

SAFEGUARDING THE REPUBLIC'S PERPETUITY:
A CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF
WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Communication and Dramatic Arts

Central Michigan University
Mount Pleasant, Michigan
October 2012

Accepted by the Faculty of the College of Graduate Studies,
Central Michigan University, in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the master's degree

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Ed Hinck for his encouragement and persistence throughout the maturation of this project. His enthusiasm for the study of rhetoric is contagious. More importantly, I am deeply appreciative of his commitment to ensuring that I complete this work on George Washington. Additionally, I would like to thank Dr. Shelly Hinck and Dr. Mary Ann Renz for serving on the thesis committee, offering insight, and providing valuable feedback, which allowed for a more polished paper. I wish to thank Scott Strittmatter and Cory Glover. No thesis can be completed without the encouragement and support of cohorts who share in the process. I appreciate each of you being a sounding board, but more importantly I am thankful for your friendship. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their encouragement and patience as I proceeded with project while farming alongside them.

ABSTRACT

SAFEGUARDING THE REPUBLIC'S PERPETUITY: A CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

by Brian Pridgeon

George Washington's farewell address is an enduring model of rhetorical action. Often cited for his stance on isolationism and recently praised (Hostetler, 2002) for the use of distance imagery, the speech had already been recognized for its complexity and splendor. However, there was an opportunity to recognize the rhetorical brilliance of how Washington engages his ethos to disarm his critics and how the speech functions as a rhetorical hybrid, responding to a complex rhetorical situation. Through the process of a Close Textual Analysis, this paper addresses how Washington engaged the epideictic action of ceremonial leave-taking to allow significant deliberative action. These two actions create the rhetorical hybrid which allowed Washington to adequately resign from office, offer praise and thanks for his years in service, respond to his critics, and display humility. The rhetorical hybrid also allowed Washington to unify his audience, bind them to his persona, establish a national identity, make the audience heirs to his public service, and enact the revolutionary narrative all to safeguard the union and ensure preservation of the Constitution. The speech constrained the power of the presidency, differentiating the office from the monarchy, and ensured that a chief executive could operate within the confines of a democracy. This speech announced the nation's stability and functions as the first steps beyond infancy for the young nation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. RATIONALE FOR STUDY.....1
 Historical Perspective2
 Obstacles of the First Term.....3
 Obstacles of the Second Term.....4
 The Character of George Washington6
 Review of Previous Research.....8
 Presidential Rhetoric10
 Generic Constraints.....12
 Approaching Criticisms from a Genre Perspective.....15
 Washington’s Farewell Address as a Critical Challenge.....22
 Rhetorical Hybrids as Significant Form25
 Summary27

II. CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AS A METHODOLOGY29
 Summary34

III. A CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF WASHINGTON’S FAREWELL ADDRESS ...36
 Purpose36
 Persona37
 Audience38
 The Analysis of the Text’s Organization39
 The First Six Paragraphs39
 The Transitioning Paragraphs.....43
 The Second Part of the Speech.....44
 Concluding the Farewell50
 Summary52

IV. IMPLICATIONS OF THE SPEECH AS A RHETRORICAL HYBRID53
 Washington’s Rhetorical Situation.....54
 Rhetorical Strategies in Washington’s Farewell Address55
 Power Distance56
 Construction of a Shared Political Identity58
 The Slogans of the Revolution.....62
 Washington’s Ethos Unites.....64
 Washington’s Farewell as a Rhetorical Hybrid66
 The Epideictic Address.....67
 Paragraph Six: The Generic Transition69
 The Deliberative Address.....72
 Concluding the Farewell and Returning to the Epideictic.....77

Implications, Limitations, and Opportunities for Future Research..... 79
Conclusion 81

REFERENCES 83

CHAPTER I

RATIONALE FOR STUDY

On September 19, 1796, George Washington submitted to the *American Daily Advertiser*, a Philadelphia newspaper, the final draft of his farewell address, the first of its genre in the history of the young United States. The speech was later published in hundreds of newspapers throughout the United States and even in major cities throughout Europe. Without a model to guide the construction of his address, Washington used the announcement of his retirement as an opportunity to reflect on his two terms as president. Understanding the threats to the nation's survival, in particular, without experience in the democratic transition of power, Washington's farewell address provided the blueprint for managing transitions of power and insight into the policies necessary to guarantee the perpetuity of the Constitution. Facing criticism for his leadership, Washington used the speech to cement his iconic status as the "Father of the Country."

The first part of the speech provided Washington's rationale for not seeking reelection, a significant event as it was publicly presumed that Washington would continue to serve until his death. With the administration of Constitution only in its eighth year, Washington recognized that his farewell address must carefully persuade the young nation to continue with its unprecedented experiment with democracy. Relying on the power of the executive office and his iconic public perception, Washington attempted to advance federalist policies. Washington's careful navigation of the rhetorical situation via the Farewell Address serves as an exemplar of responsible presidential rhetoric. This study examines how Washington's address carefully engages his ethos and persona as a national hero and father of the country to guide the nation through its first, if not most difficult, transition of leadership. To fully grasp the rhetorical

significance of Washington's speech, this chapter begins with an examination of the complex historical forces that established the demands called for in the speech. Second, within the discussion of the historical context, this paper illuminates the persuasiveness of Washington's reputation and public perception as he responds to the need to forever secure his legacy in view of how heavily criticized his second term was. Third, a review of previous research reveals the opportunities to show how ethos and persona remain in need of exploration to explain Washington's impact on the national community. Fourth, this chapter discusses the benefits and identifies a number of important limitations of engaging genre theory as a critical perspective to understand a speech of this nature. Finally, this paper offers research questions concerning the rhetorical mechanisms that allowed Washington to construct a masterpiece that secured a smooth transition of presidential power and gave credence to the Constitution.

Historical Perspective

In April 1794, not satisfied with the Treaty of Paris signed between the United States and Great Britain at the end to the revolutionary war, President Washington sent Chief Justice John Jay to London to negotiate a new treaty that would attempt to remove British military presence from America. Washington received heavy criticism from Jeffersonian-republicans over his willingness to negotiate with Britain. Regardless of popular thought, Washington signed the treaty in August of 1795 (Ellis, 2004). The signing of Jay's Treaty created a larger rift between the federalists and the republicans. The treaty caused public protests outside of Washington's residence in Philadelphia. Jefferson, a supporter of France, naturally dissented believing that the United States should not enter into a treaty with an enemy of France. Therefore, he convinced James Madison that the House of Representatives had an equal stake in the creation of treaties.

Jefferson recognized that only the Senate had the power to confirm treaties, yet the Constitution gave “sovereign power over all legislation, including treaties” to the House of Representatives (Ellis, 2004, p. 229). Subsequently, Madison and the members of the House took on the President in the spring of 1796 only to lose. The treaty stood.

The Jay Treaty, as a snapshot, reveals the polarized political environment that Washington faced at the end of his second term as president. Ellis (2000, 2004) described the political division as a battle between the Spirit of '76, the republican form of government, versus the Spirit of '89, a federal form of government. The republicans believed in a limited form of a federal government, that the federal government had no sovereignty over the States, and that the office of the president was a new form of monarchy no different than what the War for Independence was fought against. The division became heated. The republicans saw in the French revolution the same principles of the Spirit of '76. The federalists saw the shortcomings of the original governing document, the Articles of Confederation. The young republican nation did not have the means to protect itself, just as the national government under the Articles of Confederation did not have the means to forcibly collect money from the States. As a result, General Washington fought a war with a bankrupt army. The federalists saw in the Constitution a more complete form of government that answers the problems of the previous attempt under the Articles of Confederation, yet it allowed the States to maintain some sovereignty. The division between these forces of political thought began the instant Washington took office.

Obstacles of the First Term

Humphrey (2003) reported that the sole task of Washington's first term was to oversee the organization of the new government. In doing so he faced several obstacles. First, under the

Articles of Confederation, citizens identified more closely with their States than to a national identity. During the construction and ratification of the Constitution, debates were focused more on the benefits for a particular State than on behalf of a national Union. One obstacle that Washington faced was the development of and commitment to the national government.

During Washington's first term, he also had to deal with a wartime deficit. When the colonies declared war against Britain in 1776, the States agreed to contribute equally to the cost of waging a war. However, in practice, the contributions were unequal if any contributions were made. The government established by the Articles of Confederation agreed to take on the war debt with no means of levying taxes, therefore the war debt could not be collected. The Constitution remedied this problem, and it was Washington's duty to enforce a new tax system. Although the language of the Constitution clearly separated the tasks of the new government among the three branches, it was Washington's task to establish and organize the bureaucracy of the Federal Government and the Judicial Branch.

Obstacles of the Second Term

Washington's second term as described above was characterized by foreign affairs and by growing political party affiliations (Kaufman, 1969). During Washington's second term, tension between France and England broke out in Europe. Additionally, the French Revolution also occurred. In response to both issues, Washington established a position of neutrality. The press used as propaganda machines by Washington's political opponents, highly criticized the position of neutrality. Washington's argument for neutrality was grounded in the belief that America was not "mature" enough to engage in the foreign affairs of Europe. He argued instead that the United States should remain neutral and concentrate on developing economic independence from

Europe. However, to secure America from European influence, Washington knew he needed to develop a more comprehensive treaty with Britain, thus his pursuit of the Jay Treaty.

In spite of great foresight, the framers of the Constitution did not predict the rise and prominence of political parties. As revealed in the battle over the Jay Treaty, the two parties were incessantly trying to subvert the power of each other. Newspapers functioned as propaganda machines for the political parties. The political parties polarized the American political process and, according to Washington, negatively impacted the progress of the young democracy. In fact during his presidency, Washington's own party plotted to have the New England States secede from the Union (Ellis, 2000).

As Washington's second term neared its conclusion Washington was weary of office and worn down by the party bickering. It was also the first time Washington's carefully constructed public persona had been cracked. Ellis (2004) noted that the first crack in Washington's character occurred after his response to the Whiskey Rebellion. In 1791, Congress passed an excise tax on whiskey to pay off the national debt. Protests began almost immediately following the excise tax on the fact that the tax unfairly hindered the freedom of whiskey distilleries to conduct business. The protest culminated in August 1794 when 6000 men set up a military encampment outside of Pittsburgh, consuming large amounts of whiskey and openly challenging the federal government to thwart their "rebellion." Washington's response was to lead 13,000 troops into Pennsylvania to put a commanding end to the rebellion. The rebellion quickly evaporated. However, Thomas Jefferson was quick to criticize the actions of the President. In a letter to James Madison, Jefferson asserted that the language of Washington's speech given to Congress to explain his actions in squelching the Whiskey Rebellion resembled "shreds of stuff from Aesop's fables and Tom Thumb" and attributed the authorship to Hamilton, implying that

Washington was a puppet of his favorite aide and no longer aware of what he was doing or saying (Ellis, 2004). Following the events of the Whiskey Rebellion were the events of the Jay Treaty, resulting in further criticism of Washington's mental capacity and allowing the republican press to further knock down the public persona of Washington.

The rhetorical situation facing Washington in August of 1796, as the President prepared his farewell address, was quite complex. Washington knew that he had a duty to leave a lasting statement addressing his terms as president and the future direction of the nation. Washington had to carefully reestablish his credibility, respond to his critics, remind the citizens of their commitment to the union, and provide warning to the potential threats to the maturity of the union (political parties, foreign alliances, and desires to change the Constitution quickly). Additionally, Washington felt that his farewell address should further outline the purpose of the presidential office, distinguishing the office and form of government from Great Britain's Monarchy, and continue to define the President's function within the new federal government. Washington astutely understood that a proper response to the complex demands of 1796 required him to draw heavily on his public persona.

The Character of George Washington

Parrish (2005) argued that a piece of rhetoric is impacted by and closely related to the character of the rhetor. Within the speech, a rhetor reveals a persona to the audience. Shogan (2006) stated that a president's authority is a reflection of his political standing. Washington's public perception can be summarized as being a man of strong character, humble in his dedication to America, deliberate in thought, and widely respected by his peers. Ellis (2004) argued that within American history "no one entered the office with more personal prestige than

Washington” (p. 188). Washington was the brave soldier that survived and explored the West, was the hero and figurehead of the American Revolution, chaired the Constitutional Convention; and, therefore, was first in mind to be the President. Ellis described Washington as an American Cincinnatus, a reference to the Roman standard for a great servant leader. Henry Lee’s eulogy of George Washington immortalized the public persona of the first President. Henry Lee described Washington as:

First in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen, he was second to none in the humble and endearing scenes of private life. Pious, just, humane, temperate and sincere— uniform, dignified and commanding—his example was as edifying to all around him as were the effects of that example lasting . . . Correct throughout, vice shuddered in his presence and virtue always felt his fostering hand. The purity of his private character gave effulgence to his public virtues . . . Such was the man for whom our nation mourns (Washington’s Eulogy by Henry Lee, December 26, 1799).

Washington’s character positively impacted the esteem in which others regarded him. Ellis (2000) wrote in his book, *Founding Brothers*, “throughout the first half of the 1790’s, the closest approximation to a self-evident truth in American politics was George Washington” (p. 120). During the ratification debates, some were concerned that by establishing an Executive Branch, the course of American government could return to a system of governance that resembled the monarchy from which the nation had just fought to gain freedom. Proponents of the Constitution refuted this argument simply by establishing that George Washington was to be the President, and that fact alone distinguished the proposed Executive from the British monarchy.

Clearly, in constructing his resignation speech, Washington had to rhetorically meet several complex demands. Therefore, the farewell address is an enduring model of rhetorical action

because of Washington's ability to manage the complex demands of the rhetorical context, the audience of the speech, and his character, allowing him to unify the citizens of the country to the Union. Because of the public perception of Washington, he was able to use language that transcended political infighting and bickering between parties to address issues that faced the young nation. This study examines Washington's use of ethos as a rhetorical mechanism.

Review of Previous Research

Being recognized as a masterpiece (see for example Schachner, 1954; Wills, 1981) and the first of its genre of Presidential farewell has inspired multi-disciplinary scholarly studies of Washington's farewell address. The historian applauds Washington's ability to continue the movement of the constitutional convention and is fascinated by the impact that the speech has on shaping history. The political scientist is fascinated with Washington's foresight on the party system and his commitment to placing the Union first above State or regional loyalties. However, few rhetorical scholars have offered an analysis of the speech.

Campbell and Jamieson (1990) included a brief discussion of Washington's farewell address in articulating their genre of farewell addresses. They argued that Washington's farewell address was a success. He was able to bequeath a legacy that was consistent with history, in a speech that was epideictic in nature. Additionally, like previous scholars and historians (e.g. Willis, 1981), Campbell and Jamieson noted that the speech is still remembered for Washington's statements of isolationism calling for no permanent alliances and no foreign allies. Campbell and Jamieson highlighted Washington's use of metaphors, describing the "experiment in democracy" as an organism needing nurturing and time to grow.

Spaulding and Garrity (1996) conducted a content analysis of Washington's farewell address, aligning the themes of the farewell address to the historical moment that called for the theme. Their primary conclusion is that the significance of Washington's farewell address is in the establishment of a "national character." The purpose of Washington's farewell address was to unite. The rhetorical mechanism of unity was to propose an American citizenship that transcended regional or State identities and created a commonality that broke down the barriers of divisiveness.

Hostetler (2002) conducted a close textual analysis of Washington's farewell address to assess the previously overlooked stylistic dimensions and distance imagery of the text. His rationale for his methodology and application of close textual analysis will be further reviewed later in this paper during the discussion on methodology. Hostetler concluded that Washington's speech is still significant today as it calls to the "unfinished process of national character building" (p. 404). Additionally, Hostetler concluded that Washington's complex style allowed Washington to establish his ethos and convincingly argue for a national character. The complex style also requires the reader to carefully reflect on Washington's arguments. In regards to distance, Hostetler argued that Washington elevates the cultural symbol of distance (geographically) to "new heights of influence" (p. 405). The result was a new conception of the distance between the new nation and Europe.

The number of rhetorical studies on Washington's farewell address is few, but they do reveal significant conclusions concerning Washington's speech. First, the complexity of Washington's speech, inherent in his prose, revealed a masterful understanding of the uncertainty his resignation would create among the citizenry. Second, Washington's farewell address was a fitting, reaffirming response to the uncertainty of presidential transition and the fragility of the

infant nation. Third, the farewell address significantly reshaped the audience's perception of a national character and ownership of the Constitution. Finally, previous research has revealed the timelessness of the speech and Washington's success in bequeathing a long-standing legacy.

Presidential Rhetoric

The previous studies are rooted in the principle that presidential rhetoric serves a vital role in American democracy. The power of the president as constructed in the Constitution is derived from the consent of the citizenry. However, the office of the president inherently has the ability to dictate and control the power held in the relationship between the American public and the President. To manage this relationship, the President often addresses the American people to garner support for legislation, foreign policy, and other initiatives or to provide meaning for significant events that occur domestically or abroad. Since the first President took office, presidential address has been the primary instrument of presidential governance. Presidential address shapes civic dialogue and has the ability to constrain and define the boundaries of public debate.

Campbell and Jamieson (1990) argued that the role of presidential rhetoric is noteworthy because of the uniqueness of the office. As a result, presidents influence public dialogue and possess the ability to "constitute the people," allowing them to shape an identity for the American people consistent with the President's interpretation of the American democracy. Campbell and Jamieson also argued that "public communication," the primary vehicle of presidential influence, "is the medium through which the national fabric is woven" (p. 6). The constitutive powers of presidential rhetoric create or shape the identity of the President and create rhetorical boundaries recognizable by the American public.

Neustadt (1960) argued that the positional power (status and authority) of the presidential office inherently adds to the persuasiveness of presidential addresses. An audience gives greater status and authority to presidential rhetoric due to the stature and esteem that the office of the president itself holds. Neustadt also described the persuasive relationship between the President and the citizens as being reciprocal. Popular opinion impacts the rhetorical effectiveness of the President (Neustadt, 1960; Shogan, 2006). However, because of the position as head of state, the President has exclusive access to information not accessible by the citizenry. Therefore, this access gives the President the power to shape public reality and impact public debate. In light of this persuasive power, presidential rhetoric enables citizens to participate in government through deliberation. In 1789, the founders created a form of participatory government rooted in the principle that any eligible citizen has a voice in public dialogue and is able to participate in the progress of the democracy. The office of the presidency, because of the access to privileged information, arms the public on the issues of governance, resulting in public deliberation, which leads to public decisions.

The American citizenry also impacts presidential rhetoric. Public dialogue leads to public opinion, which, when disseminated, has the ability to shape and set the agenda for public policies (Hauser, 1999; Neustadt, 1960; Shogan, 2006). Therefore, the president is a servant of the people and must carefully manage the public opinion of the administration. As history has proven, without public support, the president is incapable of moving forward his political agenda and is at risk of losing the constitutive powers inherent in the office.

The burden of rhetorical expertise lies on the shoulders of the president. The president must carefully engage language that most positively impacts the president's relationship with the American citizenry while carefully pushing his political agenda. Since the very words or

symbols that a president uses shape public reality and create an identity for the American people, the language choices of a president have ethical implications. The arguments a president chooses to emphasize in his rhetoric are important ingredients in the construction of his own political reality, personal credibility, and presidential authority.

The study of presidential rhetoric is valuable in understanding the development, movement, and progress of democracy in America. It shapes public opinion and provides an understanding for how an American citizen finds identity and thus engages in this democracy. Presidential rhetoric is deliberative in nature. The president is privy to information that a citizen is not. Therefore, the American citizen looks to the president for answers to challenging questions and expects the president to guide public policy. Presidential rhetoric is powerful. The tools to unpack presidential rhetoric are available under the auspices of rhetorical criticism and, in particular, generic criticism.

Generic Constraints

Rhetoric, the art of persuasion, is an old world concept. The foundation for the study of rhetoric begins with Aristotle as a result of his contemporaneous observations of the ancient Greek society. In particular, Aristotle recognized the impact public address had on an audience. He noted the relationship between the rhetor and the audience, and between the text and the context. Although Aristotle is most noted for the creation of western philosophy, his notion of rhetorical genres is especially important to this paper.

Aristotle, as he reasoned about the impact and purpose of language, asserted that rhetoric is “the power to observe the persuasiveness of which a particular matter admits” (Book 1, Chapter 2). Aristotle’s work is the foundation for the way critics approach public address. In

particular, Aristotle's work offers a foundation for understanding the context, or the situation, affecting the creation of a text. Aristotle posited that a speech is a function of a speaker, the subject, and the audience. The purpose of a speech is a function of the audience's expectations or rhetorical needs (Book 1, Chapter 3, 135b). Aristotle claimed that three genres of rhetoric are derived from three types of audiences, and so identified three classical genres of rhetoric: Deliberative, Forensic, and Epideictic address.

Deliberative address. Deliberative address is grounded on the belief that the audience is a judge for a future event and the purpose of the speech is to call for some future action. Grounded in politics, deliberative address provides a means of making a case for the public to take part in a specific action. Aristotle explained that the end of political rhetoric is action:

The political orator aims at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action; if he urges its acceptance, he does so on the ground that it will do good; if he urges its rejection, he does so on the ground that it will do harm; and all other points, such as whether the proposal is just or unjust, honourable or dishonourable, he brings in as subsidiary and relative to this main consideration. (Book I, Chapter 3, 1358b)

Since deliberative address functions within the political realm, the speaker has the burden to display expertise in the area of government and discern the course of the nation. Additionally, since deliberative address is focused on future action, the speaker must appeal to those devices that secure the happiness of the audience. Therefore, the audience accepts deliberative arguments dependent upon the greatest good or happiness an action creates or ensures.

Forensic address. Aristotle classified forensic rhetoric as the form of public address engaged in a courtroom. Forensic address is tied to law, whether it is written or common. At

play is a debate between the prosecution and defense. The subject of the debate is past tense and concerned with prior actions. Prior actions are a result of motive. The rhetor has to carefully construct an argument amidst the rigidity of the public procession, the nature of the law, and the crime committed. The purpose is to persuade the juror, the audience, to find justice. There are two types of forensic rhetoric: prosecution and defense. The objective of both types is to determine justice or injustice. Aristotle noted that the distinction between deliberative rhetoric and forensic rhetoric is that deliberative is concerned with displaying harm, while forensic's pursuit is to show the actor's harm or wrongdoing. Therefore, in the construction of either address, the rhetor's aim is different.

Epidictic address. Epidictic rhetoric is focused on the present and is concerned with either praise or blame. The audience assumes the role of a spectator merely assessing the present capacity to praise or blame of the subject (Book 1, Chapter 3, 1358b). Aristotle grounded epidictic address in character proofs resounding in the moment and often ceremonial in nature. Epidictic address may declare its subject as either being noble or virtuous. The noble is "praiseworthy through being intrinsically eligible" and inherently good (Book 1, Chapter 9, 1366b). Virtue, "the capacity to produce advantages and to preserve them," is rooted in character traits of justice, courage, restraint, splendor, magnanimity, liberality, prudence, and wisdom (Book 1, Chapter 9, 1366b). Epidictic address then celebrates the present possession of those traits yielding virtue or nobleness. The result of epidictic address, in positive persuasion, is to elevate the character of the subject; however, epidictic address may also highlight the shortcomings of the subject displaying the lack of virtue or noble behavior. Praise or censure works best in the epidictic form since it occurs in the present "for the audience takes the actions

as agreed, so that it only remains to add greatness and nobility” to the subject (Book 1, Chapter 9, 1368a).

Approaching Criticism from a Genre Perspective

Edwin Black (1965) simply and abstractly defined rhetorical criticism as the process of making critical statements on a rhetorical discourse. Giving credibility to the study of oratory, Herbert Wichelns in 1925 developed the foundation of how a critic should systematically analyze a persuasive text. At the time, Wichelns felt that there was a growing disconnect between literature and oratory. In his seminal essay, Wichelns argued that speech communication can and should function as a separate discipline from English. The crux of Wichelns’ argument follows:

...the conditions of democracy necessitate both the making of speeches and the study of the art...human nature being what it is, there is no likelihood that face to face persuasion will cease to be a principal mode of exerting influence, whether in courts, in senate houses, or on the platform. It follows that the critical study of oratorical method is the study, not of a mode outworn, but of a permanent and important human activity. (2005, p. 4)

Therefore, oratorical criticism stands separate from literature because unlike a literary critique, scholars of speech communication should be focused on the persuasive effects of the speech.

Wichelns noted “there is a consciousness that oratory is partly an art, partly a power of making history, and occasionally a branch of literature” (p. 21). Under these assumptions of oratory, the critic examines the orator as a “public man whose function it is to exert influence...” (p. 21).

Therefore, rhetoric is persuasive in nature, and rhetorical criticism is concerned with evaluating the means of persuasion.

Grounded in Aristotle's treatises on rhetoric, Wichelns (2005) argued that rhetorical criticism is the process of systematically analyzing the rhetorical effects of a speech. A critic of rhetorical works will examine how the speaker's personality shapes the speech and how the audience perceived the speaker. Additionally, the critic must describe the audience of the speech, purpose of the speech, main ideas, logical and emotional appeals, and the "nature of the proofs" offered. Assessing the style, or the nature of the speaker's diction and sentence structure, is also important in understanding how the speaker attempted to persuade the audience. Combined, these elements should allow a critic to conceive how a speaker influences his or her audience through the speaker's discourse.

Wichelns concluded his argument by positioning rhetorical criticism as a means of appreciating those individuals who have the ability to influence the course of nations, lying somewhere on the boundary of the political and literary realm. Oratory occurs in the public sphere, has the power to influence, and, in exercising the relationship between the speaker and the audience, reveals an art form worthy of examination. Therefore, rhetorical criticism has the potential to reveal the art of oratory and to appreciate how a speech attains its desired effect on an audience.

Twenty-two years later, Wrage (1947) expanded the scope of rhetorical criticism and Wichelns's definition of the importance of the scholarly outcome of the process. The thrust of Wrage's argument is that public address is vital and instrumental in shaping public progress, and, therefore, the "students of public address may contribute in substantial ways" to the understanding and acknowledgement of "the history of ideas" inherent in public address. Wrage

noted that the conception of the “idea” is a product of historical contexts, a catalyst of change, and by nature has ethical and social consequences. More important to the area of rhetoric, Wrage positioned public speeches as the means by which ideas are transmitted and cultivated. Therefore, the rhetorical critic should be concerned with more than just how a speaker attains a desired effect. They have an opportunity to comment on how public address adds to the history of ideas.

Wrage (1947) expanded the role of the critic by arguing that:

The interpretation of a speech calls for a complete understanding of what goes into a speech, the purpose of the speech and the interplay of factors which comprise the public speaking situation, or nuances of meaning which emerge only from the reading of a speech in the light of its setting...The student who is sensitized to rhetoric, who is schooled in its principles and techniques, brings an interest, insight, discernment, and essential skill which are assets for scholarship in the history of ideas, as that history is portrayed in public speeches. (p. 454)

The rhetorical critic, being an expert and student of public address, is especially attuned to the effects of a speech and its potential impact that the ideas inherent within the text impart on an audience. No other discipline is particularly trained to offer this kind of insight on public address. As Wrage expanded the role and purpose of rhetorical criticism beyond that outlined by Wichelens, his work created the crack in the traditional approach that would be later exposed by Black in 1965.

Black (1965) articulated a critique of traditional criticism that would force the field of speech communication to reassess the critical approach of systematically analyzing a text. The primary concern of Black was that traditional criticism was too formulaic, limiting the ability of

the rhetorical critic to assess the artistry of the speech. In support of his claim, Black described the speech given by John Jay Chapman at Coatesville in 1912. Chapman's Coatesville Address was delivered to three people. A traditional critique of the speech would conclude that the speech was ineffective since it failed to have an immediate effect on the audience. Additionally, Black noted that the systematic canons of traditional criticism are unable to find any redeeming qualities in the speech noting nothing of significance in regards to structure, logical appeals, ethos, or emotional appeals. Yet, Black argued that the speech still lived in the sweeping claims about the "nature of men and their world, the history and destiny of a country" whereby this timeless commentary becomes the "solid foundation that makes for its persistent viability" (p. 88). Ultimately, Chapman's address is timeless as long as an audience identifies with the message. The significance of Black's argument is that he extends the concept of audience developed in traditional criticism from the notion that a speech is only concerned with the impact of the immediate audience to a broader conception of audience that is able to move through time. Black summarized his critique of traditional criticism with an argument for how to expand the scope of rhetorical criticism at the end of chapter four cited below:

It should be clear by now that neo-Aristotelianism is founded upon a restricted view of human behavior, that there are discourses which function in ways not dreamed of in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and that there are discourses not designed for rational judges, but for men as they are. It is the task of criticism not to measure these discourses dogmatically against some parochial standard of rationality but, allowing for the immeasurably wide range of human experience, to see them as they really are. (p. 131)

Additionally, Black recognized that his arguments moved the thrust of rhetorical criticism from being solely conscious of the relationship between the text and the audience by encouraging

critics to look for the artistry in the way the speaker uses the text as a response to the context. Bitzer (1968) further articulated the role of context in the creation of text as he coined the term the “rhetorical situation.” The thrust of Bitzer’s argument is that there are situations that call for an appropriate response from the speaker. The situation gives the speech rhetorical significance and therefore can be critiqued as to how fitting a response the speech is to the rhetorical situation. The rhetorical situation has structure and by nature shapes discourse that attempts to respond to it.

Because parallels exist among some rhetorical situations, making them similar in type, modern scholars have continued to articulate the notion of genre, as it applies to rhetorical studies, expounding in the process on Aristotle’s three forms of rhetoric (deliberative, epideictic, and forensic). Scholars have begun to delineate and articulate Aristotle’s treatises on rhetorical genres. In particular scholars have examined the methodology of creating a genre, and the process of critiquing a speech within generic confines. Therefore, it is necessary to begin a discussion of how a scholar approaches criticism from a generic perspective by carefully defining this notion of a genre.

What are the elements of a genre? Campbell and Jamieson (1978) noted four elements:

1) Classification is justified only by the critical illumination it produces not by the neatness of a classificatory schema; 2) Generic criticism is taken as a means toward systematic, close textual analysis; 3) A genre is a complex, an amalgam, a constellation of substantive, situational, and stylistic elements; 4) Generic analysis reveals both the conventions and affinities that a work shares with others; it uncovers the unique elements in the rhetorical act, the particular means by which a genre is individuated in a given case. (p.14)

The basic elements that Campbell and Jamieson described allow them to begin the process of examining the relationship between rhetorical form and genre. In particular, rhetorical forms establish genres. They are the strategies that are consistent in the speeches within the genre. Rhetorical forms of genres are “stylistic and substantive responses to perceived situational demands” (p. 19). Situational demands call for a particular act. Therefore, rhetorical forms define the qualities of the rhetorical act and allow the critic to understand how the act works to achieve its ends (Burke, 1969). Additionally, the substantive and stylistic elements of one rhetorical form when combined with others create a constellation that enacts the genre.

What is the role of the critic? The rhetorical scholar is not involved in a “crusade” to find genres (Frye, 1957). Instead, the critic becomes more aware of how all rhetoric is influenced by previous rhetoric. This allows the critic to look beyond the immediate event and audience of the speech. Generic criticism becomes then a “study of recurrent rhetorical action...producing a critical history exploring the ways in which rhetorical acts influence each other” (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978, p. 27). In short, the critic employing a generic criticism compares the composition of the speech to the elements possessed within the genre. The critic determines the speech to be successful and well constructed if it meets the criteria of the genre and acceptably fashions a response within the generic restraints.

Presidential rhetoric is a natural fit for generic criticism. The addresses of presidents are well documented and similar in nature. Campbell and Jamieson (1990) carefully defined the major genres of presidential rhetoric as a result of meticulous examination of the rhetorical forms inherent in major presidential addresses: e.g. The State of the Union, Inaugural Address, and campaign speeches. This paper is most concerned with Campbell and Jamieson’s chapter describing the genre of presidential farewells. Having surveyed several farewell addresses over

the course of history, Campbell and Jamieson summarized the core objectives of presidential farewells:

The presidential farewell address is produced in response to a systemic need for a ritual of departure. The farewell occurs during a period in which presidents have greater than usual power to redefine the people and the presidency and by so doing to bequeath a legacy to the country. If presidents exploit that privileged time rhetorically, their legacies link the criteria by which they hope their presidencies will be judged to a unifying vision of the country's future – a future shaped by the lessons drawn from the experiences of a particular administration. The role assumed by outgoing presidents at this moment is profoundly rhetorical. Their practical power is virtually spent; in this address more than in any other, a president must rely on moral suasion. (p. 191)

Additionally, Campbell and Jamieson noted the rhetorical choices that a president must weigh in constructing the farewell address. The farewell address is not mandated as is the State of the Union or veto messages and is not “fixed by custom” as is the Inaugural Address. Therefore, the president may choose when and how to present his farewell remarks. Some presidents set aside a moment and give a formal farewell address; others have given farewell remarks during their final state of the union to Congress. Unlike for other speeches, for the farewell the president can choose the timing, audience, and medium. These rhetorical choices then will shape how the critic determines the success or failure of the speech.

Campbell and Jamieson (1990) determined that farewells have certain distinctive characteristics:

- 1) they occur when the president can assume a persona combining the role of leader and visionary;
- 2) for bequeathal to occur, the legacy must be consistent with the character of

the president and with the events and rhetoric of that administration; 3) consistent with its character as epideictic rhetoric, the legacy must be offered for contemplation rather than action; 4) enduring legacies are encapsulated in memorable phrase or sentence that reminds the citizenry of an enduring truth about our system of government. (p. 194)

The final distinctive characteristic that Campbell and Jamieson noted is found in the final chapter during their concluding discussion. Campbell and Jamieson observed that most presidential rhetoric is an offspring of either one of two sources: the mandates of the Constitution or because George Washington did it.

Washington's Farewell Address as a Critical Challenge

As Campbell and Jamieson (1990) have argued, a generic criticism of a presidential farewell address would be rooted in Aristotle's epideictic genre. In particular, the presidential farewell meets the need of ceremonial leave taking or shares elements of a valedictory address. Washington's farewell address is a significant text for studying presidential farewells. The address established the genre and was quickly recognized as a masterpiece of presidential rhetoric due mostly to his iconic status and to a lesser extent to Washington's arguments for isolationism, his understanding of manifest destiny and the opportunities to develop the nation westward, and his ability to bring continuity to the transition in presidential leadership while strengthening the American citizen's identification with the Union and thereby establishing a sense of patriotism. As a result, Washington's speech was canonized and as a tribute is read in its entirety during a session of congress every year on Washington's birthday.

Hostetler (2002), in arguing for the need for further study of Washington's farewell address, noted that there were aspects of the speech that scholars had yet to illuminate. As

mentioned, Hostetler chose to explore Washington's complex prose and the use of distance imagery. Washington's farewell address is a long, complex text that is challenging to read yet remains politically relevant and elicits a call to action that transcends over 200 years. The previous research albeit significant has yet to fully encompass the magnitude of the text. The purpose of this paper is to advance the understanding of the text by exploring two critical challenges of Washington's speech.

First, it is difficult to apply Campbell and Jamieson's generic lens to Washington's farewell address. The issue that needs to be addressed is how would a critic, employing a genre criticism, using the generic constraints of Presidential Farewell Address, account for how the speech was created in the absence of a previous example? How does a critic engage in a generic criticism of the first speech of a genre? Jamieson (1975) offered insight to this issue in proposing the notion of antecedent genres.

The inductive approach used to establish a genre makes using Campbell and Jamieson's (1990) criteria of presidential farewells difficult to use in a critique of Washington's farewell address. The analogy of the chicken or the egg applies to Washington's speech. As noted, Campbell and Jamieson observed that presidential address is either a requirement of the Constitution or a tradition established by Washington. Therefore, in constructing his farewell address, Washington was not constrained by the same elements that later presidents would have to carefully observe.

A simple argument would be that Washington was only constrained by the rhetorical situation; however, Jamieson (1975) observed that antecedent rhetorical genres might provide a more formative rhetorical response than the rhetorical situation. Studying Papal Encyclicals, the early state of the union addresses, and their congressional replies, Jamieson argued that "these

discourses bear the chromosomal imprint of ancestral genres” (p. 406). Jamieson noted that the early state of the union address took its precedent from the King’s Speech of the British Monarchy. The two speeches shared the pomp, circumstance, and timing of the speech before Congress. In a previous study, Jamieson contended that an unprecedented rhetorical form is not merely a response to the rhetorical situation but also is a function of “antecedent rhetorical forms.” In the study of the state of the union, Jamieson concluded the “antecedent genres are capable of imposing powerful constraints” (p. 414). Determining the degree of the constraint and whether the rhetor chose the appropriate antecedent rhetoric as a model is the job of the critic. Additionally, the critic must consider the “extent to which rhetorical response is determined by situation, audience expectation, antecedent rhetoric or other factors...” (p. 415). A critical challenge of Washington’s farewell address is to determine the extent to which Washington’s speech was a function of the rhetorical situation or antecedent rhetoric.

The second critical challenge is that Washington’s farewell address defies easy classification. The speech possesses elements of the epideictic genre, and it possesses elements of the deliberative genre. Campbell and Jamieson (1990) argued that by nature a farewell address is epideictic. The speech meets the need for ceremonial leave taking. The purpose of the speech is to bequeath a legacy. The farewell address occurs at a time when the “shadow of incumbency” necessitates that the departing president take on the role of priest or prophet offering statements for consideration only. Washington’s farewell occurred before an election took place. The assumption was that Washington would continue his service as president into a third term. The beginning of the farewell address announces his resignation. The resignation creates a great deal of uncertainty. Washington, responding to the uncertainty with the aim at maintaining stability, uses the occasion of his farewell address to offer policy statements that are

highly deliberative in nature. As a result, the existence of both epideictic and deliberative elements raises the issue of rhetorical hybrids and the process of critically approaching them.

Rhetorical Hybrids as Significant Form

The study of rhetorical hybrids is a means of understanding the interplay of two generic forms. Jamieson and Campbell (1982) argued rhetorical hybrids “are important keys to understanding the coherence of complex rhetorical forms” (p. 147). Examining a speech for its generic elements it allows the critic to illuminate how the complex situation creates conflicting demands calling for multiple genres. On occasion, presidents will attempt to blend the Aristotelian genres and pursue the objectives of both a deliberative and epideictic address. The result is a hybrid that functions as a means of responding to a ceremony but allows the speaker to give a call to action.

Zyskind (1950) argued that Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address is a hybrid of epideictic and deliberative action. Zyskind claimed the ceremonial occasion called for Lincoln to “bestow honor on the dead of Gettysburg and all those who had fought that the Union might live” (p. 206). Zyskind noted that in many regards the speech is epideictic because it attempted to elicit the audience’s immediate praise. However, the speech was also deliberative because it persuaded the audience to take up the work of ensuring the survival of the nation. Therefore, the speech attempted to accomplish two objectives: to honor and to call to action.

What rhetorical mechanisms did Lincoln use to accomplish both objectives? Zyskind (1950) first noted Lincoln’s use of tense throughout the speech. The speech opens in the past tense giving a narrative of the nation’s founding, commemorating the efforts of those who conceived and toiled over securing liberty. The speech transitions to the present tense to talk

about the fallen soldiers at Gettysburg and in a larger sense positioning the current war as a fight for the survival of the nation. The speech transitions to the future tense closing the speech with an argument for what must happen to secure the future of the nation. Zyskind argued that the use of tense indicates the progress of the American narrative. Consistent throughout the speech amongst the different tenses, Zyskind argued, the listener's roles are revealed. In the past, the audience is the benefactor of the work of the founding fathers. The present role for the audience is to dedicate. The future persuades the audience to take up the same tasks as the soldiers and secure the future of the Union. In addition to shifting tenses, Lincoln's use of the first person plural throughout the speech creates a sense of participation for the audience in the narrative. Therefore, the patterns of time and the listeners' role when linked reveal a combination of epideictic and deliberative objectives. Zyskind posited that the epideictic elements of the speech are subordinate to and help achieve the deliberative aim. This argument is most clear in how Zyskind used Lincoln's judgments of the past and present. The liberty established by the Constitution (the past) makes the ceremony fitting for the work of the soldiers. However, present words will be insignificant to adequately communicate the work of the soldiers; therefore, the ceremony is inadequate. However, Lincoln uses the inadequacy of the epideictic ceremony to push his deliberative call to action. Only after the audience is willing to act for the Union will the ceremony be fitting. The epideictic objective aided and helped to achieve Lincoln's deliberative aims. It is reasonable to conclude that, since George Washington's farewell speech is a response to a complex situation much like Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Washington's Farewell Address is a hybrid of deliberative and epideictic action.

Washington's farewell address is a critical challenge. His prose is complex. His historical demands were complex and his public persona was crumbling. Yet, Washington was

able to construct an enduring model of presidential rhetoric that successfully guided an unheard of transition in governmental power and still called Americans to the task of protecting and participating in the American form of democracy. The chief concern of this study is to understand how Washington was able to rhetorically accomplish this. This study will pursue three research questions:

RQ1: What rhetorical strategies does Washington use to manage the relationship between the ceremony of resignation and the desire to unite the nation and persuade a call to action?

RQ2: How does Washington use his ethos as a rhetorical mechanism?

RQ3: What rhetorical mechanisms does Washington engage to respond to the complex historical demands of the speech?

Summary

Washington's farewell address is a masterpiece of presidential rhetoric. Recognizing that presidential rhetoric is a primary vehicle for managing the relationship between the government and the American citizen, it is important to examine rhetorical mechanisms of presidential address. Therefore, it is the role of the carefully trained rhetorical critic to illuminate the success and failings of presidential rhetoric. Presidential address might be best understood using the criteria established under generic criticism.

In approaching Washington's farewell address, it would be easy to judge it against the genre of Presidential farewells. First it is difficult to apply a generic criticism being that it was the first of the genre. Second, the speech possesses elements of Aristotle's epideictic and deliberative genres raising the issue that Washington's farewell address might best be understood

as a rhetorical hybrid. Rhetorical hybrids often occur as a response to a complex situation. To unpack the rhetorical mechanisms that allow Washington to respond to the complex historical demands and to examine the use of deliberative and epideictic elements to show that the speech functions as a rhetorical hybrid this study will conduct a close textual analysis of Washington's farewell address.

The purpose of this chapter was to argue for the opportunities for further research of Washington's speech. Chapter II of this study will provide a rationale for conducting a Close Textual Analysis to answer the above research questions. Chapter III will be devoted to mining Washington's text to illuminate how Washington was able to respond to the complex rhetorical situation. Chapter IV will offer a discussion for understanding Washington's farewell address as a rhetorical hybrid and the means of using his ethos to carefully navigate complex historical demands. Additional chapter four will offer a conclusion and implications of what this study adds to our understanding of rhetorical hybrids.

CHAPTER II

CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AS A METHODOLOGY

Close Textual Analysis (CTA) has been demonstrated to serve critics well in studying texts that respond to complex historical circumstances, such as the circumstances Washington faced when writing his address. A CTA of Washington's Farewell Address will discover and address the rhetorical potential of the speech, in particular how the first President was able to use persuasive language that transcended the polarized political environment, garner support, respond to a challenging rhetorical situation while carefully constructing a political identity for the audience. Additionally, CTA will reveal the epideictic and deliberative elements of the text showing that a rhetorical hybrid is a proper response to a complex situation.

Rhetorical criticism with its roots in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* began with a great concern for the effect of the speech. The process of criticism was highly formulaic. However, Black (1965) and Bitzer (1968) just two voices of several have called for a paradigm shift in rhetorical criticism where the effectiveness of the speech is not the only measure of success. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* albeit brilliant is not all encompassing, however, to begin looking at the relationship between text and context should enhance the critic's understanding of the persuasive mechanisms of discourse, revealing the artistry of the speech, and perhaps explain the longevity of speeches. Out of this conception of rhetorical criticism CTA was derived.

CTA is the process of "close reading" to understand how a rhetorical text functions persuasively. CTA was established as a response to the limitations identified with traditional criticisms operating within the rational world paradigm (Leff, 1992). Leff argued "no flaw in the neo-Aristotelian program was as telling as its failure to acknowledge the tensions between the intentional structure of texts and their extrinsic effects" (p. 225). The intentional dimension of a

speech is the persuasive purpose of the rhetor. The extensional dimension of a speech looks at the effect of the rhetorical text. Leff continued his argument against traditional criticism by asserting that the “unrecognized inconsistency between the conception of the object and the standard of judgment forced critics to stagger aimlessly between texts and contexts without learning much about either (p. 226). Instead, he suggested rhetorical criticism should recognize that oration is an art form whose understanding demands concise interpretive work (Leff, 1986). Leff (1990) concluded that CTA better reveals tension between intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, which allow for a more productive and “proper” readings of rhetorical text.

Leff argued that the motive for textual criticism is to focus on the persuasive instruments “embodied” in certain discourses. Therefore, the role of the critic is to interpret a text to provide a report of the “rhetorical dynamics implicit within it” (Leff, 1986 p. 378). The process of CTA involves the (a) close reading of a text, (b) an analysis of the historical context and biographical circumstances of the rhetor that frame the text, (c) the discovery of the inner working devices that establish the “co-ordinates” of the text, and (d) the appreciation of how these factors interact within the text and with time.

CTA begins with a close reading of a text, which redirects the emphasis on rhetorical criticism to the word choice of the text and how these words form the sequence of “arguments, ideas, images, and figures which interact” or the inner-working devices that build the structure of the speech (Leff, 1990, p. 256). Through examining the word choice, the critic must recognize the close relationship between the historical context and the text. Stelzner (1966) argued on behalf of CTA because it allows the critic to examine how a rhetorical text functions within the confines of the historical context. Leff (1986) argued that the relationship between the text and the historical context are cyclical. The text is “constrained by and refers to” the historical

context of the speech. However the speech also “constructs a certain order and relations of elements within its own pattern of utterance” (p. 385). Leff argued that the central task of textual criticism is to understand how the text reflects and deflects reality, how the speech is shaped by the rhetorical situation and how the text constructs understanding of the rhetorical situation. In addition, CTA allows a critic to interpret how words create a boundary for action.

Critics of CTA have argued that this approach is too narrow not allowing the critic to judge the speech for its long-term effect. CTA may isolate a speech from larger discursive formations thus restricting the interpretation of the speech. For example, CTA may not reveal how a text adds to or is constrained by a genre. Leff (1992) responded to these arguments by first claiming that a good critic will be well versed in several rhetorical texts. Leff framed CTA as an inductive approach to understanding how a text works. Leff acknowledged a text’s role in perpetuating an ideology. CTA is not narrowing, but instead provides an inductive approach to see how discursive formations impact the generation of a text. Through reading several texts, a critic can see the progression of an ideological argument. Leff summarized the function of CTA by arguing that “textual criticism sustains a narrower focus than other types of criticism, but it does so in order to concentrate on the fundamental operations of rhetorical language” (p. 230). The critic should then be careful to find the balance between a narrow focus that concentrates on the close reading of the speech and a broad focus that understands how the rhetorical situation engages the text. This proper balance allows for a theoretical and practical use of CTA in rhetorical criticism.

Black’s (1994) masterful analysis of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address aptly demonstrates the process of close reading. Black deconstructed the 272 words speech recounting the near perfection of the speech. Black provided a descriptive analysis of the speech looking closely at

the constructions of arguments, evidence, audience, and tone of the speech that created the “hour glass” structure of the address. The criticism transitions to a discussion of the historical context. However, Black recognized the significance of the rhetor and tied his analysis together with a discussion of the ethos and character of Lincoln. Black’s analysis demonstrates one approach to CTA.

A CTA of Washington’s Farewell Address is fitting because the speech is considered a rhetorical masterpiece. As mentioned earlier, Hostetler (2002) argued that Washington’s use of distance imagery and complex style have not been highlighted by previous research. Hostetler examined Washington’s farewell using CTA. His critical approach was to “provide a close reading of selected portions of the text” that reveal those dimensions previously overlooked. The result was to provide a deeper “understanding and appreciation of one of America’s most enduring rhetorical artifacts” (p. 394). Hostetler then highlighted certain sections of the speech, meticulously mapping the sentence structure to support his argument that distance imagery and complex style were highly persuasive. He concluded that Washington’s complex style “to order and subordinate is eminently appropriate for Washington’s tasks of establishing ethos and arguing for national character” (p. 405). The complex style forces the reader to carefully contemplate and reflect on his arguments presented in the text. Hostetler described Washington’s prose as “formal, measured, demanding” (p.405). Hoststetler also concluded that Washington’s distance imagery “illuminates the role of prominent texts in the emergence of cultural symbols” (p. 405). These observations were only achieved through a concise and careful reading of the text.

Hostetler (2002) is not the only scholar to engage CTA to examine texts considered masterpieces. Lucas’ (2002) CTA of the “Stylistic Artistry of the Declaration of Independence”

provided a good model for deconstructing the complex language prevalent during this historical period. In his analysis, Lucas systematically dissects the speech blending the historical context with the text as it goes. The result of Lucas' work provided a greater understanding of the Declaration of Independence. A similar outcome would emerge if CTA were done with Washington's farewell address.

Medhurst (1994) provided a model for textually analyzing a presidential farewell address in his work on President Eisenhower's farewell address opening his analysis with a construction of Eisenhower's character, quickly establishing his biography as a public servant. Medhurst provided a discussion on the historical context surrounding the speech, then systematically examined the speech, relating both how the speech met the situation and how the situation was reframed by the speech.

Although Hostetler (2002) previously conducted a CTA of Washington's Farewell Address, the complexities of the speech and the historical and rhetorical sensitivities of each critic warrant an additional CTA of the text with the full expectations that the study will yield a further academic understanding of the significance of Washington's address in addition to that already mined by Hostetler. Hostetler only focused on a few passages of the speech to demonstrate the majesty of the prose and the use of distance imagery. This study will focus on the speech in its entirety, mining for the rhetorical mechanisms and stylistic choices of epideictic and deliberative action, the manner in which Washington defined and recast the audience, and the nature of his call to safeguard the union.

A CTA of Washington's farewell address begins with a sound understanding of the historical and biographical demands that called for the speech. This paper has outlined those demands. The close reading of the text itself begins by identifying the arguments Washington

used to respond to the rhetorical situation. Additionally, since this study is concerned with how Washington used his ethos to transcend a critical political environment and an uncertain public to generate acceptance of the principles outlined in his farewell, the arguments will be examined to illuminate Washington's careful construction of an identity for himself and his audience. The critic must mine the text for descriptive phrases and metaphors that focus the audience's understanding on the persona(e) of the author and how the author engages these phrases to constrain the audience's identity.

To approach the issue of rhetorical hybrids, a close textual analysis of verb tense will reveal Washington's careful management of epideictic and deliberative elements. Zyskind (1950) showed how Lincoln's use of present tense verbs met the epideictic needs and the use of future tense verbs identified Lincoln's deliberative arguments. A similar approach to Washington's farewell address will show how Washington blends these elements.

Campbell and Jamieson (1990) highlighted Washington's use of metaphors to describe the development of the Union. A close textual analysis of the speech will reveal the metaphor of a father passing on his life's work to the next generation. Washington uses this metaphor in creating a role for himself and the American citizenry in the transition of power from Washington to the next citizen to take on the presidential office.

Summary

This chapter has provided an argument for conducting a close textual analysis to reveal the means by which Washington used language to transcend the polarized political environment and carefully managed the generic constraints of the speech to persuade the audience to bind themselves to the Constitution. CTA is the process of "close reading" to understand how a

rhetorical text functions persuasively. It is chiefly concerned with the relationship between text and context. The role of the critic is to conduct a close reading of a text and offer an analysis of the historical context and biographical circumstances of the rhetor that frame the text. The critic mines the text to discover the inner working devices that establish the “co-ordinates” to appreciate how these factors interact within the text and with time. Previous research has demonstrated that close textual analysis is fitting for rhetorical masterpieces. Washington’s farewell address is a masterpiece and an enduring model of rhetorical action because of Washington’s ability to blend the demands of the polarized political environment, the audience of the speech, and his character in order to unify the citizens of the country to the Union. A CTA will reveal the inner working mechanisms that allow Washington’s speech to successfully respond to the demands of the situation.

CHAPTER III

A CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

As Washington approached the construction of his valedictory address, he faced the daunting task of responding to the uncertainty that his resignation would cause while ensuring that the progress of his eight years in office would continue on the same path that has been the aim of many years of public service. During his second term, his critics called into question his policies, organized protests for his stance on foreign policy, and used the press to attack his character. The political environment in Philadelphia was tense and extremely partisan. The Constitution was fragile and with Washington's resignation, its greatest advocate and pillar for stability would be retiring to Mount Vernon. Therefore, his last act as father of the country was to secure the Constitution and unite the nation behind it. This chapter will conduct a Close Textual Analysis of Washington's Farewell Address examining the elements of the speech and highlighting the small rhetorical nuances Washington engaged to meet his objectives. In particular, this chapter will examine how Washington established multiple personas, organized the speech, and engaged the audience. Before conducting the close textual analysis, this chapter will examine the overarching purpose of the speech. The Close Textual Analysis will begin with a discussion on how Washington established the personas in the speech and the roles for the audience. Then, the analysis will examine the text's organization.

Purpose

The primary and instrumental purpose of George Washington's Farewell Address is to rally the citizens of the United States behind the cause of the "great experiment" of democracy and to recognize the value of the unity of the States. The support of the unity of the government

allows for the greatest independence, tranquility at home, peace abroad, and ensures safety, prosperity, and liberty. The consummatory purpose of the speech is to appreciate the support Washington has received as a public-servant, to contemplate his effectiveness as a chief executive, to honor those who have fought for liberty, and to honor the citizens for their continued commitment to liberty in the development of this nation. This consummatory purpose is evident in the structure of the speech. Washington began with a statement of gratitude for the citizens' support by calling him to public office. The remainder of the speech is an argument for the continued attachment to the concept of the Union. Several times, Washington appealed to the citizens' sense of duty to pursuing independence and liberty, not to undo the tedious and sacrificial work of those who established the United States. A Close Textual Analysis will reveal those elements that allow Washington to meet these instrumental and consummatory purposes.

Persona

In the farewell address, Washington assumed two distinct personas with the audience. The first is of a public servant. This is evident as Washington summarized his term as president and his resolution not to seek re-election. Inherent within this persona is Washington's public biography, which afforded him the opportunity to offer statements with authority and great expertise. Having served as commander of the Revolutionary Army, chaired the Constitutional Convention, and executed the office of the Presidency for eight years, Washington offered insight and "solemn contemplation" on the direction of the country. As the expert, Washington discussed foreign policy, the Constitution, the instrumental importance of the Union, economic policy, and the developing political party system.

The second role is of a friend. As Washington transitioned his speech towards his policy beliefs, he establishes himself as a “parting friend.” In this transition, Washington defined this relationship:

These contemplations will be offered to you with more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

The language that follows is very personable, as Washington moves the tense of the speech to the second person in paragraph nine.

The unity of government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize.

Audience

Washington published his address in a Philadelphia newspaper, *the American Daily Advertiser*, in September 1796, and later reprinted it in several papers throughout the nation. The choice of releasing the speech through the press as opposed to before Congress is significant in that Washington deliberately was providing access to the government to the common citizen, distinguishing the American government from that of a monarchy. Washington cast the audience in two roles just as he engages two personas. The first role is as a recipient of his gratitude for his years in public service. The audience assumed the role as spectator assessing the present capacity to praise Washington. The second role is a participant in the revolutionary movement.

Washington engaged the audience as heirs to his work who are tasked with safeguarding the Constitution and allowing for the maturation of the new American form of government. The speech opens with “friends and fellow citizens,” indicating that the target audience is the citizens of the United States. From the beginning, Washington was establishing an egalitarian relationship between himself and his audience. Washington placed the citizens of the United States into the role of guardians of liberty and the unity of the government. These two moves will be important to defining the relationship of the citizens to the president. Also, this relationship will be important in responding to his critics. This will be displayed later in the discussion of structure and arguments. One indirect audience of the farewell address is those who are in position that enable them to exert social influence. This is evident in Washington’s foreign policy argument, the argument for the Constitution, and arguments for his domestic economic policies.

Analysis of the Text’s Organization

The speech can best be divided into two distinct sections. The first section is dedicated to the announcement of Washington’s retirement and concerned with the act of resignation. The second half of the speech becomes a call to action. Washington distinctly varied the language choices, forms of arguments, his personas, and the audience’s role between the two sections of the speech.

The First Six Paragraphs

The first nine paragraphs function as Washington’s resignation; however, it is important to examine the function of the first six paragraphs to understand the strategic choices of the organization of the address. The speech opens with “friends and fellow-citizens.” Washington

immediately removed the power distance between him and his audience by separating himself from the power of the executive office. In the first paragraph, Washington reminded the audience that a citizen administers the functions of the executive audience. Additionally, Washington used the term “clothed” to offer as a metaphor for how a citizen attains the power of the executive office, implying that the power can be removed.

In the second paragraph, Washington classified himself as a dutiful citizen, further implying that the power of the office is derived from the citizenry. Interestingly, Washington alluded to both past and future in this paragraph, “...I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for you past kindness...” indicating that at play is more than the present. Of chief concern to the audience is what the government of the United States will look like without George Washington as its pillar. His resignation created uncertainty. By alluding to the future, it opens the rhetorical option to discuss the future of the country without him at the helm. In regards to “past kindness,” Washington began the process of including the audience in the narrative of his public service. This narrative continues in the next two paragraphs.

Washington’s word choices in the third and fourth paragraph emotionally bind the audience to him. He argued that his two terms in office had been a “deference to your desire.” He was more than prepared to enjoy retirement, but instead decided to serve with a “sacrifice” of his personal needs in order to meet the expectations of the nation. In the fourth paragraph, he asked the audience for their approval of his retirement, an action that reinforces the idea that in a democracy, the power flows from the people.

The fifth paragraph offers Washington’s reflections on his effectiveness as president. He acknowledged that he may have been far from perfect, prepared, or able to handle the job. The

phrase that stands out in this paragraph is “the inferiority of my qualifications.” This word choice contradicts popular sentiment and the arguments for why the executive office would be different than a monarchy. During the ratification debates, little debate occurred in regards to the presidency because the general argument in favor of a president was that Washington would figure everything out (Ellis, 2004). The other word that sticks out in paragraph five is *patriotism*, “...I have the consolation to believe, that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.” Washington’s retirement even passes the test of patriotism.

In paragraph six, Washington’s mood became reflective and thankful. He acknowledged the debt of gratitude to the country, affirmed the role of the citizens in his success, and closed with a benediction for the future. This paragraph requires a careful dissection.

In looking forward to the moment, which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude, which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me;...

The words that stand out in the first part of the opening sentence are “terminate the career of my public life,” implying that Washington intended on a complete retirement. “Public life” calls to mind the entirety of Washington’s biography from hero in the wilderness against the Indians to the completion of his second term as president, a very powerful and widely statured biography. As is typical with a farewell address, Washington conferred gratitude for support he has received and reflected upon his many accomplishments. What stands out is the line later in the paragraph, “If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals...” Washington began the process of

recasting the role of the audience. The process begins when he reflects on his many accomplishments. The typical response would be to take credit for his accomplishments; instead, he shifted the credit to the audience. Washington's leadership is no longer the cause and stability of the revolutionary movement, but instead, the "constancy" on the audience's support was "the essential prop" of his success. At the forefront of this paragraph is Washington's sincerity, his proud feelings, and completely at work is Washington's ethos. The paragraph culminates with an emotional benediction from Washington:

Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection and adoption of every nation, which is yet a stranger to it.

This passage is a significant moment in Washington's speech. First, note the persona Washington engaged. As he enacted the allusion of his "grave," Washington took on the role of a retiring father looking to hand off his life's work to his children. He had already cast the audience as capable for the task he is about to call them to when he deferred all praise for his public service and described them as the essential prop of his success. Washington, in offering his blessing, changed the focus from the present tense and his resignation to future concern for his audience. Additionally, he upheld several ideals that "may" be met, setting several goals for

the audience. His first blessing was a function of God's grace. The remaining blessings become the task of the audience, continuing the process of recasting the audience's role. He carefully made their task the perpetuity of the union and brotherly affection, the sacred maintenance of the Constitution, the administration of the government by virtuous and wise people, and the happiness of the people living under liberty. These are all functions of a careful preservation and prudent use of this new form of government. Therefore, Washington's allusion to his death and announcement of his retirement had created a void of leadership. Until now, the figurehead of the revolutionary movement, the protector of the liberty, the guardian of the Constitution had been George Washington. The last part of his benediction placed the burden of "careful preservation" on his audience. This culminated the recasting of the audience from their prior role as commemorators to guardians of the Constitution. Once Washington had recast his audience, his next objective for the audience was to bind the audience logically and emotionally to this role.

The Transitioning Paragraphs

The next two paragraphs function as the transition from the first part of the speech to the second. If the future that Washington forecast in the end of paragraph six is to occur, then Washington had to provide the roadmap for how to arrive at these great blessings. The seventh paragraph forecast the direction for the remainder of the speech. In this paragraph, he used personal language, arguing that a concern for "your welfare" cannot end with "my life." At this moment in the speech, Washington engaged both personas as mentioned earlier. He directly cast himself as a "disinterested...parting friend" but implied that the arguments that he is about to reveal in the remainder of the speech came from the "Father of the Country," the very person

who had served as president, and seen the shortcomings of the other form of government as the General of the Revolutionary Army. He may be a parting friend, but the other persona carries a great deal of influence due to his incredible expertise. The significance of the eighth paragraph is that Washington cast the audience as already having a fortified attachment to the young national government.

The first part of the speech is characterized by Washington's subordination to the American people. It is concerned with the present and his announcement of his resignation. It is reflective on the past, his career as a public servant and, in particular, his execution of the duties of president for two terms. The language invited the audience to commemorate Washington for his work and afford him the option of retirement. Washington humbly deflected praise, characterized himself as tired, worn out, and less than qualified for the task he was elected twice to complete. Most importantly, Washington demonstrated that the office of the president is "clothed" by a citizen, distinguishing the office from the British Monarch. Since he was retiring, Washington removed the power distance and addressed his audience as an equal. The second part of the speech is distinctly different.

The Second Part of the Speech

As the speech transitions, Washington faced the complex challenge of responding to the deliberative needs of the moment. Washington's resignation created uncertainty for the future of the young and fragile nation. Washington must provide a framework for presidential transition and reinforce a preservation of the union. The shift in purpose and rhetorical objectives occur at this moment in the speech. Therefore, as his rhetorical objectives changed, Washington switched personas arguing from a position of expertise and recasts the audience as more than mere

observers. The overarching claim of the second part of the speech is found in the ninth paragraph:

The unity of Government, which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very Liberty, which you so highly prize.

As the speech transitions to Washington's policy statements, his tone changes to become serious, patriotic, and authoritative. The shift begins in the ninth paragraph and contradicts the persona he explicitly established two sentences earlier as a disinterested parting friend.

Additionally, he used the second person plural to establish commonality with the audience. He deliberately left himself out of the language, choosing not to use the first person plural; in doing so, he advanced the idea that the country must continue without him. The audience is no longer asked to function in the present and commemorate the public service of Washington; instead, Washington focused the majority of the second part of the speech on the future and called the audience to action to become actively engaged in pursuing Washington's vision for the future. Washington described the importance for the citizens of firmly binding themselves to the union of the states. He identified threats to this union: the party system, foreign relations, and temptations to change the Constitution. This tone is evident throughout the second half of the speech. Examples of this tone begin in paragraph 10:

Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism more than any appellation derived from local discriminations.

The tone continues in paragraph 16:

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a government for the whole is indispensable. No alliance, however strict, between the parts can be an adequate substitute; they must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced.

Note that in these two paragraphs, Washington's imperative statement revolved around the use of "must." The imperative limits an option other than what Washington offers. Additionally, notice how he used the second person possessive to recast the audience as participants and owners of the Union.

The significant movement in the first five paragraphs of the second part of the speech is the rhetorical pursuit of commonality or unity for the audience. In effect, Washington was creating a national identity that is paramount to any other affiliation. As referenced above, he made the claim for national unity in paragraph 10, recognized geographic factions, which elicited a closer bond than that of "American," in paragraph 11, but established commonality in paragraph 12. He carefully displayed interdependence between the North and the South and between the East and the West acknowledging that these regional affiliation would carry stronger bonds with the audience than a national identity. Using inductive reasoning with the premises given in paragraph 12, Washington made his general claim in paragraph 13:

While, then, every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in Union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their peace by foreign nations; and, what is of inestimable value, they must derive from Union an exemption from those broils and wars between

themselves, which so frequently afflict neighbouring countries not tied together by the same governments, which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliance, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter. Notice how Washington limited the audience's ability to refute this argument when he stated "all parts combined cannot fail to find." This subtle move of inclusion of "all" places those in opposition to Washington's notion for unity and primary priority for a national identity as close-minded deterrents to the new form of government. Additionally, the repetition of "greater" reinforces the value of the national identity. In paragraph 14, he further distinguished the difference further, "These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the union as a primary object of Patriotic desire." Notice how he limited the response of the audience further. If a listener finds Washington's arguments persuasive then the listener possess a reflecting and virtuous mind. If a listener opposes Washington, it is implied that the listener is close-minded and immoral. Additionally, the pursuit of unity and a national identity are the object of "Patriotic desire." Those opposing Washington are implicitly deemed unpatriotic. This is the continuation of Washington's recasting of the audience, binding them to his message and binding his message with the slogans of the revolution, which he began in paragraph eight when he alluded to the audience's "love of liberty," and continued through the remainder of the speech.

Hostetler (2001) argued that the previously unmentioned mastery of Washington's farewell was its statement on manifest destiny. Ellis (2007) summarized this notion more clearly in claiming that the greatest advantages afforded the American Revolution was the geographic isolation of the continent, allowing the founding generation the opportunity to slowly refine the experiment with Republicanism. The Revolution was not over when Great Britain surrendered at

Yorktown, nor with the Treaty of Paris, nor with the ratification of the Constitution. In Washington's farewell, the retiring president recognized this slow process and argued that the progression of the Revolution continued even in 1796. Washington's opponents firmly believed that his policies and the establishment of the government under the Constitution had misplaced the ideology of the Revolution. The government had centralized the power and functioned no differently than Parliament. Washington challenged these opponents. Washington's brilliance is demonstrated when he evoked the slogans of the American Revolution and bound them to the Constitution.

From the audience's perspective, the slogans of the Revolution (i.e. liberty, patriotism, independence) have a strong emotional connotation. These terms were the battle cry for independence and fair governance. Patrick Henry's cry for the abstract notion of liberty persuaded the Virginia Convention to raise a militia and defend Virginia from insurgent British troops. The terms alone elicited a strong emotional response. Therefore, if Washington could successfully bind these notions to the Constitutional experiment, then it would require more than pure logic from his opponents to undermine Washington's vision of an American future secured by the Constitution. Beginning in the eighth and ninth paragraph Washington enacted the notion of "real independence" and "Liberty." Washington used forms of these slogans 20 more times in the remainder of the speech to add emotional weight to his arguments. Specifically, Washington engaged these slogans after arguing for his position on divisive issues. We first see their use in the discussion on a national identity and the call to preserve the Union. Washington used them again in warning against the "spirit of parties," arguing that they are the "ruins of Public Liberty." Finally, he used these terms in arguing his position for neutrality. He compared permanent alliances with foreign countries as exhibiting the same constraints as slavery, making

the liberty of the nation a victim of the alliance. Therefore, Washington argued that “such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent Patriot.” This use again emotionally binds the audience to Washington’s arguments, includes them in the revolutionary narrative, and places any opposition to Washington’s statement on neutrality as a deterrent to liberty.

Although Washington opened the second part of the speech in the second person plural, deliberately excluding himself from the rhetoric, he shifts this tactic by paragraph 11. Prior to this moment in the speech, the notion of the national identity was subservient to regional affiliations. Once Washington establishes the priority of national identity, he switched to using the first person plural making Washington’s arguments all-inclusive. Furthermore, Washington, using his ethos, bound the audience with his ethos and his political movement. He used the first person plural and possessive when he repeats the main claim of the text, “Here every portion of our country finds the most commanding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the Union of the whole.” Not only does he cast the Union as a shared commodity, but he also established the present work of preserving the Union the future. This shared ownership is used in paragraphs 13 and 15 and culminates in paragraphs 35, 36, and 37.

The second part of the speech is also marked by the repetition of the term “preservation.” This notion was Washington’s chief order for the audience: preserve the union; preserve the Constitution. *Preservation* is a noun, which alludes to the present tense verb *preserve*, meaning that the implementation of Washington’s order began immediately and continues in perpetuity. From paragraph 6 to paragraph 18, Washington enacted the order for preservation five times.

Washington spent the remainder of the speech providing examples of those institutions or forces that will threaten preservation and those that will aid in its attainment. Washington

concluded the second part of the speech with a vision of the future if the audience pursues the preservation of the Constitution with foreign isolationism. Being isolated by oceans allowed the United States to focus on maturation. Only after maturation would the nation be able to garner European respect and have international influence. In providing this vision, Washington returned to a frequent use of the first person plural including the whole nation as participants in foreign isolationism, and more importantly, reinforced the superiority of a national identity and discouraged a strong emotional and political attachment to any European nation.

Concluding the Farewell

Paragraph 42 transitions the text back to the ceremony of Washington's resignation. Washington deliberately offered the persona of an "old and affectionate friend." The authoritative tone has subsided and instead Washington returned to a tone of humility:

In offering to you, my countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression I could wish; that they will control the usual current of the passions, or prevent our nation from running the course, which has hitherto marked the destiny of nations. But, if I may even flatter myself, that they may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism; this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

What is the effect on the audience as they read this paragraph? Washington had just spent a great deal of time arguing for a close preservation of the Union. Not only does the tone change,

but Washington removed his authoritative power when he “dare[s] not hope they will make strong impression...” This statement reinforced that Washington is merely a common citizen formerly clothed as president, but his resignation has removed that power. However, in spite of his commonality, he appealed for some flattery. In light of his many years of service, he had one request: these statements offered in the speech be considered and have influence. The paragraph closes with a summary of his main concerns. This paragraph perfectly blends the two parts of the speech. The final paragraph bookends the speech nicely, completely returning to the first persona of the speech and to the humble tone noted at the beginning.

Though, in reviewing the incidents of my administration, I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope, that my Country will never cease to view them with indulgence; and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

Note how he characterized himself as defective. This notion is contrary to his public persona as the great general of the revolution, first president, and father of the country. Yet, Washington’s admission of defects disarms his critics because it humanizes him and distinguishes him from a despot or king. Additionally, he engaged his 45 years of service to ask his audience’s forgiveness for his missteps. At play in that biography are all of his many accomplishments that should overshadow any mistakes. The use of his biography also reinforces Washington’s age, which afforded him permission to return to Mount Vernon to his mansions of rest. Therefore, the concluding paragraphs return the audience members back to their role as commemorators,

thus honoring the epideictic occasion that gives rise to the more deliberative speech. However, unlike at the beginning of the speech, they now find themselves as heirs to Washington's work, a purpose designed to preserve the principles of the Constitution.

Summary

This chapter has reported on the Close Textual Analysis of the speech highlighting the particular rhetorical mechanisms and language choices that allowed Washington to successfully respond to his critics while carefully managing the generic constraints of the speech to persuade the audience to the task of preserving the Constitution. Washington's farewell address is a masterpiece and an enduring model of rhetorical action because of Washington's ability to blend the demands of the polarized political environment, the audience of the speech, and his character in order to unify the citizens of the country to the Union. The Close Textual Analysis revealed how Washington shifted his tone, used personal language, engaged slogans of the revolution, and offered differing personas to successfully respond to the demands of the speech.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SPEECH AS A RHETORICAL HYBRID

A close reading of George Washington's Farewell Address reaffirms the complexity of this speech and offers several observations that allow the critic to appreciate the majesty in Washington's masterful response to the rhetorical situation. On the surface, the purpose of the speech is to announce his resignation. However, the majority of the speech is dedicated to deliberative action, calling the audience to accept and move on his principles. This final chapter will begin with a review of the rhetorical situation Washington had to respond to in constructing his farewell address. Then it will answer the research questions as a result of the work reported in the previous chapter in conducting a Close Textual Analysis. There were three research questions:

RQ1: What rhetorical strategies does Washington use to manage the relationship between the ceremony of resignation and the desire to unite the nation and persuade a call to action?

RQ2: How does Washington use his ethos as a rhetorical strategy?

RQ3: What rhetorical mechanisms does Washington engage to respond to the complex historical demands of the speech?

In response to the first research question, this paper will argue that the rhetorical strategies of power distance, inclusive language, the creation of a national identity, and the use of the slogans of the revolution are the rhetorical forms central to the speech as a rhetorical act. In response to the second research question, this chapter will explain how Washington's ethos was both a problem in the sense that he had been criticized as the first national leader, but also a rhetorical resource. In response to the third research question, the results of answering the first

and second questions will be used to argue that Washington used a rhetorical hybrid as the rhetorical mechanism to respond to the complex demands of the speech. Finally, this chapter will provide limitations and offer opportunities for future research.

Washington's Rhetorical Situation

As the end of Washington's first term as president approached, Washington commissioned James Madison to begin constructing remarks to announce his retirement. However, due to the persuasiveness of Washington's advisors Washington submitted to serving a second term in office. As the end of second term approached, Washington resumed the authorship of his retirement speech. Washington's overarching rhetorical objectives for his farewell address were to, first, announce his retirement and address the uncertainty that it would create. Second, due to the uncertainty, his last act of leadership needed to preserve the Union and provide a roadmap for transition of the executive office. Third, Washington needed to respond to his critics.

The American people would be surprised by Washington's retirement announcement. The Constitution provided no limits or framework for the length an individual would remain as president. The public's expectations were that Washington would remain as President until his death and his retirement announcement thrust the discussion of presidential transition to the forefront. However, the act of retiring from public service and vacating the powerful office of the Chief Executive differentiates the president from being "kingly." Washington's retirement reiterated that this new government was significantly different than the British Crown and refuted his critic's claim that Washington is a monarch.

Additionally, in 1796, the new federal government operating under a very young

Constitution was far from stable and the very man whose persona created stability was vacating his office. The nation now faced an important problem: how does executive power transfer in a newly formed and untested democratic process? Historical precedence offers that the power of the head of state transfers either through birthright or as a spoil of war. Therefore, Washington's announcement created a rhetorical need for Washington, as his last act of leadership, to ease the uncertainty of the American people by establishing the stability of the Union and the security of its people rested on the structure of government created within the Constitution, not on the man who was currently the head of state.

However, these dynamics created a rhetorical paradox for Washington. To speak as a strong leader would be symbolic of royal authority, the kind of power that his critics had been taking aim at in the closing year of his tenure in office. Abdicating the role of an authoritative leader, royal or otherwise, deprives Washington's farewell of the authority to transfer the power of the office to his successor. Without effective authority to transfer, the office and the act of the farewell would implicitly undermine the rhetorical legitimacy of his successor. The political implications of an ill performed transition might have become manifested in a weakly constituted executive office deprived of the necessary authority to hold the republic together. Clearly, Washington faced a complex rhetorical situation as he penned his farewell address.

Rhetorical Strategies in Washington's Farewell Address

To respond to the complex rhetorical situation and, ultimately, to enact policy, Washington engaged the rhetorical strategies of power distance, the construction of a shared national political identity, and the slogans of the revolution. These three strategies bound the audience to Washington and recast the audience into the role of continuing Washington's work.

The use of the slogans of the revolution included the audience in the revolutionary narrative, emotionally binding the audience to his deliberative arguments. The shared political identity meant that no member of the audience would be exempt from Washington's call to action. By speaking from presidential authority, while making himself accessible to his audience unlike a king, Washington successfully manages power distance within the speech.

Power Distance

In response to the first research question, one strategy Washington used to meet both of the generic needs of the speech was to engage two personas: President and retiring father. However, Washington's critics have cast him as a disinterested King; therefore, Washington must dismiss the persona his critics had attacked in order to allow the hybrid to work. He accomplished this goal by managing the power distance of his language.

Power distance refers to the access that an individual has to authority or how many levels exist between an individual and the person of authority. For example, the King of England wielded high power distance evident in the high protocol that existed in approaching the King. When John Adams was named ambassador to Great Britain, he had to learn how to approach, bow, and speak to the king. Unlike King George of England, Washington rhetorically gives intimate access to audience to engage their role in his public success.

During Washington's second term, Thomas Jefferson, a fellow Virginian and protégé, resigned as Washington's Secretary of State. Fundamentally, Jefferson opposed the federalist policies of Washington's administration and in particular feuded with Alexander Hamilton. Upon his resignation, Jefferson became a very public opponent of Washington. Partnering with James Madison, Jefferson and his Republican party firmly believed that the principles of 1776

were lost and that the current constitutional federal government too closely resembled the previous power held in London. Jefferson took the battle to public opinion. He enlisted the help of a New England newspaper to publish his anti-federalist propaganda painting Washington as a disinterested King. In the fall of 1796, Washington's credibility was severely in question and his iconic public status was cracked.

The thrust of Jefferson's criticism was that the American people do not have access to their president and that President Washington, like King George, was disinterested and out of touch with the concerns of the common man. Jefferson characterized Washington as ruling from Mt. Olympus. Brilliantly, Washington removed the power distance and reclassified the office of the president by using language of an equal citizen. He personalized the person who sits in the office of the president. In the first paragraph, Washington classified the president as a citizen "clothed" by the office. Unlike the King, the President is a commoner born not to a royal family but rather a citizen of Virginia elected twice to the office. In paragraph two, Washington reminded the audience that his power as President was given by the suffrages of the people. Washington had as much "right" to the office as any other citizen. The office itself wields power, but the person is fallible. Washington admitted his humanity in paragraph five confessing the "inferiority" of his qualifications to execute the office and even his best efforts to make this new form of republicanism work might fall short due to flawed judgments. By conceding his fallibility, Washington disarmed his critics' view of him as a distant, disconnected King and allowed the audience to offer forgiveness for his shortcomings. These admissions work in Washington's favor in the midst of the ceremony of leave-taking. The audience is less concerned with casting judgment on Washington's performance, but honoring his public service and upholding his public character. In a larger sense, Washington has depicted the office of the

president as held by a peer, a citizen, thus differentiating it from that of the entitled British Crown. Washington's retirement forced the country to undergo a true presidential election unlike the suffrages of Washington, thus cementing the notion that the presidential office is a pillar of American democracy. Washington's two terms set a precedent that no president challenged until World War II. Having recast himself as a citizen rather than a monarch, Washington was able to use his ethos to unite.

Construction of a Shared Political Identity

Another rhetorical strategy Washington used was to construct a shared political identity for the audience. As Washington transitioned to the deliberative action of the speech, he has successfully bound his audience to his ethos. His next objective was to bind them to the pursuit of preserving the Constitution above all else. Washington was responding to the fragility of the union. The Constitution and Washington's execution of it was under attack by his critics. It is critical that Washington rhetorically oblige his audience to the act of preserving of the Constitution to ensure the continued existence of this new federal system. The primary obstacle Washington faced was the lack of a strong affiliation to the Union. The concept of a United States citizen and the patriotism associated with such was not paramount to the American people. Instead, members of the audience thought of their identity as more ordered. They were more closely and proudly identified with the State in which they resided, and within that state to particular cities. Then the audience would affiliate with a particular geographic region: North, South, East, or West. The concept of "American" was in direct competition with these other identities and was ranked last. At stake at this moment was a potential reversion to the system of government founded under the Articles of Confederation. Additionally, for Washington's

deliberative action to be enacted it had to be received by a common people. State affiliations only work against the very system that the American people twice elected Washington to establish. The political identity Washington constructed was of an American citizen bound closely to the national government, thus establishing similarity and common purpose with every member of the United States regardless of geographic location.

To have the audience accept and adopt the political identity, as American citizen above any other affiliation, is rhetorically challenging; however, Washington used a personal tone and a mix of absolute present tense and past tense language to establish the national political identity. Absolute present tense language is used at the beginning of Washington's "counsels" for the future. Washington made the claim that the "unity of the Government, which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you." At this moment in the speech, the use of the present tense verb "is" is a moment of constitution where Washington called into being an accomplished and vital identity for the audience. Washington then directly and personally reminded his audience why the national government was important. Additionally, Washington provided a logical argument for why a national identity should supersede any regional or State affiliations and reinforced commonality in paragraph ten:

Citizens, by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles.

Developing a sense of commonality, Washington expanded on this notion by discussing the interdependence that exists between the North, South, East, and West. His argument was that a

close bond with the national Union serves the best interests of each region. Throughout the speech, Washington used past tense language to reinforce the idea that a commonality among the citizens is not new and to remind the audience of the common battle that each had fought to achieve the new-found liberty secured by the Union, developing a sense of ownership and personally securing their livelihood to the Constitution. The use of past tense highlights that the American identity began to form the minute the settlers established communities on this continent. The Constitution is a result of maturation in the nation's infancy and since an American identity existed before the enactment of a stronger federal government under Washington, the American identity should be held in as high esteem as a citizen regarded his or her affiliation to a state. Linguistically, the shift in the speech from the present tense to the past provides evidence for Washington's subtle move to create an American identity.

Washington went to great length to develop a sense of commonality thus binding all citizens together and bringing patriotic meaning to the term "American." This identity allowed Washington to entrust the American people with the protection of the Constitution and the national union, thus adding a need for the existence of the political identity. Washington then provided an extensive list of threats to the Constitution and described in absolute language how the American citizenship should protect against them. The language is persuasive and is only successful because of Washington's ability to use responsible presidential rhetoric that is inclusive yet authoritative. The epideictic action allowed Washington to offer these deliberative arguments. As he transitioned from the epideictic he offers these thoughts merely for the audience's considerations; however, as the speech moved further into the deliberative action, Washington's authority increases. As he constituted his audience as American citizens, heirs to his public service, his authority increased, even though he was stepping down from office.

Furthermore, the use of inclusive language binds the audience to this national identity. When describing the Constitution and the audience's relationship to the young government, Washington used very personal language. However, when describing the opponents to federalist beliefs, Washington referred to the opponents in the third person. This simultaneously occurred as Washington described his thoughts on foreign policy. Washington referred to those who had strong ties to one particular foreign nation in the third person.

Excessive partiality for one foreign nation, and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other.

The inclusive language invited others to move from partiality but to see their identity in neutrality.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connexion as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith.

Notice that Washington deliberately used the first person plural pushing forward the belief that his foreign policies are based on beliefs shared with the American citizens. If Washington had successfully transferred his ethos to his audience and his audience took to heart his blessing as heirs to his work, then this inclusive language cements the sense of ownership and obligation for the American populace. Washington created a dichotomy of inclusion versus exclusion. The language of inclusion is tied to a national political identity that protects the instrument that establishes an enduring form of government that ensures liberty and prosperity: the Constitution. The language of exclusion argues that those who do not subscribe to Washington's beliefs do not have the best interests of the nation at heart. The general argument is as follows: since the

Constitution secures our liberty we should protect it at all costs. To oppose the Constitution is to oppose us and the very essence that we have toiled for since 1776. For the audience, the language no longer invites them to join Washington; it limits them either as participants in or enemies of the nation and the Constitution. Therefore, the audience must accept Washington's arguments and become bound to the Constitution or reject them and reject the principles upon which the young nation was founded.

The Slogans of the Revolution

A third overarching rhetorical strategy Washington used to meet the complex needs of his audience is the enactment of the slogans of the revolution. Washington's deliberative action is not only secured by the use of his ethos and the creation of a common identity, but it is also secured by the use of the emotionally powerful slogans of revolution. As each argument unfolds, Washington grounded his arguments on emotionally laden terms, weaving a form of deliberative action that appeals to the audience both logically and emotionally. The first sentence of his deliberative argument begins the process of associating the slogans of the Revolution to the Constitution in paragraph nine.

The unity of Government, which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very Liberty, which you so highly prize.

The use of the terms (i.e., liberty, independence) is engaged throughout the remainder of his deliberative action. In paragraph ten:

The name of American which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism...

You have a common cause fought and triumphed together; the Independence and Liberty you possess...

In paragraph 13:

...your Union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

In paragraph 14:

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind, and exhibit the continuance of the union as a primary object of Patriotic desire...with such powerful and obvious motives to Union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.

In paragraph 16:

Respect for its (the Constitution's) authority, compliance with its laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true Liberty.

These forms of arguments continue throughout the remainder of the speech. Washington engaged the use of revolutionary slogans nine more times. Every main claim of Washington flowed through some notion tied to the revolution. The result was an argument that hinges around the American narrative, a narrative the audience personally identifies with and is emotionally bound to. The arguments of the farewell address funnel to this moment.

Washington was only able to enact the revolutionary narrative because he has transferred his majesty of office, once a target of criticism and source of suspicion regarding the despotic ambitions of a potential office holder, to the American citizenry in which he has bound all citizens to one national identity. Therefore, the progress of American democracy is only secured to those who accept Washington's earlier assertions. Additionally, the enactment of these terms rhetorically limits how those in opposition can respond and refute Washington's claims.

Washington has tied his view of federalism, executive power, and an American citizenry within the constructs of the American Revolution. These claims not only appeal logically to the audience but also are secured emotionally. To refute Washington, the critic faced the rhetorical hurdle of placing Washington's claims and, to a larger extent, narrative within the farewell address as contrary to revolutionary ideals. Additionally, Washington has rhetorically cast his critics as outsider to the revolutionary narrative, placing them as unpatriotic obstacles to liberty and independence; this makes it exceedingly difficult to engage rhetoric against Washington's positions. The creation of an independent United States elicits a strong emotional pride. As Washington engaged the narrative, he recast his critics as antagonistic to patriotic ideals. Therefore, not only must his critics offer sound reasoning to refute Washington, they must also win the hearts of the American people, a daunting rhetorical task given Washington's powerful move to constitute a national identity in support of his vision of executive authority.

Washington's Ethos Unites

In response to the second research question, a study of the speech shows how Washington was able to draw on his leadership success to respond to the criticisms of his time in office. Aside from engaging his various public roles to disarm his critics and allow for the

deliberative action of the speech, Washington successfully drew his audience to his ethos thus creating their role as heirs to his work. This strategy responds to the second research question. Washington first began to bind his ethos with his audience when he established himself as a public servant serving two terms as President only because of the will of the people. Unlike the monarchy, the control of the government, and in particular the President, is in the hands of the people and is in the hands of the people not a function of birthright.

Washington continued to tie the audience to his ethos in paragraph six when he deferred praise for any success as a result of his public work.

If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected.

The benefits were “to their praise”; thus the audience received the glory for his work. In particular, the constancy of their support of Washington, which recently had been waning, allowed for Washington’s achievements. Rhetorically, Washington has manipulated the farewell to not just bequeath his legacy as Campbell and Jamieson (1990) have observed for the presidential farewell genre, but Washington deferred his legacy to the audience giving them ownership and, ultimately, responsibility as heirs to Washington’s legacy. This culminates in his blessing at the end of paragraph six:

...that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; than, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation, which is yet a stranger to it.

This blessing above recites the pursuit of the founding generation. Washington personalized this for his audience. He gave them possession of the “free Constitution.” Ultimately, he made the claim that only the Constitution will meet the desires of the founding of the United States and that its model ought to be adopted throughout the world. The preservation of the Constitution becomes the mission statement for the remainder of the speech. What follows this blessing is Washington’s transition to the deliberative action of the address, which argues in favor of the audience’s whole-hearted pursuit of Washington’s blessing.

Washington’s Farewell as a Rhetorical Hybrid

The discussion of the first and second research question revealed that Washington’s farewell is very deliberative in nature. In response to the third research question, only a rhetorical hybrid could respond to the complexity of the rhetorical situation facing Washington. The epideictic action functions to disarm and reassure. Epideictic rhetoric is more focused on the present and is concerned with either praise or blame. It takes on the ceremony of leave taking, allowing Washington to reflect on his work and to shape how his audience should regard

his many years as a public servant. The epideictic action asks the audience to assume the role of a spectator, merely assessing Washington's public work. However, the epideictic action invites the audience to be participants in Washington's public service; therefore, transferring his ownership of the Constitution to them. Only the success of the epideictic action allows Washington to make strong deliberative statements regarding the execution of the new federal government furthering the movement of federalism. A strictly deliberative speech would not have been as well received. The strategy of engaging a rhetorical hybrid is necessary to infuse the office with rhetorical legitimacy for his succession. Thus, the deliberative action provides an avenue for transition but more importantly preserves the union in this fragile moment of transferring power. As noted in the previous chapter, Washington's speech has two distinct parts. The first is epideictic. The second is deliberative. Although the previous chapter provided clear distinctions between the two parts of the speech, let us reexamine the opening paragraphs of the speech to highlight how the epideictic and deliberative elements work and how Washington engaged duo-personas between the two. The opening seven paragraphs function epideictically.

The Epideictic Address

The presidential farewell meets the demand of ceremonial leave taking. Therefore the first few paragraphs are dedicated to that rhetorical objective, affording Washington the opportunity for character building and reshaping public opinion. Washington opens his address with "Friends and fellow citizens." The significance of the opening statement is that Washington directly addresses the American citizenry as opposed to Congress. The first paragraph announced his retirement and placed the burden on choosing the next president on the American citizen. The emotional needs of the audience called for epideictic action that affirmed the

breadth and significance of Washington's public service and assured the audience that his retirement does not mean the demise of the newly secured liberty entrusted in the Constitution. From the onset of the revolutionary movement, Washington had served as its figurehead. His retirement called into question whether the movement would continue without his leadership. Washington spent the next six paragraphs addressing his audience's emotional needs.

The second, third, and fourth paragraphs provide Washington's rationale for the timing of his retirement. Washington had not approached this decision lightly and was "influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest." Note that these words anticipate a pivot from addressing the present, a concern of epideictic form, to a concern with the future, typically more characteristic of deliberative address. Also, the future will concern the interests of the people, not him or the power of the office. Additionally, Washington noted that his two terms in office, as a "reluctant" response to the public's will, have been a "uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty; and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire." Washington admits that he had hoped to retire sooner, but the timing was not right. Paragraph four concludes that the country is stable enough to withstand a presidential transition. Washington's retirement is the next step in the evolution of the nation. As a result, Washington's allusion to "sacrificial service" bolsters his character as a man deeply concerned for the well-being of the American people, characterized his continued service as a deference to the people's expectations, and placed his motives in subordination to the desires of the people. His assessment of governmental stability eased the nervousness about the impending transition.

Washington transitioned to paragraph five and offered a very personal rationale for his retirement. He acknowledged his critics who argued that Washington had lost touch with the concerns of American and had lost his mental faculties. He was a puppet of his staff and they

compared him to a monarch. Washington, in his responses, removed his “crown” and makes the office of the president personal:

...that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and administration of the government the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable. Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome. Satisfied, that, if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In other words, Washington is worn out by the constant criticism he has fought during this second term and any rational man who has grown weary would heavily consider retirement. However, even the patriotic man sees this moment as an opportunity to retire. Washington endeared the audience to his character, reshaping the public’s opinion. Rather than accept his critic’s persona as an “old puppet king,” Washington rhetorically engaged language of a father looking to give his inheritance to his heirs. This begins in paragraph six.

Paragraph Six: The Generic Transition

In paragraph six, Washington brought his retirement announcement to a conclusion. The tone is still ceremonial, and the mood is reflective. Recall that the Close Textual Analysis revealed how Washington ceremoniously acknowledged the debt of gratitude to his country and the American citizens for the honors, support, confidence, and opportunities both have afforded

him. More importantly, Washington affirmed the role of the citizens in his public success. At the conclusion of the sixth paragraph, Washington introduced the claims of his deliberative action. It is fitting because he directly tied it to the epideictic action of his retirement. Therefore, the sixth paragraph achieves the transition from epideictic to deliberative action. It functions as the introduction for Washington's persuasive agenda, but maintains a strong epideictic tone. The pinnacle of the epideictic action allowing for the transition to strong deliberative action in paragraph six bears a closer examination of Washington's prose.

The sixth paragraph is three sentences long. The first sentence highlights Washington's gratitude for the honors, confidence and opportunities he has been afforded while serving the country. To this point in the speech, Washington had announced his retirement, thanked the public for their trust in electing him president, and offered quick reflections on the job he has done, deflecting any praise. It is only fitting for him to offer a sincere thanks.

In looking forward to the moment, which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude, which I owe to my beloved country for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal.

Upon completing this statement, Washington could merely conclude the speech, having met the situational needs of announcing his retirement. However, at this moment in the speech, uncertainty still loomed as to how democracy will continue without Washington at the helm. The exigencies call for deliberative action. Washington's farewell address is an enduring model of rhetorical action because he not only meets the rhetorical needs inherent in announcing his

retirement, but he used his retirement to provide a blueprint for securing and enacting democracy beyond the years with him in charge, a deliberative movement that would not have been successful without the prior work of the epideictic action.

The epideictic action allows for the deliberative action and the transition from the first to the second begins in the second sentence. Instead of focusing on his accomplishments, he deflects praise from himself and begins the process of binding his audience to his accomplishments and over four decades of service to the country. Washington hinged the merits of his biography on the “constancy” of the public’s support. This began the inclusive narrative that allowed Washington to emotionally bind the audience to his deliberative action.

If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the passions, agitated in every direction, were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected.

Campbell and Jamieson (1990) argued that in a farewell address, the President takes on the role of priest or prophet. This is no more evident in Washington’s address than the final sentence of the sixth paragraph. Washington, having just offered thanks for the citizens’ role in his success, delivers a benediction to his beloved people.

Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to my grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence; that your Union and brotherly affection may be perpetual; that the free

constitution, which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained; that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue; than, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing, as will acquire to them the glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation, which is yet a stranger to it.

This statement is Washington's manifesto for his farewell. He says to his audience, in essence, If you preserve the Union, and if you preserve the Constitution then your liberty and hard fought independence shall endure and be made secure. This marks the pinnacle of Washington's epideictic action and allowed Washington to change tone and persona. If the above blessing is to be made real and not the empty wishes of a retiring old man then the careful preservation of the Constitution should be the sole pursuit of the American people. As the first and only president, Washington has positioned himself rhetorically as having a uniquely qualified and unquestionable argument about the way to secure these blessings. The argument began in the seventh paragraph.

The Deliberative Address

Paragraph seven transitions to Washington's full out defense of the ideals contained in his blessing. The bulk of the text is consumed with his call to action to pursue the "careful preservation" of the Constitution. What Washington accomplished rhetorically in the first seven paragraphs allowed Washington to construct an audience to accept his federalist ideals with open arms. Let us examine the rhetorical strategies Washington engaged to balance the epideictic and deliberative action of the rhetorical hybrid beginning with the use of his ethos, as introduced in

the discussion on the second research question. Additionally, Washington used his ethos to merge the needs of the epideictic address with his desires for deliberative action.

No member of the founding fathers was more popular than George Washington. His biography was well known. In paragraph six, Washington referred to the “career of my public life.” This casual mention of his biography carried great weight with the audience and invited them to consider all Washington had done during his forty-plus years of service. Washington was the hero of the wilderness and sat as a Virginia delegate in the Continental Congress that decided to declare independence. There he was named General of the Continental Army becoming the figurehead of the Revolution. Upon completion of his role as General, he resigned giving power back to Congress. In retirement, he was called back to service by James Madison to sit as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention. Madison used Washington’s persona to give the convention credibility. At the convention, Washington was elected chair. The debates and discussion on the role and power of the Executive Office would have been more contentious and would have bogged down the constitutional proceedings had it not been assumed that George Washington would be the first president. Washington as president inherently distinguished the office from a monarch. Upon ratification of the Constitution, Washington was formally elected president. Inherent in Washington’s biography is a great deal of national pride. His biography also gave Washington a great deal of credibility with his audience. Although his opponents heavily assaulted his credibility, it is still undeniable.

How does Washington tap into his long-established public credibility and stature while at the same time disabling his critics? Washington was able to accomplish this because he was not hindered by the shadow of incumbency. Instead Washington engaged the new role established at the moment he announced his resignation. The metaphor that best describes this role is an elder

father looking to hand off his life's work to his heirs. Washington began to construct the identity of the retiring father when he admits that "every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome." In some ways Washington was acknowledging that political cartoons depicting him as a frail old man hold some truth. Washington was tired. At the same time, his age established authority from wisdom. By 1796, his direct "sons" have either rejected his work or appear incapable of moving it forward. Jefferson and Madison have alienated themselves from Washington, and Alexander Hamilton's ego had become so politically polarizing that he is not a suitable heir. Therefore, Washington looked to hand over his work to the American citizens.

As the speech moved into the deliberative action, Washington engaged his role as president to display expertise. Therefore, as the epideictic action allows for the subordinating deliberative action, so too, Washington's personas as father and president display a similar interplay. This is most evident in the timing of paragraph six and seven. In paragraph six, Washington alluded to his public service, calling to mind the magnitude of his accomplishments and the success of nearly everything he has touched. Paragraph seven functioned as generic transition in the speech. The paragraph abruptly changes the tone of the epideictic expectations and introduces the possibility of engaging deliberative action. Washington began to subordinate his role as President in his status as citizen.

Here, perhaps I ought to stop. But a solicitude for your welfare which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me, on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of

your felicity as a people. These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsel. Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it, your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

The transition abruptly begins with the use of “stop.” The ceremony of resignation will not fulfill all of the rhetorical needs called into being by this moment. As Washington transitioned to deliberative action, he engaged both roles as President and as retiring father. The “solicitude for your welfare” refers to the motivation of Washington’s public work as General and President. The occasion, like the present, reaffirms Washington as retiring president. As the sentence continues, Washington had two urges very fitting for this moment: “to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review” that the audience receive Washington’s call to action. When Washington used the word “offer” he implied a choice for the audience. The “offer” is a confirmation of Washington’s view of the office and his role as President. This offer was not a mandate from the king, but a carefully constructed contemplation from a common citizen. The use of “recommend” was more loaded. Washington may be recommending to your “frequent review” as a common citizen, yet his biography carried great weight. He may be removing the mantle of the office, but he is still George Washington. This recommendation placed the responsibility of “frequent review” in the hands of his audience, to test whether future leaders remain faithful to the constitutional values Washington was about to lay out. Therefore, presidential power is derived from the citizens. More importantly, as Washington announced his resignation, he has reconstituted the executive office, its powers and limits, and had begun to build a tradition of transition. Washington was blending both personas in this sentence beginning with Washington’s “solicitude for your welfare” engaging

Washington's persona as public servant, next provides an offer from a retiring citizen, and then "recommends to your frequent review" from the public servant and authority in which he had held. The sentence that follows returns to the persona of retiring father, and within that role, Washington announced that the gloves are off. Washington explicitly expressed that the epideictic occasion allowed him to offer these with "more freedom" for they can only be received as an offerings from a "disinterested...parting friend." Notice how Washington cast his role and relationship with the audience. A "parting friend" implies equality; thus, like reciting the limit of the office, and by engaging the audience on the level of equal status as citizens, he enacted the proper role of citizen as President, recognizing that in a democracy, authority is derived from the people.

In paragraph nine, as Washington began his call to action, his language became more authoritative and absolute, which is not consistent with the notion of light-hearted sentiments from a parting friend. In many respects, these "sentiments" could only come from an expert, the President. Thus, inherent in the statement is a recognition of the fact that the sentiments are a result of years of public service dedicated to the development of the nation. The term "parting friend" engages both personas. Friendship implies influence based only a familiar relationship not derived from a position or public office. However, the use of the word "parting" reminds the audience of the position Washington was leaving and reinforces the expertise of the President.

After offering a quite lengthy discussion of the potential threats to the Union, and outlining the right course of action the American citizens should take to face those threats, Washington concluded this section by reinforcing the dual-personas. He reminded his audience that these "counsels" are from an "old and affectionate friend" whose only concern is for their well-being and felicity, which coincidentally is bound to the Constitution. Immediately following

the persona of retiring father, Washington addressed his terms as President and described his approach to serving as the Chief Executive as being guided by principles that are evident in the outcomes of his work and displayed in the public record. Therefore, Washington was able to provide strong statements about his desired future of the government and its people by reducing the political tension through the use of the persona of Father, but gave the considerations from the point of view of the experienced president. Washington was only able to engage these duo-personas because of his rhetorical strategy for managing power distance, as discussed in answering the first research question.

In addition to power distance and the use of the duo-personas, Washington's strong deliberative action is accomplished through the construction of a shared national identity and the enactment of the slogans of the revolution. The primary form of argument in the deliberative speech is deductive reasoning. As previous research (e.g., Hostetler, 2002; Spalding & Garrity, 1996; Campbell & Jamieson, 1990) has already highlighted, the deliberative action of the speech has had long lasting effects on the political maturation of the nation. The deliberative address is only effective because it is preceded by the epideictic. The rhetorical hybrid is made complete when the speech returns to the epideictic form and concludes.

Concluding the Farewell and Returning to the Epideictic

Upon completing his deliberative action, culminating with the creation of a national identity and recasting the audience as preservers of the Union, Washington transitioned the speech back to the epideictic action in paragraph 42. This transition makes the hybrid complete and ensures that the deliberative action is subordinate to the epideictic. Without the epideictic, the deliberative is not successful as the epideictic aids in making the audience receptive to the

deliberative. Washington reverted to his earlier persona as a tired fatherly figure longing for retirement. He referred to himself as an “old and affectionate friend” reinforcing his status as a common citizen and not as a king. His tone returned to humility removing the authoritative imperative tone of the deliberative action. Yet, in the same paragraph, Washington made on final request of his audience that his “considerations” offered in this speech “may be productive of some partial benefit, some occasional good.” He then relisted those issues he posed as the greatest threats to the preservation of the Union entwining the deliberative action with the epideictic action of his resignation. This subtle move complicated the audience’s role. By returning to the epideictic action, Washington moved the role of the audience back to commemorator; however, by summarizing his deliberative action Washington reinforced his call to action for the audience. This subtlety highlights Washington’s greatest rhetorical move of the entire speech. At the beginning of the speech, Washington addressed the audience as “friends and fellow citizens” establishing a close and equal relationship. The audience celebrated with Washington the biography of his public service. Through the ceremony of his resignation, the audience’s only role was to commemorate Washington and his 45 years of public service. However, the deliberative action recast the audience as heirs to Washington’s work receiving his call to safeguard and preserve the Constitution. When he returned the speech to the epideictic action at the conclusion of the speech, the audience could not abandon this role. Therefore, as Washington returned to the epideictic, he was addressing a fundamentally different audience than when he began the speech. As he concluded his speech and takes on the epideictic tone, he summarized the main points of the deliberative address, binding the deliberative with the present action of his resignation.

This subtle move ensured that Washington's resignation became the call to deliberative action for his audience. The transfer of his life's work is made complete to his heirs, his "friends and fellow citizens."

Implications, Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

This study reaffirms that a rhetorical hybrid may be the best response to a complex rhetorical situation. However, this study adds to the scholarly understanding of the rhetorical hybrid. First, the examination of how Washington engaged his public persona as a rhetorical strategy implies that the success of a rhetorical hybrid seems to require a strong ethos from the rhetor. Washington's public persona allowed him to disarm his critics and endear his audience to him. Additionally, the epideictic action at the beginning of the speech placed Washington's persona at the forefront of the speech. Rather than begin the speech with deliberative action, Washington is able to begin the speech with a simple call to action for the audience: commemorate his biography as a public servant. This alludes to the second significant finding of this study. The deliberative address would not have been effective if the epideictic action had not preceded it. In other words, would the speech have been successful if Washington only provided a deliberative address? Washington's opposition were too vocal when he penned his farewell. If he had only offered a deliberative address, it would have fallen on deaf ears and be more fodder for his political opponents. This study has shown that the epideictic action placed the audience in the position to positively receive Washington's call to action. A third implication for the understanding of rhetorical hybrids is how the hybrid allows the rhetor to cast the audience in multiple roles. Washington began the speech asking the audience to commemorate and reflect on his service to the founding of the nation. When the speech transitioned to the

deliberative action, Washington recast the audience as participants in the revolutionary narrative, allowing him to call the audience to the action of preserving the Constitution. When the speech returned to the epideictic, the audience is significantly different at the end of the speech than at the beginning of the speech. The rhetorical hybrid allowed for this action.

Historically, this study provides a significant argument that Washington secured a national identity by conceptualizing a national community. However, the study is limited in that by conducting a Close Textual Analysis of Washington's farewell address it becomes easy to view the speech as a singular voice for the culmination of the revolutionary movement. Being the first of its genre, Washington faced few rhetorical limitations. The study limits our understanding of the speech as if it operates as a singular or definitive statement of Washington's words. However, future research could look at this text as a part of larger evolution of rhetorical acts focused on forming a common citizenry, united around a national government, and separate from influence from Europe. Washington's farewell address functions as the culmination of the argument on behalf of the Constitution. The movement begins with the speeches that occurred at the Constitutional Convention in 1787 and with the Federalist and Anti-Federalist Papers written during and following the convention. Future research could also examine each state's ratification debates and would culminate with Washington's presidential speeches.

Another opportunity for future research would be a rhetorical study of how Washington's ideology evolved from his farewell address as General to his First Inaugural Speech to the culmination of his Presidential Farewell. This examination would add further insight into the revolutionary movement. As the General of the Continental Army, Washington was acutely aware of the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation.

His frustration with trying to wage and win a war under funded by a weak federal government gave him great insight into the administration of the new form of federal government under the Constitution.

Additionally, it would be interesting to examine how Washington's farewell constrained his successor, John Adams, and what influence or boundaries it provided when Thomas Jefferson took office, the first presidential transition between individuals with differing ideologies. John Adams ascended to the office of the president in part because of his close affiliation with George Washington. However, he was unable to unite the nation around his cause and lost his reelection bid to Thomas Jefferson. Recall that during Washington's second term, Jefferson became Washington's greatest public critic. Yet, Washington's policies argued in his farewell lasted into the 19th century. Therefore, Jefferson would have felt come constraint by Washington's rhetoric.

Conclusion

George Washington's farewell address is an enduring model of rhetorical action. Often cited for his stance on isolationism and recently praised (Hostetler, 2002) for the use of distance imagery, the speech had already been recognized for its complexity and splendor. However, there was an opportunity to recognize the rhetorical brilliance used as Washington engages his ethos to disarm his critics and the way the speech functions as a rhetorical hybrid, responding to a complex rhetorical situation. Washington's farewell address engages the epideictic action of ceremonial leave-taking to allow significant deliberative action. As a result of constructing the rhetorical hybrid, Washington adequately resigns from office, offers praise and thanks for his years in service, responds to his critics, displays humility, and then transitions to deliberative action where he disarms his critics, unites his audience, binds them to his persona, establishes a

national identity, makes the audience heirs to his public service, and enacts the revolutionary narrative all to safeguard the Union and ensure commitment to the Constitution. The speech constrained the power of the presidency, differentiating the office from the monarchy, and ensured that a chief executive could operate within the confines of a democracy. This speech announces the nation's stability and functions as the first step beyond infancy for the young nation.

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