"Rhetosclerosis"
The Impact of Institutionalization on Presidential Rhetoric

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of the staffing process on the rhetoric of the presidency. Using multiple drafts of presidential addresses from the archives of the Kennedy, Ford, and Carter presidential libraries, this paper uses content analysis to track changes in presidential rhetoric as speeches work their way through the White House staffing process.

This study suggests that the speechwriting process is a unique window on the struggle for power within the presidency. This struggle extends beyond the personalities of White House staff and the partisan or bureaucratic interests represented by the various offices within the Executive Office of the President. The battle over presidential rhetoric is also a struggle between the roles of the office described by Edward Corwin and Clinton Rossiter.

Rhetosclerosis [*]

> *Had the Gettysburg address been written by a committee, its ten sentences would surely have grown to a hundred, its simple pledges would surely have been hedged, and the world would indeed have little noted or long remembered what was said there.*[1]
>
> *Ted Sorensen*

Presidential speech has come to be seen as one of the most valuable assets in American politics. Political scientists have debated the impact of the bully pulpit,[2] but we have spent much less time discussing the origins of the words the president chooses. This paper explores the process of writing presidential speeches and examines the impact of the institutionalization of the speechwriting process with an eye toward a conclusion that is both paradoxical and common sense: that presidential speech is harmed by the expanding number of people helping to produce it. While the debates over what the president should say reflect the healthy exercise of pluralism within the White House, the clashing of interests may have limited the quality of presidential speech and undermined the president's ability to inspire and lead. The administrations of John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, and Gerald R. Ford illustrate the transformation of speechwriting from informal to formal, and the transformation of speechwriters from policy advisors doubling as literary partners of the presidents, to technicians in a speechwriting process separated from the policy development process.

The speechwriting process is a unique opportunity to study the political forces inside the White House. The institutionalization of the process has given many political and institutional interests places at the editing table and the battle for control over presidential words can be witnessed through the changes in drafts of speeches. The location of the speechwriting process in the policy process provides us with a unique view into the institutional and political battles within the White House and helps us see the careful balancing of political and institutional demands that the president must satisfy. The results presented in

[1] Theodore C. Sorensen, <u>Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch or the Arrows</u>, New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, 61-62.

[2] Most recently, George Edwards has argued that the bully pulpit is overrated. While Edwards may be correct in his argument that the impact of the president's words are overestimated, the fact that they remain an obsession in the media and within the White House make the production of speeches worthy of our attention.

George C. Edwards III, <u>On Deaf Ears: The Limits of the Bully Pulpit</u>, New Haven: Yale, 2004.

this paper provide evidence that the amount of change to presidential speech found in the speechwriting process has changed over the administrations studied and demonstrates the impact of divisions within the White House on the choice of the president's words.

<center>"Rhetosclerosis"</center>

The growth of the White House staff has created an effective set of checks on the speechwriting process. The best and the brightest of the Executive Office of the President and the Cabinet department serve as alert guards of the wants and needs of bureaucratic organizations or related interest groups. Each is ready to spring into action to make sure that the voice of an important constituency is heard, or prevent a president from uttering words that might undermine importance of their department. However, in attempting to make sure that the President does not fall into the innumerable pitfalls of modern American politics, the White House may be creating a climate in which cautious language survives and strong leadership is less likely.

The modern presidency includes many organizations and represents many interests that have become proficient at protecting their position. Their ability to win a place in the White House is testimony to their power. If the presidency's roles and constituencies complimented each other, the task of leadership would be simplified. However, these often conflict leaving presidents to negotiate a minefield as they prepare to speak.

The tone of presidential speech could fall victim to an affliction similar to Jonathan Rauch's notion of "Demosclerosis" in which government loses its ability to adapt in the face of pressure from interest groups.[3] "Rhetosclerosis" would be the loss of flexibility in presidential rhetoric caused by interest pressure. Rauch argues that FDR could not have conducted the grand experiment of his New Deal in a "society dense with professional lobbies."[4] This paper argues that Roosevelt's New Deal rhetoric would be stifled in a White House so densely populated with interests and that the lack of bold language contributes to the inability to promote bold policy change. A president posing a fundamental challenge to current policy or seeking to redefine citizen's thinking would likely be caught in a sandstorm of objections *within* the White House before the president had a chance to take the issue to the public. Thus, the battle for the hearts and minds of the citizenry can be decided before citizens hear from their president. From the outside, the White House resembles a tightly knit team, united behind their leader, and sharing set of common goals. As Terry Moe points out "while they may 'exist to serve the president' and have no other constituency, formal organization inevitably creates interests and beliefs that set them

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[3] Jonathan Rauch, "Demosclerosis: The Disease That's Petrifying American Government," <u>The New Democrat</u>, June/July 1994, 8.

[4] Jonathan Rauch, <u>Government's End: Why Washington Stopped Working</u>, New York: Public Affairs, 1999, 149.

apart from him."[5] Seeing the attachment to the president as the organizing principle of the White House overlooks many subtle yet important shadings of political views and motives.

The suggestions and protestations swirling around the speechwriting process do not succeed because presidents and White House staff today are intellectually or politically less equipped for the tasks of leadership. This cacophony of worries, hedging, and alternative wordings are posed by bright people who are well meaning and trusted advisors attempting to protect the office and the occupant from missteps. Almost everyone who comes to the president insisting that words and sentences be changed or dropped was hired by the stroke of the president's own pen and their offices created at the insistence of previous presidents and perpetuated by the current occupant. At the same time, it's important to note that while the president created these offices and hired these staffers, they did not create the forces that led to these additions.

It would be naive to think that the forces of hyperpluralism would not have occupied the White House as they have other democratic institutions. That these forces toil behind the walls of the White House makes their impact no less important. Because these battles are won and lost beyond the view of citizens, understanding them becomes even more intriguing for political science.

The concerns of speechwriters testify to the conflicts within the White House. As in other administrations, the Carter speechwriters complained that the policy advisors did not understand how to write a speech. In a draft memo circulated among the speechwriters (and marked "good!") James Fallow describes the perils of the policy analysts and the role of the speechwriters as fundamentally at odds.

> Left to its own devices, the policy machinery of this government will never produce speeches or statements which crisply advance our themes. The policy staffs have a bias toward encyclopedic thoroughness (to avoid leaving anything out), toward hedged and cautious statements (to avoid making commitments), and away from clarity or daring (to avoid offending anyone). They also have a bias toward mushy-mouthed language, since that is the way they think and write. In all these biases, they will prevail, unless someone is equipped to fight them by arguing for all the things they oppose – simplicity, clarity, emphasis, daring. That, presumably, is the role we should be able to play. [Emphasis in the original][6]

As the writers and the analysts square off, all sides jealously guard their turf (with good reason). Budget Director Charles Schultze once complained to Nixon speechwriter Will Sparks, "the real menace

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[5] Terry M. Moe, "The Politicized Presidency," in The New Directions in American Politics, John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson, editors, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1985, 240-241.

[6] Memo to Jerry Rafshoon from Jim Fallows, June 8, 1978, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 1/1/77-5/31/78," Box 28, Subject File, Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 2.

to a balanced budget around here isn't the departments: it the speech writers."[7] During the Ford administration some offices attempted to circumvent the speechwriting office's clearance process

The culture of Washington, is according to columnist Tish Durkin, one in which, "each syllable needs to be bubble-wrapped in euphemism, so that the meaning is muffled out of it and no one can possibly be offended—or rather, so that no one has occasion to jump on the streetcar named ire."[8] The pressure toward cautious speech comes from a variety of sources, including the president. As Robert Hartmann prepared the speech Ford would give as he began his presidency, the speechwriter proposed the words that would be one of the most memorable of the Ford administration when the new president proclaimed, "our long national nightmare is over." Ford, however, worried that the line was "a little hard" on Nixon. Hartmann battled fiercely to get Ford keep the phrase.

> Junk the rest of the speech if you want… but not that. That is going to be the headline in every paper, the lead in every story. This hasn't been a nightmare just for Nixon and his family… It's been a nightmare for everybody—for you, for me, for Nixon's enemies as well as his friends… This has been a national nightmare, and it's got to be stopped. You're the only one who can.[9]

Thus, presidential eloquence is, in the eyes of many, threatened by the hoards of assistants who swarm across the pages of speech drafts. While the damage they do might be reversible, the president lacks the time to reassemble the shattered rhetoric and the speechwriters lack the clout to undo what the more senior policy advisors have done. When Gerald Rafshoon took over as Director of Communications for Carter, the speechwriting staff urged him to do what he could to check the problem of "too many cooks."

> You know as well as I that no six people can write a decent speech, even though every one of them may be marvelously gifted and wise. Nonetheless, almost every speech that's come out of here has been a committee product… I understand that it is essential to get ideas wherever possible, to circulate drafts, to make sure that all viewpoints have been considered. But some one person needs to be in charge of this situation—in charge of collecting ideas, registering complaints, and finally seeing that the agreed-upon policy in written down in a coherent and literate way… My suspicion is that the President thinks he is that person; he no longer has the time to be.[10]

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[7] Will Sparks, Who Talked to the President Last? New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1971, 56.

[8] Tish Durkin, "Trent Lott and the Euphemistic Ways of Washington," National Journal, December 14, 2002, 3633.

[9] Robert T. Hartmann, Palace Politics: An Inside Account of the Ford Years, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980, 160

[10] Memo to Jerry Rafshoon from Jim Fallows, June 8, 1978, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 1/1/77-5/31/78," Box 28, Subject File, Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 2-3.

Before attempting to quantify the differences between administrations, we need to examine the speechwriting processes of each president. Three presidencies are included in the analysis presented here. The Kennedy, Carter, and Ford administrations can provide some clues into causes and consequences of presidential speech writing. The Kennedy administration represents the last president to use an informal system without relying on a specialized office of speechwriting. The Johnson and Nixon administrations would see the appearance of speechwriting on the organizational charts and the segregation of that function to individuals with little connection to the speechwriting process.[11] This makes the Ford and Carter Administrations good examples of an institutionalized process and gives us the first chance to asses the impact of the newly formalized process on the president's words.

John F. Kennedy, Ted Sorensen and the Collaborative Presidency

Several things about the Kennedy presidency would strike any observer of today's White House. One obvious difference is the small number of speechwriters Kennedy used. Theodore Sorensen headed a speechwriting staff that would include Arthur Schlesinger, Lee White, Richard Goodwin, and Myer Feldman.

Ted Sorensen served as chief speechwriter throughout Kennedy's presidency, although his title as "Special Counsel to the President" makes no mention of speechwriter. Sorensen had joined Kennedy's Senate staff in 1953 and the years together created an understanding of substance as well as style. "As the years went on, I came to know what he thought on each subject as well as how he wished to say it," Sorensen reflected, "our style and standard became increasingly one."[12] Kennedy Press Secretary Pierre Salinger said, "Sorensen not only had strong social convictions echoing those of the young senator, but a genius for translating them into eloquent and persuasive language."[13]

Insider accounts of a presidency generally tend to overstate the author's role in the presidency. However, Kennedy's speechwriters appear to have *understated* their contribution. They realized that taking responsibility for Kennedy's words would make it look like they were attempting to promote their own image while diminishing the Kennedy legacy. The Kennedy biographies written by Sorensen and Schlesinger were published in 1965, when few citizens wanted to hear doubts upon their fallen president. The speechwriters may also have played down their role due to lingering sensitivity over questions about the authorship of Profiles in Courage. In 1957 journalist Drew Pearson had asserted that Kennedy's Pulitzer Prize winning book had been ghostwritten. In a counter-offensive, Clark Clifford was retained as

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[11] Governing the White House: From Hoover through LBJ, Charles E. Walcott and Karen M. Hult, Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1995,

[12] Sorensen, Kennedy, 60.

[13] Pierre Salinger, With Kennedy, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966, 66.

legal counsel and Ted Sorensen signed an affidavit that he had not written this book for Kennedy and his assistance to Kennedy had included the "assembly and preparation of research and other materials."[14]

While the debate over the writing of Profiles in Courage is not directly related to the construction of Kennedy's speeches, the issue provides some insights into the relationship between Kennedy and Sorensen and is an interesting example of the issue of authorship. In his book on presidential staff, Patrick Anderson suggests that both Sorensen and Kennedy wrote the book with Sorensen doing the historical work and the rough drafting and concludes that "had they been professional writers, instead of Senator and aide, any publisher would have credited them as co-authors."[15] Historian Robert Dallek reached a similar conclusion suggesting that the book was the product of a several people and Kennedy "did more on the book than some later critics believed, but less than the term *author* normally connotes."[16] Kennedy, in his own listing of the assistance he received, indicates that he was the beneficiary of more assistance than most authors. As was typical of the relationship between Sorensen and Kennedy, the two men formed a partnership in which Sorensen remained a silent partner. In describing the ten-year working relationship on speeches, Sorensen used the term "collaborator,"[17] a term that implies working with someone, rather than working for them. Kennedy clearly held control over his speeches and was senior partner, but Sorensen held Kennedy's respect and enjoyed a degree of latitude in drafting speeches.

Sorensen's closeness to the President and role the policy process put him in a strong position to defend speeches drafts from dilution at the hands of others in the administration. The role of policy advisor to the President kept him in the room at every phase of the speechwriting process. No one other than the President was likely to override Sorensen and he was not obligated to clear speech drafts on most issues with more senior policy advisors because no on held a higher rank.[18]

The speechwriters advised Kennedy on a remarkable array of issues and held significant influence in policy formulation. Arthur Schlesinger offered advice on a variety of policy issues, but his role in Latin American policy was especially significant. This proximity paid off for the speechwriters. In one case, Richard Goodwin worried aloud to the President that he might not be able to get a task force to agree to

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[14] Sworn Affidavit, December 14, 1957, folder: "John Kennedy, 'Profiles in Courage,'" Personal Papers of Clark Clifford, Speech File Series, Box 2, John F. Kennedy Library.

[15] Patrick Anderson, The President's Men, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1969, 339.

[16] Robert Dallek, An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy 1917-1963, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2003, 199.

[17] Theodore Sorensen, Kennedy, New York: Harper & Row, 1965, 59.

[18] Theodore O. Windt, "John F. Kennedy: Presidential Speechwriting as Rhetorical Collaboration," from Presidential Speechwriting: From the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and Beyond, Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst, eds., College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003, 103.

the specific proposals outlined in a draft speech. Kennedy's response was simply, "I don't care if everyone agrees. You know what our thinking is. That's the only agreement you need—with me."[19]

The speechwriting process

Major addresses generally started with a meeting of the President's closest advisors. Based on that discussion, Kennedy would come up with an outline of what he wanted to say and Sorensen would go off to prepare the first draft. When the broad outline of the speech was set and the basic structure in place, Kennedy would review the speech and do some editing. That draft would be reviewed, especially with an eye toward the broad goals of the speech. If Kennedy agreed that the emphasis of the speech was correct, Sorensen would assemble a subsequent draft.

According to one study of the Kennedy speechwriting process, "practically anyone could be involved in some of the minor speeches."[20] While this is true, it should not be interpreted to suggest that responsibility for speechwriting was scattered around the White House. Most speeches began (and ended) with Sorensen or Schlesinger. People inside (and outside) of the administration might be invited to offer suggestions, even drafts, but it is clear from the archival material that Sorensen and his assistants were the primary authors of speeches and remained in control of the process.

The degree to which speech drafts would be circulated varied from speech to speech. In some cases, the President wanted and sought little or no input from departments. This was the case with his speech at American University (the "Peace Speech") because he expected resistance from the State and Defense departments. On issues of less interest to the President, Kennedy was often content with the drafts that resulted from Sorensen's collaboration with the relevant department.

While Kennedy's staff praised him as an excellent editor, his handwritten revisions to speech drafts are relatively sparse compared to the grammatical tinkering of an Eisenhower or the extensive revisions made by Nixon and Carter. Kennedy seemed to be as comfortable with the drafts he received as any president studied, reflecting the degree to which Sorensen understood and anticipated the President's wishes and the Kennedy style of speaking. However, the absence of written feedback should be interpreted carefully. Given the access the speechwriters enjoyed, many of Kennedy's suggestions may have been transmitted verbally rather than in writing.[21]

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[19] Theodore O. Windt, "John F. Kennedy: Presidential Speechwriting as Rhetorical Collaboration," from Presidential Speechwriting: From the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and Beyond, Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst, eds., College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003, 101.

[20] Theodore O. Windt, "John F. Kennedy: Presidential Speechwriting as Rhetorical Collaboration," from Presidential Speechwriting: From the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and Beyond, Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst, eds., College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003, 94, 98.

[21] This is made even more likely by Kennedy's handwriting, which Schlesinger described as illegible.

On major speeches, especially television addresses from the White House, Kennedy stuck closely to the prepared text. In minor speeches, Kennedy took more liberties, often frustrating the speechwriters who saw their labors evaporate from the page and journalists who had often already written their stories based on the pre-speech press releases put out by the White House.[22]

While the institutionalization of the speechwriting process was not as extensive as it would be by Ford and Carter administrations, the need for clearance from departments was already becoming the subject of presidential jokes. In a draft of his remarks for the annual Gridiron Club Dinner, Kennedy was to remark, "This speech has not been submitted to the State Department for clearance… so I have been asked to announce that these views are not necessarily theirs - - which is all right, since their views are not always mine."[23]

The Kennedy White House recognized the limits of institutional speechwriting and the perils of speechwriting by committee. Individuals could look over the speech and comment, but ultimately the overall structure of the speech and the theme had to come from one speechwriter lest the power of the words get lost in revision. Sorensen argued that "group authorship could not produce the continuity and precision of style he desired, or the unity of thought and argument he needed."[24] This avoidance of what Theodore Windt described as "committee writing"[25] may explain why Kennedy's speeches are memorable.

The pitfalls of writing speeches in the same way committees write legislation may seem obvious, the contrasting case of Gerald Ford suggests that the complex environment of the White House can generate more perspectives than is healthy for the writing process. By the time Gerald Ford assumed the presidency in 1974 the speechwriting process in the White House had become institutionalized. As Hult and Walcott note, the Nixon speechwriters were segregated in to the Office of Speechwriting and were writing specialists, playing no part in policy or political advising.[26]

Arthur, M. Schlesinger, <u>A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House</u>, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Company, 1965, 690.

[22] Salinger, 67.

[23] "TCS 1st Draft," 3/15/62 folder: "Gridiron Club Dinner, 3/17/62, Speech Materials, 3/15/62 – 3/17/62 + undated," Personal Papers of Theodore Sorensen, Speech File Series, Box 68, John F. Kennedy Library, 2.

[24] Sorensen, 330-331.

[25] Theodore O. Windt, "John F. Kennedy: Presidential Speechwriting as Rhetorical Collaboration," from <u>Presidential Speechwriting: From the New Deal to the Reagan Revolution and Beyond</u>, Kurt Ritter and Martin J. Medhurst, eds., College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003, 103.

[26] Karen M. Hult and Charles Walcott, Empowering the White House: Governance under Nixon, Ford, and Carter, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004, 15-160

Gerald Ford and Institutionalized Speech

Gerald Ford's sudden and unprecedented entry to the Oval Office contributed to his problems with speechwriting. Ford entered the White House without the battle-tested staff that results from the rapid-fire production of dozens of speeches over the course of a presidential campaign that provides a crash course in political speechwriting. The speech that is finished on the plane will sometimes make it only as far as the tarmac before it is tested before a live audience. If a speech goes poorly it can be refined and re-tested—often several times in a single day of campaigning. The long campaign also gives the speechwriters opportunities to develop their relationship with the future president. Neither Ford nor his staff had much practice with large audiences. Representing nothing larger than a single house district in Michigan, Ford had little experience with broader audiences beyond a few televised appearances as minority leader. While his time as Vice President might have given him time to develop a speech writing staff this process was hindered when Nixon had own his speechwriters write speeches for Ford to deliver.

The Ford White House also lacked the core of loyalists with ties strengthened by the trials of a national campaign. Staff unity was further undermined because Ford refused to immediately clean house and start fresh with his appointees. This left Ford's people to blend with the Nixon holdovers in an organizational style they were not comfortable with. The Ford appointees tended to not trust the Nixon staff while the Nixon holdovers felt the new staff were inexperienced and ill-prepared. Both sides bore the scars of the Watergate battle.

The Ford staff

Ford made Robert T. Hartmann chief White House speechwriter. Hartmann was a former newspaper writer who had joined Ford's congressional staff in 1967. Working closely in the relatively small office of a member of Congress, the two worked together frequently and developed a strong working relationship in speechwriting, as well as in policy and political strategy. Hartmann's relationship with Ford gave him some superficial similarities to Ted Sorensen. However, the Ford-Hartmann partnership would produce a very different style

This lack of interest in a style like Kennedy's and an appreciation for simpler phrasing was what made Hartmann's partnership with Ford so comfortable. According to Hartmann, "I avoided the speechwriter's great temptation of being too poetic and rhetorical. I wrote Ford's speeches in the same plain language that he normally spoke."[27] According to James Cannon, "Hartmann scorned the elegant apposition of a Ted Sorensen and the imaginative alliterations of a William Safire. When he sat down at a typewriter, Hartmann was looking for the everyday words and common-sense logic that was so natural to

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[27] William Syers interview with Robert T. Hartmann, May 3, 1985, Gerald R. Ford Library, 1.

Ford."[28] James Humes, who wrote speeches for several presidents, found Ford to be a master of policies, but with little skill or interest in the language of rhetoric: "He was comfortable with the kind of stock speeches given to the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce but little else."[29] Ford's preference for simple language was reflected in his first address to Congress as the President told his speechwriters that the speech open with "no fancy oratory" and just begin with something like, "My friends, we've got a lot of work to do. Let's get on with it."[30] The Ford style presented a dilemma in hiring speechwriters because they were being hired to produce creative prose for a president who had little use for it. People who would dedicate their lives to creative writing were often not satisfied spending their days constructing the simple prose Ford demanded. What Ford most needed was writers interested in working within his rhetorical preferences, but writers with a passion for plain rhetoric are unlikely to take up writing as a vocation.

Robert Hartmann would officially hold the title of Counselor to the President and oversee what was known as the "editorial office." The title of "counselor" indicated that Hartmann would serve as a close advisor to Ford on a wide range of matters. This also meant that as the administration progressed, Hartmann would have less and less time for speech drafting as the duties of Counselor involved him with more issues and meetings.

The Ford White House usually had six full-time speechwriters, with Hartmann and his deputy responsible for editing the work of the staff while remaining available to contribute some drafting between their administrative chores. Initially, Paul Theis served at Hartmann's deputy and was responsible for assigning the speeches to individual speechwriters, overseeing the process, and serving as an editor. When Theis left the White House, Bob Orben took his responsibility. Orben was best known because of his specialization in the humor that was usually found in the opening and closing lines of the speeches. Before joining the White House Orben had written for the Red Skelton and Jack Parr television shows and put out "Orben's Current Comedy," a weekly compilation of jokes for business and other speakers.[31]

One of the most challenging administrative chores for Hartmann and his assistant was soliciting and coordinating feedback from up to 15 people in the Executive Office of the President and Cabinet in a timely fashion. This task was made more difficult given the busy schedule of the people whose feedback was being solicited and the need of ignoring the advice of some of the most powerful people in the country.

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[28] James Cannon, Time and Chance: Gerald Ford's Appointment with History, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994, 92.

[29] James C. Humes, 152.

[30] Robert T. Hartmann, 179.

[31]Robert Orben, Orben's Current Comedy, Issue #282, Vol. 17, No. 23, August 1, 1974, folder: "Orben, Bob—Current Comedy," Robert Hartmann Papers, Box 145, Gerald R. Ford Library.

The editorial office was responsible for everything the President said to the world, whether spoken or in print. As Hartmann pointed out, "I had to approve every single word that went out of the White House in the President's name—with the exception of statements he authorized the press secretary to make."[32] This meant that the office not only oversaw the drafting and editing of the President's formal addresses, they also put together the "talking points" that guided the president in less formal setting like meetings with small groups, interviews, press conferences, and even staff holiday gatherings. The volume of the editorial office's work is evident from their yearly activity report for 1976. During that year the office processed 1,636 drafts of speeches and action memoranda, 1,693 presidential messages, 382 special topic messages, and 272 requests for Presidential greetings for birthdays and anniversaries. The office also handled 163,751 autopened items for mailing including: 127,431 letters, 872 commissions, 1,735 certificates, 26,059 photographs, and 7,654 autographs.[33]

One of the ironies of the Ford presidency is that while he was not regarded as a strong speaker, he quickly became of the most active speech-givers to inhabit the White House. The speechwriting staff estimated that by the end of 1976, they had produced 1,142 speeches, 174 proclamations, 68 veto messages, 154 bill signing statements, 196 executive orders, 405 communications to Congress, 81 memos to head of federal departments and agencies, and 143 news conference statements and "Q and A's." By their estimation, this brought the "Presidential Word Count" up to 2,732,563.[34]

While Ford chose to speak more often than Nixon, he insisted on doing so with a smaller speechwriting staff. The reduction in the speechwriting staff was a product of the general White House staff reductions designed to demonstrate austerity and to reduce the appearance of the "imperial presidency." The speech-writing staff that had included about eight writers during the Nixon administration was reduced to six with similar reduction in the size of the research staff. Over time, the heavy workload and the lack of time to carefully develop speeches lead to high turnover. Professional writers who relished the challenge of carefully crafting sentences and themes found they had little time to do so. In just over 2 years, the Ford White House went through 18 speechwriters. To meet pressing deadlines, vacancies had to be filled quickly meaning that new writers were thrown immediately into speechwriting before they could be trained or tested. As Orben pointed out to Hartmann, "Even a capable writer needs time to adjust to style, learn the system, and develop the background necessary to meet the writing demands we face. Because we have so few experienced writers, I am forced to give brand new

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[32] Robert T. Hartmann, 278.

[33] Memorandum for Counselor Hartmann from Gwen Anderson, January 17, 1977, folder: "Editorial and Speech Staff (3)," Robert Hartmann papers, Box 122, Gerald R. Ford Library.

[34] Public Speeches and Presidential Documents, August 9, 1974 through December 31, 1976, folder: Editorial and Speech Staff (3)," Robert Hartmann Papers, Box 122, Gerald R. Ford Library,

writers fairly major speeches and hope for the best - - or frantically rewrite them at the last minute. This is not the stuff that campaign winning speeches is made of."[35]

The Speechwriting process

The speechwriting process began when the scheduling office accepted an invitation for the President to speak. The speechwriters wanted more input into scheduling because they felt that the President was often asked to speak when there was nothing to say at events did not lend themselves to interesting speeches. Hartmann and his deputy would sit down with the President twice a week to review upcoming events and present the President with several options on topics. Ford would choose one of the options or map out his own view of what should be covered. In the case of most minor speeches, the staff would proceed with little guidance from the President. After the general plan was set, Hartmann or his deputy would assign each speech to a writer who would put together a draft. A draft would circulate within the speechwriting office until it was ready to go to Robert Hartmann.

After the speech had been sent to various offices around to various aides in the White House and Cabinet, the President had a chance to edit the speech. Ford would sit down with Hartmann, Hartmann's deputy (who was a kind of chief speech editor), and the speechwriter who had written the speech in order to go over the draft. The President often reviewed the speech line by line and the speechwriter was given a chance to defend his initial choice of words if changes had been made.

Often, Hartmann or his assistant would travel with the President with time for a brief meeting on Air Force I to go over the speech. Reading the speech aloud not only gave the President a kind of rehearsal, it also alerted the writers to what Robert Orben called, "combinations of words and syllables that mortal tongues were not meant to utter."[36] Having a speechwriters travel with the President also provided feedback to the President and the rest of White House about the appropriateness of the event, the President's delivery style, and the audience's response. For example, Robert Orben followed the President on a trip that included the commencement speech at the University of Pennsylvania. Orben credited the president with "a good range of emphasis and tonal changes" that gave "a fine dramatic reading to the speech." However, Orben noted that while the style of delivery would have been good as part of a shorter program or as the first or second speech of the event, "Appearing at the end of almost one an a half hours of ceremony, a faster tempo might have been indicated."[37].

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[35] Memorandum from Bob Orben to Robert T. Hartmann, March 26, 1976, folder: "Editorial and Speech Staff Reorganization," Robert Hartmann Papers, Box 122, Gerald R. Ford Library, 1-2.

[36] Robert Orben, "Speeches, Humor and the Public," 236.

[37] Memorandum from Robert Orben to Robert Hartmann via Paul Theis, May 19, 1975, folder; "Orben, Bob," Robert Hartmann Papers, Box 145, Gerald R. Ford Library.

Hartmann's close relationship with Ford initially gave him the clout to insert ideas, including Ford's WIN program ("Whip Inflation Now") into speeches without having them reviewed by others around the White House.[38] While Ford had signed off on Hartmann's idea, the failure of the "WIN" program was assigned to Hartmann's resistance to having speeches reviewed by White House staff. In response, Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld institutionalized a review process for Ford speeches to prevent future problems. This, in part, explains why the review process in the White House became so extensive. While there was a legitimate need for a systematic process, staffing would grow, according to Hult and Walcott, "out of control."[39] When a reporter asked how many speechwriters worked in the White House, Orben turned to another speechwriter and said, "I don't know Milt [Freeman], how many are there now? Is it five or six hundred?"[40] According to speechwriter Pat Butler, Ford's speeches suffered at the hands of too many senior staff who, in their efforts to protect the President, not only took out anything that might prove controversial, but also anything that might have been inspiring. As Butler reflected, "A bureaucracy had been created that simply did not serve the President's best interests."[41]

The speechwriting process was cumbersome, but it was the result of Ford's political training. As Robert Hartmann noted, "Great speeches are not written by committees. But that's the way we do things in Congress and that was his school."[42] As Hartmann described it on another occasion:

> His approach to a speech was that of a legislator; it required something on paper to spark its further development. You start with some kind of draft bill and then amend, delete, revise, substitute and perfect it into a considerably different, and more palatable, final product.
>
> This is not only a time-consuming process, but a speech thus produced by committee ends up about as exciting and artistic as an Act of Congress.[43]

No one seems to regard the speechwriting office as effective. In a draft memo from 1976 Hartmann refers to the staff "with which we have both become increasingly unsatisfied."[44] As the time to give the 1975 State of the Union Address drew near, Ford found that he was unhappy with the draft that Hartmann had prepared and that Rumsfeld and others were trying to produce their own draft. The two drafts came

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[38] Bob Goldwyn interview, A. James Reichley oral histories, Gerald R. Ford Library, 2.

[39] Karen M. Hult and Charles E. Walcott, <u>Empowering the White House: Governance under Nixon, Ford, and Carter</u>, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004, 160.

[40] Robert Orben, "Speeches, Humor and the Public," <u>The Ford Presidency: Twenty Two Intimate Perspectives of Gerald Ford</u>, Kenneth W. Thompson, editor, New York: University Press of America, 1988, 242.

[41] Oral history interview with Pat Butler by A. William Syers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, 1.

[42] Chase Haddix interview with Robert Hartmann, April 5, 1991, Gerald R. Ford Library, 12.

[43] Robert T. Hartmann, 384.

[44] Draft memo, Hartmann to the President, nd [marked: March 1976?], folder: "Office—Organization," Robert Hartmann Files, Box 13, Gerald R. Ford Library, 1.

to Ford in a meeting at 9 PM on the day before the address (to be given at 1 PM the next day). Ford told his staff to produce *one* version, but to little avail.

> Hartmann was insisting that section X or paragraph Y had to be in the final version just as he had written it, and Rumsfeld was equally adamant about his contributions. As a result, I had to be editor, and I didn't approve the final version until nearly 4 A.M. It was a long, disagreeable night and a waste of my time, but it did teach me an important lesson. In the future, I told Hartmann, important speeches had to be submitted to me well in advance of the scheduled delivery date. I simply couldn't tolerate any more performances like that.[45]

One staffer describes Rumsfeld as worrying "if that word gets out- - that he [Ford] was there so late- - it will be pretty solid evidence of just what happened, 'a monumental fuckup.'" The staffer went to worry about the press office getting the speech distributed in time, "so it wouldn't look like we don't know how to run the free world."[46]

A year later the problem was little better as similar bickering ground the process for the 1976 State of the Union to a halt. Ford called those involved in preparing the speech together in the Cabinet room on January 17, but the disagreements continued in the meeting that triggered what Ford described as "one of the few times I lost my temper."

> The disagreements continued. Finally, after about three hours of this, I had heard enough. "Damn it," I said, slamming my hand on the table, "we've got to stop bickering over these little details. I want a final draft by noon tomorrow."[47]

Some of the speechwriting problems resulted from staff problems. However, Ford's approach to speechwriting was at the heart of his problems with speechwriting. The idea of a president "bickering" with his staff suggests that Ford was not willing to take sides in the battle. In his attempt to placate both sides of the battle over the 1976 State of the Union, Ford took bits and pieces of the competing drafts and, according to Robert Hartmann, "strung them together like a string of beads. He thought that was pretty dandy. Nobody was willing to tell him how terrible it was."[48] The idea of Ford negotiating with his own staff suggests that it is not fair to blame the organization of the staff for all the problems.

Adding the Carter administration to the picture provides some assurance that the challenges of managing a speechwriting institution go beyond the problems of one person. And, as the Carter

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[45] Gerald R. Ford, <u>A Time to Heal: The Autobiography of Gerald R. Ford</u>, New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979, 233.

[46] Memo from Tom to Ron, January 15, 1975, folder: SOTU, 1975, General (1), Ron Nessen Papers, Box 27, Gerald R. Ford Library.

[47] Gerald R. Ford, 350.

[48] Chase Haddix interview with Robert Hartmann, April 5, 1991, Gerald R. Ford Library, 6.

Administration will demonstrate, a legislative background was not required for problems with speechwriting.

Carter and Speechwriting

Carter entered the White House unaccustomed to having speeches written for him. As Governor of Georgia, Carter had written his own speeches or extemporized his remarks. During his run for the presidency, Carter hired Robert Shrum as his first speechwriter in March of 1976. A devoted liberal, Shrum was unhappy in the campaign and lasted only nine days before leaving, sending a copy of his letter of resignation and a ten-page critique of Carter to the press as he left. Carter then hired Pat Anderson in April of 1976 and added James Fallows in July.

The Carter Staff

Given his unfortunate experiences with Shrum and his limited amount of time working with speechwriters in general, Carter entered the presidency with no experience with a speechwriting organization. He prevailed upon Fallows to remain on his staff after Anderson declined to join the administration. However, Fallows had little interest in remaining a speechwriter. Fallows had not enjoyed speechwriting, but was willing to accept the position because he was looking for a role in the new White House and realized that he lacked the policy background to get a position as a policy in the White House.[49]

Jim Fallows would serve as the first head speechwriter, assisted by speechwriters Griffin Smith, Jerry Doolittle, Achsah Nesmith, Rick Hertzberg. Susan Battle served as a researcher. Originally, the speechwriting staff reported to Jody Powel, until Gerald Rafshoon was brought in to oversee communications. Powell was busy dealing with the press and was never well organized to begin with.[50] As it the case with other administrations, the staff would get together informally and volunteer for particular speech assignments. Individual speechwriters began to develop a variety of specialties. For example, Rick Hertzberg specialized in foreign policy while Aschsan Nesmith specialized in "soft speeches" especially Carter's well-received addresses to African-American churches. Jerry Doolittle specialized in humor. Caryl Connor did cities and parties given her background in party politics.

The staff added Tom Thiel who served as managing editor and held responsibility for keeping track of the President's upcoming speeches and who was writing them to make sure that deadlines were met and that the president got speeches earlier to give him more time to fashion his own contribution.

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[49] James Fallows, White House Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 8-9.

[50] Hendrik (Rick) Hertzberg, White House Exit Interview, Tape 1, Side 2, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

With Carter's chief speechwriter having been with him less than a year, the speechwriting operation lacked a strong personal connection to the President. Even after serving in the White House, Fallows never had an extended conversation with Carter.[51] As one speechwriter noted, "Our goal was to get closer to the President because he never dealt closely enough with the people that were writing the words that he spoke."[52]

The Speechwriting process

Carter's dislike for the prepared speeches portended his problems with his speechwriters. The speechwriters likely reminded Carter of much he disliked about politics and the presidency, paving the way for a relationship that would be uneasy at best. Carter didn't like slogans because he regarded them as simplistic and misleading.[53] Compounding the tension with those who prepared the text of his addresses was the fact that Carter disliked working from a prepared text and resisted practicing his speeches.[54]

Speechwriting was further hampered by chief speechwriter's lack of enthusiasm for speechwriting. As he left the White House, Fallows conceded, "Speechwriting was not satisfying to me. Partly because so many people get in on a presidential speech."[55] Like many others who have served as speechwriter, Fallows was not content to serve in the narrow role of speechwriter and wished for a broader role and an impact on policymaking.

Fallows likely shared the dislike for the speechwriting process that had driven away Pat Anderson. As one speechwriter noted, Anderson disliked being trapped in the process. "He hated it… He thought of himself, legitimately, as a writer and thought of himself as something of an artist and really resented the fact that Jody [Powell] and I would go through and slash whole paragraphs and pages from his work which was always longer than Carter wanted it."[56]

During the transition, Carter received advice on the development of a speechwriting staff as part of broader organizational plans. Stu Eizenstat warned the President-elect of the "enormous flow of Presidential messages, statements, and speeches" and that Carter's plan to cut back the size of the White House in general could be applied to the speechwriting staff, but only with caution. Eizenstat urged that the speechwriters have "close access" to the President because "only through that access can they better

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[51] James Fallows, White House Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library. 11.

[52] Hendrik (Rick) Hertzberg, White House Exit Interview, Tape 1, Side 2, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[53] Hendrik (Rick) Hertzberg, White House Exit Interview, Tape 1, Side 2, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[54] James Fallows, White House Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 7.

[55] Robert Maddox interview, White House Exit Interview, Tape 1, Side 1, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

[56] Gregory Schneiders, White House Exit Interview, Tape 1, Side 2, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

understand the President's needs." Arguing that "Speechwriters should not become policymakers." Eizenstat urged that the president's domestic policy advisor review speech drafts before they went to the President.[57]

Fallows asked for permission to sit in on policy meetings because "I think the more familiar I am with the arguments and assumptions that lie behind your decisions, the more successful I will be in helping present them… During the campaign I found the ambiance of the plane, and the frequent opportunities to talk with Stu, Greg, Jody, and others, were great help in providing me with background." Fallows asked if he could attend staff and cabinet meetings with the promise not to get underfoot. While Carter granted this wish, his response was a less than enthusiastic: "OK-don't overdo it."[58]

Carter attempted to assert his independence from his speechwriters for some time. However, shunning these writers proved costly. Carter was unhappy with the drafts of his November 1977 televised energy address in November 1977 and sat down and wrote the speech. The result would be considered one of his worst speeches. Fallows described that speech as a "turning point" for the speechwriting office because it demonstrated that Carter had trouble putting together a major speech by himself.[59] The tension between the President and the speechwriting staff is also evident in Fallows' memo to the President outlining his feelings about the redrafting of the speech. His memo opens: "With respect, I have to say that I liked this better before. It seems to me that, as the speech has been condensed, it has become too abrupt and has lost some of the narrative pace." A handwritten note from Stu Eizenstat attached to the memo says, "This is fine. Problem on energy speech was President totally rewrote your 4th draft near end of line."[60] In a memo to his staff, Fallows noted that "There is a silver lining in this abysmal energy speech. Carter sent a charming little note to Jody and me, saying we needed to clarify the rules for preparing speeches." Scrawled in the margins after the word "charming" is the note: "this word is used sarcastically – it was caustic in the extreme."[61] The fate of the energy speech forced Carter to make better use of the work of his speechwriters. However, the relationship was never good.

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[57] Memor to President-Elect Carter from Stu Eizenstat, RE: Organizing the White House Staff [nd], folder: "White House Organization, 11/76 – 1/77," Handwriting File, Office of Staff Secretary, Box 3, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 14-15.

[58] Memoradnum to the President, from Jim Fallows, January 21, 1977, folder: "1/24/77," Handwriting File, Office of Staff Secretary, Box 4, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library,

[59] James Fallows, Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 19-20.

[60] Memoranda to the President from Jim Fallows, November 5, 1977 (with attached memo and note between Eizenstat and Fallows, folder: ""Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 11/1/77-5/31/78," Subject File, Box 28,Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[61] Memoranda from "Jim," 11/8/77, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 11/1/77-5/31/78," Subject File, Box 28,Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

To revise the process, Jim Fallows suggested that the process begin with top staff (Powell, Jordan, Fallows and Eizenstat for domestic matters or Zbigniew Brzezinski for foreign policy issues) meeting to discuss the planned event. The President would then meet with the writers involved in preparing the speech to provide guidance on the tone or theme of the speech. From that meeting writers could put together a first draft that would be reviewed by the policy advisors before going to the President. That draft would be the focus of another short meeting between the Carter, the writers and policy people. After that the President would redraft the speech as he saw fit and then circulate the draft among top staff for comment.

This process would have been similar to those used by other administrations, except that Fallows' plan required two 15-20 minute meetings involving speechwriters talking directly to the President. Reflecting the natural rivalry between policy staff and speechwriters, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski proposed the speechwriters should work from a draft prepared by the policy staffs and send the draft to the president through the policy staff, rather than directly.[62] Brzeninski's proposal would insure that policy advisors controlled the process as much as possible.

Carter revised these plans extensively. He wanted to top staff to begin the process by helping the speechwriters put together a simple list of points to be made in the speech. This listing would be reviewed by the President who would then go over the outline with speechwriters and policy staff to explain his emphasis and answer any questions. Based on the outline and meeting Fallows or his writers would draft a speech. After "clearing the content" with the policy staff, the speechwriters would give the speech draft to the President and meet with him again to explain their choices of emphases or words. The President could then redraft the speech and then circulate it among top staff for suggestions before sending it back to the speechwriting office for typing and the press office for distribution.[63]

Gerald Rafshoon joined the White House as director of communication in the summer of 1978. Carter created the position of director of communication as a means of putting someone in charge of long-range planning in communications. Rafshoon was able to focus on broader themes rather than react to day-to-day press crises or the editing of minor speeches. The Nixon Administration had an office of communication that had become heavily involved in Nixon's defense against Watergate charges. Rafshoon did attempt to bring a more cohesive strategy to the White House.

[62] Memorandum for Jim Fallows from Zbigniew Brzezinski, November 11, 1977, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 11/1/77 – 5/31/78," Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Subject File, Box 28, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[63] Memorandum to the President from Jim Fallows, November 28, 1977, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 11/1/77 – 5/31/78," Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Subject File, Box 28, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

As Director of Communications, Rafshoon gave the speechwriting staff input on what the president wanted to say in a speech and provided assistance with editing speeches.[64] Rafshoon's presence helped free Carter from some speechwriting tasks. Rafshoon also helped coordinate the message coming out of the cabinet.

The number of people involved in a speech could become absurd. Joking with an interviewer, Gerald Rafshoon described a meeting of people reviewing Carter's energy address.

> I remember we had a meeting in Stu Eizenstat's office and it might have been twenty people in the meeting in this little office—oh, more than that, thirty people. And in this meeting, going over word for word, trying to edit the speech were the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Treasury, the Secretary of Interior, the had of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare]—I don't know, were you in the meeting? I mean, if anybody had run into you in the hall, they'd have brought you in, and you could have had input.[65]

Rafshoon's solution to this massive editing meeting was to make little use of the editing suggestions put forward. As Rafshoon notes, if he had used all the input, "the speech would have been a hodgepodge."[66]

The Carter style

Jimmy Carter presents an interesting dilemma for students of presidential speeches. Carter was not good at delivering prepared addresses and preferred working from talking notes. Carter lacked the natural speaking style to captivate the audience and did not have the temperament to spend a great deal of time practicing to improve his delivery. Carter faced frequent criticism of his speaking style with Senator Eugene McCarthy describing Carter as an "oratorical mortician."[67]

At the same time, if speaking your mind and being independent of speechwriters is what Americans wanted, they should have found it in Jimmy Carter. Carter was an aggressive editor and his comments on speech drafts are generally clear and direct. In response to one draft of the Energy speech that Gerald Rafshoon had been working on with several others, Carter returned the draft with the comment, "Jerry, this is the one of the worst speeches I have ever seen. After the first half-hour, nobody—no, after the first five pages nobody but the Mobil Oil public relations man would be awake." When Rafshoon read the President's comments back to speechwriter Rick Hertzberg, Hertzberg comment was, "He seems pretty

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[64] Gerald Rafshoon, Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 6-7.

[65] Gerald Rafshoon, Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 12.

[66] Gerald Rafshoon, Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 13.

[67] James T. Wooten, "The President as Orator: His Deliberate Style Appears to Run Counter to the Inspiration He Seeks to Instill," The New York Times, January 26, 1978.

sure of himself."[68] On the sixth draft of a speech to the United Steelworkers of America, Carter deleted about half of the paragraphs and extensively edited others.[69]

However, as one of his chief speechwriters James Fallows points out, part of Carter's enduring appeal was that he didn't sound like other politicians.[70] Carter grew up in the South at a time when much of the region's politics was dominated by politicians who used fiery rhetoric to stir racial hatred. Carter shared the public distrust of well-marketed candidates. Carter could have done a great deal to improve his communication style; the criticism of his predecessor was that Reagan was all style and no substance. While Carter could have obtained a better balance between the two, expecting all presidents to have the on-camera skills of a professional actor like Reagan is unrealistic.

Staff members struggled to get Carter to practice speeches. While Gerald Rafshoon managed to get him to practice more as his administration struggled, staffers had to be careful how they approached Carter on style. Jim Fallows assured the president that substance would remain more important than style: "I am not talking about anything illicit, underhanded, corrupting, or unfair… The only weapon we have in these matters is our ideas, and I think we must do a better job of giving our ideas a chance to speak for themselves."[71]

Fallows pressed Carter to put more preparation into each speech to insure that the speech went better and that the press covered the themes that the White House wanted. Fallows became concerned that press coverage of Carter's speeches focused more on the logistics and atmospherics of speeches than in what was said. Fallows outlined his reasons for doing more planning in an October 1977 memo to the President.

> If we don't do the planning, chances are slim that the reporters will emphasize what we want to get across. But if we do plan – by releasing a text, explaining the parts we think are important, giving the reporters a few hours to prepare – we improve the odds for favorable substantive coverage. We do so for several reasons:
>
> * it makes it easier on the reporters (they can follow the text as you speak, rather than desperately taking shorthand);
>
> *it gives them more time to plan, think over, and write their stories;
>
> *it enables us to highlight the points we are most eager to push;

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[68] Gerald Rafshoon, Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 11-12

[69] Draft Address at the Convention of the United Steelworkers of America, 9/19/78, Draft 36, folder: "Speeches and addresses [O/A 6317] [2]," box 280, Eizenstat Files, Domestic Policy Staff, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[70] James Fallows, Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 23.

[71] Memorandum for the President from Jim Fallows, October 25, 1977, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 11/1/77 – 5/31/78," Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Subject File, Box 28, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 2.

* it allows us to phrase things in exactly the form we want to see quoted.[72]

Carter's staff worried that his impromptu remarks tended to get the most attention and drew reporters' coverage away from the planned purpose of a trip. Doolittle urged the President to avoid the overuse of extemporizing speeches, even though they were his strength. "You are extraordinarily good at impromptu speaking, and plainly more comfortable with it than with a prepared text. But it's the wrong piece of equipment for formal occasions. While Arthur Ashe would no doubt feel more comfortable on the golf course with a racket in his hand, he would do better with a nine-iron."[73]

In 1980 Gerald Rafshoon also observed that the political world and/or the needs of the American people had changed since Carter came to office noting, "Your natural style – low-key, soft spoken, gentleness – was perfect for 1976. People were looking for the antithesis of Richard Nixon – a non-politician. In 1980 they're looking for a leader." In a five-page memo Rafshoon urges the President to adapt his style. Carter resisted changes in his style. As they approached the 1980 elections, Rafshoon drafted a memo urging the President to change how he portrayed himself.

> People in 1980 are going to vote for whomever they think has the best chance to lead us out of our troubles. They're going to make that decision based on very subtle perceptual factors. (Margaret Thacher realized this and got professional help to improve her style – to great effect.) I hope that you won't be deceived because of your success in 1976 that all your critics on this score are wrong. And I hope that you won't be too proud or committed to "just being yourself" that you won't take the relatively small, cosmetic steps necessary to convey the accurate impression of your leadership.[74]

Carter proved resistant to many of the speechwriters' plans. In a memo urging the President to reevaluate his style, Jerry Rafshoon warned Carter, "I know you think it's phony and that you're fine the way you are but that pride is, by far, your greatest political danger."[75] Rafshoon also warned Carter that

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[72] Memorandum for the President from Jim Fallows, October 25, 1977, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 11/1/77 – 5/31/78," Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Subject File, Box 28, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

[73] Memorandum to the President from Jerry Doolittle, October 25, 1977, folder: "Speeches, Preparation of [Guidance] 11/1/77 – 5/31/78," Presidential Speechwriters, Staff Office Files, Subject File, Box 28, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 2.

[74] Memorandum for the President from Jerry Rafshoon re: Style [nd], file: "Memoranda for Jerry Rafshoon, June, July & August, 1979," Box 28, Rafshoon Files, Domestic Policy Staff, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 5.

[75] Memorandum for the President from Jerry Rafshoon re: Style [nd], file: "Memoranda for Jerry Rafshoon, June, July & August, 1979," Box 28, Rafshoon Files, Domestic Policy Staff, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 2.

his inability to speak effectively was "the single greatest reason (under our control) why your Presidency has not been more successful than it has."[76]

Carter's disdain for slogans inhibited his speechwriters' ability to develop speeches with strong, memorable themes. For example, the 1978 state of the Union went through several drafts but it didn't have a broad message that would embrace Carter's philosophy and approach to governing. Rick Hertzberg, had become head speechwriter, suggested the "New Foundations" theme that would describe what Carter was trying to do in both foreign and domestic policy. The idea of the "new foundations" theme was that the administration was going back to basics and laying the foundation for a better future. Carter liked the label enough to allow it to appear 12 times in his state of the union. As Hertzberg predicted, the "New Foundations" label was ridiculed. However, he saw this as a sign of success since Kennedy's New Frontier and FDR's New Deal had initially faces similar criticism. While many in the White House urged sticking to the slogan, Carter was not committed to the label. Carter effectively killed the label when he denied during a press conference that this was his new slogan

In a draft memo to Carter, Jerry Rafshoon argued that not only did an emphasis on "image" not undermine the integrity of issue stands, the proper use of style could serve the advancement of issues.

> On the merits you have a good case. Unfortunately, the press and the public pay little attention to the merits. You're going to have to start looking, talking and acting more like a leader if you're to be successful – even it it's artificial. Look at it this way: changing your positions on issues to get votes is wrong; changing your style (like the part of your hair) in order to be effective is just smart, and, in the long run, morally good.[77]

While the Carter White House generally lacked the dramatic personal conflicts seen in the Ford White House, the lack of a speechwriter with the clout to give the speechwriting process a cohesive direction helped contribute to Carter's limited effectiveness in his formal speeches. Carter would try to serve as speechwriter even though he lacked the time and inclination to spend his energies polishing speeches.[78]

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[76] Memorandum for the President from Jerry Rafshoon re: Style [nd], file: "Memoranda for Jerry Rafshoon, June, July & August, 1979," Box 28, Rafshoon Files, Domestic Policy Staff, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 3-4.

[77] Memorandum for the President from Jerry Rafshoon re: Style [nd], file: "Memoranda for Jerry Rafshoon, June, July & August, 1979," Box 28, Rafshoon Files, Domestic Policy Staff, Staff Office Files, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 2.

[78] Given his publication of a book of poetry, one may speculate whether or not Carter lacked the aptitude.

Data and Methods

We have people in the White House… who aren't there representing the President to the country. They are representing the country to the President. That's not what the White House staff should be.[79]

Theodore Sorensen

The battles over presidential speech in the White House can be viewed as a form of rhetorical pluralism in which different factions battle for control over presidential rhetoric. As is the case with pluralism in general, the struggles of rhetorical pluralism reflect personal, interest group, bureaucratic, and even geographic conflicts. Terry Moe describes the institutions of the presidency in terms of protecting "a maze of supporting expectations and relations."[80] Within the walls of the White House, these forces feel free. While generally out of sight, these battles can be seen in the changes to drafts of speeches.

While descriptions of the process and comments from speechwriters suggest that the process has an impact on the president's rhetoric, some means of measuring the impact is needed. It is not possible to create a "control group" of speeches that that would contain only the words the president would choose without any assistance to see what kind of speech each president would write without speechwriters. Rules on human experimentation prevent social scientists from locking presidents in a room and forcing them to write speeches. However, we can attempt to compliment our descriptions of the speechwriting process by examining how drafts of speeches change as they pass from office to office in the White House. If the president were in full control of the process or if the process were in the hands of one set of actors with one shared perspective, we would expect to see the speech change little over the course of the drafting process or that the changes in the rhetoric would be a consistent evolution. If, on the other hand, there were many divergent forces with a variety of perspectives, we would expect that the rhetoric would be volatile as the speech went through the various drafts with the rhetoric shifting back in forth in a kind of rhetorical tug of war over control of the speech.   Such instability would provide some evidence that the steps in the process have an impact and that the process of reviewing speeches has an impact on presidential rhetoric

To compare the process in the Kennedy, Ford, and Carter Administrations, a few speeches from each administration were selected for detailed analysis. The cases for the Kennedy administration were the inaugural address, his December speech to the National Association of Manufacturers, the speech at Rice

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[79] Bradley H. Patterson Jr. <u>The White House Staff: Inside the West Wing and Beyond</u>, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Press, 2000, 173.

[80] Terry M. Moe, "The Politicized Presidency," in <u>The New Directions in American Politics</u>, John E. Chubb and Paul E. Peterson, editors, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1985, 241.

University discussing the space program, his commencement address at Yale, and the 1962 State of the Union Address. The five speeches from the Ford administration selected were his first address to Congress, his announcement of the Nixon pardon, his energy address on May 27, 1975, his bicentennial speech at Independence Hall on July 4, 1976, and his 1976 State of the Union message.[81] The six speeches utilized for the Carter administration are his inaugural address, his speech at the dedication of the John F. Kennedy Library, his July 17, 1979 Address to the Nation (commonly referred to as the "Malaise" speech), his Farewell address, and the 1978 and 1979 State of the Union Addresses. Including six speeches from the Carter administration allow for the analysis to be done with and without the Malaise speech. Inclusion of the Malaise speech is somewhat problematic because the speech changed purposes as it developed, meaning that the changes in rhetoric could results from changes in the goals of the speech rather than simply the process.

Drafts of these speeches were photocopied from the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, the Gerald R. Ford Library in Ann Arbor, and the Carter Library in Atlanta. The drafts were then put into machine-readable form and then analyzed using DICTION software. Because the drafts were often hand-written or included hand-written revisions, automated scanning was not sufficient and many passages had to be manually typed.

These cases do not reflect a random sample of speeches. In fact, speeches that received more staff attention were more likely to be chosen for study since they produced the multiple speech drafts required for comparison. While having a random sample of the speeches of each administration might be desirable, such a sampling is not possible or practical. The drafts of some speeches do not exist. Even if a random sample was possible, the time and expense required to gather, copy, and code multiple drafts of enough speeches to be a reasonable sample is not practical.

The DICTION software used in this study was initially developed by Roderick Hart for his 1984 book, Verbal Style and the Presidency,[82] and has been refined in the 20 years since. The software evaluates the use of language by looking for the frequency of words from thirty-one different sets of words or dictionaries designed to pick up elements of style. Each dictionary (described briefly in Appendix A) yields a semantic score based on the frequency of words from that dictionary. While some of these narrow scores may be of interest to the researcher, the broader master variables were used to make sure that changes in narrow components of the rhetoric do not receive too much attention. The

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[81] Ford's brief statement upon being sworn in was not included because sufficient drafts were not available.

[82] Roderick P. Hart, Verbal Style and the Presidency: A Computer-Based Analysis, Orlando: Academic Press, Inc., 1984. For a detailed description of the function of the DICTION software see pages 14-24 and Appendices A-D.

DICTION software uses scores based on these specific measures to construct five "master variables" that summarize the tone of speeches in more general terms:[83]

> CERTAINTY: Language that reflect resoluteness, inflexibility, completeness, and a tendency to speak from a position of authority or rank.
> Formula: [Tenacity + Leveling + Collectives + Insistence.] - [Numerical Terms + Ambivalence + Self Reference + Variety]
>
> OPTIMISM: Language that supports some person, group, concept or event or highlights their positive qualities.
> *Formula: [Praise + Satisfaction + Inspiration] - [Blame + Hardship + Denial]*
>
> ACTIVITY: Language featuring movement, change, the implementation of ideas.
> Formula: [Aggression + Accomplishment + Communication + Motion] - [Cognitive Terms + Passivity + Embellishment]
>
> REALISM: Language describing tangible, immediate, recognizable matters that affect people's everyday lives.
> Formula: [Familiarity + Spatial Awareness + Temporal Awareness + Present Concern + Human Interest + Concreteness] - [Past Concern + Complexity]
>
> COMMONALITY SCORE: Language highlighting the agreed-upon values of and rejecting idiosyncratic modes of engagement.
> *Formula: [Centrality + Cooperation + Rapport] - [Diversity + Exclusion + Liberation]*

The DICTION software includes a database that allows the user to compare the speeches analyzed to semantic score a variety of speech types. The "normative profile" utilized for this study is "public policy speeches," a profile based on DICTION scores from 615 policy speeches delivered by presidents from Harry Truman to Bill Clinton. These speeches closely match the kind of presidential addresses studied here. The software generates a "normal range" that spans those scores within ±1 standard deviation of the mean of scores from these 615 speeches in Hart's database.

The normal range was originally used in Hart's study of presidential communication to compare speeches and evaluate how each speech compares to other speeches by other presidents. However, the range can be used in this study to construct a standard of between drafts of the same speech. For example, based upon the 615 presidential speeches in Hart's database, the normal range for the "Commonality" variable ranges from 49.91 to 52.37. The difference between these two (2.46) can be interpreted as the amount of variation normally found across different presidential speeches. This variable labeled *normal variation* allows us to focus on the amount of change in rhetoric and to more easily summarize the data so that change across drafts and rhetorical characteristics can be more easily compared. Normal variation, the scores for individual master variables, and other scores for all speech drafts studied are reported in Appendices B through D.

The *normal variation* measure is similar to ANOVA analysis that compares variation across groups to variation within groups. In some regards, the comparison of different drafts of the same speech to a range

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[83] Roderick P. Hart, Michael V. Stanton and Tom A. Cox, <u>DICTION 5.0 The Text-Analysis Program-User's Manual</u>, Austin: Digitext, Inc., 2000, 32-37.

of speeches from different presidents sets a high standard. The possibility that the different versions of a single speech might vary more than speeches on a variety of policies promoted by different presidents speaking to different generations might seem remote. However placing impact of the internal forces of the White House next to the historical forces of all presidential speeches should make a compelling argument.

Results

The results of the content analysis of speech drafts can answer two questions in this paper. The first is how much rhetoric changes in the course of the speech drafting process. The second question, more specific to the rhetosclerosis argument, is *how* the rhetoric is impacted.

Stability of rhetoric

The first question that we should answer here is whether or not the president's rhetoric is altered by the process and whether or not the degree of change differs from administration to administration. If the institutionalization of the speechwriting has an impact, we would expect to find more shifts from draft to draft in the Ford and Carter speeches given the institutionalization that occurred during years after the Kennedy administration

In general, the process behind Kennedy's speeches seems to result in a stable and relatively orderly process in which speeches change little from draft to draft. Dramatic shifts in tone are generally rare.

Figure 1:
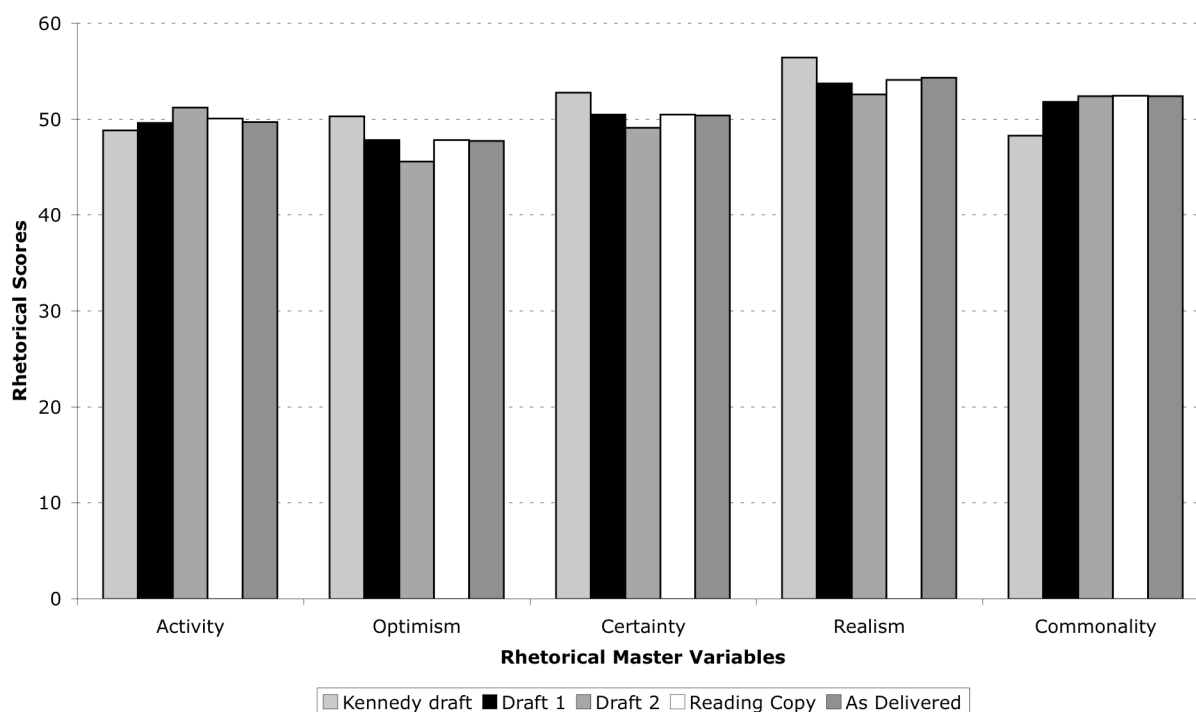**Kennedy's Inaugural Address by Draft**

Figure 1 reflects the scores of the five different drafts of Kennedy's inaugural address. As the figure indicates, the scores change little suggesting that the language of the speeches changed little over the writing process. This result is especially interesting in that we can see scores for the first handwritten draft scribbled by Kennedy, through several typed drafts (labeled "Draft 1" and "Draft 2"), and into the reading copy typed for Kennedy to take to the podium.

While the consistency of the scores for Kennedy's address suggests stability of rhetoric, we need to be sure that stability observed is a product of stable rhetoric rather than a lack of sensitivity in the measures or DICTION software. We can make use of several different comparisons to judge the stability of speech drafts.

One possible standard is to compare the fluctuations in drafts to presidential speeches overall. Figure 2 charts the shift in optimism scores for Ford's first address to Congress. The rhetoric drops into the "normal" range for presidential speeches as the rhetoric moves from a very optimistic first draft to a more typical tone as the speech moves through the various internal drafts.

Figure 2:
Optimism Scores by Speech
Draft
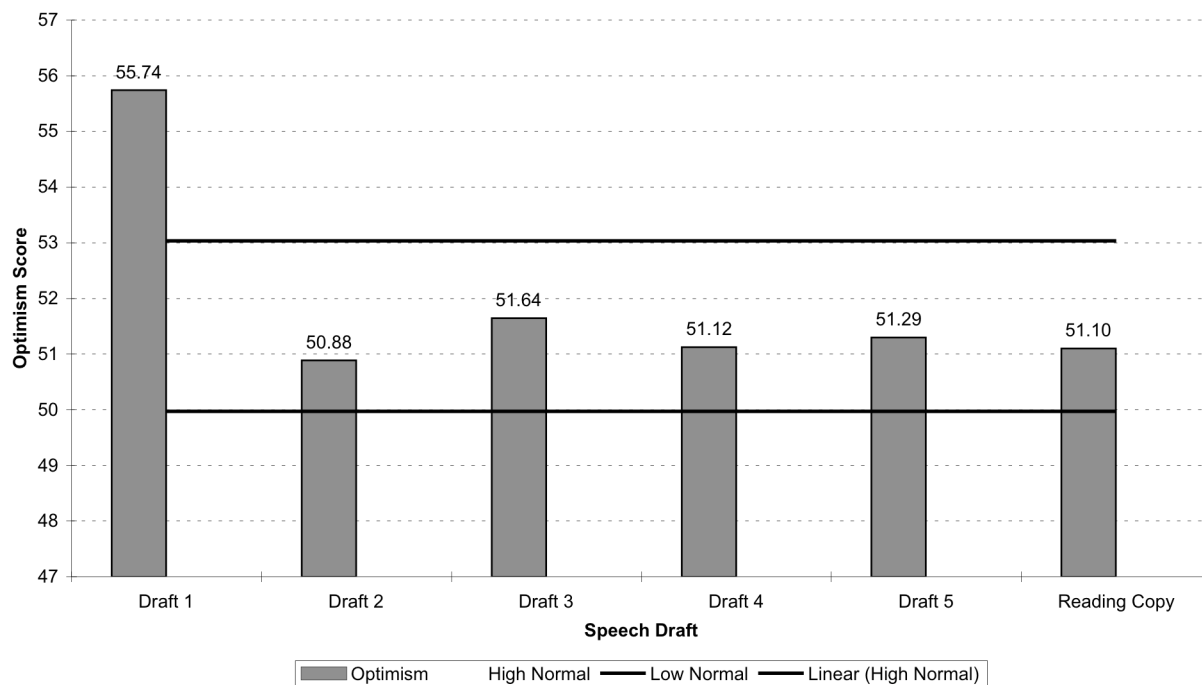
Since the focus of this study is change, we need a measure that focuses on the degree of change between drafts of speeches. While the "normal variation" measure can help us create a standard across speeches, one further refinement is needed. Comparisons across different rhetorical scores are difficult because, while these variables were computed in a way to have similar means across all kinds of rhetoric,

presidential speeches will have different means and deviations. For example, while the *activity* score for presidential speeches normally ranges by over five points (from 47.25 to 52.53), the *commonality* score varies only 2.46 (from 49.91 to 52.37). To standardize measure of the changes in these scores relative to other presidential speech scores specific to each variable, the variation between speech values was divided by the *normal variation* for that variable. This created a *percentage of normal variation* measure that compares the variation on this characteristic of each speech to the degree to which that score varies across all presidential speeches. These measures for all five Ford speeches are charted in Figure 3.

Figure 3:
Shift in Rhetorical as Percentage of Normal Variation
Ford Administration
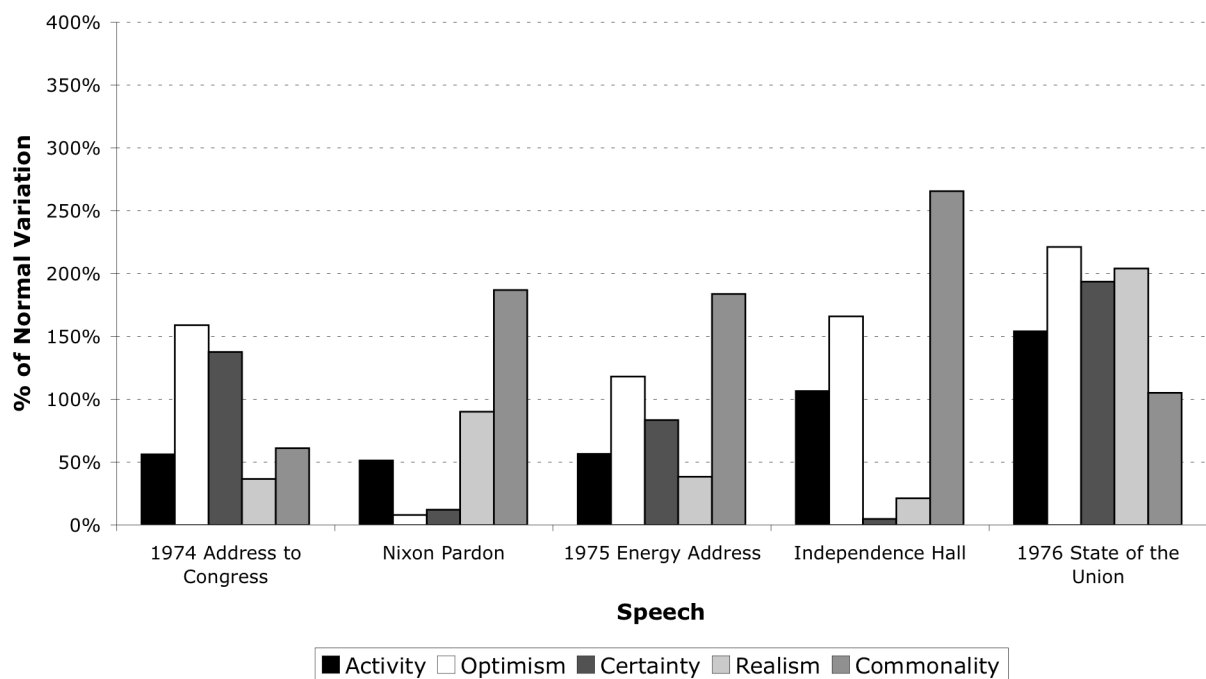
All speeches exhibit some variation great than 100%. The changes in the 1976 State of the Union Address are especially interesting given the significance of the speech. Months of planning go into the president's annual address and suggested language and drafts of entire sections are solicited from all over the executive branch. As Figure 3 indicates, all five of the characteristics vary by 100 percent or more, indicating that by all measures the 1976 address varied more across its various drafts than different presidential addresses generally do.

Figure 5 charts similar number for the Carter administration.[84] At times, the Carter speeches reveal even more variation than the Fords speeches. However, these most extreme results should be approached

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[84] To facilitate comparisons, the graphs have been placed on identical scales.

with caution given the presence of Carter "malaise" speech since that speech was originally as an energy address before turning into Carter's speech bemoaning the nation's mind-set. Since the intention of the speech changed over the course of the drafting process, higher levels of changes than other speeches should be expected.

Figure 5:
Shift in Rhetorical Scores by Speech
Carter Administration
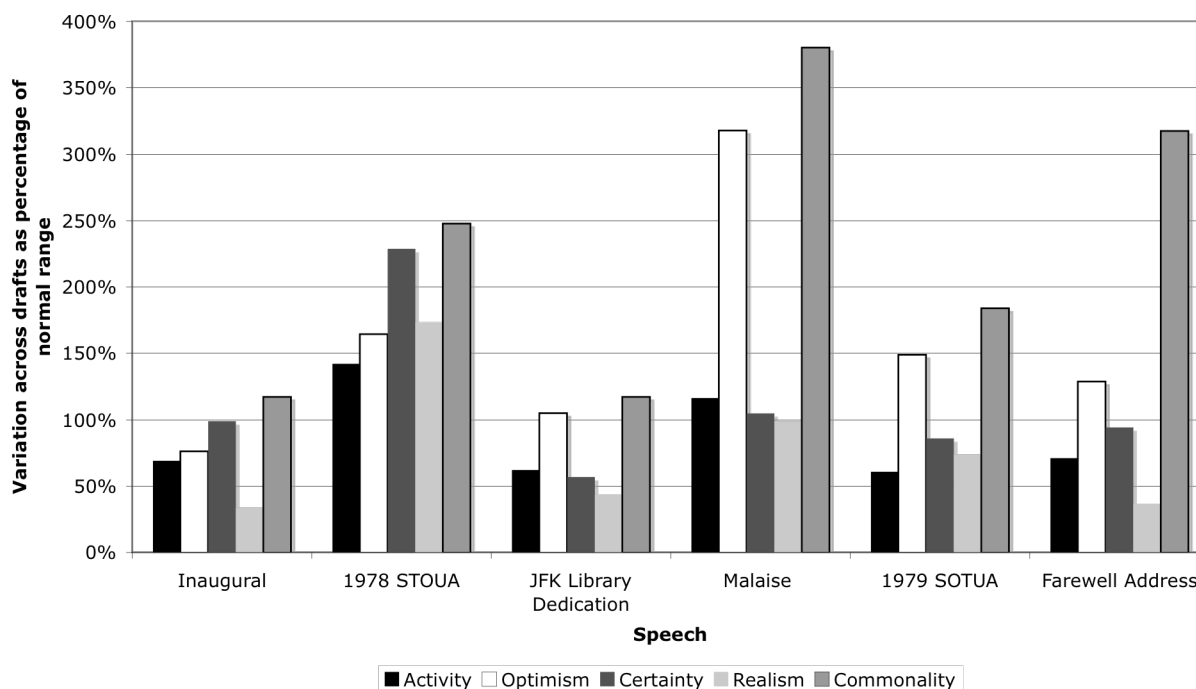
In sharp contrast to the Carter and Ford data, the Kennedy speeches seem remarkably stable. As Figure 6 shows, Kennedy's speeches generally don't exceed 100% of normal variation with the highest levels going just beyond 150% on three measures. This serves to confirm the hypothesis that change is more common after the institutionalized process brought more people and perspectives into the process.

If we average these shifts over the drafts of the two administrations, the Kennedy speeches average much less than the variations in the Ford speeches. On average, the scores for the master variables in the Kennedy speeches shift 65 percent while the Ford and Carter speeches shift an average of 125 percent and 128 percent respectively.[85] The differences in the fluctuations of the Kennedy and Ford scores provide further encouragement that the methods are capable of detecting systematic differences.

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[85] If the "malaise" speech is excluded the average variation for Carter speeches drops to 117%. Similarly, if a partial draft of Kennedy's speech at Rice submitted by NASA is included, the average variation for Kennedy rises to 86%.

Figure 6:
Shift in Rhetorical as Percentage of Normal Variation
Kennedy Administration
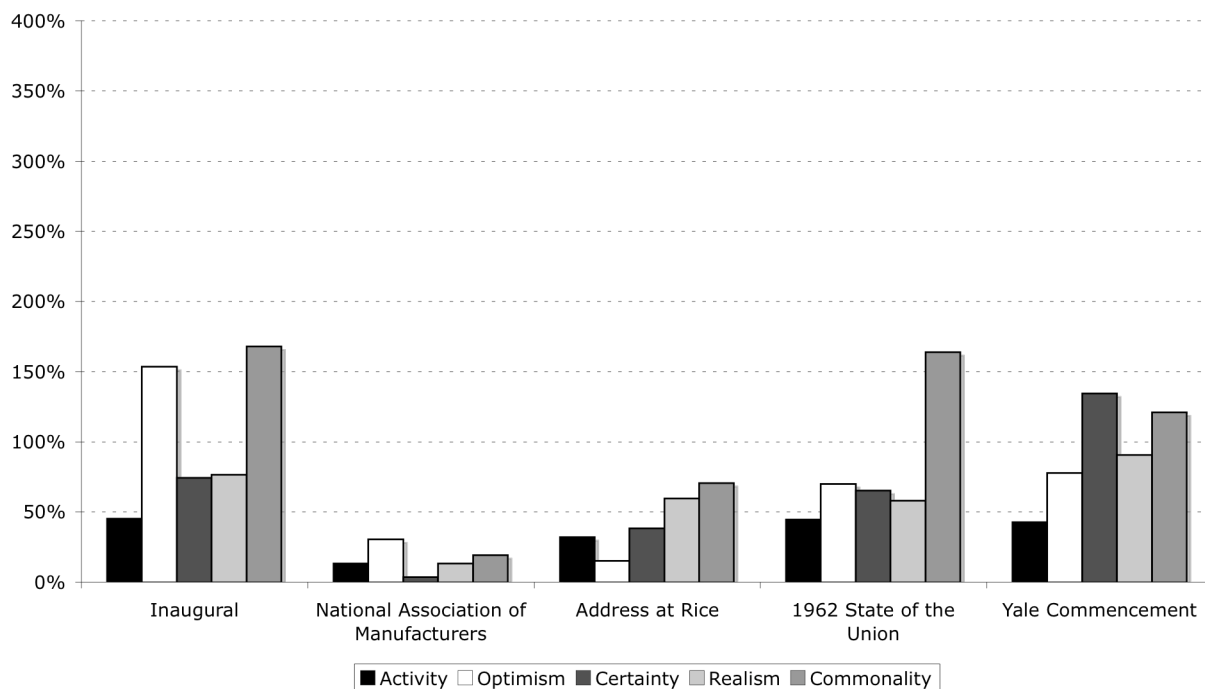
While this use of such rhetorical variables is new to the discipline, the results suggest that the DICTION software is sensitive enough to pick up variations between drafts. Further, measures based on a broader database of presidential speeches, comparisons between the Kennedy, Ford, and Carter administrations, and comparison of a draft from outside the White House all suggest that the variations detected are valid and significant.

Overall, the shifts in presidential rhetoric over the course of the process indicate that the institutions involved in speechwriting had a much greater effect on presidential rhetoric during the Ford and Carter Administrations than under Kennedy. The degree to which some aspects of the speech change from draft to draft suggests that the process of speechwriting is not a simple process in which a speech is drafted and refined. The evidence here indicates that presidential rhetoric was often dramatically altered during the speechwriting process.

Shift in tone

While the evidence presented so far clearly indicates that speeches change as they move through the drafting and clearing process, the direction of that change is clear. Because the notion of "rhetosclerosis" could take many meanings and measures, testing this particular hypothesis is, to say the least, ambiguous. However, if presidential speech is being diluted by the larger number of people in the speechwriting

process, we might reasonably hypothesize that optimism and certainty would be a victim, while realism would expand.

Analysis of the speech data gathered thus far yields little conclusive evidence for the rhetosclerosis hypothesis. On some speeches, the variables did perform according to expectations. However, shift in optimism and certainty were often quite small and more than occasionally in the wrong direction.

One of the barriers to developing more conclusive evidence is that the authorship of changes to speech drafts is often unknown or ambiguous. Often, speechwriters appear to have been drawing input from a variety of sources. Some speech drafts bring together the revisions proposed by everyone in the process. Because of this is it hard to isolate the impact of individuals and additional work is needed.

Conclusion

The speechwriting process today demands that the White House speechwriter be artist, diplomat, and manager. The creative skills of the ghostwriters find little daylight in the machinery of the modern speechwriting operation, and the presidency may suffer from the problem. One of the ironies of the White House speechwriting office is that while the numbers of writers has grown, few people would argue that presidential speech has gotten better.

The conflict with policy advisors is a recurring theme in interviews with White House speechwriters. Reviewing a book by Reagan speechwriter Peggy Noonan, Carter speechwriter James Fallows concedes that, "My sympathies are entirely with Noonan as she fights against the policy nerds, but it's easy to imagine them grinding their teeth about her 'delicate yet vital' prose."[86] Ford Speechwriter John Casserly described the process of watching a writer's prose ground up in the bureaucratic maze of departmental politics. After a meeting on an energy speech begins with Glen Schleede from the Domestic Policy Council showing up with a four and one-half page "insert" that would take up half of the time allocated for the speech and change the subject, Casserly watched the battle develop.

> I feel like a man watching an old tree being cut down. However, weather-beaten and battered, it seems to me that it has more integrity than the two men axing it down. Hugh [a OMB staffer] and Schleede are chopping hither and yon. A buzz-saw would be quicker. But now, paragraph by paragraph they cut into ERDA's projections for America's future energy. And they substitute caveats and compromise "lest the President's policies be misunderstood."

> Declarative sentences, filled with ifs, buts and maybes, become dishwater. The ringing pronunciations of a President become hollow sixty-word sentences, dangling with participles. Schleede and Hugh beam.

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[86] James Fallows, "White House Confidential: The top speechwriter for Reagan and Bush takes you behind her lines," The Washington Monthly, February 1990, 46.

As bureaucrats, they have done their jobs—protected their rear ends. In service to their President and the country, they have failed to communicate. That is my job."[87]

The data analyzed so far has not successfully revealed detailed patterns of presidential speech, the turbulence of presidential prose is clear. While the shifting rhetoric revealed by the analysis may be interesting in its own right, it is more valuable as a window into the power struggles within the White House, it may be more important in revealing the internal struggles of the White House as it tries to define the presidency. Presidential speech has generally been portrayed as power wielded against other political forces. What we can see of the presidency can be used to learn about political forces that are seldom, if ever, visible to the scholar.

The findings presented here can only provide the first bits of circumstantial evidence about these battles in the White House. The inclusion of data from more administrations will provide additional theoretical leverage and the use of different types of content analysis may yield insights into other areas of presidential speech. While offering only a few definitive answers, this paper demonstrates the viability of a type of data that can be used to tackle a broader range of questions as the number of cases expands and the measures are refined. While political science generally views the presidency as a monolithic entity with one motive and view of the political world, the results demonstrate that the White House is not of one mind.

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[87] John J. Casserly, 52.

Appendix A
DICTION Dictionary and Score Descriptions[88]

ACCOMPLISHMENT: Words that express completion of tasks (establish, finish, influence, proceed) and organized human behavior (motivated, influence, leader, manage). Includes capitalistic terms (buy, produce, sell), words related to expansion (grow, increase, generate, construction) and general functionality (handling, strengthen, succeed) and programmatic language (agenda, enacted, working, leadership).

AGGRESSION: Words that highlight competition and forceful action. This includes physical energy (blast, crash, collide), domination (conquest, attacking, dictatorships, violation), words associated with personal triumph (mastered, rambunctious, pushy), excess human energy (prod, poke, pound, shove), disassembly (dismantle , demolish , overturn, veto) and resistance (prevent, reduce, defend, curbed) are included.

AMBIVALENCE: Words expressing hesitation or uncertainty, implying a speaker's inability or unwillingness to commit to the verbalization being made. Included are hedges (allegedly, perhaps, might), statements of inexactness (almost, approximate, vague, somewhere) and confusion (baffled, puzzling, hesitate). Also included are words of restrained possibility (could, would) and mystery (dilemma, guess, suppose, seems).

BLAME: Terms designating social inappropriateness (mean, naive, sloppy, stupid) as well as downright evil (fascist, blood-thirsty, repugnant, malicious) compose this dictionary. In addition, adjectives describing unfortunate circumstances (bankrupt, rash, morbid, embarrassing) or unplanned vicissitudes (weary, nervous, painful, detrimental) are included. The dictionary also contains outright denigrations: cruel, illegitimate, offensive, and miserly.

CENTRALITY: Terms denoting institutional regularities and/or substantive agreement on core values. Included are indigenous terms (native, basic, innate) and designations of legitimacy (orthodox, decorum, constitutional, ratified), systematicity (paradigm, bureaucratic, ritualistic), and typicality (standardized, matter-of-fact, regularity). Also included are terms of congruence (conformity, mandate, unanimous), predictability (expected, continuity, reliable), and universality (womankind, perennial, landmarks).

COGNITIVE TERMS: Words referring to cerebral processes, both functional and imaginative. Included are modes of discovery (learn, deliberate, consider, compare) and domains of study (biology, psychology, logic, economics). The dictionary includes mental challenges (question, forget, re-examine, paradoxes), institutional learning practices (graduation, teaching, classrooms), as well as three forms of intellection: intuitional (invent, perceive, speculate, interpret), rationalistic (estimate, examine, reasonable, strategies), and calculative (diagnose, analyze, software, fact-finding).

COLLECTIVES: Singular nouns connoting plurality that function to decrease specificity. These words reflect a dependence on categorical modes of thought. Included are social groupings crowd, choir, team, humanity), task groups (army, congress, legislature, staff) and geographical entities (county, world, kingdom, republic).

COMMUNICATION: Terms referring to social interaction, both face-to-face (listen, interview, read, speak) and mediated (film, videotape, telephone, e-mail). The dictionary includes both modes of inter course (translate, quote , scripts, broadcast) and moods of intercourse (chat, declare , flatter, demand). Other terms refer to social actors (reporter, spokesperson, advocates, preacher) and a variety of social purposes (hint, rebuke, respond, persuade).

COMPLEXITY: A simple measure of the average number of characters-per-word in a given input file. Based on the idea that convoluted phrasings can make ideas abstract and implications unclear.

CONCRETENESS: A large dictionary possessing no thematic unity other than tangibility and materiality. Included are sociological units (peasants, African-Americans, Catholics), occupational groups (carpenter, manufacturer, policewoman), and political alignments (Communists, congressman, Europeans). Also incorporated are physical structures (courthouse, temple, store), forms of diversion (television, football, cd-rom), terms of accountancy

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[88] Roderick T. Hart, DICTION 5.0 Users Manual, Austin: Digitex, Inc., 2000, 32-37.

(mortgage, wages, finances), and modes of transportation (airplane, ship, bicycle). In addition, the dictionary includes body parts (stomach, eyes, lips), articles of clothing (slacks, pants, shirt), household animals (cat, insects, horse) and foodstuffs (wine, grain, sugar), and general elements of nature (oil, silk, sand).

COOPERATION: Terms designating behavioral interactions among people that often result in a group product. Included are designations of formal work relations (unions, schoolmates, caucus) and informal association s (chum, partner, cronies) to more intimate interactions (sisterhood, friendship, comrade). Also included are neutral interactions (consolidate, mediate, alignment), job-related tasks (network, detente, exchange), personal involvement (teamwork, sharing, contribute), and self-denial (public-spirited, care-taking, self-sacrifice).

DENIAL: A dictionary consisting of standard negative contractions (aren't, shouldn't, don't), negative functions words (nor, not, nay), and terms designating null sets (nothing, nobody, none).

DIVERSITY: Words describing individuals or groups of individuals differing from the norm. Such distinctiveness may be comparatively neutral (inconsistent, contrasting, non- conformist) but it can also be positive (exceptional, unique, individualistic) and negative (illegitimate, rabble-rouser, extremist). Functionally, heterogeneity may be an asset (far-flung, dispersed, diffuse) or a liability (factionalism, deviancy, quirky) as can its characterizations: rare vs. queer, variety vs. jumble, distinctive vs. disobedient.

EMBELLISHMENT: A selective ratio of adjectives to verbs. Embellishment is calculated according to the following formula: [Praise + Blame +1] ÷ [Present Concern + Past Concern +1]

EXCLUSION: A dictionary describing the sources and effects of social isolation. Such seclusion can be phrased passively (displaced, sequestered) as well as positively (self-contained, self-sufficient) and negatively (outlaws, repudiated). Moreover, it can result from voluntary forces (secede, privacy) and involuntary forces (ostracize, forsake, discriminate) and from both personality factors (small-mindedness, loneliness) and political factors (right-wingers, nihilism). Exclusion is often a dialectical concept: hermit vs. derelict, refugee vs. pariah, discard vs. spurn).

FAMILIARITY: Consists of a selected number words that are the most common words in the English language. Included are common prepositions (across, over, through), demonstrative pronouns (this, that) and interrogative pronouns (who, what), and a variety of particles, conjunctions and connectives (a, for, so).

HARDSHIP: This dictionary contains natural disasters (earthquake, starvation, tornado, pollution), hostile actions (killers, bankruptcy, enemies, vices) and censurable human behavior (infidelity, despots, betrayal). It also includes unsavory political outcomes (injustice, slavery, exploitation, rebellion) as well as normal human fears (grief, unemployment, died, apprehension) and in capacities (error, cop-outs, weakness).

HUMAN INTEREST: Includes standard personal pronouns (he, his, ourselves, them), family members and relations (cousin, wife, grandchild, uncle), and generic terms (friend, baby, human, persons) because concentrating on people and their activities gives rhetoric a life-like quality.

INSISTENCE: A measure of the repetition of key terms that may indicate a preference for presented a limited or ordered view. All words occurring three or more times that function as nouns or noun-derived adjectives are identified and the following calculation performed: [Number of Eligible Words x Sum of their Occurrences] ÷ 10.

INSPIRATION: Abstract virtues deserving of universal respect. Most of the terms in this dictionary are nouns isolating desirable moral qualities (faith, honesty, self-sacrifice, virtue) as well as attractive personal qualities (courage, dedication, wisdom, mercy). Social and political ideals are also included: patriotism, success, education, and justice.

LEVELING: A dictionary of words that build a sense of completeness and assurance used by ignoring individual differences. Included are totalizing terms (everybody, anyone, each, fully), adverbs of permanence (always, completely, inevitably, consistently), and resolute adjectives (unconditional, consummate, absolute, open-and-shut).

LIBERATION: Terms describing the maximizing of individual choice (autonomous, open-minded, options) and the rejection of social conventions (unencumbered, radical, released). Liberation is motivated by both personality factors (eccentric, impetuous, flighty) and political forces (suffrage, liberty, freedom, emancipation) and may produce dramatic outcomes (exodus, riotous, deliverance) or subdued effects (loosen, disentangle,

outpouring). Liberatory terms also admit to rival characterizations: exemption vs. loophole, elope vs. abscond, uninhibited vs. outlandish.

MOTION: Terms connoting human movement (bustle, job, lurch, leap), physical processes (circulate, momentum, revolve, twist), journeys (barnstorm, jaunt, wandering, travels), speed (nimble, zip), and modes of transit (ride, fly, glide, swim).

NUMERICAL TERMS: Any sum, date, or product specifying the facts in a given case. The presumption is that these term hyper-specify a claim and detracting from its universality.

PASSIVITY: Words ranging from neutrality to inactivity. Includes terms of compliance (allow, tame), docility (submit, contented), and cessation (arrested, refrain, yielding). This dictionary also contains references to inertness (backward, immobile, inhibit), disinterest (unconcerned, nonchalant, stoic), and tranquility (quietly, sleepy).

PAST CONCERN: The past- tense forms of the verbs contained in the Present Concern dictionary.

PRAISE: Affirmations of some person, group, or abstract entity. Included are adjectives describing important social qualities (dear, delightful, witty), physical qualities (mighty, handsome, beautiful), intellectual qualities (shrewd, bright, reasonable), entrepreneurial qualities (successful, conscientious, renowned), and moral qualities (faithful, good, noble).

PRESENT CONCERN: This dictionary includes a selective list of present-tense verbs and is not topic-specific. This score points to general physical activity (cough, taste, sing, take), social operations (canvass, touch, govern, meet), and task-performance (make, cook, print, paint).

RAPPORT: This dictionary describes attitudinal similarities among groups of people. Included are terms of affinity (congenial, camaraderie, companion), assent (approve, vouched, warrants), deference (tolerant, willing, permission), and id entity (equivalent, resemble, consensus).

SATISFACTION: Terms associated with positive affective states (cheerful, passionate, happiness), with moments of undiminished joy (thanks, smile, welcome) and pleasurable diversion (excited, fun, lucky), or with moments of triumph (celebrating, pride, auspicious).

SELF-REFERENCE: All first-person references. This dictionary track how often the locus of action appears to be the speaker and not in the world at large.

SPATIAL AWARENESS: Terms referring to geographical entities and physical distances. Included are general geographical terms (abroad, elbow-room, local, outdoors) as well as references to specific locations such as nations. Also included are politically defined locations (county, fatherland, municipality, ward), points on the compass (east, southwest), terms of scale (kilometer, map, spacious), and other references to geographic terms (latitude, coastal, border, snowbelt). This dictionary also measure as well as quality (vacant, out-of-the-way, disoriented) and change (pilgrimage, migrated, frontier) in geography.

TEMPORAL AWARENESS: Terms that fix a person, idea, or event within a specific time-interval, thereby signaling a concern for concrete and practical matters. The dictionary designates literal time (century, instant, mid-morning) as well as metaphorical designations (lingering, seniority, nowadays), calendrical terms (autumn, year-round, weekend), elliptical terms (spontaneously, postpone, transitional), and judgmental terms (premature, obsolete, punctual).

TENACITY: These verbs that connote confidence and totality. This dictionary analyzes all uses of the verb "to be" (is, am, will, shall), three definitive verb forms (has, must, do) and their variants, as well as all associated contraction.

VARIETY: This measure divides the number of different words in a passage by the passage's total words. A high score reflects an avoidance of overstatement and a preference for precise statements.

Appendix B

Rhetorical Scores for all Kennedy White House Drafts

Normative Group-615 Presidential Speeches					
Draft	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Normal Range-Low	47.25	49.97	47.68	48.42	49.91
Normal Range-High	52.53	53.03	52.59	53.47	52.37
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
Inaugural Address 1/20/1961					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Kennedy draft	48.81	50.25	52.71	56.38	48.26
Draft 1	49.56	47.80	50.44	53.70	51.79
Draft 2	51.19	45.56	49.07	52.53	52.38
Reading Copy	50.01	47.81	50.45	54.07	52.39
As Delivered	49.68	47.68	50.36	54.29	52.35
Maximum shift	2.38	4.69	3.64	3.85	4.13
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	45%	**153%**	74%	76%	**168%**
National Association of Manufacturers 12/6/1961					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft 1	52.43	49.03	49.23	51.12	50.18
Reading Copy	51.73	49.96	49.25	50.48	50.65
As Delivered	51.91	49.43	49.08	50.45	50.53
Maximum shift	0.7	0.93	0.17	0.67	0.47
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	13%	30%	3%	13%	19%
Rice University Address 9/12/1962					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft 1	50.15	50.06	49.32	50.93	49.7
Draft 2	50.82	50.1	47.44	50.28	50.64
NASA Draft	40.76	59.03	47.34	49.91	48.15
Reading Copy	50.76	50.16	47.46	50.06	50.63
As Delivered	49.13	50.52	47.92	53.06	48.91
Maximum shift including NASA Draft	10.06	8.97	1.98	3.15	2.49
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	**191%**	**293%**	40%	62%	**101%**
Maximum shift excluding NASA draft	1.69	0.46	1.88	3	1.73
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	32%	15%	38%	59%	70%
1962 State of the Union Address 1/11/1962					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft #1	47.79	49.89	46.05	49.26	50.85
Reading Copy	50.13	47.75	48.94	52.18	46.82
As Delivered	49.9	47.92	49.24	50.69	47.65
Maximum shift	2.34	2.14	3.19	2.92	4.03
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	44%	70%	65%	58%	**164%**
Yale Commencement Address 6/11/1962					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Sorensen Draft #1	49.48	48.55	49.10	47.59	48.75
Sorensen Draft #2	47.84	46.20	50.01	51.34	50.70
Sorensen Draft #3	49.23	48.09	48.80	49.51	48.74
Undated draft	47.30	46.61	51.69	48.25	50.95
Schlesinger Draft #1	47.24	47.56	45.10	48.19	51.09
Schlesinger Draft #2	47.85	46.17	49.84	51.19	50.70
Reading Copy	49.35	47.66	49.04	50.43	48.12
As Delivered	48.68	46.40	49.78	52.16	49.28
Maximum shift	2.24	2.38	6.59	4.57	2.97
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	42%	78%	**134%**	90%	**121%**

Appendix C

Rhetorical Scores for all Ford White House Drafts

Normative Group-615 Presidential Speeches					
	Activity	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Normal Range-Low	47.25	49.97	47.68	48.42	49.91
Normal Range-High	52.53	53.03	52.59	53.47	52.37
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
1974 Address to Congress 8/12/1974					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft #1	47.84	55.74	58.50	52.84	55.16
Draft #2	49.06	51.64	51.76	54.53	54.09
Draft #3	49.09	50.88	51.78	54.68	53.94
Draft #4	50.78	51.12	54.13	54.32	55.44
Draft #5	50.79	51.29	54.00	54.00	55.35
Reading Copy	50.70	51.10	53.68	53.99	55.19
Maximum shift	2.95	4.86	6.74	1.84	1.5
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	56%	**159%**	**137%**	36%	61%
Nixon Pardon Speech 9/8/1974					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft #1	41.70	49.85	50.02	51.83	50.04
Reading Copy	44.16	50.05	50.61	47.54	45.45
As Delivered	44.40	50.09	50.57	47.29	45.83
Maximum shift	2.70	0.24	0.59	4.54	4.59
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	51%	8%	12%	90%	**187%**
Energy Address 5/27/1975					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft X	50.33	48.74	57.25	51.71	50.87
Draft #1	51.64	49.24	53.17	50.77	52.28
Draft #2	53.30	46.46	55.67	52.34	49.66
Reading Copy	51.94	45.63	55.99	52.69	47.76
As Delivered	52.48	45.94	53.37	52.61	47.83
Maximum shift	2.97	3.61	4.08	1.92	4.52
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	56%	**118%**	83%	38%	**184%**
Bicentennial Speech-Independence Hall 7/ 4/1976					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft B1	46.78	59.44	55.61	52.26	50.03
Draft B2	49.97	54.37	55.46	51.96	48.64
Draft D1	52.39	55.11	55.56	51.20	54.32
As Delivered	50.42	54.64	55.69	52.09	47.79
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
Maximum shift	5.61	5.07	0.23	1.06	6.53
As % of normal variation	**106%**	**166%**	5%	21%	**265%**
1976 State of the Union Address 1/12/1976					
Draft	*Activity*	*Optimism*	*Certainty*	*Realism*	*Commonality*
Draft #1	49.55	53.66	58.59	52.85	50.60
Draft #3	47.64	50.91	49.09	49.45	51.91
Draft #6	42.84	57.67	54.53	59.75	51.80
Draft #8	50.97	52.30	56.47	54.16	51.27
As Delivered	50.08	53.32	56.34	53.69	53.18
Maximum shift	8.13	6.76	9.50	10.30	2.58
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	**154%**	**221%**	**193%**	**204%**	**105%**

Appendix D

Rhetorical Scores for all Carter White House Drafts

Normative Group-615 Presidential Speeches

	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Normal Range-Low	47.25	49.97	47.68	48.42	49.91
Normal Range-High	52.53	53.03	52.59	53.47	52.37
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46

Inaugural Address 1/20/1977

Draft	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Draft #1	45.86	54.50	52.82	50.53	53.34
Hertzberg Draft #1	47.84	52.17	50.46	49.73	50.87
Draft #2	47.95	53.99	50.16	50.31	52.29
Draft #2	48.14	53.36	49.70	48.83	50.88
Draft #2a	46.94	53.71	50.18	48.85	52.65
Draft #3	46.61	53.65	47.96	49.78	51.33
Draft #4	46.99	52.83	48.24	50.13	50.92
Reading Copy	46.01	53.22	48.29	49.98	50.66
As Delivered	44.50	53.43	48.71	49.97	50.46
Maximum shift	3.64	2.33	4.86	1.70	2.88
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	69%	76%	99%	34%	**117%**

State of the Union Address 1/19/1978

Draft	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Draft 5	0.53	4.70	49.70	53.84	49.65
Draft 5A	0.70	4.24	54.66	58.06	40.24
Draft 5A2	0.59	4.55	51.14	57.26	51.00
Draft 6	0.54	4.68	49.02	53.85	50.46
Draft 7	0.57	4.78	48.33	55.85	49.87
Draft 6A	0.58	4.78	48.20	55.83	49.67
Draft 7A	0.60	4.57	48.43	57.64	51.47
Reading Copy	0.58	4.71	47.16	55.96	50.36
As Delivered	0.59	4.61	49.39	58.87	50.54
Maximum shift	7.50	5.03	11.23	8.77	6.09
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	**142%**	**164%**	**229%**	**174%**	**248%**

Dedication of the John F. Kennedy Library 10/20/79

Draft	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Draft B1	48.33	51.17	50.32	51.19	47.46
Draft B2	48.96	51.6	48.49	51.01	49.05
Cutler Draft	46.26	53.84	47.53	50.94	50.34
Draft P1	49.55	50.63	48.96	52.65	48.02
Reading Copy	46.31	50.97	49.06	53.04	49.09
As Delivered	47.97	51.01	49.46	53.15	49.02
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
Maximum shift	5.61	5.07	0.23	1.06	6.53
As % of normal variation	**106%**	**166%**	**5%**	**21%**	**265%**

Malaise Speech 7/15/1979

Draft	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Draft 1	56.15	46.1	49.65	50.26	43.95
Draft 3	56.54	55.82	44.51	50.06	47.68
Sundquist Draft	50.59	54.04	46.52	55.05	53.3
Stewart Draft	52.62	49.21	49.12	51.71	50.84
As Delivered	50.39	52.5	47.58	51.45	50.41
Maximum shift	6.15	9.72	5.14	4.99	9.35
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	**116%**	**318%**	**105%**	**99%**	**380%**

1979 State of the Union Address 1/25/1979

Draft	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Draft #1	0.54	4.53	47.45	51.26	51.48
Draft 1R	0.50	4.49	47.98	51.91	52.34
12/26/78 Draft	0.47	4.27	50.66	49.73	48.12
Draft #3	0.53	4.53	47.66	51.21	51.81
Rack Draft	0.53	4.86	49.15	48.66	50.76
Nesmith	0.53	4.64	47.73	51.40	51.66
As Delivered	0.54	4.69	49.05	53.21	51.70
Maximum shift	3.21	4.55	4.22	3.73	4.52
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	61%	**149%**	86%	74%	**184%**

Farewell Address 1/25/1979

Draft	Activity	Optimism	Certainty	Realism	Commonality
Draft #A1	48.42	52.5	45.03	51.92	49.55
Draft #B2	48.53	51.29	48.68	51.23	49.51
Draft #B1	48.23	48.57	46.25	50.46	49.76
Draft LNC1	50.35	50.13	49.41	51.41	41.95
As Delivered	46.59	52.06	44.78	52.32	48.09
Maximum shift	3.76	3.93	4.63	1.86	7.81
Normal Variation	5.28	3.06	4.91	5.05	2.46
As % of normal variation	71%	**128%**	94%	37%	**317%**