Ghosts in the Machine:
Rhetoric and Representation in the White House

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Abstract

Using multiple drafts of presidential addresses from the archives of the Kennedy and Ford presidential libraries, this paper tracks changes in presidential rhetoric as these speeches work their way through the White House staffing process. Rod Harts DICTION software is used to generate quantitative scores that track changes to draft speeches over time.

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.

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Although the president got the help the Brownlow commission recommended, presidential rhetoric doesn't seem to have been the beneficiary. Among the help that eventually would find its way into the organizational charts of the White House was a stable of professional speechwriters dedicated to crafting inspirational presidential rhetoric. However, few would argue that presidential speech has improved since Franklin Roosevelt, and the Gettysburg address remains unrivaled.

Presidential speech has come to be seen as one of the most valuable assets in American politics. Political scientists have spent a great deal of time talking about the impact of the bully pulpit, but we have spent much less time discussing their origins. The failure of more full-time writers to produce better presidential rhetoric is as mystifying as political science's relative neglect of the origins of the words behind the bully pulpit.

This paper examines the impact of the institutionalization of the presidential speechwriting process. Presidential speechwriting has changed from the labors of a few anonymous and nearly invisible "ghostwriters" to the management of an elaborate prose machine identified on the White House organizational chart.

One argument of this paper is that the transformation of the process has not suited the ghostwriters, or at least the words they produce. In fact, the appearance on the White House organizational chart represented a demotion for speechwriters since formal recognition and specialization brought with it segregation from the policy process and eventual banishment to what one Ford speechwriter referred to as "the lower vineyards of the White House."[1] The writers who once toiled in relative anonymity also worked with little interference. Working closely with the president on an informal basis, early speechwriters had considerable freedom to write and their frequent interactions built the foundation for influence within the White House. A second argument is that the speechwriting process as a unique opportunity to study the political forces at play inside the White House.

The cases of the speechwriting of John F. Kennedy and Gerald R. Ford illustrate the transformation of speechwriting from informal to formal, how speechwriters have gone from being literary partners of the presidents, to technicians in a speechwriting machine over which they have little control.

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[1] Memoranda from Pat Butler to Ron Nessen, folder: "Butler, Pat," White House Memoranda," Ron Nessen Papers, Box 126, Gerald R. Ford Library.

From ghosts to stars

Speechwriters have always been one of Washington's worst kept secrets. The roots of presidential speechwriting go back to George Washington whose Farewell address was written with the help of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton with Madison writing an early draft and Hamilton expanding the address and adding much of the specific language. This left Washington himself to fine-tune the speech to fit his personal style. One day Hamilton was walking down Broadway in New York City when an old soldier tried to sell him a copy of Washington's Farewell Address. As Hamilton walked away he remarked, "That man does not know he has asked me to purchase my own work." Later, some of Hamilton's friends withheld some of Hamilton's papers including an original draft of the address in his handwriting because they believed the public should not be disturbed by doubts about Washington's authorship of his speech.[2]

Judson C. Welliver is widely considered to be the first speechwriter to serve on the president's staff, although he was not officially on the payroll in Warren Harding's White House and instead worked for one of the cabinet departments.[3] According to former White House Usher Irvin "Ike" Hoover, "there was no legal appropriation for his [the speechwriter's] salary. It was skimmed from here, there and everywhere. At one time it was taken from the fund for the payment of chauffeurs and the upkeep of the garage."[4] While accounts vary to what degree Welliver is responsible for the President's words, most scholars acknowledge his role in crafting the president's speech. Francis Russell asserts that Harding let Welliver write most of his speeches because he had been hurt by the harsh criticism of his oratory.[5] William Allen White asserted that Welliver helped both Harding and Coolidge "with most of their public utterances."[6] According to historian Robert K. Murray, Welliver wrote drafts of minor speeches based on a general outline and some key phrases provided by Harding but that the President wrote his most important speeches himself.[7]

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[2] Roger Butterfield, "Ghost Writers: Behind the famous presidential phrases often lurks an unknown phrasemaker," Life, July 5, 1968, 62.

[3] The view that Welliver was the first speechwriter on staff is found in many sources including Irwin Hood (Ike) Hoover, Chief Usher. Forty-Two Years in the White House, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934, 252 and Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965, 70 & 94. Cornwell also reports that Harding was the first president to use amplifiers when the new president gave his inaugural address in 1920. (page 71).

[4] Irwin Hood (Ike) Hoover, Chief Usher. Forty-Two Years in the White House, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934, 253.

[5] Francis Russell, The Shadow of Blooming Grove, Warren G. Harding and His Times, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1968, 453.

[6] William Allen White, A Puritan in Babylon: The Story of Calvin Coolidge, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938, 336.

[7] Robert K. Murray, The Harding Era: Warren G. Harding and his Administration, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969. 123.

Like many who would come after him, Welliver's service went beyond speechwriting. He served as a general political and policy advisor and assisted with press relations. A former "newspaperman" from Harding's home state of Ohio, Welliver manipulated newspaper coverage to Harding's advantage. Randolph C. Downes details Welliver's wide ranging public relations efforts in the campaign of 1920. Welliver carefully crafted Harding's image in the press though press releases and planted stories while hammering away at the image of Democratic candidate James M. Cox through stories and the political cartoons of Albert T. Reid.[8] Elmer Cornwell in Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion, finds little to like in Harding's record as president, but does assert that "A persuasive claim can, however, be made for the thesis that Harding made significant contributions to the development of presidential techniques for the leadership of public opinion."[9]

By 1949 *The New York Times Magazine* was ready to declare that, "political ghosting is a potential menace to society."[10] In a story assailing the use of ghost writers, Harry Gilroy suggested that the "ghost-ridden politics of today created a destructive cynicism. "The public is being swindled, and the worst thing about it is the cynicism this engenders. Cynicism is an acid capable of dissolving the whole idea that men can trust one another enough to combine in democratic government."[11] Scholars often agreed. In 1965 Elmer Cornwell suggested that the rise of radio and television made people more accustomed to the ideas of performers, commercial or political, who were reading the words of others. This, Cornwell suggests helped American people to accept the political ghostwriting that "was once viewed as faintly reprehensible.[12] Cornwell asserted, " The growth of the [speechwriting] office had eliminated by the 1920s any real possibility that the public utterances of the President could be prepared by his own hand, save rare instances."[13] Writing 40 years later, historian Lewis Gould agreed saying that the arrival of speechwriters transformed the office in that, "in the future most of what presidents said would be the product of other minds."[14] Walter Lippmann argued that the authenticity of presidential speech was fundamental and that should not write a president's speeches because "it is as impossible as writing his love letters for him or saying his prayers for him." Lippmann went on to argue that, "When he speaks to

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[8] Randolph C. Downes, The Rise of Warren Gamaliel Harding, 1865-1920, Ohio State University: Ohio State University Press, 1970, 463-469.

[9] Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965, 62.

[10] Harry Gilroy, "Survey of the Ghost Writers," New York Times Magazine March 27, 1949, 20.

[11] Harry Gilroy, "Survey of the Ghost Writers," New York Times Magazine March 27, 1949, 60.

[12] Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965, 289.

[13] Elmer E. Cornwell, Jr. Presidential Leadership of Public Opinion, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1965, 284.

[14] Lewis L. Gould, The Modern American Presidency, Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2003, 63.

the people, he and not someone else must speak. For it is much more important that he could be genuine, and it is infinitely more persuasive, than that he be bright, clever, ingenious, entertaining, eloquent, or even grammatical."[15]

Lippmann, in many regards, has lost the arguments and presidential speechwriting has become common practice. Speechwriters now appear on the organizational charts of the White House and are sometimes interviewed in newspaper and television stories about presidential speeches[16] so that little pretense remains that our presidents' words are their own.

In some ways, the degree to which Americans today accept this from their president is remarkable. The necessity of having others write the president's words had become so accepted by the time of his presidency that George W. Bush was comfortable releasing photos of himself practicing his State of the Union Address in front of his communications staff in the White House theater.

In her book on presidential speechwriting, All the Presidents' Words, Carol Geldeman makes the case that the lack of connection between speakers and the spoken word has become a part of political life in America. "Obviously presidents should take some part in writing their own words, but not all do. In fact, speaking the words that others have written is practically *de rigueur* in political circles, from the Oval Office to county headquarters."[17]

Questioning who is responsible for these words is more than a debate over simple authorship because the presidency has become a highly personal office. There is something paradoxical about the presence of presidential speechwriters. It is the presumption that the words come from the president that makes those words important and the possibility that those words originate from outside the Oval Office would seem to immediately devalue their importance. Ironically, it is the importance of the president's words that has led to their careful selection, requiring speechwriters and a staffing process to check every word.

To some, the difference between the speeches written by a president and those of a paid assistant may seem to be of little relevance to some. After all, from the outside the White House resembles a team of players, united behind their leader, and sharing a clear set of common goals. This overlooks many subtle yet important shadings of political views and motives. As Terry Moe points out "while they may 'exist to serve the president' and have no other constituency, formal organization inevitably creates interest and

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[15] Walter Lippman, Something Off My Chest," Today and tomorrow, March 14, 1942. Reprinted in The Essential Lippmann: A Political Philosophy for Liberal Democracy, edited by Clinton Rossiter and James Lare, New York: Vintage Books, 1965, a320.

[16] For example, an interview Bush Speechwriter Michael Gerson was a segment of Nightline on December 20, 2002.

[17] Carol Gelderman, All the Presidents' Words: The Bully Pulpit and the Creation of the Virtual Presidency, New York, Walker and Company, 1997, IX.

beliefs that set them apart from him."[18] 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.

John F. Kennedy, Ted Sorensen and the Collaborative Presidency

Several things about the Kennedy presidency would strike any observer of the White House today. The most obvious difference is the small number of speechwriters Kennedy used. Ted Sorensen was chief speechwriter, although his title as "Special Counsel to the President" did not mention 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, and 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."[19] 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."[20]

While insider accounts of a presidency generally tend to overstate the author's role in the presidency, Kennedy's speechwriters appear to have understated their contribution. This may be because they realized that that taking responsibility for Kennedy's words would only diminish his legacy. The Kennedy biographies written by Sorensen and Schlesinger were published in 1965, when few citizens wanted to hear about something casting doubt upon their fallen president. The speechwriters may 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 legal counsel and Ted Sorensen signed a sworn 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."[21]

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 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

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[18] 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.

[19] Sorensen, Kennedy, 60.

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

[21] 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.

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."[22] Historian Robert Dallek reached a similar conclusion suggesting that the book was the product of a committee and Kennedy "did more on the book than some later critics believed, but "less than the term *author* normally connotes."[23] Kennedy, his own listing of the assistance he received, indicates that he was the beneficiary of more assistance than most authors. While he may have been the driving force behind the book, the final manuscript was the product of many minds. As was typical of the relationship between Sorensen and Kennedy, the two men formed a partnership in which Sorensen remained a silent partner.

While Sorensen had, according to one journalist, "the glory of words,"[24] he avoided taking credit for Kennedy's speeches. In describing the ten-year relationship working relationship on speeches, Sorensen used the term "collaborator,"[25] a term that implies working with someone, rather than working for them. The Kennedy-Sorensen speechwriting effort was that of a team. However, 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 the policy process put him in a strong position to defend speeches drafts from dilution at the hands of others in the administration. 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.[26] As one observer noted, referring to Sorensen as "only a speechwriter" misses the point because Kennedy looked to Sorensen for ideas and the words to promote them.

Sorensen's influence in the White House grew after the Bay of Pigs because Kennedy decided that he needed to broaden his sources of advice on foreign policy. This would eventually place   Sorensen in the middle of the Cuban Missile Crisis where Sorensen gained influence in the process when he was given responsibility for coming up with draft statements for both the blockade and the air strike options. In drafting rationales for each decision, Sorensen put together questions for the Executive Committee that forced them to consider the follow up to the blockade decision.[27] Theodore Windt noted that Sorensen's book on decision making in the Kennedy White House was remarkable for its clarity and its source,

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

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

[24] Salinger, 66.

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

[26] 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.

[27] Anderson, 354.

"Rarely has an official of a sitting administration spelled out the workings of the executive branch as Sorensen did. Rarer still is the power wielded by a speechwriter to speak about presidential decision making with such authority."[28]

While Sorensen's broad role in the White House was an asset, it was also clear that the demands of speechwriting were quickly becoming too great to be handled by one person who also shared broad policy advising. At times, Sorensen would need to set aside hours or days to focus on speechwriting, leaving his other tasks to Deputy Special Counsel Myer Feldman and Assistant Special Counsel Lee White.[29]

Sorensen headed a speechwriting staff that would include Arthur Schlesinger, Lee White, Richard Goodwin, and Myer Feldman. Reflecting Kennedy's shunning of rigid lines of authority, the speechwriters advised Kennedy on a remarkable array of issues. Arthur Schlesinger advised the President on Latin America and wrote Kennedy a 5-page memo on the atmospheric test of nuclear weapons in late 1961. The memo goes well beyond the broad arguments of a generalist only casually involved in such issues and reflects a deep understanding of the facts of the case.[30] While Schlesinger's influence has been debated, it is clear that he did not carry the same weight as Sorensen who was clearly one of those closest to the President. Some sources argue that Schlesinger was often ignored and, as one Kennedy advisor put it, "You have to understand that *Arthur* was over in the *East Wing* drinking tea with *Jackie*."[31] Schlesinger served as a sort of ambassador to the liberal wing of the party. As a founder of the Americans for Democratic Action and a close associate of Democratic rival Adali Stevenson, Schlesinger was not regarded well by many Kennedy loyalists. However, while he may have initially been brought in to the White House to build liberal support, his contributions to Kennedy's speeches were significant.

Kennedy's empowerment of speechwriters went beyond Sorensen. In one case, Richard Goodwin worried aloud to the President that he might not be able to get a task force to agree to 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."[32]

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[28] 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, 92.

[29] Anderson, 349.

[30] Memorandum fro the President, December 29, 1961, folder:" Memoranda for the President, 1961," Personal Papers of Arthur Schlesinger, White House Files, Memoranda for the President, Box WH-66, John F. Kennedy Library.

[31] Patrick Anderson, The President's Men, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1969, 259.

[32] 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.

Dick Goodwin joined the speechwriting staff in January 1961. According to Patrick Anderson, Goodwin rivaled Sorensen's speechwriting ability, creating some tension with Sorensen, the person who was nominally his boss. Initially, Goodwin was well regarded in the Kennedy White House for his political and rhetorical sense but as he became restless in his pursuit of broader influence he began to annoy Kennedy and others in the administration. Goodwin was unhappy serving as a number-two speechwriter and wanted a position with impact on policy. Goodwin would move to the State Department, wear out his welcome there, and then move on to become a speechwriter and trouble shooter for Sargent Shriver in the Peace Corps. Later, Goodwin would return to the White House to help Lyndon Johnson promote the Great Society.

The speechwriting process

Major addresses generally started with a meeting of the President's closest advisors. With that group, Kennedy would come up with an outline of what he wanted to say and Sorensen would go off to prepare a first draft. 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. When the broad outline of the speech was set and the basic structure in place, Kennedy would review the speech and do some editing.

According to one study of the Kennedy speechwriting process, "practically anyone could be involved in some of the minor speeches."[33] While this observation is true, it should not be interpreted to suggest that the speechwriting function was scattered around the White House. Most speeches began (and ended) with Sorensen or Schlesinger. Others might offer suggestions, even drafts, but it is clear from the archival material that Sorensen and his assistants were the primary authors of speeches.

While authority in the speechwriting process remained in the hands of the president and his speechwriters, they were not reluctant about soliciting ideas and feedback—when it suited them. 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 praises 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

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[33] 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.

made by Jimmy 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.

On major speeches, especially television addresses from the White House, Kennedy seems to have 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 stories were often already written based on the pre-speech releases that the White House put out based on the prepared text.[34]

While the institutionalization of the speechwriting process was not as extensive as it would be by Nixon and Ford administrations, the need for clearance from departments was already being commented on by Kennedy. 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."[35]

In contrast to the Ford White House, the Kennedy White House recognized the limits of institutional speechwriting and the perils of speechwriting by committee. In the systems established by Sorensen and Kennedy, 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. "Groups of advisers could suggest outlines and alterations, and they could review drafts, but group authorship could not produce the continuity and precision of style he desired, or the unity of thought and argument he needed."[36] This avoidance of what Theodore Windt described as "committee writing"[37] may explain why Kennedy's speeches are so often quoted.

While the problem with writing speeches 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 into a multitude of perspectives that can undermine effective speechwriting.

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[34] Salinger, 67.

[35] "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.

[36] Sorensen, 330-331.

[37] 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.

Gerald Ford and Institutionalized Speech

The Ford administration is a good case for comparison because by 1974 the speechwriting process in the White House had become institutionalized. In addition, Ford's management of the speechwriting process is far from typical. In fact, Ford's tendency to negotiate speech language like a legislative compromise makes it an interesting contrast to the Kennedy approach.

Gerald Ford's sudden and unprecedented entry to the Oval Office may have 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. The campaign not only gives the speechwriters many opportunities to polish their art and to develop their relationship with the future president, it also provides a steady stream of instant feedback from audiences. 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. However, neither Ford nor his staff had much experience 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 expansive 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 to 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

After taking office, Ford made Robert T. Hartmann as 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 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-Hartman partnership was very different in its style. 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 Ford."[38]

It was this lack of interest in a style like Kennedy's and an appreciation for simpler phrasing that made Hartmann's partnership with Ford so comfortable. Hartman described Ford as "intelligent, but almost tone-deaf to felicitous combination of words"[39] and suggested that the President "had little appreciation of literature as an art form; neither poetry nor music interested him much."[40] 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."[41] 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."[42] 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."[43]

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" reflected that along with his administrative duties, Hartmann would serve as a close advisor to Ford on a wide range of issues. 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 more issues and more meetings. In 1974 Hartmann was given responsibility for relations with the Republican National Committee and other party organizations.

Eventually the speechwriters would become restless and resent the limitations on style enforced by Hartmann who, according to one, "consistently edited eloquence from speeches" warning his speechwriters, "Stop trying to make every speech a Gettysburg Address."[44] Ford further frustrated his speechwriters by departing the text and mixing the speechwriters' carefully crafted prose with the folksy language Ford preferred. James Humes fumed on one occasion when Ford effectively rebelled against the language given to him by the writers.

> In the remarks, I had Ford praise Moynihan's outspoken warnings to
> the third world nations: "Ambassador Moynihan brought a strong measure of

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[38] James Cannon, <u>Time and Chance: Gerald Ford's Appointment with History</u>, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994, 92.

[39] James Cannon, 92

[40] Robert T. Hartmann, 187.

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

[42] James C. Humes, 152.

[43] Robert T. Hartmann, 179.

[44] John J. Casserly, 110.

realism to newly independent states of Africa. He told them they had freed themselves from the shackles of European colonialism only to assume new chains of military Marxism." Then Ford ad-libbed, "What I'm really trying to say is that Pat Moynihan really called a spade a spade."[45]

The Ford style presented a dilemma in hiring speech writers because they were being hired to produce creative prose for a president who had little use for it. People would dedicate their lives to creating 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 the writer with a passion for plain rhetoric are unlikely to take up writing as a vocation.

There were usually 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.[46]

One of the most challenging administrative chores 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 compounded further by the fact that not all their advice would be taken.

The editorial office was responsible for what 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."[47] 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.

An often overlooked, but important function of the editorial office was research. This involved simple fact-checking as well as the kind of background research that would identify relevant quotes and anecdotes appropriate to each speech. The research division included five staffers with little secretarial

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[45] James C. Humes, 152-153.

[46] 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.

[47] Robert T. Hartmann, 278.

help. Everyone on the staff considered this level of staffing insufficient, often requiring that speechwriters put aside their writing duties to track down specific facts and figures.

The heavy 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.[48]

One of the paradoxes 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.[49]

While Ford chose to speak more often than Nixon, he insisted on 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. The staff reductions created a tremendous load on the speechwriters with Hartmann complaining to the President about "the severe constraints of a personnel cutback that was putting increasing pressure on me personally."[50]

The workload and the smaller staff combined to undermine the quality of both the speeches and the speechwriting staff itself. 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 about 18 speechwriters. Because of pressing deadlines, these vacancies had to be filled quickly meaning that new writers were thrown directly into speechwriting before they could be tested. As Orben pointed out to Hartmann, "Since it takes a month or so to adequately determine what a writer is capable of - - we will be going into the months ahead with a totally inadequate staff in point of numbers and experience - - and no chance of substantially improving the situation. Even a capable writer needs time to

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[48] 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.

[49] 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,

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

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 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."[51]

Access

Speechwriter's satisfaction with how much access the speechwriters had to Ford varied. Much of the complaining about lack of access comes from lower ranking speechwriters who had unrealistic expectations about the access they would enjoy. Robert Orben commented years later that, especially after talking with other speechwriters, they enjoyed "amazing access" to the President.[52] Orben had what he termed "door knock privilege" which allowed him to catch the president for a few minutes between appointments, an option not available in other administrations.[53]

David Gergen had initially been pleased to find that the speechwriters had a weekly meeting with the President, in contrast to Nixon's distance from most of his speechwriters. However, Gergen realized that the meetings were "a special form of hell" for the President. This contributed to meetings that were far from efficient or productive.

> They began as Hartmann or one of the full-time writers would remind the President of an appearance he had five days hence, with, say, the American Legion. The writers would then give Ford a draft they had prepared and pass them out to the other ten to twelve people in the room.
>
> Many of us, starting with the man who was to deliver the speech, had never seen any draft before. Collectively, we would have a moment of silence while everyone read page one. Ford would then ask for comments on that page, talk them over, and order up amendments. Page two: another pause for reading, more discussion, more changes scratched in. Page three, etc.[54]

These meetings eventually became far too time-consuming, often eating up more than two hours as the President spent, according to one speechwriter, "an unusually large amount of time reviewing the details of these speeches.[55] Further, this process did little that allowed consideration of the general structure or theme of the speeches and instead engaged the President and a room full of staffers in the drudgery of editing individual sentences.

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[51] 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.

[52] Robert Orben, "Speeches, Humor and the Public," The Ford Presidency: Twenty Two Intimate Perspectives of Gerald Ford, Kenneth W. Thompson, editor, New York: University Press of America, 1988, 234.

[53] Robert Orben, "Speeches, Humor and the Public," 237.

[54] David Gergen, Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton," New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000,133.

[55] Oral history interview with Pat Butler by A. William Syers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, 3.

In the end, Gergen found the process so pointless that he opted out.

> Without knowing where the whole speech was heading for how it hung together, how could we offer constructive comments on page two or three about logic and structure… It was so frustrating that I eventually did something I had never done before: asked to be excused from a meeting with the President of the United States.[56]

The Speechwriting process

The speechwriting process actually began with the scheduling office. Once the scheduling office had accepted an invitation to speak, the speechwriting office was left to put together the proper remarks for the event. The speechwriters wanted more input into scheduling because they felt that the President was often asked to speak when there was nothing to say. They complained that when speeches are scheduled at events that do not lend themselves to interesting speeches, there is relatively little that the writers can do to create memorable speeches. At the same time, the speechwriters saw the political operation and the scheduling staff as potential valuable assets to the speechwriting staff because they provided analysis of the audience the president would be addressing.[57]

Scheduling goes beyond accepting an invitation, the president's role in the event and his position in the program were also concerns. One night, Ford was left to speak to the crowd after comedian Danny Thomas had driven audience members to hiss and others to walk out by telling wife, ethnic, and religious jokes. After the President's poor reception, Bob Orben urged that the President speak earlier in the program to avoid a similar ordeal.

> The audience is tired. The good subjects may have been picked over. If the program is too long you may lose news coverage. And if a professional entertainer or comedian precedes you on the program, there is always the danger of their doing very well and being a hard act to follow - - - or doing very badly and frosting the audience. These are problems that can be avoided.[58]

Hartmann and his deputy would sit down with the President twice a week to review what events were upcoming that required prepared president remarks. They would present the President with several options of what topics the writers thought should be covered. Ford would choose one of the options or map out his own view of what should be covered. In the case of some minor speeches, the staff would proceed without explicit guidance from the President, but only in cases where the speech was routine. After the general plan was set, Hartmann or his deputy would assign each speech to a writer who would

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[56] David Gergen, 135-136.

[57] Craig R. Smith, "Richard Nixon and Gerald R. Ford: Lessons on Speechwriting," 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, 144

[58] A handwritten note from the President read: "All excellent suggestions. Make sure Bob O. carries them out."

Attached note, and Memoranda to Bob Hartman from Bob Orben via Paul Theis, May 7, 1975, folder: "Speeches (2)," Robert Hartmann Papers, Box 43, Gerald R. Ford Library, 2.

put together a draft. The head of the office or the editor would review that draft and several versions might move back and forth until a draft was ready to go to Robert Hartmann. If Hartmann signed off on the draft it went to the President for final approval.

The White House changed its procedure for the President's Bicentennial speeches. Instead of each writer being assigned to draft a speech, several speechwriters were encouraged to develop their own version separately from the others. The staff then put the drafts side-by-side and selected the best sections from each version. In the end, while no one speechwriter could claim authorship, most of the speechwriters could identify sections or phrases that came from their own draft.[59]

After the speech had been sent to various offices around the administration to various relevant advisors 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.

Ford's speechwriters both wrote and observed the President's speeches. Often, the Hartmann or his assistant would travel with the President and during that trip there would be 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 them to what Robert Orben called, "combinations of words and syllables that mortal tongues were not meant to utter."[60] Having a speechwriters travel with the President 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."[61] While the President did read these reports, it's not clear that the praise found in them results from a steady improvement of delivery or the speechwriters' natural reluctance to criticize their boss.

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[59] Robert Orben, "Speeches, Humor and the Public," 233-237.

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

[61] 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.

While the number of people in the Ford White House overall may have shrunk, there was no shortage of people involved in the President's speeches. When a reporter asked how many speechwriters worked in the White House, Orben turned to another speechwriter and said, "I don't know Milt, how many are there now? Is it five or six hundred?"[62] 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 what 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."[63]

While this speechwriting process was cumbersome, 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."[64] 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.[65]

Speechwriter John Casserly describes the process of watching a writers 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 watches the battle develop.

> I feel like a man watching an old tree being cut down. However, weatherbeaten 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.
>
> 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."[66]

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

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

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

[65] Robert T. Hartmann, 384.

No one seems to regard the speechwriting office as entirely successful. In a draft memo from 1976 Hartmann refers to the staff "with which we have both become increasingly unsatisfied."[67] 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 to Ford in a meeting at 9 PM on the day before the address (to be given at 1 PM). 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.[68]

Accounts in the press office were more blunt. 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 offices getting the speech distributed in time, "so it wouldn't look like we don't know how to run the free world."[69] The White House obviously grasped that the image of Gerald Ford struggling to get control over his own words would be damaging to his presidency.

A year later the problem was not no 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."[70]

While some of the speechwriting problems resulted from staff problems, Ford's role in speechwriting likely contributed. 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,

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[66] John J. Casserly, 52.

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

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

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

[70] Gerald R. Ford, 350.

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."[71]

Sources of Conflict in the War of Words

Everyone wants to see their priorities appear in presidential speeches. This problem is made worse due to the perception that presidential words are free. Each added sentence may see of little cost. However, there is a price to be paid in that if every interest found its way into presidential speeches, no one would listen to the president.

The struggle for inclusion goes beyond simple words. During the Ford administration the "deaf community" lobbied the White House requesting a sign-language interpreter appear along with the President during televised messages. When the White House balked at this, Robert Hartmann reminded Ron Nessen that 9,300,000 voting age Americans have hearing defects.[72]

Even geographic representation finds its way into the speechwriting office. In May of 1975 Jack Calkins suggested to Hartmann that the staff hire a Southern male. "The volume of work warrants this and, further, the Southern chairmen and RNC members would feel they have a friend at court. The White House Staff is short of Southern types and, though Gwen [Anderson] and I have extended ourselves to give good service to the South, the presence of a Southerner on the political staff would help in giving Southern GOP leaders someone to point to in telling their people the president does really consider them a part of the nation and party."[73]

Terry Moe describes the institutions of the presidency in terms of protecting "a maze of supporting expectations and relations."[74] While the conflicts behind presidential speech can have many sources, three specific sources are considered here: (1) conflicts arising out of personal conflicts, (2) conflicts arising from institutional differences between offices, and (3) the conflicting demands of the many roles the president must play.

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

[72] Handwritten note by RTH on memorandum dated March 4, 1975, folder: "Hartmann, Robert (1)," Ron Nessen papers, Box 129.

It appears that Hartmann lost this battle as a cover note reads "Ron said to ignore this and just file it… hopefully Hartmann will not bring it up again…

[73]Memo from Jack Calkins to Robert Hartmann, May 26, 1975, folder: "Editorial and Speech Staff Reorganizations," Robert Hartmann Papers, Box 122, Gerald R. Ford Library, 2.

[74] 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, 241.

Presidential roles

In some ways, presidential speech can tell us about what the presidency is, or at least what the White House wants it to be. Clinton Rossiter has pointed out that the president must play many roles.[75] What becomes evident in the study of presidential speech is how complicated and demanding these expectations can be and the degree to which these roles conflict and how often these clashes between are played out in the speechwriting process.

Different assistants and offices within the executive branch see the needs of presidential speech defined by different roles. While the State Department may want the president to think and speak in the cautious language the Chief Diplomat needs to maintain alliances, the Defense Department may want the president to speak in aggressive terms that the Commander in Chief needs to lead troops. Some advisors will want the president to embrace the role of Chief of Party and rally the faithful while others on the staff will urge broad, uniting language to serve the non-partisan role of Chief of State. At times the president will wish to speak honestly to the nation, but the role of Manager of the Prosperity precludes language that might shake financial markets.

According to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson rhetorical genres are used to maintain the institution of the presidency.[76] While the ambiguity of these roles may seem to create fewer restraints than the more formal and rigid rules of other institutions, this can also create uncertainty to feed hours of debates about what it is to look and sound "presidential."

The people who work in the White House will preserve these roles for a variety of reasons. The first is to meet the expectations of citizens in order to maintain popularity. A president who fails to honor the traditions of the presidency does so at great peril. It is almost certain that the next president of the United States will attend the lighting of the national Christmas tree and offer up some choice remarks for the occasion because the residents of the White House have been doing exactly that since Calvin Coolidge.

The president and his/her staff maintain the rhetorical traditions of the presidency because the history of the office is a powerful asset for the president. It is the honor of being Chief of State that puts a president at the center of any occasion. It is the duty of serving of Commander in Chief that leads citizens to turn to their president when facing foreign threats. Jimmy Carter found the presidency a little smaller politically without the Marine Band playing "Hail to the Chief" and George W. Bush found the presidency a little larger when he donned a flight suit and landed on an aircraft carrier. The great symbols of the presidency are the source of great power, but require some upkeep to be effective. Bill Clinton was

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[75] Clinton Rossiter, <u>The American Presidency</u>, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987, Chapter 1.

[76] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, <u>Deeds Done in Words: Presidential Rhetoric and the Genres of Governance</u>, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990, 4.

criticized for "diminishing" the presidency though his use of the White House residence for fundraising or through his affair with an intern.

Each of the roles of the president carries the opportunity for influence, but these roles also requires constant maintenance. As long as presidents are seen as Manager of the Prosperity they will enjoy a role in leadership of economic policy. But, if a president fails to address economic issues or fails to provide leadership during economic crisis, the claim to leadership toward prosperity will suffer.

While Woodrow Wilson claimed that the President has the power to be "as big of a man as he can be" it can also be said that the office should also be as big as an office can be. Because the presidency had many needs and many roles, a host of presidential assistants will insist on presidential action on a great number of issues. However, because these goals conflict, the president must choose where to invest his or her words.

All these forces come into play in the modern speechwriting process because the elaborate speech clearance process provides the first intersection of these interests and creates the opportunity for the first collision. For example, the policy process of the White House is generally separate from the diplomatic process of the State Department, and the ceremonial tasks of the Chief of State seldom overlap with Commander in Chief role. The President can meet separate with different sets of advisors or different interest group representatives. This leaves these interests to collide when the president chooses his/her words and battle for power in the White House is often played out in the struggle for control of what the president says. Because the world listens to every speech the president give, the president cannot speak to only one audience and play one role at a time.

The president also does not have the luxury of avoiding issues for long. The mantle of leadership requires that the president define the position of his or her administration or the nation in general. The president cannot appear to be evasive, indecisive, or uninformed. As one Carter speechwriter noted, "he can't say, 'I don't know the answer to this; nobody knows the answer to it.'"[77]

Bureaucratic Division in the White House

The head speechwriter serves a gatekeeper role similar to the chief of staff or the Office of Management and Budget's central clearance process. The president's words are as closely guarded as the president's time and access to either is a means of advancing issue agendas as well as a measure of importance in the White House. The head speechwriter insures that the speech is in line with the president's strategy, ideology and even mood. What the president says are not just words, they carry weight in the political world and guide the action of the executive branch. Robert Hartmann described

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[77] James Fallows, Exit Interview, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, 3.

speech preparation as a "battlefield" because "It's very important to all these people to get their ideas and thoughts coming out of the President's mouth."[78]

The war over words can be intense as each department tries to ensure that their priorities are reflected in the president's words. One NSC staff described a draft of the Ford's 1975 Foreign Policy address to Congress as "dangerous" and "little more than a patchwork of complaints that will signal to the public and other nations that their worst suspicions have been realized, that the President has been reduced to squabbling with the Congress…. offering fairly convincing evidence to his audience that our foreign policy is indeed in shambles."[79] Foreign policy speeches were especially difficult, given the nature of the speeches and the presence of Henry Kissinger. As they watched the Secretary of State leave the room with Ford, Hartmann worried aloud to the other speechwriters, "There goes our new speechwriter."[80]

A tug of war between policy goals can be seen in Ford speechwriting. A good example is a memo from Hal Horan who asserted "the fact remains that if we do not break the continued absence of any reference to Africa in the President's speeches, the adverse impact this creates in Africa will only increase."[81] Horan, as a representative of the National Security Council, was not simply representing the interests of the agency (although agency interests are always linked to the concerns of some special interest). He was instead trying to find presidential language that would dissuade Africa's perception that it is unimportant to the United States. Horan's argument in favor of the inclusion of Africa in the President's address may have been reasonable. However, the speechwriting staff likely took exception to his argument that "What seems to me important to keep in mind is that it costs us nothing to include a few brief comments on Africa, whereas the absence of them creates a problem for us."[82]

<div align="center">Personal Battles</div>

While personal conflicts will appear in every administration, the personal battles were especially deeply rooted in the Ford White House. Initially tension lingered from Ford's time as Vice President. There had been a great deal of tension between the Vice President's staff and Nixon's Chief of Staff Al Haig. Haig's dislike for Hartmann seemed especially nasty with Haig once saying, "The Secret Service reported to me that Bob would get drunk in the office, take off his clothes, and chase his secretary about

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

[79] Memorandum from Mr. Clift to Jeanne W. Davis, April 2, 1975, folder: "SP 2-3-36, Address by the President to the Join Session of Congress, 4/10/75," White House Central Files, Box 11, Gerald R. Ford Library, 2.

[80] John J. Casserly, The Ford White House: The Diary of a Speechwriter, Lincoln, Nebraska: iUniverse.com, Inc. 2000, 69.

[81] Memo from Hal Horan to Jeanne Davis, April 2, 1975, Folder: "SP 2-3-6, Address by the President to the Joint Session of Congress, 4/10/75," White House Central Files, Box 11, Gerald R. Fold Library, 1

[82] Memo from Hal Horan to Jeanne Davis, April 2, 1975, Folder: "SP 2-3-6, Address by the President to the Joint Session of Congress, 4/10/75," White House Central Files, Box 11, Gerald R. Fold Library, 1.

the desk."[83] It had been Haig who had Nixon's speechwriters write Ford's vice presidential speeches, just as they had for Agnew. However, Ford gave Hartmann control over his speeches after the Vice President came to believe that his credibility would be damaged if he became a puppet in the White House's desperate defense of Nixon.[84] Hartmann urged Ford to clean house and fire every Nixon appointee as soon as Nixon resigned. Hartmann told Ford he was too trusting, "You don't suspect ill motives of anyone until you're kicked in the balls three times."[85] While Ford chose to keep many of Nixon's people on, Hartmann moved swiftly at his first opportunity to rid his staff of Nixon holdovers. According to Ford, "No sooner had I put him in charge of the White House speechwriters than he'd fired everyone of them—and done it disagreeably."[86]Without warning the staff, the press secretary announced that Paul Theiss had been named as the new head of White House speechwriting. This decision was made without telling either Chief of Staff Al Haig or David Gergen who had been trying to integrate the efforts of the Ford writers with the Nixon speechwriters.[87]

After the White House finished shedding the remnants of the Nixon staff, new tension emerged. Hartmann's strained relationship with Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld erupted during a battle over a speech on tax and spending cuts with Hartmann yelling: "You write it" to Rumsfeld. In response, Rumsfeld turned responsibility for writing the speech over to David Gergen, then an assistant in the Treasury department. In the end, the speechwriters had no role in crafting the speech and the text itself was the first in the Ford administration not to be typed by the secretarial staff in the speechwriting office.[88]

After becoming Chief of Staff, Richard Cheney hired Gergen to provide alternatives to the drafts produced by Hartmann's staff after Cheney and others in the White House became dissatisfied with the quality of speeches. Gergen was part of White House Office of Communications. The Communications office had been created during the Nixon administration and had been involved in managing the response to the Watergate scandal. Ford had considered getting rid of the office, but it remained as part of the press office. The office was responsible for compiling the daily news summary for the president, and preparing briefing books for the presidential press conferences. By the time Gergen came to head the office in 1976, he reported directly to the Chief of Staff despite being part of the press office on the organizational charts.

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[83] James Cannon, <u>Time and Chance: Gerald Ford's Appointment with History</u>, New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994, 264.

[84] James Cannon, 264-265.

[85] Gerald R. Ford, 148.

[86] Gerald R. Ford, 148.

[87] David Gergen, <u>Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership, Nixon to Clinton</u>," New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, 112.

[88] John J. Casserly, 191.

With Gergen reporting directly to Cheney, the White House then had two competing speechwriting staffs.[89]

In March of 1976 Hartmann protested to the President that Cheney and those around him were keeping him from organizing his staff as he wished. "I am told that people under my supervision were encouraged to be insubordinate and somebody went so far as to instruct the security guards to refuse admission to the EOB persons we had told to report for work…" [90]

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.

Results: The Impact of Institutionalization on the President's Words

It is not possible to see what kind of speech a president would write if unassisted. Rules on human experimentation and political realities 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 a speech change as it moves through the staffing process in the White House. If the institution has little impact independent of the president, we would expect the tone of the speech to change little as it finds its way through various offices around 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 process in the Kennedy and Ford Administrations, five 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, his speech at Rice University discussing the space program, this commencement address at Yale, and his 1962 State of the Union Address. The five speeches selected were Ford's first address to Congress, his announcement of

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[89] Oral history interview with Pat Butler by A. William Syers, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, 2, 3.

[90] Memo from Robert Hartmann to the President, folder: "Editorial and Speech Staff Reorganization," Robert Hartmann Papers, Box 122, Gerald R. Ford Library, 4.

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.[91] These cases do not reflect a random sample of speeches. In fact, speeches that received more staff attention were more likely to be chosen since they produced the multiple speech drafts required for comparison.

After drafts of these speeches were photocopied from the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston and Gerald R. Ford Library in Ann Arbor they were put into machine-readable form and then analyzed using DICTION software. The DICTION software was initially developed by Roderick Hart for his 1984 book, Verbal Style and the Presidency,[92] and has been refined in the 20 years since. The software evaluates rhetoric 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, a broader measure of rhetoric is needed to make sure that changes in narrow components of the rhetoric do not receive too much attention. The DICTION software uses scores based on these specific measures to construct five "master variables" that summarize the tone of speeches in more general terms:[93]

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 allows the user to compare speeches to a variety of speech types from a "normative profile" based on semantic scores from similar speeches. The "normative profile" utilized for

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

[92] 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.

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

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 match closely 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 designed to compare presidential speeches and evaluate how each draft compares to speeches by other presidents. However, the range can be used here as to construct a standard of variation to help evaluate the amount of change 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 speeches. This standard 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 each speech are reported in Appendices B and C.

The intuition behind the normal variation measure is similar to that of the comparison of means in inferential statistics. If the variations in drafts of one of Ford's speeches differ more than speeches on a variety of subjects by different presidents, the impact of the process can be assumed to be meaningful. This standard is similar to ANOVA analysis that compares variation across groups to variation within groups.

The comparison of different drafts of the same speech to a range of speeches from different presidents sets a high standard. The possibility that the various drafts of a single speech might vary more than different speeches on different subjects by different presidents over the course of over half a century might seem remote, but placing the internal forces of the House next to the historical forces of all presidential speeches makes a compelling story.

In general, the process behind Kennedy's speeches seems to result in a relatively orderly process in which speeches are drafted by the speechwriters before being refined with the input of the President and others in and around the White House. Dramatic shifts in tone are generally rare.
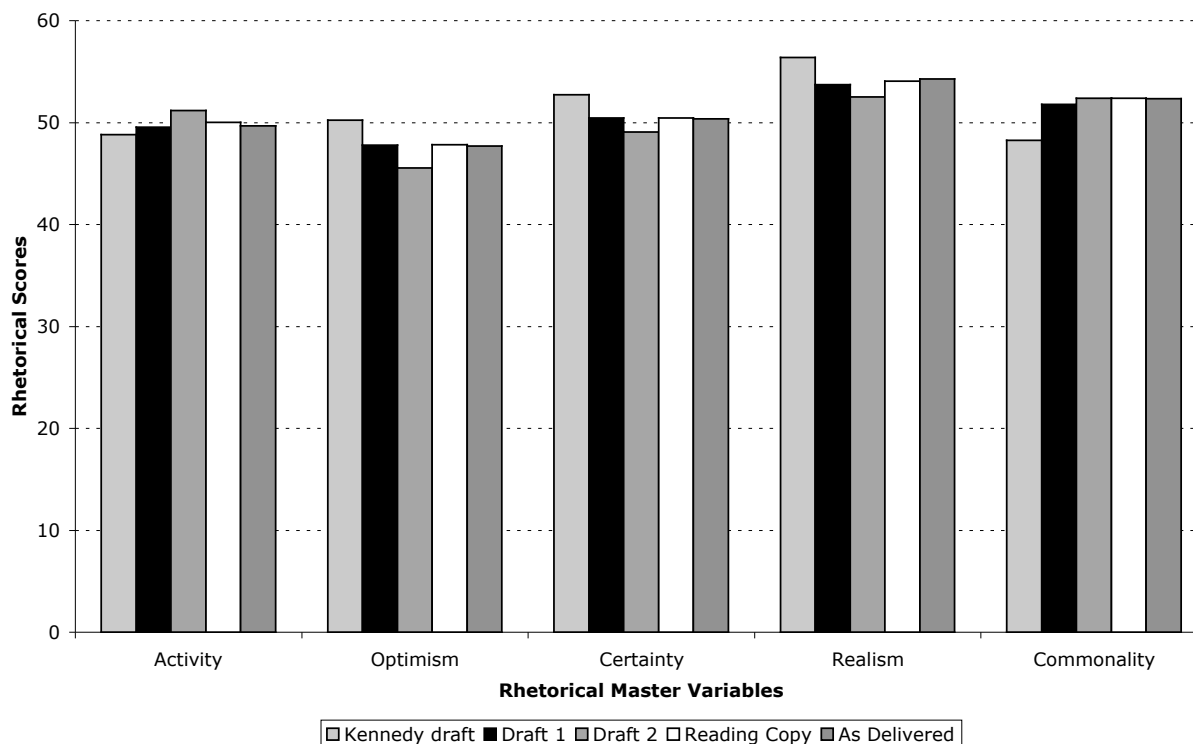
Figure 1: Kennedy's Inaugural Address

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. The rhetorical scores change very little from 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 suggest stability of rhetoric, it is unclear how much of that consistency results from the sensitivity of these scores as measured by the 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. The decline in optimism is expected as the speech moves from the typewriters of the speechwriters to the more pragmatic policy and political advisors who prefer not to over-promise.

Figure 2:
Optimism Scores by Speech Draft
Ford's First Speech to Congress
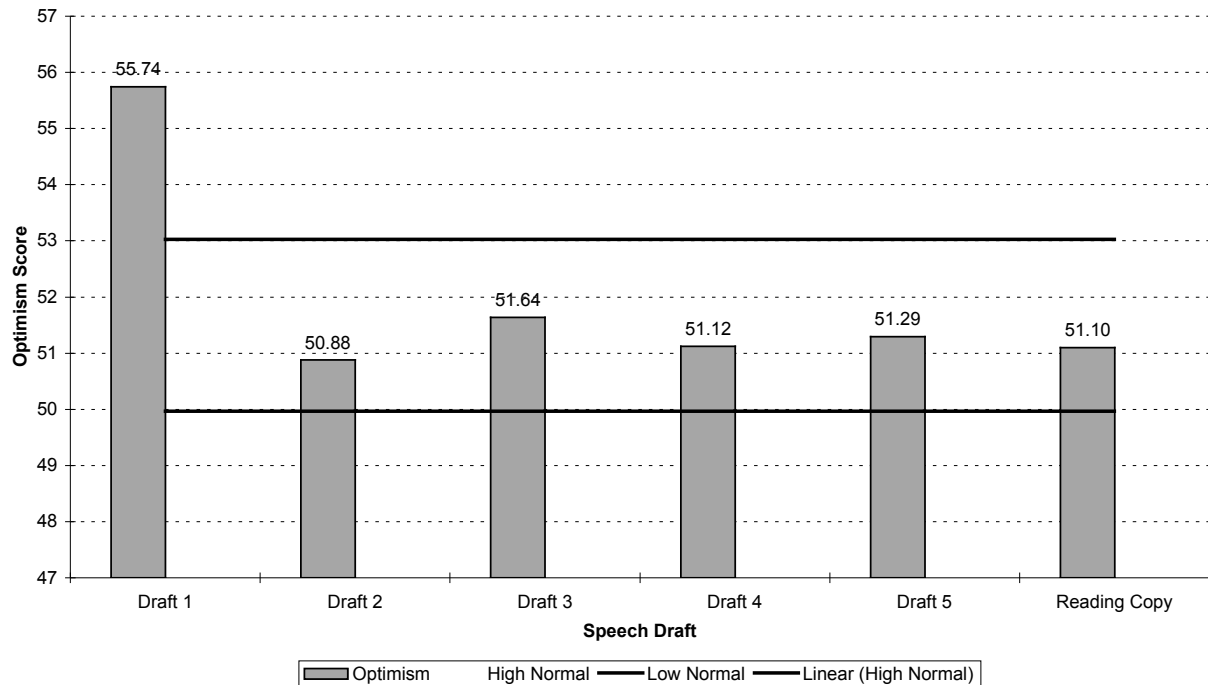
While Figure 2 provides some sense of Ford's speech relative to the speeches in general, it does not summarize change in rhetoric very effectively. To help illustrate the degree of fluctuations of rhetoric over the course of the writing process, Figure 3 charts the level of change in the *Optimism* score for all five Ford speeches. In the figure, the change in the optimism score is summarized as the *maximum shift* computed as the absolute value of the difference between the lowest and highest commonality score for each speech. For example, the change in optimism for Ford's address to Congress (4.86) is the difference between the highest level of commonality (Draft "1" at 55.74) and the lowest level (the final version that Ford took to the podium at 51.10).

Figure 3:
Shift in Otimism Score of Ford Speeches
**Compared to Normal Variation Across All Presidential Speeches**
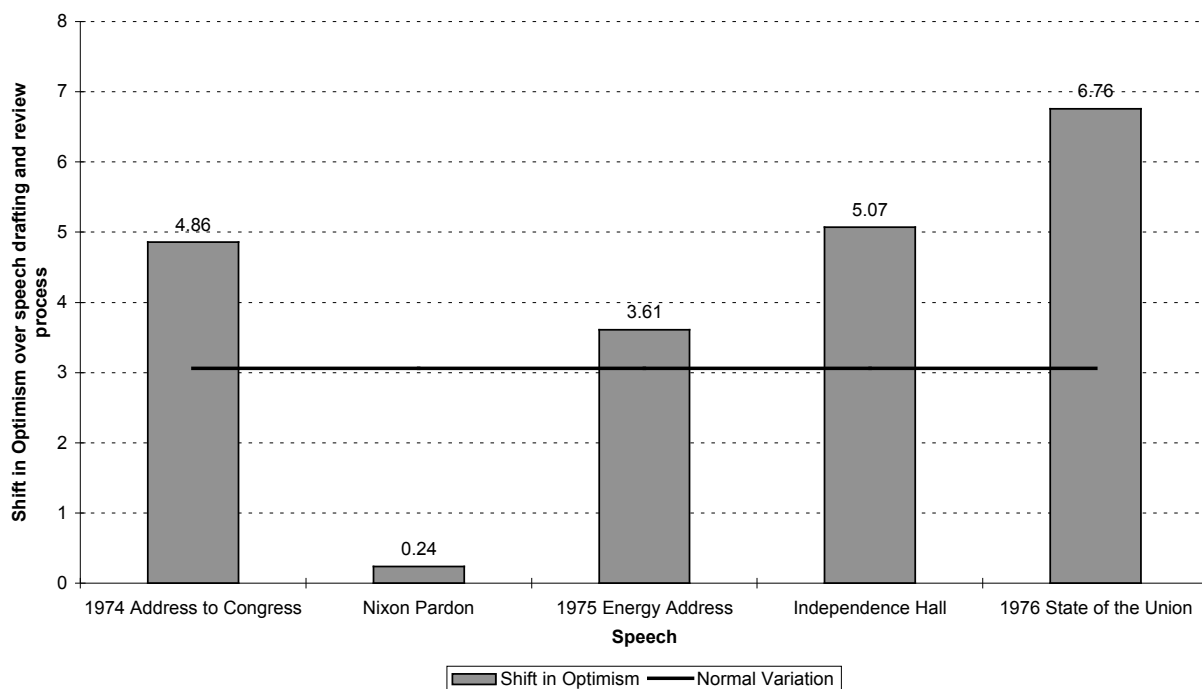
Optimistic rhetoric was often influenced by the speechwriting process. As Figure 3 illustrates four of the five cases show drafts of the same speech differing more than the normal variation in rhetoric of the 615 presidential speeches in DICTION's comparison group. The decline in optimism is consistent with the speechwriters' complaints about their lofty language being watered down by overly cautious bureaucrats. The only exception is the announcement of the Nixon pardon, which changed very little over the course of writing and review. The lack of change in the Nixon pardon speech likely results from Ford avoiding advice on the pardoning of Nixon since many of the staff had either worked for Nixon and had a conflict of interest or strongly objected to pardoning Nixon on other grounds. By including fewer people in the decision and the drafting of the speech, Ford reduced the impact of the forces in the White House.

Comparisons across these 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 from 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 4. All five speeches display some significant changes. In all five cases rhetorical scores for at least one variable shift more than 100 percent of the normal range.
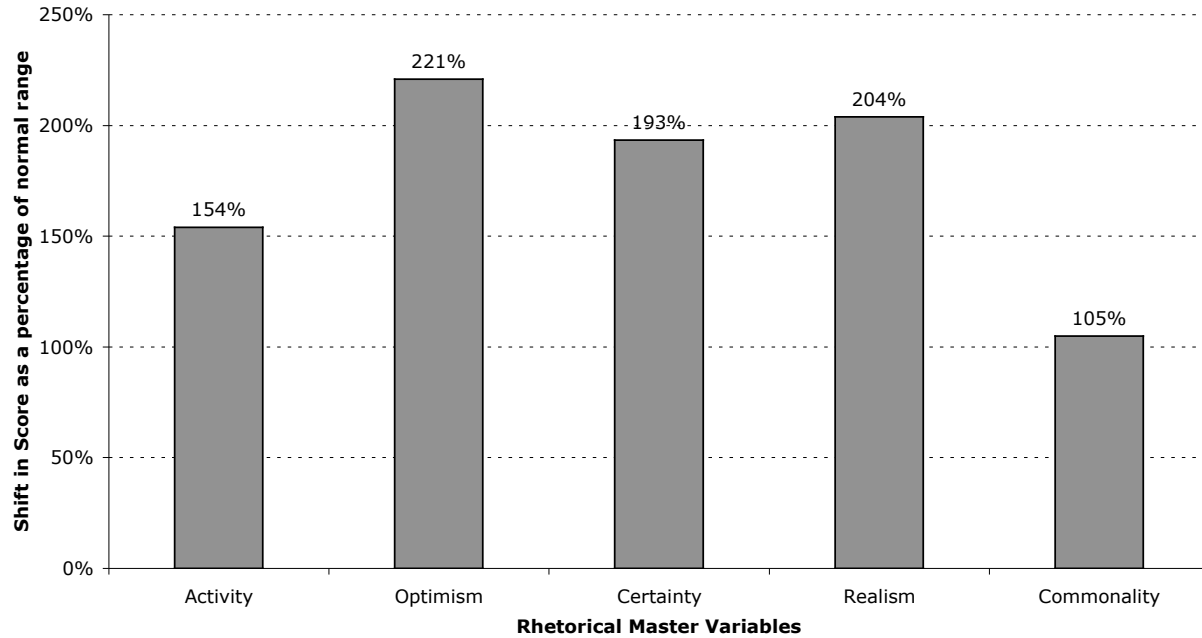
Figure 4:
Shift in Rhetorical as Percentage of Normal Variation
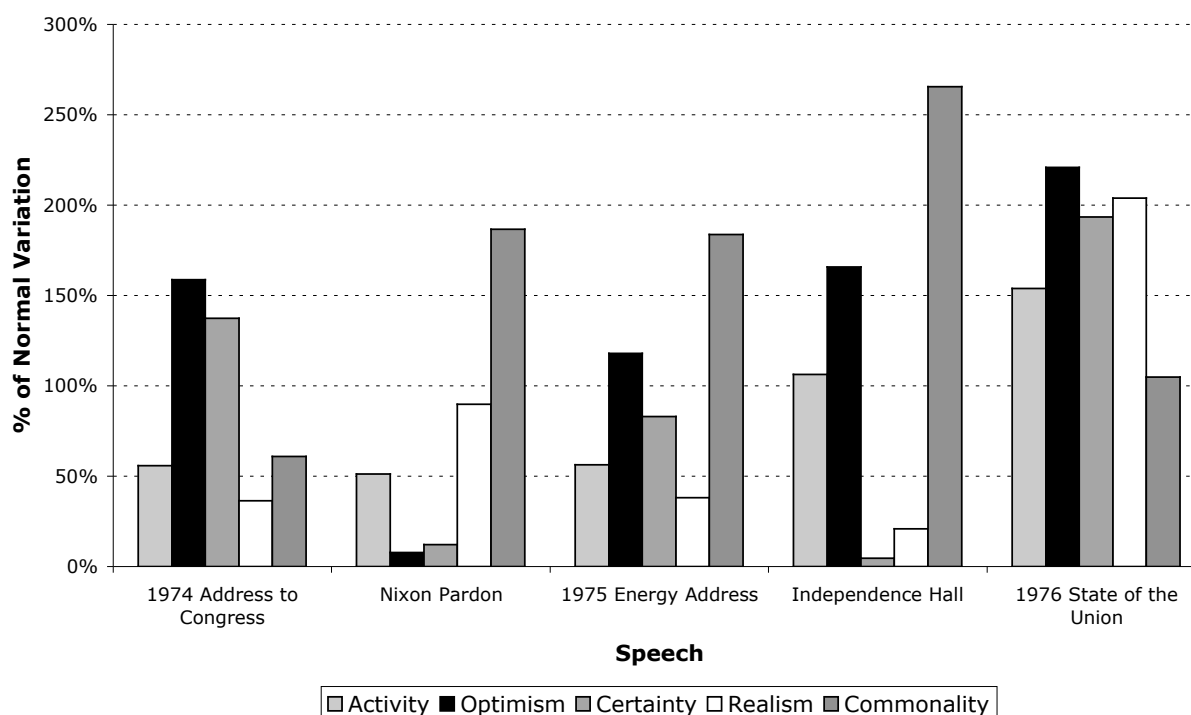
While all speeches exhibit some variation, the 1976 State of the Union Address clearly stands out. Changes in the president's annual message are especially significant given the heavy scrutiny that those drafts are subjected to. Months of planning go into the president's annual address and suggested language and drafts of entire sections are solicited from all over the executive branch. As Figure 4 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 the rhetorical levels of all five rhetorical categories for the five drafts of the 1976 State of the Union Address. The scores for 1976 State of the Union may vary from draft to draft and do not appear to move in a consistent direction over the course of the drafting process. This fits well with the account of the drafting of this speech discussed earlier in this paper. The chaotic process and competing authors behind the 1976 address are reflected in the shifting rhetoric of its drafts.

Figure 5:
Shift in Rethorical Master Variables
in 1976 State of the Union Address
as a percentage of the normal range

Beyond using DICTION's normative profile of other presidential speeches, we can also use comparisons across the administrations studied here to get a sense of whether not the shifts observed here are significant.

Figure 6:
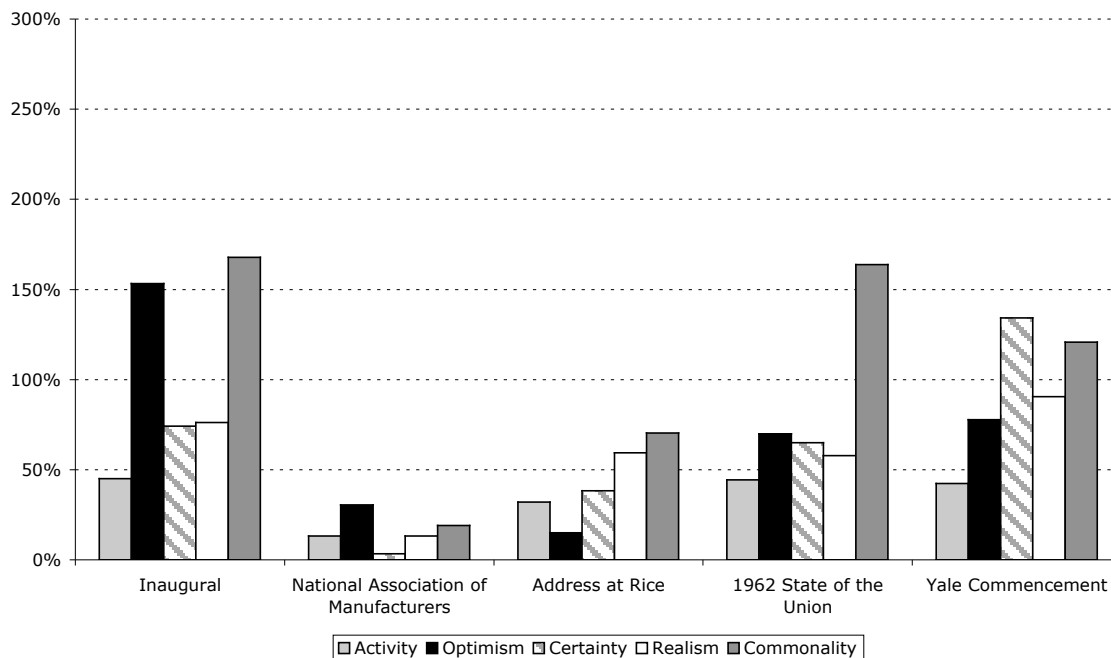**Shift in Rhetorical as Percentage of Normal Variation**

Figure 6 charts the shift in Kennedy's rhetoric in drafts of all five speeches as a percentage of the normal range. While the figure reflects some significant shifting of rhetoric, the shifts are generally smaller than those seen in the Ford drafts. In fact, 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 68.2 percent while the Ford speeches shift an average of 128.1 percent. The differences in the fluctuations of the Kennedy and Ford scores provide further encouragement that the methods are capable of detecting systematic differences.

A final comparison can be done using draft from different sources. In this case, we can look outside the White House to other parts of the executive branch to see if different sources produce different qualities of rhetoric. Figure 7 charts the scores for 5 different drafts of the president's speech at Rice University. The NASA draft differs dramatically in both "activity" and "optimism," perhaps because of its institutional origins outside the White House. This suggests that there are some measurable differences between the language of the White House and the language of the bureaucracy.

Figure 7:
Rhetorical Scores Kennedy's Speech at Rice University
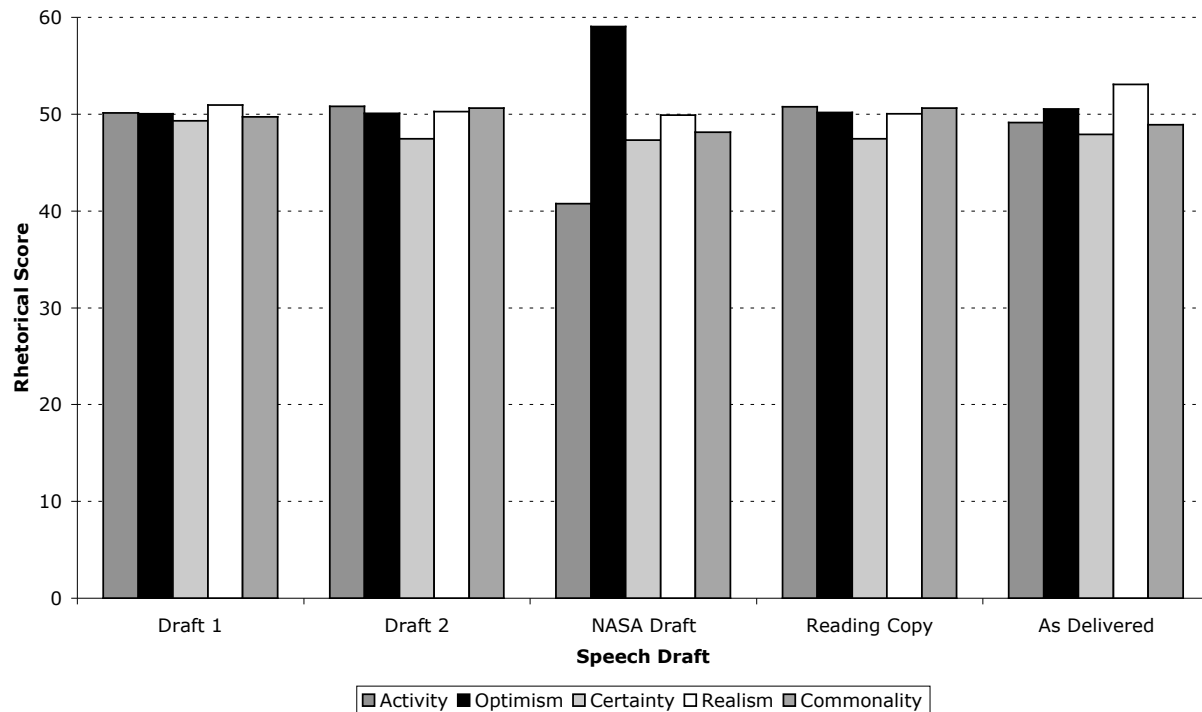
The difference between NASA's perspective and the needs of the White House speechwriters illustrates the divide between the particularized interests represented in NASA and the broad vision required of the presidency. The draft prepared by NASA focused more on the rockets than space. NASA's focus on facilities and equipment is a natural consequence of the agency's role and it serves to illustrate the choices that the White House speechwriters must make as they try to balance the competing demands from within the administration. One example of the agency's suggestions about the capabilities of their hardware is an explanation of the power of the Saturn rocket that would propel America to the moon.

NASA Draft

Only a few hours ago, I stood on a little hill in Huntsville, Alabama, to watch the ground-testing of a Saturn booster rocket, seven hundred yards away. The power developed by the cluster of eight rocket engines, fire simultaneously, cannot be fully appreciated unless one is close enough to hear the deafening roar and feel the earth quake underfoot.

This first-model Saturn, which generates 1,300,000 pounds of thrust - - a force equal to 28 million horsepower - - is the most powerful rocket yet revealed to the world. It generates power equivalent to 100,000 standard 1962 automobiles with their accelerators pressed to the floor.

As delivered by Kennedy

In the last 24 hours we have seen facilities now being created for the greatest and most complex exploration in man's history. We have felt the ground shake and the air shattered by the testing of a SATURN C-1 booster rocket, many times as powerful as the ATLAS which launched John Glenn, generating power equivalent to 10,000 automobiles with their accelerators on the floor.

The technical details of the systems are a good example of the kind of expertise that agencies can bring to the speechwriting process. The speechwriters blended the capabilities of NASA's equipment with the speechwriters' theme of the challenges of space to paint an eloquent picture of a nation rising to the challenge.

Another perspective on the speech was supplied by the State Department. While they did not prepare a draft of the speech, the State Department did put together three pages of suggested "Illustration and Arguments as to Why the Space Program is Important Based on Both History and Current Events." While many of the department's suggestions spoke to broad themes, the State Department saw foreign policy concerns to be addressed: "In the world of 1963 a principal symbol of strength of a nation is its ability to mount a vital space program."[94]

While the use of these rhetorical variables in this way is new to the discipline, the results suggest that the DICTION software is sensitive enough to pick up variations between drafts. Further, measure based on a broader database of presidential speeches, comparisons between the Kennedy and Ford administration, 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 Administration 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 addresses were often significantly altered during the speechwriting process and that differences in the administration were taking rhetorical form.

Conclusion

Early astronomers often got their first hint about the existence of new planets by observing the variations in the movement of known planets. Astronomers learned where in the sky to look for new planets as the unseen forces of gravity provided clues to the origins of these forces. Even when they could not see the source of the pull of gravity, they could hypothesize about the unseen objects that were causing small variations in the skies over their heads.

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[94] Memorandum for Theodore Sorensen Through McGeorge Bundy, September 10, 1962, folder: "Space—Rice Institute, Memoranda + Speech Materials, 9/10/62 – 9/12/62 + undated," Personal Papers of Theodore Sorensen, Speech File Series, Box 69, John F. Kennedy Library, 2.

So it is with presidential rhetoric. While the movements of the rhetoric here are interesting in their own right, they also have a story to tell us about the broader forces of the presidency. What we can see of the presidency can be used to learn about political forces that are seldom, if ever, visible to the scholar.

As Terry Moe points out, "all institutionalized behaviors, whether or not they have an organizational chart or formal name, generate expectations conducive to their continuation."[95] By tracking these changes in rhetoric this paper has taken a step toward uncovering the institutional forces at work inside the modern White House.

It is clear that the conflicts between presidential roles, bureaucratic concerns, and personal conflict present a complicated environment for speechwriters to navigate. Given the complex forces of pluralism found in Congress and the rest of our democratic system, it would be naïve to think that the forces of hyperpluralism would not occupy the White House. As the presidency has become more democratic, the demands upon the office has increased in number. These forces may have taken a toll on the speechwriting process. As the Ford case demonstrates, when the speechwriting process begins to look like the legislative process, speeches begin to read like legislation.

The speechwriting process today too often demands that the White House speechwriter be artist, diplomat, and manager. The creative skills of the ghostwriters have little freedom 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. Reagan is better known for his delivery than his words and even Republicans seem to prefer quoting Kennedy rather than Reagan. The inability of full-time writers to meet the standard of Lincoln or Roosevelt may tell us a great deal about the environment of the White House.

This is not the only evidence that good prose can get lost in an organizational chart. Often, a president's best speech is their inaugural address—written before they have taken office, before they have a full staff around them to "help" with their speech. George W. Bush's inaugural address was widely hailed as the best in a generation, but little that followed has been memorable. The President has often struggled since, even when armed with the passions of post –9/11 Americans, he has generally been seen as a competent speaker at best. When presidential speechwriters, or their spouses, are grappling over credit for phrases like "axis of evil," it is hard to argue that American presidential rhetoric is benefiting from the hundreds of people ready to help the president assemble a speech.

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[95] 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

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. Despite the limited data presented here, this study demonstrates several promising directions.

First, the ability of the DICTION software to pick up shifts in rhetoric across multiple speech drafts reflects that archival research can be blended with quantitative analysis. While other software and future refinements may improve our ability to compare the evolution of presidential rhetoric, the methods use thus far have been able to produce interesting results.

Secondly, the results presented here demonstrate that presidential speech merits study as both an independent variable that can be used to test our theories of presidential influence as well and a dependent variable to give us new insights into the inner workings of the executive branch. The study of the White House has given us few opportunities for the construction of quantitative measures, making the use of rhetoric as a dependent variable even more valuable.

Appendix A
DICTION Dictionary and Score Descriptions[96]

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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[96] 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%**