OBAMA. IN HIS OWN WORDS

THE CANDIDATE AND THE PRESIDENT

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Abstract
Title: Obama In His Own Words: The Candidate And The President.

Pages: 40.

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Purpose/Aim: To study the rhetorical changes in the speeches of Barack Obama from being a presidential candidate to being the President.

Material/Method: A rhetorical analysis of two defining speeches using logos, pathos and ethos in conjunction with framing and identity.

Main Results: The main result of the essay was that the rhetoric used by Barack Obama did indeed change as his position as a politician changed. This change, however, was the result of how language is affected by circumstance, audience, the context in which the language is sent and received and the current identity being used by the speaker. Rhetoric is not purely about the language used.

Key Words: Logos, pathos, ethos, framing, identity, context, audience, media.

1. Foreword
Before beginning, I feel it is helpful and correct to examine the structure of the essay as a whole, and to take issue with any eventual questions which may arise regarding the essay. This chapter will also save me writing a “Structure” Chapter.

The structure is based on the hermeneutic principle, and I will endeavor to connect the theory, method and analysis parts as closely as possible, and relate them back to the original problem and questions. These are the original starting-points of the essay. Indeed, they are the entire point of the essay.

The “Introduction” and “Background” chapters are meant to serve as their names suggest. No more, no less.

It is my opinion that theory and method are not two completely separable parts, but rather are part of a hermeneutic entirety which links the theory/method closely with the study/analysis and the eventual evaluation and discussion. It is therefore that I refer closely between the chapters during the course of the essay. The eventual aim is to get all the elements to act in unison in order to obtain accurate answers to the questions posed by this essay, in the simplest way possible.

Regarding the use of sources, I have chosen to use Wikipedia in certain instances. Although I agree that Wikipedia is often not a valid academic source, I have used it in those instances in which the reader might want additional factual background which this essay is not able to provide.

It might also be interesting for the reader to see where Barack Obama stands on the various political issues.¹

There is a huge gulf between the Western European definition of “liberal” and the American. When we use the word “liberal”, we tend to use it in the economic sense, not the socio-political sense.

Unfortunately it is impossible to write about Barack Obama without referring to race and origin. They are both integral parts of a person’s identity, and thus his/her rhetoric. I hope I manage to do so in a respectful and proper manner.

2. Introduction

¹ http://www.ontheissues.org/Barack_Obama.htm
“I was born by the river in a little tent
Oh and just like the river I’ve been running, ever since
It’s a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will

It’s been too hard living but I’m afraid to die
Cause I don’t know what’s up there beyond the sky
It’s been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will

I go to the movie and I go downtown
Somebody keep telling me don’t hang around
It’s been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will

Then I go to my brother
And I say brother help me please
But he winds up knocking me
Back down on my knees

There been times that I thought
I couldn’t last for long
But now I think I’m able to carry on
It’s been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will” ²

The lyrics you have just read are from a song released in 1964 by an African American artist by the name of Sam Cooke. He died in 1964. The year after his death, African Americans were given the right to vote.

The song was sung by a black man in the USA before a change ever came. Maybe you have heard of Otis Redding (he made the song famous), maybe not. It was a long time coming indeed. It is still a Long Time Coming.

It was at this time, and in these circumstances that Martin Luther King made what can only be said to be the speech against which all political speeches are measured, and his words have inspired people the world over ³.

² http://www.metrolyrics.com/a-change-is-gonna-come-lyrics-sam-cooke.html
³ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PbUtl_0vAJk
The abject hardships which Black Americans had to endure are difficult for white Swedes/Western Europeans to comprehend. Unfortunately it is not possible to give the full history in one short essay. I would hope that the readers would take their time to get the full picture. Slavery was a crime. What came after could almost be construed as worse.\(^4\)

The basic point of this essay is to examine how the rhetoric of the first successful black American presidential candidate evolved from his days as a candidate to the day he was sworn in as President.

3. **Background**

The art of rhetoric cannot be under-estimated. The rise of Barack Obama from marginal candidate to President can, in my opinion, be largely attributed to his ability to use the power of the spoken word as a persuasive tool.

Of course the specific history of the times has to be taken into account (this is an area which cannot be covered by this essay. The question remains open as to whether Barack Obama would have won the election if it had not been for the economic crisis.)

Suffice to say that he re-invented campaign financing. The representatives of the poor could outspend the party which has historically supported the interests of the affluent, if only for once.

It is, of course, not as clear-cut as it might seem. By circumventing the accepted means of campaign financing and relying on entirely private financial assistance, he was able to raise substantially higher amounts than his competition to finance his campaign. What this will mean for the future of American political campaigning remains unclear.

What Barack Obama also did was resurrect the art of the campaign speech.

The role of the media was crucial. Who was Barak Obama? Did you even know who Barack Obama was two years ago? As a student of US politics at the time, even my teacher thought he would be no more than a mild distraction along the way to Hillary’s ascent to the City On The Hill.

Obama managed to reach more people than McCain, and a lot of that was down to his team’s understanding that there were new ways to reach voters. In many ways Obama’s success can be seen as the breakthrough point for what is titled “new media” in the world of politics. His rhetorical skill was abetted by the skilled and large-scale use of the internet.

The actual building blocks upon which Obama built his electoral success are many, and would be the subject of a political science essay. It is extremely interesting though, to put those building blocks into some sort of focus in the context of this essay. For those readers who are interested, I recommend http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama

I was too young to witness JFK. But I have seen Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush, Clinton and Bush again in my lifetime. All of them disappointments in there own way. The weight of expectation on Barack Hussein Obama is extreme. He has the expectations of billions on his shoulders.

The fact that, all over the world, TV stations changed their schedule to broadcast the Oath of Honor of Obama as the 44th President of the United States is proof enough that what happens in the USA happens in Enköping.

The candidacy of Barack Obama was followed the world over. I do not think it is taking an academic liberty by saying that the world, as a whole, is glad that the citizens of The United States of America voted Barack Obama as their president.

Who among us did not watch his swearing in as president without the thought, in the back of our minds, that he could be shot at any second?

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5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Campaign_finance_in_the_United_States
6 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama
Who among us thought that we would ever see a black president?

Nothing remotely resembling this has ever occurred. The absolute, sheer implausibility of Obama’s win will only begin to sink in after when historians start to write history. John F Kennedy won the presidency as the first Catholic, but even that pales in comparison with what Obama has achieved.

1965 was the year African – Americans received the right to vote. 44 years later, we have a black president.

4. Aims & Questions

The fundamental aim of this essay is to examine the rhetoric of the speeches of Barack Obama, and note any changes in them, from being a candidate, being sworn in, and actually being president. This will be done by looking at specific elements of rhetoric combined with framing
and identity, which are intrinsic elements in the overall rhetorical structure and message of any given political speech.

The basic question the essay will ask is: How does political rhetoric differ as a politician’s status changes? That is to say, how does what he says, and how he says it, change? It is my contention that the nature of Obama’s words, and the way in which he speaks them, changes depending on circumstance, and that he constructs identities accordingly.

The decisive differentiating circumstance at the core of this essay is the comparative political situation of the speaker at the time the speech’s are delivered.

A candidate will, of necessity, have certain aims.

Number one among these is the obvious fact that he/she wants to be elected/re-elected.

A newly elected president will have a different agenda. He/she will want to unite the nation, move forward, and try to ascertain a common ground for the implementation of their policies.

5. Theory

The theoretical basis of this essay is classical rhetoric, combined with framing and identity (Giddens’s theory on the Reflexive Project of the Self). In this chapter I will examine and discuss each of the three theoretical starting points. The method chapter will then describe how they will
be used and combined in order to carry out the analyses. The literature used as a basis for this chapter has been chosen specifically according to its concise, understandable and practical handling of concepts in which it is easy to become bogged-down and lose track of how they will most benefit the essay.

5.1. Rhetoric

“Rhetoric is the art or the discipline that deals with the use of discourse, either spoken or written, to inform or persuade or motivate an audience, whether that audience is made up of one person or a group of persons….rhetoric has traditionally been concerned with those instances of formal, premeditated, sustained monologue in which a person seeks to exert an effect on an audience.” 7

“Everyone develops some instincts for adapting means to fit the subject, occasion, and audience, but by experience and education some people or refine these instincts that their success in dealing with others can be attributed to an art rather than to a mere knack. And when persuasive activities approach the condition of art they can be said to fall within the province of rhetoric.” 8

Aristotle described rhetoric as “the art of persuasion” 9.

Logos, Pathos and Ethos. These are the central pillars of rhetoric, and will form the basis of my rhetorical analyses. There are many other rhetorical concepts which may be applied, but for purposes of clarity and uniformity, I have chosen to concentrate on these three.

At this point it is necessary to examine the above-mentioned elements in greater detail in order to define them in the context of this essay. This will be done by first referring to the literature in order to formulate a precise idea of what the terms mean before moving on to look at how they interact with and influence each other. Although rhetoric is used in many forms of communication, I refer specifically to “speaker” and “audience”, given the context of the essay.

5.2. Logos

Logos, as with the other two elements, is described in different terms depending on which source and author one uses. Corbett and Connors describe it as “The Appeal to Reason” 10 or “rational

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8 CORBETT/CONNORS P32
10 CORBETT/CONNORS. P32
appeal.” Mral describes it as “that which addresses the public’s understanding and thought process.”

As we can see, these definitions are quite similar. Corbett and Connors go on to qualify this rather strict definition of logos as a pure appeal to logic and reason. They are of the opinion, as am I, that an appeal based exclusively on logic and reason is an ideal which is compromised by the realities of human nature. In an ideal world people’s behavior and responses would be governed by reason.

This is clearly not the case. Even when examining the appeal to, and response to, rationality, one must always bear in mind that it is seldom possible to completely separate reason from subjective factors such as culture beliefs and emotions, factors which Corbett and Connors refer to as “irrational motives.” It is necessary to mention the presence of these irrational motives in order to guard against a too-narrow interpretation of the term.

For the purposes of precise definition, however, logos can be seen as the way in which the speaker attempts to persuade his audience by appealing to their logical, analytical side. One should not forget, though, that, despite its apparent basis in logic and reason, logos is nevertheless still a tool of rhetorical persuasion.

5.3. Pathos

Corbett and Connors define pathos as “The Emotional Appeal,” while Mral prefers to speak of it as “that which influences and moves the public’s feelings.”

This can be a difficult subject for the speaker to judge correctly. The emotional appeal is powerful, but the speaker has to beware of the extent to which it is used, for fear of alienating his audience. Corbett and Connors take up this point and state that “People are often sheepish about acknowledging that their opinions can be affected by their emotions.” Indeed, there are many instances which come to mind in which the emotive appeal has been used as a means to further the aims of those whom history has judged extremely negatively. One needs look no further than Adolf Hitler for an example of this.

It is no surprise then if the emotional appeal suffers from a bad reputation, but this should not take away from the fact that feelings and emotions play a very considerable role in our behavior and in the decisions we make. “The fact that some people exploit the emotions for unscrupulous

12 CORBETT/CONNORS. P18
12 MRAL. P154
13 CORBETT/CONNORS P32
14 CORBETT/CONNORS. P77
15 MRAL. P154
16 CORBETT/CONNORS P77
purposes may constitute a caution about the use of emotional appeal, but does not constitute a condemnation of emotional appeal.”  

Concisely put, pathos is the way in which the speaker tries to persuade his audience on the emotional level. Whilst by no means an inherently negative means of persuasion, its use should ideally be carefully considered by the speaker, and carefully monitored by the audience.

5.4. Ethos

Ethos is perhaps the most difficult of the three concepts to define as it deals with the credibility of the speaker. Corbett and Connors describe it as “The Ethical Appeal”, and Mral writes that “if one cannot create believability in how one appears, one will not succeed…” 

The criteria which define a speaker’s trustworthiness and believability, and thus underpin his or her ethical appeal are derived from a number of sources. In the context of this essay, the nature and level of ethos present cannot be determined or examined in isolation.

“The ethical appeal is exerted, according to Aristotle, when the speech itself impresses the audience that the speaker is a person of sound sense…., high moral character….., and benevolence.” While this description is essentially sound, it has to be accepted that we live in a mediated age. The speech itself is no longer enough to convince the audience/audiences of the speaker’s moral character or trustworthiness, and on this point I disagree fundamentally with Corbett and Connors.

Ethos is a fluid and subjective concept, and is determined by the context in which the communication is received. In relation to this essay, the following example is relevant: A speech given to a congregation of African American church-goers by a black presidential candidate is likely to be received in a different way to the same speech being broadcast through the multitude of media outlets available.

The believability of the speaker is primarily decided by the audience, and that makes ethos difficult to define.

In its basic form, ethos can be seen as the speaker’s appeal to how much the audience trusts him/her, according to the way in which the audience perceives his/her character.

5.5. Interaction of Rhetorical Elements

17 CORBETT/CONNORS P77/78
18 CORBETT/CONNORS. P71
19 MRAL. P154
20 CORBETT/CONNORS. P72
I chose to leave the definition of ethos to last because it is my opinion that a speaker’s believability is governed, and judged by, the audience. The listeners judge by how the speaker uses logos and pathos. If the listener is of the opinion that the speaker has employed false logic, or has attempted to overly influence their emotional responses, then he/she will be less inclined to regard the speaker as ethical or believable. This leads me to contend that ethos is in fact the defining element of the three. Logos and pathos are used to create a sense of ultimate trust in the speaker, and ethos is the end product of how logos and pathos are employed.

An important, defining factor which must however be born in mind is the nature of the audience: How receptive are they to the speaker’s message, to what extent do they already agree with what he/she is saying and to what degree are they already persuaded? This will influence the way in which the message is received, and the way in which the speaker’s believability is judged. This factor makes ethos the most subjective of the three elements.

In this regard, I am of the opinion that Corbett and Connors place too much emphasis on the actual speech itself. In the context of this essay’s subject-matter, one has to take into account the almost-certain probability that significant parts of the audience are already convinced as to the ethics, trustworthiness and believability of the speaker.

It was extremely interesting during my research to note the emphasis placed by the various authors on the idea that the three elements do not act independently of each other, something with which I fully agree. It is often impossible to separate the emotional appeal from the appeal to logic as elements of both often exist together and function side-by-side as equal partners in a persuasive discourse.

5.6. Framing

The term is usually associated with news organizations, but it is my opinion that it can be applied to political speeches.

Framing is the art of presenting communication “in a certain Context”. In this case it is about political communication, and the rhetorical art of the political speech. At this point I feel it is necessary to obtain a precise definition;

“The way in which news content is typically shaped and contextualized by journalists within some familiar frame of reference and according to some latent structure of meaning. A second, related meaning concerns the effect of framing on the public. The audience is thought to adopt the frames of reference offered by journalists and to see the world in a similar way.”

“A “frame is a central organizing idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue.” Although facts do remain neutral until framed, they “take

on their meaning by being embedded in a frame or story line that organizes them and
gives them coherence, selecting certain ones to emphasize while ignoring others.” When
we frame acts or events in a particular way, we encourage others to see those facts and
events in the same particular way. In this sense, framing can be understood as taking
some aspects of our reality and making them more easily noticed than other aspects.” 22

5.7. Identity

In light of previous studies and reading on the issue of identity, it is my view that identity is not
an inborn trait, but is an ever-developing part of a person. The theory chosen for this essay is one
put forward by Giddens, which he calls “The Reflexive Project of the Self”. It is based on the
contention that modern society is post-traditional;

“It is important for understanding Giddens to note his interest in the increasingly post-
traditional nature of society. When tradition dominates, individual actions do not have
to be analyzed and thought about so much, because choices are already prescribed by
the traditions and customs….In post-traditional times, however, we don`t really worry
about the precedents set by previous generations, and options are at least as open as the
law and public opinion will allow. All questions of how to behave in society then
become matters which we have to consider and make decisions about. Society becomes
much more reflexive and aware of its own precariously constructed state. Giddens is
fascinated by the growing amounts of reflexivity in all aspects of society, from formal
government at one end of the scale to intimate sexual relationships at the other.

Modernity is post-traditional. A society can`t be fully modern if attitudes, actions or
institutions are significantly influenced by traditions, because deference to tradition –
doing things just because people did them in the past – is the opposite of modern
reflexivity.” 23

With this definition in mind, the author goes on to explain The Reflexive Project of the Self as
follows;

“Giddens says that in the post-traditional order, self-identity becomes a reflexive project
– an endeavour that we continuously work and reflect on. We create, maintain and
revise a set of biographical narratives – the story of who we are, and how we came to be
where we are now.

Self identity….is a person`s own reflexive understanding of their biography. A stable
self-identity is based on an account of a person`s life, actions and influences which
make sense to themselves, and which can be explained to other people without much
difficulty. It `explains´ the past, and is oriented towards an anticipated future.” 24

The concept of an individual building and recounting his or her identity according to the
circumstances and possibilities available is a particularly interesting one. It allows us to envisage

22 McChesney, Robert W, September 11 and the Structural Limitations of US Journalism, from Zelizer, Barbie/Allan,
24 Gauntlett P99
a situation in which an individual is not necessarily bound by past occurrences, or even, if taken a step further, by reality. It allows the individual to add new narratives, or stories, to their identity according to their needs.

This theory is extremely useful for the purposes of this essay, which charts the changes in political rhetoric according to the politician’s changing circumstances. The relationship between the speaker’s personal identity and his use of rhetoric is, in my opinion, critical to establishing and identifying these changes. Where Obama positions himself on the question of his racial background and race in general can also be examined using this theoretical base.

Also, the concept of the post-traditional society is applicable when examining the rhetoric of a politician who based his bid for power on the ideology of “Change”.

The theory discussed above is backed up by the scrutiny of the use of inclusive, identity-defining terms such as “we,” “us”, “our”, “ourselves”, and other terms which occur, as a means/method of establishing how Barack Obama has built/adapted an identity.

The terms are universal, and are used to establish one’s personal identity. Even when it is not a conscious process, these terms are potent expressions of identity, and serve as a useful indicator of where, and with whom, the speaker is positioning himself in the course of a given speech.

It is perhaps important that the reader not only reads the script, but watches and hears the rhetoric. There is an entire study-area which revolves around hand-gestures and how one might/should interpret them, but this essay will focus on the words used. The gestures used, though, are part-and-parcel of the entire presentation, and it with this in mind that I have chosen to use sources which have a video link.

6. Method
The method of the essay will be a part in the hermeneutic process described earlier. The analyses described below are structured in such a way as to echo as closely as possible the theoretical basis of the essay.

It is here that my contention that theory and method are not separate entities, but overlap and act in unison, comes into play. In order to define and discuss the theoretical elements of this essay, it was necessary to give some indication as to how they would be used – i.e. refer to method, and when discussing the method to be used it is necessary to refer back to the theories on which the method is based.

The core of the essay consists of rhetorical analyses of two Obama speeches, and will be based upon the theories discussed in the previous chapter. The aim is to apply these theories in a way which will enable the essay to determine how Obama’s rhetoric has changed as his political career has progressed from presidential candidate to serving President.

The first step, under the heading “The Speech”, is to give an over-view of the speech in order to gain an insight into the content, themes, context and setting.

This will be followed by “Logos”, “Pathos” and “Ethos”, in which the three individual rhetorical elements will be examined. The concept of logos, in the context of this essay, will be used to determine Obama’s appeal to his audience’s logic. What is he actually saying, and how does he logically justify it? Pathos will look at the emotional appeal being made, and ethos will be used to determine the ultimate believability of the speaker and the speeches.

This will be followed by “Interaction of Rhetorical Elements” which will analyze how the three elements work together in the context of the speech.

The analyses will then look at how the issues and content of the speech’s are framed. That is to say, the context in which they are given. This will be done under the heading “framing”.

The next heading is titled “Identity”, and will examine how Barack Obama constructs his identity and alters his personal narrative according to the circumstances surrounding each particular speech. A key element in this section will be to look at Obama’s use of inclusive phrases as a pointer to who, or which group (or groups), he is identifying himself with.

Each analysis will conclude with the heading “Summary of Analysis”, in which a broader view will be taken in order to determine how the various above-mentioned theoretical elements combine in order to gain an impression of the rhetorical nature of the speech in its entirety.

By its nature the essay will be qualitative, but, whenever one compares, an element of the quantitative is likely to be involved. Any quantitative elements arising are, however, secondary, and the essay is not based on any purely quantitative methods such as comparative word-counts.

In the course of each analysis, attention will be given to the wider context of the speech. In today’s mediated world, a speech by an important political figure is seldom received only by the immediate audience. Through various media forms, speeches often reach far wider and varied
audiences than those to whom they are initially delivered. Thus, an integral part of the method will be to assess the impact of the speeches after they become media property and product.

The analyses will make use of specific quotes as examples from each speech, if necessary, to reinforce any statements or points being made and to give the reader a direct and readily available insight into what is being discussed or analyzed.

Both analyses have been conducted as separate entities, avoiding comparison, in a uniform manner to ensure that as high a level of consistency as possible is maintained.

Following the analyses, a separate chapter is devoted to comparing them in order to detect and evaluate common themes and differences. This chapter will attempt to answer the fundamental problem and questions set by this essay.

7. Material
The choice of material stems directly from the aims and questions stated above. In order to avoid any randomness in the selection, I have chosen major speeches which have attracted media attention.

The choice of material is self-explanatory. The aim of the essay, and the subsequent questions, is to determine if and how political rhetoric changes due to the politician’s situation or office.

With this in mind the essay will analyze two speeches.

The first is a campaign speech given by Barack Obama in the midst of his effort to be elected President of the United States.

The second speech is the speech Barack Obama gave when he had been voted the President of the United States.

The sources are both internet-bound, and I have provided both written as well as visual sources. I consider both sources to be completely trustworthy, even though there are discrepancies between their graphic presentation.

8. Analyses
8.1.1. The Speech

This speech is the first of three chosen speeches. It is selected as an example of Obama’s rhetoric during the time he was campaigning as a presidential candidate. The setting was the church of deceased 60s civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. The church’s congregation, and thus the audience for the speech, are almost exclusively African American.

Obama begins the speech by creating a strong religious tone. He refers to the incident in the Bible in which the united voices of the Israelites cause the walls of Jericho to tumble and fall. He then moves on to invoke the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr. and his role in the campaign for equal rights for black Americans, and quotes his statement that “Unity is the great need of the hour” 25, which is the underlying theme of the speech. He also mentions the role of whites in this struggle. Throughout the speech it is difficult to establish to what extent Obama is referring to unity as unity among only African Americans, as occasionally the term appears to be used more inclusively.

The speech emphasizes that the financial and political problems facing the United States are primarily moral problems, before going on to address some of the specific problems facing the country such as institutional racism, welfare issues, problems with the criminal justice system and intolerance of immigrants and other religions. Mention is also made of the war in Iraq and the imbalance of wealth distribution in the United States, and the image of the fall of the walls of Jericho is invoked again.

The following quote is indicative of the tone: “For most of this country's history, we in the African-American community have been at the receiving end of man's inhumanity to man. And all of us understand intimately the insidious role that race still sometimes plays - on the job, in the schools, in our health care system, and in our criminal justice system.” 26

At this point in the speech Obama delivers a reminder to African Americans that they are not blameless, and that they too have been guilty of intolerance. He uses this to reinforce his message that all Americans need to unite to overcome the problems facing the country, and refers to the Bible when saying that words are not enough, action is needed.

The themes of unity and need for action are continued in this reference to Martin Luther King:

“That is how we will bring about the change we seek. That is how Dr. King led this country through the wilderness. He did it with words - words that he spoke not just to the children of slaves, but the children of slave owners. Words that inspired not just black but also white; not just the Christian but the Jew; not just the Southerner but also the Northerner.

He led with words, but he also led with deeds. He also led by example. He led by marching and going to jail and suffering threats and being away from his family. He led by taking a stand against a war, knowing full well that it would diminish his popularity. He led by challenging our economic structures, understanding that it would cause discomfort. Dr. King understood that unity cannot be won on the cheap; that we would have to earn it through great effort and determination.”

Obama then proceeds to recount a story about individuals who have been affected by the problems afflicting the country. This precedes the finale, in which the theme of unity is once again reinforced and the comparison with the crumbling of the walls of Jericho is echoed. America, he states, is “truly indivisible”.

8.1.2. Logos

The challenge when analyzing logos in this particular speech is that the speech is emotionally laden. It is emphatically not a statement of firm policies or plans. Nor is it purely a rationally delivered list of grievances and concerns.

It is conceivable that, in the American context, Biblical references might be considered as a part of a speech’s logos, but, for the purposes of this essay, written from a European perspective, I choose to consider these under the heading of pathos.

Obama appeals to his audience’s logic and understanding by referring to historical facts such as the African American struggle for equal rights and cites several concrete examples which occurred during this campaign. He mentions the hardships and problems facing many Americans today, which is also factual, and provides the audience with a logical link between the struggles of the past and the issues of the present. He also logically states that the United States is comprised of many different ethnic and social groups, and that unity is necessary if the difficulties facing the country are to be overcome.

The problem remains, however, that these appeals to logic have to be sifted from the emotional language and imagery in which they are couched. This issue will be returned to when framing is discussed.

Viewed in its entirety, the speech cannot be seen as an appeal to reason, and indeed its logos is extremely difficult to identify and isolate.

8.1.3. Pathos

This speech exhibits a high level of pathos. The repeated use of Biblical imagery in front of a devoutly religious audience is a good example of this, as is the repeated evocation of the struggles and hardships, faced and being faced by African Americans, before an overwhelmingly African American audience. The tone and nature of the language used contributes significantly to the speech’s emotional appeal.

The following quote shows how these elements are used, and is typical of the overall tone of the speech:

“The Dr. King understood is that if just one person chose to walk instead of ride the bus, those walls of oppression would not be moved. But maybe if a few more walked, the foundation might start to shake. If a few more women were willing to do what Rosa Parks had done, maybe the cracks would start to show. If teenagers took freedom rides from North to South, maybe a few bricks would come loose. Maybe if white folks marched because they had come to understand that their freedom too was at stake in the impending battle, the wall would begin to sway. And if enough Americans were awakened to the injustice; if they joined together, North and South, rich and poor, Christian and Jew, then perhaps that wall would come tumbling down, and justice would flow like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

Note the use of strongly emotive and resonant words and phrases such as “oppression”, “injustice”, “freedom”, “impending battle” and “…justice would flow like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream. Note also the underlying religious imagery.

8.1.4. Ethos

The ethos of this speech is extremely difficult to judge. Given the assertion of this essay that ethos is, or can be, particularly subjective, one has to take into account the nature of the actual audience. Or, in this case, the intended audience.

The actual audience, as has been noted, was made up of African American church-goers, but what about the wider, intended, audience. It is at this point that one has to at least consider the fact that the speaker was not only speaking for the immediate audience and that he was aware that the speech would in fact reach a wider audience through various branches of the media.

This leads to a situation in which the speaker`s ethos, and that of the speech itself, might be perceived differently, depending on the context. The committed Obama supporter, such as the immediate audience, given their positive reaction, might look past the emotive nature of the speech and find the speaker to be trustworthy, while a wider audience could be expected to contain those who considered this emotive tone to render the speaker untrustworthy and lacking in ethos.

8.1.5. Interaction of Rhetorical Elements

In this case it is obvious that pathos is the driving force behind the speech. The fact that the unaffiliated listener would have to sift through a lot of emotional speech and imagery to extract the logos of the speech and speaker is, as discussed above, a factor which can be expected to affect how the speaker`s rhetoric works on the wider media audience. This factor should, however, be viewed in the context in which the speech was originally given.

The rhetorical elements interact differently in the case of this specific speech, according to the audience.

8.1.6. Framing

The theory relating to framing states that facts are neutral until they are framed. That is to say, until they are put in a certain context. Returning to the discussion on logos – 5.2, it is clear to see that certain facts are present in Obama`s speech. The African American struggles of the past are factual, but they are presented in a certain context. The context in this case is the continuing injustice faced by the African American (and other minorities) in the history of the United States of America.

The problems faced by these groups in the present are also factual, and they, in turn, are presented in the historical context of the above-mentioned struggle, as well as the original context that the injustice is continual, and still exists.

These contexts are given form and reinforced by the specific rhetorical choices made by the speaker. The issues being addressed are particularly emotional, especially to the original
audience, as are the frames in which they are delivered, and the speech is constructed and delivered accordingly. As was noted under the heading of logos – 5.2, the factual elements of the speech are subjugated to the emotional elements.

8.1.7. Identity

The most notable factor in the speech when considering identity is the fact that Obama is primarily addressing an African American audience, and the identity he presents is first and foremost African American.

It is interesting at this point to return to Giddens’ theories, and his contention that identity is something which can be formed and adapted according to circumstance. Barack Obama is not, in fact, African American; he is of mixed white and Kenyan extraction. He has, however, cast himself as a spokesman for, and aligned himself with, African Americans and African American issues and grievances throughout his political career. His “blackness” is of course a major factor in allowing him to construct this identity. Thus we have already established one narrative, one “story of who we are” which the speaker has maintained and updated.

Whilst Obama never loses sight of the wider audience and political implications of the speech, and makes several references to inclusiveness, his usage of the inclusive terms which reflect identity are clearly indicative of whom he is identifying himself with in this particular speech.

“As I was thinking about which ones we need to remember at this hour, my mind went back to the very beginning of the modern Civil Rights Era.” 30

“We have an empathy deficit when we’re still sending our children down corridors of shame - schools in the forgotten corners of America where the color of your skin still affects the content of your education.” 31

“For most of this country's history, we in the African-American community have been at the receiving end of man's inhumanity to man.” 32

The above examples are typical of the speech as a whole and reflect the fact that “we” is by far the most common inclusive, identity-defining term in this particular speech. If this becomes a pattern in the other speech’s to be analyzed remains to be seen. In this speech “we” is used mostly in reference to African Americans, and occasionally to include other groups perceived to be oppressed, reflecting the theme of overall unity central to the speech.

8.1.8. Summary of Analysis

As stated when describing method, this sub-chapter will examine how the above elements combine to create a rhetorical whole. Taking Aristotle’s contention that “rhetoric is the art of persuasion”, we can see that all the above elements act together to create a speech which is intended to persuade an audience. In this particular speech the persuasion occurs on a notably emotional level.

The dominant specific rhetorical issue was found to be pathos, and the speech was framed using emotive and evocative contexts. Obama, as the speaker, clearly identified himself most closely with those Americans, specifically African Americans, who are perceived to have suffered, and continue to suffer, injustice.

At this point I refer back to the Theory chapter - Pathos – 5.3, in which the possible negative implications of the use of what could be considered to be excessive amounts of emotion are mentioned. The use of so much pathos, and the effect this has on the speaker’s ethos, combined with the emotive framing and the speaker’s clear identification with a certain group could, conceivably damage the speech’s power to persuade.

This was clearly an emotionally-laden speech, given initially to an audience comprised mainly of Obama faithful. It’s impact beyond that primary audience must be called into question.

8.2. Speech Two: The Inauguration Speech

8.2.1. The Speech

This is the speech given by Barack Obama after being sworn in as the 44th President of the United States of America. In November 2008 he had won a decisive victory over his rival John McCain, and public expectation was considerable. According to estimates, the crowd gathered on the Mall in Washington was the largest ever assembled for a presidential inauguration. The audience can be considered as a cross-section of the American public.

Obama begins by addressing his “Fellow Citizens”, and says how humble and grateful he is to receive the nation’s trust. He mentions the sacrifices made by the nation’s forefathers before offering a token of conciliation to his predecessor, George W. Bush by thanking him for his service to the nation.

The central, overriding theme of the speech is hope and belief in the future; that, even in times of trouble, the USA is still great, but he begins with a negative tone by referring to the difficult times facing the country. He states that America is in a crisis, citing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the ailing economy and a list of other problems.

This is followed by a veiled attack on the failings of the politics of the past. While Obama never mentions the Bush administration by name, he refers directly to its policies, and there remains little doubt to who he is referring. “Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered. Our health care is too costly, our schools fail too many -- and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet.”

The fact that the nation is in crisis is reiterated when Obama declares that the country is facing a lack of national confidence. This is the point at which the speech changes gears, and moves from a negative to a positive tone:

These are the indicators of crisis, subject to data and statistics. Less measurable, but no less profound, is a sapping of confidence across our land; a nagging fear that America's decline is inevitable, that the next generation must lower its sights.

Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this America: They will be met. (Applause.)

On this day, we gather because we have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

33 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
34 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
This change of tone is immediately followed by biblical reference, which leads into an oblique comparison of The Scriptures with the ideals of the US Constitution as he mentions noble ideas such as freedom.

Obama again pays tribute to previous generations, emphasizing their sacrifice and hard work, and uses this as a platform to make the point that America is still great, and that “Starting today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America. For everywhere we look, there is work to be done.”

The speech moves on to call for an end to the cynicism of those who do not believe in America’s future then moves on to address broad issues about the nature of government. There follows another veiled attack on past policies, including a cautious attack on the extreme free-market economics that hold sway.

In direct contradiction to the policies of the previous administration, Obama emphasizes the need for international co-operation, better relations with the Muslim World, and mentions the need to withdraw from Iraq and Afghanistan, although he quickly stresses America’s right to defend itself, and refers to 9/11.

Towards the end of the speech, Obama refers to his status as a black man.

The speech concludes with a comparison between the darkest days of the war of independence and the situation facing the country today and George Washington is quoted; “”Let it be told to the future world...that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive... that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet [it]."

  America: In the face of our common dangers, in this winter of our hardship, let us remember these timeless words.”

8.2.2. Logos

At the time the speech was given, a common criticism in the media was that general issues were addressed, problems were identified and solutions were given, but that it was lacking in specific policies. There was a broad feeling that too little attention was paid to the questions of “when?” and “how?”. This has to be taken into account when assessing the logos of the speech, as a statement of intent, while appearing logical, can also be seen as an appeal to the emotions. The following statement is an example of this; “To the people of poor nations, we pledge to work alongside you to make your farms flourish and let clean waters flow; to nourish starved bodies

35 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
36 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
and feed hungry minds."  

At the same time it should be borne in mind that this was an inauguration speech, and was not billed as a declaration of policy.

The fundamental appeal to logic in this speech is that the policies and politics of the past have failed, and that a new approach is necessary. Obama recounts the many problems facing the country, and does refer to specific issues when doing so, but the terms of reference, tone and language used when doing so are emotionally laden.

As a result, there is very little evidence of any purely logical appeal to reason.

8.2.3. Pathos

As stated above, this was, in fact, a triumphant inauguration speech, and it is perhaps remiss to expect logical appeals to reason in the form of concrete statements of policy. The context of the speech is important to keep in mind. Nevertheless, it is clear to see that this speech is dominated by the emotional appeal.

The example referred to in the previous sub-chapter “To the people of poor nations...”, is typical of the way that this speech uses the emotional appeal in tandem with a seemingly logical statement of intent.

The entire structure of the speech is carefully designed to appeal to the emotions of the listeners. By beginning with humble gratitude and thanking George W. Bush, Obama already attempts to elicit a feeling of warmth towards himself. The passage from negative beginning through to rising levels of hope is used to lift the audience’s emotions. The conclusion of the speech refers to the founding of the American nation in stirring tones, and he signs off with a rousing “God bless the United States of America”.

The repeated references to the symbols of a great and glorious past, the struggles faced by the nation’s ancestors and the sacrifices made to make America what it is today are all aimed at the common American sense of national pride. The focus on the injustices faced by many Americans, both past and present, serve the purpose of evoking the emotions of anger, pity and a sense of righteousness among the audience.

The following example is typical of the emotional tone, language and imagery used throughout the speech;

“For us, they packed up their few worldly possessions and traveled across oceans in search of a new life. For us, they toiled in sweatshops, and settled the West, endured the lash of the whip, and plowed the hard earth. For us, they fought and died in places like Concord and Gettysburg, Normandy and Khe Sahn.”

37 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
38 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
In one short passage Obama manages to evoke the settler spirit, the myth of the “West”, the suffering of slavery and the sacrifices made by America’s armed forces. All of these are powerful emotional symbols in the collective American consciousness. The choice of words and terms such as “few worldly possessions”, “new life”, “toiled” and “lash of the whip” is also indicative of the emotional nature of the speech.

The speech contains several Biblical references, another powerful emotional pull in the American context.

8.2.4. Ethos

It is fair to assume that the majority of the many thousands present on the day to here the speech were pro-Obama, and as such found what he said, and how he said it, to be trustworthy. However, as stated previously, there were critical opinions in the wider audience who found the speech to be lacking in substance.

This supports the contention that the concept of ethos is subjective. The speech was transmitted world-wide, and the ethos of the speaker and the speech itself will have been perceived differently by different audiences.

Observed from a purely neutral point of view, the fact that the logical appeal was outweighed by the emotive nature of the speech indicates that the speaker and speech’s level of ethos is low. To merely view the speech in this way is, however, simplistic. The use of emotional language and symbolism, in the context of this particular speech, does not necessarily make the speaker appear untrustworthy.

Indeed, by referencing the values, ideals and history which the American nation holds dear, it is quite possible that the opposite is true, and the speaker’s trustworthiness increases.

8.2.5. Interaction of Rhetorical Elements

This speech is a very good example of the fluid nature of the rhetorical elements, how they interact, and how the borders are blurred. It is difficult to distinguish logos from pathos. The logical appeal is made in an emotive way, and the emotional appeal is often used to convey a logical point.

The difficulties experienced in evaluating the ethos of the speech and speaker are partially indicative of this. Context and audience aside, this is an emotive speech which, at the same time, seems capable of generating trustworthiness.
8.2.6. Framing

The issues touched upon in the speech are many, and mostly concern the challenges facing the United States now and in the future. The dominant frame used as a context for these issues is the nation’s past.

Almost every present day or future issue referred to in the speech is preceded or followed by a reference to the history of the country. These references take several forms. Sometimes the sacrifices of past generations are evoked. Sometimes it is the struggles faced by Americans through the ages. At other times the audience is reminded of the memories of past glories and America’s rise to greatness and its present position as a global superpower.

The one thing that all of these references have in common is that they ultimately project America’s past in a positive, progressive light, and thus serve as the context and frame through which to take issue with the present and future.

The dominant emotional rhetorical tone serves as a tool to ensure that the historical references are perceived in a way that in the end is uplifting, and help to reinforce the frame in a positive way, even while the miseries of the past are also addressed.

8.2.7. Identity

The circumstances in which this speech is given are that Obama has moved on from competing as a candidate, and is now the newly sworn-in leader of the United States. This affects the identity he adopts, as well as who he identifies himself with.

It is interesting to note that only once does he refer to himself in the African American context and invoke his “blackness”.

“This is the meaning of our liberty and our creed, why men and women and children of every race and every faith can join in celebration across this magnificent mall; and why a man whose father less than 60 years ago might not have been served in a local restaurant can now stand before you to take a most sacred oath. (Applause.)” 39

It is already evident from the content of the speech that Obama is beginning to directly address the world at large and thus add a new chapter to his personal narrative. He is now the leader of a great nation with far-reaching influence, and it can be seen in this speech how he is starting to adapt his identity accordingly.

His usage of inclusive terms also reflects the fact that he now leads a diverse nation. The very first sentence sets the tone for the entire speech; “My fellow citizens: I stand here today

39 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you've bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices borne by our ancestors.”

Obama refers not to one specific group, but to his “fellow citizens”, and identifies himself with the entire nation by the use of “us” and “our”. This can be seen as indicative of his trying to reach out and include even those who did not support him.

8.2.8. Summary of Analysis

Having won the election and moved on from the role of candidate to that of President, Obama no longer has to persuade people to back him, and this is evident in the rhetorical nature of this particular speech. He is now attempting to persuade the nation as a whole to share his vision of the future, based on his and their shared past.

The over-riding rhetorical element of the speech, pathos, is backed up by several references to specific issues and a fairly strong, if subjugated, undercurrent of logos. While it is based on the broad emotional appeal of hope, the speech manages to touch on many issues which are central to Americans, and the level of ethos appears to be high.

The mainly positive frame in which the speech is delivered and on which it is based combines with these rhetorical elements to give the speaker and the speech an element of trustworthiness. This is reinforced by the fact that Obama is setting himself up as a representative of all Americans, and identifying himself with the nation as a whole.

As has been noted, the effects of this speech’s rhetoric varied according to the mediated audience, but, given the context and circumstances in which it was given, it comes across as ultimately well balanced and fitting for the occasion.

9. Evaluation

40 http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inaugural-address
It is perhaps unfair to compare a politician’s rhetoric over his career (especially as Barack Obama still has the best part of his career ahead of himself). The key word which appears again and again is “context”.

Let us return to the hermeneutic principal now. The big picture is only visible by observing the details, and the details, in turn, allow us to view the big picture in the fitting context.

What stands out, regardless of the speech and language used, is the context in which the speech is given. It is the context which has most bearing on the speech, and it is context which determines it’s rhetorical value.

At the same time, the speech also forms and dictates the context. It would be naïve to assume that a skilled politician is fully at the mercy of circumstance. A skilled politician, as one must assume Obama is, must be assumed to be at least partially in control of his circumstance.

This apparent contradiction is best solved by examining the speaker`s use of basic rhetorical principals, how they are framed, and, last but very much not least, who the speaker identifies himself with at which point, and which identity he builds for himself.

Both speeches are dominated by an emotional appeal, and both were delivered to immediate audiences which could be considered to be favorable to Obama. The question of context comes into play when the mediated form of the speeches is considered. The first speech was given in the context of a follower in the footsteps of Martin Luther King. The second speech was given as the anointed savior of a nation.

9.1. Logos

Both speeches were found to lack a fundamental logical argument. They were, however, different in several ways.

The “Inauguration” speech exhibited a greater degree of logos than the “Candidate” speech.

One must return to the theory and ask oneself “What is logos?”

According to this essay, it is the appeal made by the speaker to the audience’s logic. Neither speech made a particularly strong appeal to logic, and both speeches were anchored in the emotional appeal. The references in both speeches to factual issues were delivered in emotional tones and with emotional words.

However, the underlying appeal to logic in the two speeches is not hard to locate and compare. The first speech uses history and current events as a means to gain votes. The second speech uses the same touchstones as a means to involve and carry with the listeners.
While the two speeches are not defined by logical argument, they are nonetheless based on a certain logical sub-stream. It is at this point that the rhetorical elements become particularly difficult to separate, because, as stated, the elements of logos and pathos tend to mix, especially in the second speech.

The logical basis of the Candidate Speech is less easy to see and detect. This could be, and very likely is, due to the fact that the Candidate Speech was given as an appeal for votes from a specific group, with specific issues. Whereas the Presidential Speech was made before an entire nation, not to mention the world’s media. The need for a logical argument, however much coated in emotional language, was more pressing.

There was clearly more evidence of logical argument in the Presidential Speech, even though it is defined and delivered in a way which is more reminiscent of pathos.

9.2. Pathos

Pathos is the dominant rhetorical element in both speeches. It should be remembered that political discourse, in general, is often a plea to the heart, at the expense of the mind. This is particularly true in the USA, where political campaigning takes place on a theatrical level which can seem foreign and strange to the European observer.

Again, the context of the two speeches has to be taken into consideration. Both were appeals for support.

The “Candidate Speech” was an appeal for voter support, while the “President Speech” was essentially an appeal for a united nation with common goals and hope for the future. Both were delivered in emotionally charged circumstances. Both speeches ended on a Patriotic high point; “God Bless America”. The European aversion to this kind of linkage of the “divine” and politics has to be borne in mind when assessing American political speech.

In order to evaluate the emotional content of the particular speeches one has to take into account not only the immediate audience but also the wider media-facilitated audience.

It is only when one examines the speeches in relation to their respective audiences that one can compare their pathos and emotional appeal. This issue will be taken further in the following sub-chapter.

9.3. Ethos

As has been established, the two speeches both emotional in tone and language used.
Identity is a key issue when examining Obama’s ultimate trustworthiness and believability in each speech. The “Candidate” speech comes across as less trustworthy because the impression can be gained that Obama is identifying himself with certain groups for political gain, and using an emotive tone in order to connect with these groups.

The “President” speech, while also using a broadly emotional tone, appeals to a more general audience, and thus comes across as more trustworthy.

This is a telling example of how language alone does not give a sufficient basis for an accurate rhetorical analysis. All the elements of this essay come into play when determining the ethos of a particular speech.

Again, the issue of where the speech is heard, and by whom, is paramount. One audience might consider a certain speech to exhibit a high degree of ethos, while another might consider the opposite to be true.

9.4. Interaction of rhetorical elements

When examining the implications of the three core rhetorical elements on the specific speeches it is necessary to refer back to the theory which underscores this essay. As has been sufficiently stated, the relationship between the three is the decisive factor.

As stated above, it is necessary to know and understand the where and why of a speech.

When analyzing the three fundamental rhetorical elements the “where and why” are just as important as when the frame and issues of identity are considered.

The “Candidate” speech, given it’s specific context, could be seen as favoring the emotional appeal over the logical, as could the “President” speech. Both, as stated, were delivered in a dominantly emotional way.

The stated theoretical base, that ethos is the deciding factor, is decisive when comparing the two speeches from a rhetorical - specific perspective. The interaction between logos and pathos made both speeches difficult to analyze, yet it was that same interaction which gave both speeches their character.

The decisive question is how trustworthy the speaker/speech is, and, in this regard, the “Candidate” speech shows itself to exhibit less ethos than the “President” speech. This is due to the inclusive/exclusive nature of the appeals being made.
9.5. Framing

The frames used in the speeches differ fundamentally. In the “Candidate” speech, Obama uses a very specific frame. He uses a frame, and bases the speech within that frame. The “President” speech employs a broader frame.

In the “Candidate” speech, Obama is very careful to use a frame which can support the appeal which he is making to his audience. One might say that the frame is custom-designed for a specific audience.

Of course the context is again central. Both speeches make use of the past and history of the United States as points of reference. The central difference is the use of, and reference to, injustice.

The “Candidate” speech uses the perceived injustices of the past to put the present into context, as does the “President” speech. The difference is in the passed-on perception of a generalized past. In 2008 Obama was focusing on certain groups. In 2009 he was including an entire nation. The frame through which the speech is given changes accordingly.

9.6. Identity

Perhaps the defining point when analyzing the rhetoric used in the two speeches is who Obama identifies himself with. By understanding the identity he is attempting to present, the personal narrative he is showing the world, we can more easily get to grips with how and what he says.

The issue of “blackness” and African American-ness is central. The two speeches show that Obama is willing to define himself differently according to the circumstances. It is not for this essay to judge if he uses, or used, “blackness” as a political tool. The demographics and political history of the United States seem to indicate otherwise.

What is clear is that Obama created an identity to appeal to African American voters (the “Candidate” speech), and subsequently presented a different, more inclusive identity when presenting himself as President.

The use of inclusive terms is further evidence of this. In the “Candidate” speech, Obama, while not forgetting to include all Americans, primarily included and identified himself with African Americans and excluded minorities.

As a newly elected President, Obama needed to identify himself with the nation as a whole, and this is evident in the speech. He is no longer using the inclusive terms to connect with the African American/minority communities. Instead he is identifying himself as an American.
9.7. Summary

The essay’s main point, as should be the purpose of all essays, is to answer the questions set at the start.

Given that this is not a quantitative essay, it is impossible to conclusively prove anything, and it is impossible to reach any concrete conclusion.

It is clear though that Obama’s rhetoric has changed. Many factors remained the same between the two speeches when compared, but there remain certain over-riding differences. This was perhaps to be expected, given the fact that a politician’s priorities and aims change when he/she makes the step up from candidate to elected official.

While the language used in the two speeches is similar, the deciding factors were the purpose of the language and the context in which it was used. Both of these factors underline the necessity of including framing and identity in the analyses. The role of the media has also come to the fore when analyzing the speeches. It is absolutely central to how they are received, and is, in effect, a joker when it comes to assessing the rhetorical impact of the speeches.

Let us now take stock of the key results reached by this essay:

- **Logos** – Both speeches were found to be lacking in logos. The logos present was found to be tied up in, and framed by, emotional imagery and language. I was surprised by the over-all lack of logos in both speeches.

- **Pathos** – The general tone of both speeches was emotive. Regardless of the context, or perhaps because of the context, emotion was the over-riding rhetorical element. The preponderance of pathos over logos has, according to the theoretical base of the essay, an effect on the speech’s ethos.

- **Ethos** – This proved virtually impossible to pin down. I have attempted, in the analyses, to give a guide according to the named theories. The effects of pathos have been noted above, but the mediated nature of the speeches suggest that it is the perception of audiences and the context in which the speeches were/are received which ultimately decide the ethos of these two speeches and the speaker.

- **Framing** – Framing is linked very closely to identity. The frames used were different, but linked. The frame used in the first speech was very much tied to the suffering of certain elements of US society in the past and present. The second speech still referenced those points, but was more inclusive. The frame widened to include the entire nation. This was found to be a reflection of who the speaker was appealing to/identifying himself with at the time.

- **Identity** – The difference between the two speeches is clear. Obama is in the process of building new identities according to his political situation. He identifies himself with
different target groups and builds new narratives. In the first speech his narrative and identity is predominantly African–American/minority, while in the second speech his narrative and identity has broadened to identify himself first and foremost as an American.

It is fair to say that the essays questions have been answered, and the original contention, that Obama’s rhetoric changed as his position changed, has been shown to be correct.

10. Closing Reflections
I am of the opinion that the chosen theoretical base and method worked. The purpose of the essay was achieved. The theoretical base and method could be applied to future research. It is clear that it might need changing according to the specific topic, but I can see it functioning to analyze many aspects of political discourse, and I would be very interested to apply it to political journalism.

The role of the media in how political discourse is received is an angle which is also very fertile ground for further study and examination.

From the original starting point, the journey has led me to learn many new things, and to ask many questions I might not otherwise have asked. By using the hermeneutic principle it has been possible to look at the issue as a whole from the macro and micro perspective. It has become clear that political rhetoric functions on many levels, and it is impossible to gain a clear impression without having a clear overview while at the same time understanding how the details function.

Researching and writing this essay has been very rewarding and enriching, to say the least. When one begins an essay of this nature, one is never too sure where it will lead. I began by envisaging a purely rhetorical study, but soon realized that the overall rhetorical effect of political discourse is profoundly affected by other factors. Rhetoric is the sum of many parts.

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