Politics and Sports, and the Rhetors of Them: A Debate in Distanced Disciplines

In Chapter 2, Book 1 of Aristotle's *On Rhetoric* (trans. George Kennedy), Aristotle defines rhetoric as "an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion. This is the function of no other art…But rhetoric seems to be able to observe the persuasive about 'the given,' so to speak" (36-37; bk. 1 ch. 2). This essay suggests that classical rhetoric, as Aristotle defines it, is still prevalent in modern society today. By comparing two significant speeches — one of presidential discourse and the other of collegiate football discourse — this essay proposes that these apparently unrelated discourses are united through their similarities of classical rhetoric.

The Placement of Presidential Rhetoric

The question has been posed as to whether presidential rhetoric has declined in the past century. Elvin Lim, in his 2002 essay, "Five Trends in Presidential Rhetoric: An Analysis on Rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton," speaks on this topic and claims that "modern presidents have become rhetorically very different from their forebears" (332). Consider, for example the extemporaneous remarks New York Senator Robert F. Kennedy delivered in 1968 upon hearing of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination:

> "Ladies and Gentlemen,
>
> I'm only going to talk to you just for a minute or so this evening, because I have some -- some very sad news for all of you -- Could you lower those signs, please? -- I have some very sad news for all of you, and, I think, sad news for all of our fellow citizens, and people who love peace all over the world; and that is that Martin Luther King was shot and was killed tonight in Memphis, Tennessee.

> Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice between fellow human beings. He died in the cause of that effort. In this difficult day, in this difficult time for the United States, it's perhaps well to ask what kind of a nation we are and what direction we want to move in. For those of you who are black -- considering the evidence evidently is that there were white people who were responsible -- you can be filled with bitterness, and with hatred, and a desire for revenge.
>
> We can move in that direction as a country, in greater polarization -- black people amongst blacks, and white amongst whites, filled with hatred toward one another. Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand, and to comprehend, and replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understand, compassion, and love.
>
> For those of you who are black and are tempted to fill with -- be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed, but he was killed by a white man.
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> But we have to make an effort in the United States. We have to make an effort to understand, to get beyond, or go beyond these rather difficult times" (Kennedy, "Speech on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.").

Senator Kennedy delivers this impromptu speech with eloquence and passion. He touches the hearts of listening Americans and does so by crafting his words in a way that demands action and togetherness by the people. His ethos is apparent in his sharing some personal family history as well as his overall tone of delivery, and his pathos for the United States is profoundly evident. By telling his audience, "We can move…we can make," Kennedy allows the audience to identify

with his emotions and feel united with their country despite a time of sadness (Kennedy, "Speech on the Assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.").

This discourse is seen even earlier. Take President Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address delivered in 1863 on the battlegrounds near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania:

> "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation: conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
>
> Now we are engaged in a great civil war. . .testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated. . . can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war.
>
> We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.
>
> But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate. . .we cannot consecrate. . . we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.
>
> It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us. . .that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion. . . that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain. . . that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom. . . and that government of the people. . .by the people. . .for the people. . . shall not perish from the earth" (Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address").

President Lincoln addresses the nation during a time of war. He revitalizes Americans with words of hope and praise in remembrance of honor and sacrifice. Rather than speaking with lofty or verbose language, Lincoln reminds his listeners of the Founding Fathers through powerful, precise words that transform his speech: "Four score and years ago" (Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address"). This opening phrase also conveys a pathetic appeal by retelling a story of history. His manner is logical, and his thoughts are strongly conveyed. Lincoln, as orator, is powerful because his words are clear and direct. Through repetition of key words (e.g., consecrate…consecrated), Lincoln communicates the importance of his speech.

It is difficult to imagine a contemporary politician speaking with such eloquence or using the terms of classical politicians today. Americans are often reminded of these dated speeches when conversations arise regarding the olden days of America and the way it "used to be." According to Lim, "presidential rhetoric has become more informal…we can reliably infer that recent developments in the postwar period have fostered a heightening reverence of the opinion, judgment, and rhetoric of the common man" (333). Lim's claim is evident in some words from Sarah Palin's 2009 speech in Hong Kong:

> "When my country again achieves financial stability and economic growth – when we roar back to life as we shall do – it will be thanks in large part to the hard work and common sense of these ordinary Americans who are demanding that government spend less and tax less and allow the private sector to grow and prosper. We're not interested in government fixes; we're interested in freedom! Freedom! Our vision is forward looking. People may be frustrated now, but we're very hopeful too.
>
> And, after all, why shouldn't we be? We're Americans. We're always hopeful. Thank you for letting me share some of that hope,

> and a view from Main Street with you. God Bless You" (Palin, "Hong Kong Speech").

Palin speaks in a conversational, laid-back tone; however, her words, like Kennedy and Lincoln's, are clear and direct. She ignites fire within her audience with phrases such as "roar back to life," and with the repetition of the word "freedom" (Palin, "Hong Kong Speech"). Palin's political rhetoric is just as inclusive, using words such as "we're" and "our," as Kennedy's; however, she delivers that language differently than the ways of her predecessors.

Even President Barack Obama, a political figure highly regarded in terms of his public speaking abilities and eloquence, is not immune from the folksy, run of the mill, conversational formulations more typically thought of as the home turf of Sarah Palin. Lim suggests this trend is in line with his supported claim that "presidential rhetoric has become more conversational: it has become more intimate, it has focused increasingly on the trust of the rhetor, and it has become more anecdotal" (343). Consider Obama's speech to a Louisville, Kentucky crowd on September 14, 2006:

> "Don't let anybody tell you that we don't know what we stand for. We know who we are. We know what we believe. We believe in making sure that everybody should have the opportunity to get a job that pays a living wage. That's something we believe in. We believe that nobody should be bankrupt when they get sick, and that everybody should have access to decent healthcare. That's something we believe. We believe that schools should be adequately funded and every child should be able to learn and they should be able to go to college, even if they don't have a lot of money. We believe that. We believe in a foreign policy that's based not just on military might but also the quality of our moral character as a nation. That's something we believe. We believe every senior citizen should be able to retire with

> dignity and respect. That's something we believe. We are the party of FDR. We're the party of Jefferson. We're the party of Kennedy…" *[FADES OFF]* (Obama, "Slugger Field").

Just within these few lines, Obama uses rhetorical techniques, similar to those used by his predecessors, to cater to his audience. His use of contractions and repetition of key words and phrases (e.g., "That's something we believe; We're the party of…") in combination with the way he presents his words, brings cheer and praise from the audience (Obama, "Slugger Field"). Obama speaks with simple, powerful language (like Kennedy and Lincoln) in a conversational, causal tone (like Palin). The inclusiveness of language is even more prevalent here than in Kennedy, Lincoln, or Palin's words, and it surfaces another one of Lim's claims: "Presidential rhetoric in the past thirty years has become dramatically more people-oriented and compassionate, more intimate, more focused on the trustworthiness of the rhetor and more anecdotal" (345). Obama's words embody this new-age presidential rhetoric; he returns presidential language to rhetorical sophistication by merging the eloquent tactics of classical orators (e.g., Kennedy and Lincoln) with the linguistic, modern-day techniques of new-age politicians (e.g., Palin). Because his speeches embody characteristics of orators across decades, Obama is perhaps deemed more rhetorical savvy than any of his predecessors.

From these comparisons, it is suggested that contemporary society is not dumbed down as much as the classical modes of rhetoric are more dispersed. These classical rhetorical tactics are also prevalent in the ever so modern discipline of sports. Even in the jargon-ridden, clichéd language of sports, classical rhetoric still persists.

Presidential Rhetoric vs. Sports Rhetoric

Research regarding political discourse, and specifically the exchanges taking place in presidential conversation, has continued to accumulate over the decades. This research compares the discourse of earlier centuries to that of the twenty-first century, and political scientists have argued that the presidential recourse to public rhetoric as a mode of political influence in the twentieth century represents a significant departure from pre-twentieth century norms. Distanced from this conversation of presidential discourse exists another field blanketed with similar language — sports.

Both literature and media document the rise in the attention given to these two disciplines. Kenneth Looney cites the twentieth century as the time America "began to see the emergence of sports as an actual part of our political system" (30); therefore, the twenty-first century begs for additional inquiry. The impact of both disciplines on modern society is astounding; just as parties gather as a mass in support of their favored presidential candidate, so too, do sports fans dedicate their loyalty to a team or state. Both disciplines bring with them a basket of rhetorical devices and with those, surfaces these questions: To what extent do these discourses resemble one another, and how prevalent is the age of classical rhetoric in this resemblance?

Aristotle's Epideictic or Demonstrative Rhetoric

Aristotle identifies the three components of a speech — a speaker, a subject, and the object — and defines the three species of rhetoric. He writes that the hearer must be either a speaker or a judge, "and [in the latter case] a judge of either past or future happenings… Thus, there would necessarily be three genera of rhetorics; *symbouleutikon* ["deliberative"], *dikanikon*

["judicial"], *epideiktikon* ["demonstrative"]." (47-48; bk. 1 ch. 3). The two speeches within the corresponding video embody this last genus of rhetoric, the epideictic or demonstrative. "In the epideictic, there is either praise [*epainos*] or blame [*psogos*]… in epideictic the present is the most important; for all speakers praise or blame in regard to existing qualities, but they often also make use of other things, both reminding [the audience] of the past and projecting the course of the future" (Aristotle 48).

The football scene takes places in the Iowa State University (ISU) locker room after the team's unexpected victory over Oklahoma State University (OSU) in 2011. Head Coach Paul Rhoads addresses the team with praise, and his players respond with cheers and exultations. Rhoads exclaims: "I end with this… and for that men, I am so proud" (Rhoads, "Locker Room Victory Speech"). Rhoads's vocabulary features words such as "privilege, united, team," and his team chants a tune, transcribed here (courtesy of cyclones.com, ISU Athletics):

> *"O we will fight, fight, fight for Iowa State,*
> *And may her colors ever fly.*
> *Yes, we will fight with might for Iowa State,*
> *With a will to do or die,*
> *Rah! Rah! Rah!*
> *Loyal sons forever true,*
> *And we will fight the battle through.*
> *And when we hit that line we'll hit it hard*
> *ev'ry yard for I.S.U."* (Wilson, "Iowa State University Fight Song").

The terminology used in this fight song (e.g., "we will fight the battle through") mimics that of the comparing clip, which showcases President Obama's address to troops at Fort Bliss, Texas in August 2012. Obama, too, uses words such as "battlefield" and "fight," and he uses of them in particularly similar ways as Rhoads (Obama, "Fort Bliss"). Both Obama and Rhoads refer to the battlefield as the war zone, the place where the fighting and the hard work must take

place. Obama speaks to the Fort Bliss soldiers on the second anniversary of the end of major combat operations in Iraq, and in using the constructions "we honor, we salute," he recalls components of an earlier speech. "Welcome home, and congratulations on a job well done," he says. "You left Iraq with honor, your mission complete, your heads held high" (Obama, "Fort Bliss"). This symbolism is reiterated in greater detail at other points in the speech:

> "In every major phase of that war, you were there, the Iron Soldiers. Because of your speed and strength, American troops toppled a dictator in less than a month. Because of your commitment, you stayed on extended tours and went back, tour after tour, year after year. Because of your determination to succeed, you turned back an insurgency. …That was the progress you made possible with your service and your courage" (Obama, "Fort Bliss").

Both Rhoads and Obama's speeches are showered with elements of Aristotle's epideictic speech. They nearly echo Aristotle's own words regarding virtue:

> "Since virtue is defined as an ability for doing good, the greatest virtues are necessarily those most useful to others. For that reason, people honor the just and the courageous, for the latter is useful to others in war, and the former in peace as well…Manly courage [*andreia*] [is a virtue] by which people perform fine actions in times of danger and as the law orders and obedient to the law, and cowardice is the opposite" (80; bk. 1 ch. 9).

Aristotle also discusses magnanimity [*megalopsychia*], a "virtue productive of great benefits [for others]," which is also applicable to Rhoads and Obama's speeches.

Presence and Absence: Obama and Rhoads vs. *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*

Obama's twenty-first century speech to Fort Bliss soldiers confirms some of the ideas communicated in Elvin Lim's "Five Trends in Presidential Rhetoric: An Analysis on Rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton." The 2002 article analyzes the "actual substance of

rhetoric as it has transpired in the 211 years of presidential rhetorical history from 1789 to 2000 to see if a rhetorical transformation has occurred, and if so, what are some…that define the modern rhetorical president" (Lim 330). Lim's research supports his claim that references to cognitive processes and states have declined; he writes of some of these states — awareness or unawareness, similarity or difference, generality or specificity, and presence or absence (333).

To further delve into this idea of presence and absence, one can turn to Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*. Both of these stories open by setting the stage after a speech has been given to a crowd. In addition, the characters await an arrival of something, for something that has yet to occur. In *Phaedrus*, this arrival is the anticipation of the retelling of Lysias's speech; in *Gorgias,* it is the conversation amongst a small audience in Callicles's home. Phaedrus recounts the speech in private, beyond the city walls; Gorgias, too, engages in private conversation.

Obama's speech resembles Phaedrus's retelling of Lysias's speech, to some extent. Both speeches are being retold; the sense of urgency, the kairos is absent. The speeches were already written, already rehearsed, and are simply being recounted to an audience. In Phaedrus's case, he retells a speech to another, originally unintended audience (Socrates). Although Obama's speech was intended for the audience at Fort Bliss, its words were practiced (in private) many times before they were delivered to the targeted audience. Obama is recounting these rehearsals when delivering his speech, just as Phaedrus is recounting Lysias's delivery of his speech. Furthermore, Obama gave a very similar speech to the same Fort Bliss crowd, just two years prior. Lim argues that, "it has become rare practice to think aloud and in public" (333). The regurgitation of information in both Obama's speech and Lysias's retelling is evidence of the rarity of public kairos. The practice removes the presence; therefore, these speakers are absent.

Kalliopi Nikolopoulou provides a similar argument in his book, *Tragically Speaking: On the Use and Abuse of Theory for Life*. He recalls the scenes in *Phaedrus* and writes: "Less interested in the youth's rehearsal and more in Lysias's letter, Socrates detects the script hidden under Phaedrus's cloak and asks him to read it. Why hear the speech through Phaedrus's memory when Lysias himself is 'present?'" (128). In arguing that Lysias is present, Nikolopoulou suggests that Phaedrus is absent during the retelling of Lysias's speech. It is not until after Phaedrus has recalled the speech and begins new conversation with Socrates, that Phaedrus himself becomes present.

Coach Rhoads's speech has similarities to what takes place in *Gorgias*. The story opens with Socrates having just missed Gorgias make "a display…of many fine things" (*Gorgias* 25; 447a). Callicles, in impromptu fashion, invites Gorgias to his home where they can engage in conversation with Socrates and Chaerephon; Socrates wishes to test Gorgias's claims. This conversation, unlike Obama's speech, was not planned or pre-orchestrated; therefore, it embodies kairos. Gorgias and Coach Rhoads deliver their words to a targeted, private audience, rather than to the masses to which Obama and Lysias delivered. Gorgias and Coach Rhoads speak directly to their audience and have full range of emotions and character. They are present due to the impromptu nature of the occasion by which they deliver.

Common Characteristics of Discourse

In his dissertation, "The Rhetoric of Athletic Coaches and Their Players: A Study of Speech Genre in the Composition Classroom," Kenneth Looney makes an argument that there are common characteristics amongst the discourse between collegiate football coaches and athletes. Looney proses that "while all of these contexts [practices, pep-talks, and one-on-one

confrontations] are taking place, the coach is exposing the player to a very powerful discourse" (7). Looney labels this discourse "coach speech" (7) and later writes that, "the coach speech genre…involves the discourse that coaches use to motivate, teach, or encourage players" (29).

According to Looney, one of the notable properties of the coach speech genre is the use of clichés, sayings or aphorisms. Coach Rhoads's uses such technique in his post-game victory speech:

> "…I don't care if you're black or white. I don't care if you're rich or poor. I don't care where you come from, whether it's Texas, Florida, California or right here in the State of Iowa. I don't care about any of that. But what I did care about was moving forward from that day on, that we were one team that we were unified, and we were one team. And you have bought into it, hook, line and sinker, and for that men I am so proud" (Rhoads, "Locker Room Victory Speech").

In just one minute's time, Rhoads uses "one team…unified… hook, line and sinker" (Rhoads, "Locker Room Victory Speech"). Looney would argue that Rhoads "seems to have a series of these clichés memorized so that he can insert them in his speech whenever it seems necessary… It seems that the coach speech genre has generated many of these sayings and clichés over the years, and coaches only have to learn to recognize when they should be applied" (32). In a state of unplanned victory, and therefore impromptu speech, Rhoads speaks with kairos and thus reverts to these mechanisms of language construction. Obama, too, uses sayings, such as "ultimate sacrifice… on the battlefield… we're upping our game" (Obama, "Fort Bliss"). This is seen again in a later part of the speech when he uses the phrase: "we can see a light, a light of a new day on the horizon" (Obama, "Fort Bliss"). Just as Rhoads addresses his team during a time of victory, Obama addresses his soldiers during a homecoming and celebration of America's military efforts.

Coach Rhoads's discourse resembles another one of Looney's common characteristics — Rhoads uses gestures to accompany his linguistic communication. Throughout his speech, Rhoads pumps his fits, nods his head, and points his finger. Looney argues that these nonverbal actions "are used to emphasize or clarify the meaning of what the coach is saying…[they] are usually used to emphasize a positive message to the players" (34). This technique is not foreign to Obama. While speaking the following passage, Obama incorporates gestures and additional nonverbal cues to further stress the importance of the issues he discusses:

> "…Because part of ending wars responsibly, is caring for those who fought in it. That's why I wanted to come back to Bliss on this anniversary to reaffirm our solemn obligations to you and your families. You see, we may be turning a page on a decade of war, but America's responsibilities to you have only just begun" (Obama, "Fort Bliss").

Obama continuously taps the podium with his finger, pumps his fists, and uses the open space in front of him to enact his gestures. Although these cues are on a smaller scale than those of Rhoads', these actions are still used by the same means to reach the same outcome. Both Obama and Rhoads wish to communicate a positive message to their audience.

What Looney claims are common characteristics amongst the rhetoric of collegiate football coaches, are clearly present amongst that of presidents as well. Therefore, through these common characteristics, the disciplines merge and are reflective of one another.

Aristotle's Three Appeals

It is not, however, solely Obama or Rhoads's use of clichés and gestures that prompts their delivery of simplistic, natural speeches; the appeals of each speaker, and their effects on delivery, are other factors contributing to the success of the discourse. Aristotle claims:

> "Of the *pisteis* provided through speech there are three species: for some are in the character [*ēthos*] of the speaker, and some in disposing the listener in some way, and some in the argument [*logos*] itself, by showing or seeming to show something…. [There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [*pathos*] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieves and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile" (37-38; bk. 1 ch. 2).

Ēthos or Character

Kennedy summarizes Aristotle's verdict on *ēthos* and writes: "The predominant meaning of *ēthos* in Aristotle is 'moral character' as reflected in deliberate choice of actions and as developed into a habit of mind. At times, however, the word seems to refer to qualities" (163). The word refers to the trustworthiness, or credibility of the character, and this is an implied given for Obama. As commander in chief, Obama reaffirms his *ēthos* by recounting to his audience at Fort Bliss that he followed through with his pledges to withdraw troops and to insist that America serves the military just as they have served the country. Obama places confidence in his audience; he reassures them of his character by highlighting these carried out pledges, and his Fort Bliss audience cheers and applauds.

Similarly, an implied *ēthos* exists within Coach Rhoads during his speech. He has just led his team to victory and, therefore, has ensured the trust of his players. Rhoads recalls conversations with several team parents and this, too, is suggestive of a pre-existing *ēthos*. This appeal can also be discussed in reference to those the speaker targets. Rhoads's team of college athletes is young. Aristotle argues these youth are "changeable and fickle… impulsive and quick-tempered…they are unable to resist their impulses; for through love of honor they cannot put up with being belittled but become indignant if they think they are done a wrong. And though they

love honor, they love victory more; for youth longs for superiority, and victory is a king of superiority" (165; bk. 2 ch. 12). This explains the effort the football team put forth in beating their competitor, the favored team; The ISU team could not let down their coach. Rhoads is aware of this, and his *ēthos* as coach is respected.

Aristotle discusses moral character in Books 1 and 2 of *On Rhetoric*. One particular passage is illuminated here, as it parallels with Rhoads's oppositional language. Aristotle states: "And generally [there should be consideration of] what attributes make the moral characters of human beings differ; for example, seeming to oneself to be rich or poor will make some different, and [thinking oneself] to be lucky or unlucky" (90; bk. 1 ch. 10). Here, Coach Rhoads's actions disagree with Aristotle in this fashion; Rhoads tells his team that these attributes are irrelevant in regard to their character as men and a one, united team.

Pathos or Emotions

Aristotle might classify both Obama's address to the soldiers at Fort Bliss and Coach Rhoads's post-game victory speech to his team as those of *zēlos.* In Chapter 11, Book 2 of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle suggests that emulation is a good thing if one member has what is good, while another does not. Obama is an emulated person: "What persons are emulated is also evident; for they are those who have acquired these things and things like them. These things are those mentioned…bravery, wisdom, public office; for public officials, including generals, politicians [*rhētors*]…can benefit many people" (162; bk. 2 ch. 11). Obama praises troops for their service during the war, speaks of the resulting triumphs of Americans nationwide, and proclaims what Americans need to do:

> "Now this may be a political season and folks may be arguing about all sorts of things, but one thing that we Americans are

> united on is our support for you. Only one percent of Americans may wear the uniform, but 100 percent of Americans need to be supporting you and your families, 100 percent" (Obama, "Fort Bliss").

It is through this support, and the resulting emotion it fosters in both soldiers and civilians, that Obama embodies pathos all throughout his speech.

This *zēlos* is more evident in Rhoads's speech, for his team is victorious over their ranked opponent. His team was regarded as the underdog on the gridiron, yet they prevailed and "fought the battle through" (Rhoads, "Locker Room Victory Speech"). Rhoads's speech illustrates the feelings resulting from competition and rivalry with others of an equal sense (the opposing football team). Rhoads even uses the word "emotional" to describe his feelings as he prefaces the climax of his speech.

Obama's speech also embodies characteristics of *kharis*. Aristotle defines *kharis,* "as a service to one in need, not in return for anything nor that the one rendering the service may get anything but as something for the recipient" (149-150; bk. 2 ch. 7). Both Obama and the soldiers he speaks to possess and inflict this emotion. Obama, as the nation's leader, expects nothing in return; the soldiers serve the country to grant freedom for its citizens. Obama speaks of the genuine acts of soldiers: "Because of their sacrifice, because of your service, we pushed the Taliban back… it's the selflessness that says 'I don't care who gets the credit, but I'll do my part and we'll get the job done" (Obama, "Fort Bliss"). With these words, Obama cites the magnanimity [*megalopsychia*] of the acts of the United States military.

Before concluding his speech, Obama recalls a story from his time in Afghanistan. He tells of his encounter with a wounded warrior in a Bagdad hospital, and he includes the details of the attack and the injuries inflicted upon the soldier. Obama uses this emotion to connect with the Fort Bliss audience:

> "I leaned in and told Chase how proud of was of him…I was turning to leave and something happened. There was a rustling under his blanket. Chase never opened his eyes, couldn't make a sound, but suddenly you saw the blanket lift, and his arm came out. And he shook my hand, a firm Army handshake. And I don't think there was a dry eye in that room. A few months later, I was visiting our wounded warriors and I walk around the corner, and who's there but Chase. He was preserving through physical therapy, but this time he was on his feet. He was walking again, and he had his Dad next to him. And today he's back where every soldier wants to be… back with his unit. And it made me think: That's just one moment in the life of one American Soldier, but it captured the spirit, the resilience, the tenacity, the discipline, the resolve, the patriotism, of all of you" (Obama, "Fort Bliss").

Obama's story transitions to the conclusion of his speech. In placing the story at the latter portion of his speech, Obama instills that emotion within his audience. He wants to leave them with a sense of hope, support and motivation. Aristotle regards this emotion as an altruistic feeling of kindness and benevolence.

Logos or Logic

Obama uses reasoning in his scenarios to defend his claims: "If you've been a medic in theater, you shouldn't have to start at nursing 101 if you decide you want to go into the medical profession here in the United States. If you've been a mechanic on a multi-million dollar piece of equipment, you shouldn't have to come back and start all over again and getting credentials to work on a car here in the United States" (Obama, "Fort Bliss"). Using Aristotle's favorite appeal, Obama persuades his Fort Bliss audience. Just after this passage, Obama furthers his reasoning by calling on Congress:

> "So today, I am again calling on Congress to act. They've got some work they need to do. Pass the veterans jobs core so we can

> put more vets to work protecting and rebuilding America. Extend tax credits to businesses that hire our veterans. And I say to every company in America, 'If you want somebody who knows how to get the job done, if you want somebody who is going to make you proud, just like they made America proud, then hire a vet.' Hire a vet. Because after fighting for America, you shouldn't have to fit for a job in America" (Obama, "Fort Bliss").

Obama's claims are clear and his logic is reasoned; he effectively supports his pledges for better treatment of veterans in the professional and educational sector.

Rhoads's speech, likely due to its brevity and roots in *ēthos* and pathos, does not embody logos. As a football coach, Rhoads does not need nor rely on logic; instead, his main objective is to motivate, support and congratulate his team. Despite the missing logos appeal, Rhoads's speech is characteristic of Aristotle's rhetoric.

Shared Beliefs in Disciplines

Aristotle concludes that rhetoric is the partially to dialectic, and that they (rhetoric and dialectic) are both concerned with common knowledge and public opinion. Unlike Plato, Aristotle invites the masses; he encourages the speaker to obtain a universal knowledge of the audience, of the people to secure the rhetorical situation — this is what both President Obama and Coach Rhoads do in their speeches. Obama's audience has shared beliefs and common topics, as too does Rhoads's. Rhetoric, in these cases, embodies a specialized knowledge.

Whereas Coach Rhoads ties up his speech by igniting passion in his team and initiating the ISU fight song, Obama brings his home by different means. Here are some words from Obama's final three minutes:

> "For a decade, you have served under the dark cloud of war. You've endured great loss. Good men and women have given their last full measure of devotion. But we Americans are strong, and

> we are resilient. And we have resolve. And now we can see a light, a light of a new day on the horizon. And that's because of you. The war in Iraq is over. The transition is underway in Afghanistan. Our troops will keep coming home. And we're keeping our military ready for whatever the future may hold. But know this, Bliss: We are moving forward stronger and more confident in knowing that when faced with great trials, we Americans do what we always do. We don't just endure; we emerge stronger than before. …The strength you draw from every part of our American family, every color, every creed, every background, every faith. Coming together, succeeding together as one American team. That's who you are. That's who we are. We are Americans. We pledge allegiance to the same proud flag and we all love this country and all it represents to the world, the hope, the opportunity. And we stand united in support of our troops and your families. And when we stand together and when we work together, when we take care of each other, we remind ourselves there's nothing we can't do. America's greatest days are yet to come and that we remain the greatest force for freedom the world has ever known. So God Bless you. God Bless all our men and women in uniform and God Bless the United States of America" (Obama, "Fort Bliss").

Obama's sentences become shorter, quicker as he relays his final words. This style mimics that of his speech to the Louisville, Kentucky crowd. The President incorporates several rhetorical devices within these closing remarks: He uses the language (e.g., "endure") and employs the metaphorical devices (e.g., "a light of a new day on the horizon;" "stand united") of his predecessors; he is conversational and incorporates gestures like his modern-day political fellows; and, he unites the country through his words of praise just as those before him did. Obama successfully merges the generation of classical political rhetoric with that of modern-day by incorporating styles from both.

Rhoads's speech uses these same rhetorical devices, and at one point, the rhetors even use the same language. Both Obama and Rhoads describe their audience's efforts in "moving

forward," and through the similar means of motivation, the rhetors persuade their audiences. Furthermore, the idea of the one, united team resounds throughout both speeches. Rhoads's speech also has characteristics reminiscent of Kennedy's speech on Martin Luther King Jr., in the sense that both speeches address the black vs. white relationship.

In these comparative speeches, "the end…is what has been said" (Aristotle 49; bk. 1 ch. 3), and that end is triumph. They highlight the ends of honor through a means of praise, and therefore, match the definition of an epideiktikon speech that Aristotle puts forth in Book 1. From these arguments, it can be concluded that political and sports discourses are better understood, and even seen as compatible, when viewed through the lens of classical rhetoric.

Contemporary Society vs. Classical Rhetoric

Classical rhetoric is far from dying. Rather, it plays as much, if not more, of a role in contemporary society as it did during its own time. Its placement, however, has been altered, but the ends are still the same. In addition, this rhetoric is more greatly dispersed and showcased in what are arguably very different disciplines. The discourse of presidents mimics that of collegiate football coaches, and they both artistically cater to their respective audiences, uniting the people (or the team) as one. Aristotle places emphasis upon rhetoric as the art of discovering the available means of persuasion, and both Obama and Rhoads craft and deliver speeches that do just that. In combination with Aristotle's three appeals, the eloquence and detail of classical rhetoric is immersed within the simplicity and passion of contemporary society; neither classical nor contemporary function alone.

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