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When in Rome An examination of Women and Political Rhetoric

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When in Rome

An examination of Women and Political Rhetoric

Spring 2007

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Louisiana State University
Undergraduate Honors Thesis**

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ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem

Despite the advancements of women in all vocational fields, women still lag significantly in their political representation. The woman politician faces a particular linguistic challenge -- presenting an appearance of competence though a novelty in her field, and maintaining the image of her femininity. Locally, Louisianans witnessed harsh criticisms of Kathleen Blanco following the hurricanes of 2005 as sister state Mississippi's Governor Haley Barbour received skyrocketing approval ratings for his response to the disaster.

Evidence of Need

Across all fields, women remain underrepresented in both politics and business. In the U.S., women make up only a quarter of elected state government officials and only 16% of the national congress. This gender gap continues into business, where women experience a wage gap of 77 cents to the dollar and less than 2% of female CEOs for over a thousand top traded companies.

Rhetorical and Performative Examination

Cheris Kramarae's Muted Voice theory posits that women do not advance without adapting their language to the language of people in power (masculine styles of communication). Through an examination of the concepts of marginality and performativity, speeches can be evaluated to determine whether or not there is a gendered style to political language. By examining the ability of each candidate to meet their rhetorical burden, speeches can also be compared neutrally for gender difference or bias.

Methods

The Special Session speeches of Kathleen Blanco and Haley Barbour were compared against each other and their approval ratings, as were the speeches of Senators Landrieu, Vitter, Cochran, and Lott. Each speech was examined qualitatively using rhetorical and performative tools of analysis.

Results

Both Governor Blanco and Senator Landrieu upheld masculine styles of communication, while Governor Barbour and Senators Vitter and Lott upheld mixed styles of communication. The largest difference between representatives fell more to party allegiance than gender difference -- Blanco and Landrieu as Democrats upheld the duty of the state to resolve the destruction of Katrina, and Barbour, Vitter and Lott as Republicans upheld the heroism of the people in the recovery. Senator Cochran employed mainly masculine speaking styles and Republican ideology.

Conclusions

The male representatives benefited from the use of mix gendered styles. The use of a masculine style did not appear to be particularly beneficial to the female representatives. In the future, further studies might examine women who successfully employ both male and female speaking styles, finding a way to bridge the gap between the "novelty" of the woman politician and the success of her male counterparts.

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Dressed to the nines, Eliza B. Doolittle screams out at the upper-crust society horse races, “Come on Dover, move your bloomin’ ass!” Shocked, the crowd stops and stares. Here, in the story of *My Fair Lady*, we discover a young lady confronted with the question of whether or not she should do as the Romans do, when unexpectedly finding herself in Rome. Taken under the wing of a linguistics professor, Eliza Doolittle is being taught to speak, walk, and perform the image of upper-class success. Through this process, she renegotiates her position in society, rapidly rising on the social ladder. However, like the woman politician today, Eliza B. Doolittle is forced to maintain her performance of success or return to the dredges of London. Professor Henry Higgins agrees with modern theorists: in order for women to advance, they must conform their language to the language of people in power.

Gender research must first ask whether women lag in positions of power due to gender bias or whether they merely fail to meet rhetorical expectations. What appear to be differences in gender may be that women have not been properly trained in the art of rhetoric. What appears to be a rhetorical culture may be a reaction against women in non-traditional fields. Today’s political environment challenges the woman rhetor to do as the Romans do while still maintaining her own identity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the Women's Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, women in the U.S. are still significantly underrepresented in elected political leadership. The evidence suggests that women fail to meet gender expectations of their constituents, and this failure presents a barrier to their political advancement. Locally, Louisianans witnessed harsh criticisms of Kathleen Blanco following the hurricanes of 2005 as sister state Mississippi’s Governor Haley Barbour received sky-rocketing approval ratings for his response to the disaster.

In order to examine reactions against Kathleen Blanco in the wake of the hurricane disasters, we must first examine the situation of the woman politician today. Secondly, we will examine the rhetorical and performative explanations for women's lag in representation. Third, Kathleen Blanco's speech will be studied in a case study comparing her style of language to Mississippi representatives Governor Barbour, Senator Cochran, and Senator Lott as well as Louisiana Senators David Vitter and Mary Landrieu. The presence or absence of a gendered style of language can be determined qualitatively through rhetorical and performative analysis.

EVIDENCE OF NEED

In 2007, several national polls illustrated a U.S. nation willing to elect a woman president if she were qualified for the position. A December 2006 *Newsweek* poll claims 86% of people would vote for a qualified woman if their party nominated her; a September 2006 Gallup poll sets the same number at three fifths of the population in support of a female commander-in-chief, and a February 2006 poll from *the New York Times* claims that 92% of Americans are ready for a woman president (Center for American Woman and Politics). Yet each of the state legislatures, governor offices, and even the Congress of the U.S. show a large deficit of women actually representing their regions of the U.S.

In fact, only 23% of representatives in state legislatures in 2007 are women. Women represent a mere 24.1% of all elected executive statewide positions. In national Congress, women are even less present – at only 16.3% (Center for American Women and Politics). Women's low participation in the political process compared to other countries ranks the U.S. as low as 57 in political representations of women around the world, beneath countries such as Rwanda, Cuba, South Africa, Germany, Vietnam, and even Turkmenistan (Lawless and Fox 19).

If the U.S. is ready for women in positions of power, the number of women in these elected positions does not reflect it.

The private sector suffers from many of the same gender gaps as the political sphere. Estimates of women's wages compared to men's find a significant gender gap of almost 77 cents to the dollar, and as low as 44 cents per dollar over a 15 year work period (Berstein 58; Soper). Despite the number of women in the workforce more than doubling since 1970, women only make up 2% of the chief executive officers in the top thousand publicly traded companies (O'Neill 38). O'Neill credits the lack of female participation to a different evaluation of the costs and benefits of pursuing a high level career. Women believe that the "good old boy system" of networking influences advancement more than hard work, and this perception matches the gender gap, increasing as the position advances with men believing between 12% and 30% more often that hard work alone results in promotion. Other researchers find significant differences in the way that men and women view ambition, which in turn affects their representation in the workforce. Not only do men and women compete in different ways, but women are more likely to avoid high-stakes games with direct competition, preferring instead to compete against themselves than against others (Kluger 49). Differences in competition can be found in state legislatures, where women perceive cost and benefits of running for office differently from men, causing them to shy away from running for Congressional positions (Fulton, Maestas, et al., 247). The largest barrier to women's advancement appears to be woman's own perception of her ability to be competitive in positions of power.

Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox in *It Takes a Candidate* further examine the barriers to women's stagnation in public office. Since 1992 (often coined "The Year of the Woman" for the high female involvement in U.S. Congress), women's participation has shown no significant

increase. Three common explanations for this are: discrimination, incumbency barriers, and the pipeline explanation. Overt discrimination and voter attitudes have changed to show overwhelming support for a qualified women candidate in the polls. As Fox and Lawless point out, however, “voters rely on stereotypical conceptions of women’s and men’s traits, issue expertise, and policy position when casting ballots” (24). The second explanation, that women are not progressing because of the institutional inertia of the incumbency, proves less explanatory. While term limits have not been imposed on the U.S. Congress, in the states where terms limits are enacted, less woman have been elected into new positions than have left (26). The final explanation is that as women begin to occupy more and more careers that are the “pipeline” entrance to political office, more and more women will begin to run for office. These careers often include law, business, and higher education (27). Currently, women outnumber men in university enrollment and graduation, matching men in major fields at the entry level positions (Barker and U.S. State Department). A closer look at these findings show, however, that despite women’s rapid achievements in education, women continue to lag in enrollment in the graduate studies of theology, business, law, and noneducation majors (Lewin). Women’s representation as Fortune 500 CEOs has actually declined since the 1980s, and only comprises 16 percent of the corporate offices of the eleven thousand corporate offices available (Lawless and Fox 27). As Lawless describes, “There is no question that as women increase their proportions in the pipeline professions that precede political careers, there will be an increase in the number of women candidates. The data on career patterns suggest, however, that these increases may be very incremental” (28).

Women’s participation cannot stand alone as the goal of increasing women’s participation in leadership. As a *Gender & Development* editorial explains, “The link between

personal identity and leadership style is a complex one. There is no guarantee that women leaders will promote gender equality, and there is also no guarantee that male leaders will not do so” (“Editorial” 6). The editorial further explains that not all women are feminists, and not all feminists are women – feminist action seeks to “transform unequal gender power relations,” while some women’s action actually undermine gender equality (“Editorial” 6). As women are increasingly cynical about their ability to have a voice in government, they participate less as voters citing the cause of their cynicism: “very few women are in elected office...and women feel their representatives do not have personal experience with the issues that concern women, such as affordability of health care and retirement” (“Survey”). Some women rely more on consumer power such as the “Sex and the City Voter,” who claims that women can create more change through individual sexual revolution and buying power than political action or voting (Anderson 605-607). This generation of voters “take gender equity for granted, [are] more self-obsessed, wed to the culture of the celebrity, primarily concerned with sexual self-revelation, and focused on the body rather than social change” (Shugart, et al., 194). Consumer power does not provide women with the same access to political change as *actual* involvement in politics.

In a field where women appear to be stagnating, advancement appears to be largely dependant on women developing a perception of power that corresponds with their own identity. Molly Mayhead and Brenda Devore Marshall explain that it is “self-evident, then that for women to make meaningful contributions to the shaping of political reality their voices must be included in the symphony of our national discussion of public affairs” (2). Women’s lack of political ambition results from evaluating different costs and benefits of candidacy based on gender (Lawless and Fox 29-32). Women running for office evaluate something “unfeminine” in the very nature of running for office.

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell in “The Rhetoric of Women’s Liberation: An Oxymoron” explains that the “insofar as the role of the rhetor entails qualities of self-reliance, self-confidence, and independence, *its very assumption is a violation of the feminine role*” (398, emphasis in original). Many women resist readings of the feminist in action, because as Campbell describes, portraits of the “liberated woman” often range from “bitches—aggressive, confident, strong,” “witches,” “lesbians,” and “androgynous role[s]” (403). Campbell concludes that women’s rhetoric is a separate genre of rhetoric, set apart by characteristics with its own stylistic features including affective proofs, personal testimony, participation, dialogue, self-revelation, self-criticism, and a “violation of the reality structure” (403). Women rhetors must negotiate their “womanhood” with their role in leadership -- to be a feminist means to “fight an enemy who has outposts in your head,” as women want to hold a special identity in a domestic sphere, lead happy domestic lives, and at the same time, have the right to respect, dignity, and self-determination (406).

Several studies support Campbell’s assessment that women in non-traditional roles make people, even female peers, feel uncomfortable. For example, a 1996 study of undergraduate reactions to people in non-traditional gender occupations finds students rated the stimulus woman in a non-traditional field as a “personal and social deviate by distancing themselves and by denigrating her role behaviors and personal traits, *including her femininity*” (Yoder and Schleicher, emphasis added). This result was not shared with the stimulus male in non-traditional roles. A 2006 study not only agrees that women’s work in mixed-sex teams tended to be considered “less competent and less influential”, but that *other women* as well as men played a part in devaluing the work and leadership of women (Heilman and Haynes 915). The identity

of “woman” maintains aggressive leadership qualities as “male” and less aggressive qualities as “female.”

There are several factors to consider when examining why women are not advancing into high-level career paths. First, the facts recognize a gender gap in actual wage and advancement. Secondly, with legal and overt sexist barriers removed, the failure to advance can be attributed to different perceptions of the costs of running for office. Women enact competition differently than men, focusing more on personal competition than competition with others. In the rhetorical arena, many women find themselves battling with a persona in non-traditional fields, simultaneously wanting to fulfill societal gender explanations. The study of the problem of gender is a particularly difficult one: it recognizes gender language as a social construct but admits there are gender gaps and gender differences.

THE ROLE OF GENDERED LANGUAGE

While men and women are born as different sexes – with a different set of biological organs – gender appears to be socially constructed. As Julia Wood and Kathleen Dindia argue, “Social ideologies prescribe that each group be allowed some and not other experiences (football and cheerleading; hunting and ballet), roles (damsel in distress, knight in shining armor; president, first lady; mother, father), personal appearances (grow a beard, shave legs; pectoral implants, breast augmentation), and professional options (human relations, executive; mommy track, no daddy track)” (21). Gendered socialization results in men and women playing “male” and “female” roles. Male and female styles of speaking characterize language as an extension of gender roles. Men have six stylistic features of interpersonal communication: references to quantity, judgmental adjectives, elliptical sentence, directives, locatives, and “I” references. Women have ten stylistic features to their speech as follows: intensive adverbs, references to

emotion, dependent clauses, sentence-initial adverbials, uncertainty verbs, oppositions, negations, hedges, questions, and longer mean length sentences (Mulac 133). Overall, women tend to be “indirect, elaborate, and affective” and men’s language tends to be “direct, succinct, personal, and instrumental” (Mulac 147). The feminine rhetorical style can further be defined as: (1) personal in tone, (2) relies on personal experiences and anecdotes, (3) uses inductive reasoning (in which observations are given before conclusions), (4) invites audience participation, (5) addresses the audience’s peers, and (6) identifies with the audience’s experience. Masculine speech styles use the following: (1) deductive logic and reasoning (“the most common political speech strategy,” in which conclusions are given before examples), (2) affirmation’s of the rhetor’s expertise, (3) use of expert authority, (4) use of impersonal or incomplete examples (hypothetical/historical examples not connected to either speaker or audience) (Bystrom, et al., 12-13). These speaking styles are not exclusive to one gender – at times both genders employ these styles. Historical analysis of a number of candidates including feminists, woman orators such as Texas governor Ann Richards, and feminist social movements show that women often “synthesize gender expectations in their political discourse by using both ‘masculine’ rhetorical strategies, such as formal evidence, deductive structure, [and] linear modes of reasoning, with elements of feminine style such as personal anecdotes” (Bystrom, et al., 13). In practice, successful women politicians blend male and female styles of speaking. Women differ less in style and more in “the structure of their appeals, application of familial roles, use of attacks, and emphasis on masculine versus feminine traits” (Bystrom, et al., 14).

One significant problem, however, to gendered language is that while “research has been carried out on male communication strategies...’male’ has been the genderless norm while ‘female’ has been the deviance in need of explanation” (Kroløkke and Sørensen 105).

Speaking styles associated with power and decisiveness tend to be speaking styles that are considered masculine. Women adapt their language to masculine norms to be competitive in leadership, but due to their sex, they can be neither “masculine” nor “feminine.” This forces the woman rhetor to “perform” her gender while simultaneously convincing their audience that women are capable of good governing.

Even the use of the “female style” in politicians can have detrimental effects. For example, John Kerry, highly characterized during the Presidential election of 2004 as a “flip-flopper” uses several “hedgies” in his speech, phrases such as “I think” or “I believe.” The use of such hedgies promotes uncertainty, and lead to Kerry’s identity as wishy-washy as Lakoff explains, “‘There are certain forms of grammar that don't commit you, phrases like 'I believe' or 'I think....Kerry has to learn not to do that’” (quoted in Williams). Kathleen Hall Jamieson, agrees, “People who speak in sentences that contain parenthetical phrases, people who begin a sentence and then deflect to add a series of illustrative examples before they end the sentences [do not seem authoritative]...The language of decisiveness is subject, verb, object, end sentence” (quoted in Williams). People who fail to employ “decisive language” such as Kerry are often characterized as ineffective speakers, but in women, this style of speaking tends to be associated with the female gender. Women rhetors also face two particular problems in evaluation: difficulty in separating themselves from traditional roles (wife, mother, and caretaker) and criticisms about “over-performing” their gender (or trying very hard not to perform their gender at all).

THE NEED FOR QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION

In evaluating gendered language, it is important to note that gender is a fluid identification of identity. Both men and women employ different or mixed gender styles when speaking. Men

and women do not tend to stick to either “male issues” (such as taxes) or “female issues” (such as education). Rather, their interests align more with their allegiance to their party and the issues they represent of their constituency (Dolan). As Kathleen Dolan describes these findings, “gender stereotypes are not always accurate” and “may be waning” (42). The field of rhetoric calls for a qualitative, rather than quantitative, examination of what the rhetor is saying and how they are saying it. Certain phrases are often unique to the rhetor that employs them and speakers may employ different styles of speaking for reasons independent of their gender. If we agree that gender is socially constructed, then we should start from a tradition that assumes no difference and then look for differences using a non-gendered tool of analysis.

The argument for feminism maintains that the traditions of rhetoric that request a specific format are traditions created by men in power, and that women have difficulty competing in this tradition. I argue, however, that differences in language are stylistic rather than substantial differences. There is no evidence to support the claim that women cannot be successful in politics due to their language differences. The question is if women who fail to meet the rhetorical expectations of a speaker are different than men who fail to do so. If there is no gender difference, it could largely be that women failing to meet their rhetorical burden suffer from gender criticisms because of their position on the margin.

HYPOTHESES

SUCCESSFUL MEN AND WOMEN RHETORS USE BOTH FEMALE AND MALE STYLES OF SPEAKING, MEETING A BASIC RHETORICAL BURDEN.

WOMEN RHETORS WHO FAIL TO MEET THEIR RHETORICAL BURDEN SUFFER FROM GENDER CRITICISMS BECAUSE OF THEIR POSITION ON THE MARGIN.

DEFINITIONS

As the Greeks defined it, “rhetor” was both the word for orator and politician (Poulakos and Poulakos 35). Within this study, the word rhetor is used to refer to politicians in their context as public speakers or orators to their constituents. “Performativity” refers to performance as behavior, where “social life is described through an organizing metaphor of dramatic action” (Madison and Hamera xv). Performativity is understood as a repetition of acts, reinforcing the idea that identities are created through the acts that one performs and repeats and that these identities can be reshaped. Specifically for analysis, this study looks at the use of performativity and stylized acts, acts which are internalized repetition and inherited by contested identities (Madison and Hamera xvii, xix). Male and female styles of speaking are identified by their characteristics previously cited in this paper.

RHETORICAL CHALLENGES FOR THE WOMAN RHETOR

A. Non-Competitive Language – Muted Voice Theory

Cheris Kramarae attributes the difficulty women have in competing with men to the fact that the language of the people in power--mainly men--is not tailored to the experiences of women. Women are forced to conform to a masculine style of communication in order to be competitive (*Women and Men Speaking* 1). Despite being written over twenty years ago, Kramarae's discussion is still relevant today. She further explains this phenomenon in a colloquium on Muted Group Theory :

Speech [of those in subordinate groups] is disrespected by those in dominant positions; their knowledge is not considered sufficient for public decision-making or policy making processes of that culture; their experiences are interpreted for them by other.
(55, *Excerpts*).

As a marginalized group, women’s language must conform to the language of the people in power in order to gain authority. Yet with higher female involvement, the language of people in

power can change: “Women do not have, according to many men, authoritative voices. But of course until women are in positions considered important, their voices will not carry authority” (Kramarae, *Women and Men Speaking* 98). The addition of women’s voices to the political sphere adds legitimacy to women’s voices in all spheres.

B. Difficulties of Persuading from the Margin – Marginality and *Doxa*

Robert Hariman in “Status, Marginality, and Rhetorical Theory” describes the attribution of social status as a social act that exists only through the support and cooperation of other people within a particular society (40). Discourse marked as marginal is seen as “confused, inarticulate, flawed” and as Hariman explains,

Marginality can be understood as the internal dynamic of social thinking used to generate verbal power, and as a limitation upon the words given social sanction, and as a condition of being for those words placed in the margin. (42)

The nature of rhetoric as dialectical means that what is marginal can be continually negotiated by an audience. Thus *doxa* (social opinion) and *episteme* (social knowledge) can be continually negotiated as a speaker persuades their audience to bring the marginal into the mainstream view. Created by acts of concealment, social opinion focuses on one particular part of society and leaves another part unexposed. A speaker outside the normal expectations of society draws attention – exposes – the marginal position and in doing so, renegotiates the social body (45-47). Thus, a talented woman rhetor could renegotiate her novelty position by persuading the main social body that women fit under the definition of “leader.”

PERFORMATIVE CHALLENGES FOR THE WOMAN RHETOR

A. Performing Gender

While rhetorical examination examines the effectiveness of a persuasive message upon its audience, an investigation into performativity examines in what ways the speaker has built their

persona and what identities are expressed in the building of such persona. Kenneth Burke equates the dramatic with the dialectical explaining that “dialectic is concerned with different levels of *grounding*” which allow rhetoric and drama to interact, as one provides the logical support for the illustration of the other (440). Burke further explains that the primary purpose of the study of drama has been “to express towards language an *attitude* embodied in a *method*” (441; emphasis in original). As rhetors, we perform and react to gender expectations and we do this as a performance in which we act out the parts we are expected to play.

In recent history, the definition of performance has been expanded to comprehend “how human beings fundamentally make culture, affect power, and reinvent their ways of being in the world” (Madison and Hamera xii). Performance, as an examination of how people create and maintain theatrical personas through their speech, invites an evaluation of the characteristics a speaker creates in order to persuade their audience. In one sense, performance is similar to rhetorical speaking in that public, political speech is a kind of “public performance where audience and speaker are changing and changed by the urgent issues of the time and the compelling need to speak and witness” (Madison and Hamera xiv). Performance must be evaluated with rhetoric to understand a speaker. In this case, performativity--a quality of public speech--examines how society constructs and maintains certain societal gender norms.

Narrative and performativity come together under Burke’s theories of dramatism. Burke creates a rubric for the examination of dramatic speech, outlining five elements of method for study:

In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*) and the *purpose*....Any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind*

of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency) and why (purpose). (Burke xv, emphasis in original)

Burke's performative pentad identifies elements of public speech in terms of the dramatic, providing a framework for analysis. Performative analysis of the speaker identifies a view of the speaker in terms of gender constructions, as well as the performance and maintenance of power.

B. Failure to Perform Expected Persona – The Case of Hillary Clinton

Despite the fact that successful women politicians often employ both masculine and feminine speech (Bystrom, et al., 13-14), the use of masculine speaking constructions often causes women to be characterized as “too masculine.” Aggressive women politicians such as Hillary Clinton are often characterized in a negative light in popular culture, displaying a reaction that there is something “un-feminine” about an assertive female politician. The men's magazine, *Details*, published an article titled, “If Power Is The Ultimate Aphrodisiac, Why Don't You Want To Bang Hillary Clinton?” in which the author attributes the nature of women politicians as being unfeminine because of their lack of sex appeal :

Fear, in fact, seems to be a recurring theme in the way powerful women present themselves. Female politicians are afraid to look too alluring lest they come across as slutty and louche (read: liberal and unelectable). Female executives are afraid they'll be sent out for coffee while the boys divvy up the spoils. And fear is never appealing. No matter how strong you are, you seem weak if you're not at ease with your own power. Exhibit A here, as for so many other lessons in *Getting It All Wrong*, is Hillary. (Wells 80)

This characterization of Senator Hillary Clinton has also been the subject of much academic discussion. Mandy Manning, in an article in the *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, characterizes her as portraying “all of the markers of stereotypical masculine communication” such as “aggressive, authoritative, and ambitious...often seeking [the limelight]” and “out to better champion her causes” (109). Manning further claims that while Clinton was unsuccessful

with this style in appealing to women as a First Lady, Clinton's masculine style is rhetorically successful as a U.S. Senator, explaining that her style "is not a hindrance, but instead requires the voting public to see her not as a woman, but as a strong and capable politician" (110). While Manning identifies the strengths and successes of Clinton's campaign, her analysis rests in the identification of "strong and capable" with masculine, not feminine, styles of communication. Despite her success, Clinton still finds herself forced to conform to a specific, gendered style of speech. Karlyn Khors Campbell better identifies Clinton's style and our reaction to it as she explains "[Clinton's] limited ability to feminize her rhetorical style, to perform a culturally defined feminine role publicly, is clearly a disadvantage. At the same time, our failure to appreciate the highly developed argumentative skills of an expert advocate when that advocate is a female, reveals our deficiencies, not hers" ("The Discursive Performance of Femininity" 15). Perhaps Clinton's most detrimental problem is that she appears to be "performing" a specific persona rather than being genuine. As Mackenzie Carpenter describes her in the *Pittsburg Post-Gazette*, "When she reemerged...the public was never quite sure who she was, because she would never say."

C. Fighting Feminism and the Media – Elizabeth Dole's Bid for the Presidency

"For journalists, as well as the public at large, ideas about what it means to be a 'woman' do not correspond well with expectations about what it means to be 'president,'" explains Caroline Heldman (316). Heldman's analysis of Elizabeth's Dole print coverage during her short run for the 2000 Presidential Campaign in 1999 reveal that despite being ranked number 2 in Gallup polls at the beginning of the primaries, Dole received "less coverage and coverage that differed in tone and content *from what would be expected given her second-place standing in the polls and her political experience*" (330; emphasis in original). Media tended to favor issues centered

on the novelty of a woman President, her appearance, and her relationship to her husband, former candidate Bob Dole (329-330). Dole, like Clinton, also experiences performance criticisms as she is described as “scripted, rehearsed, robotic, controlled” (332). The embodiment of successful speaking styles in women (where women conform to more masculine speech) often results in an over-performance, where by becoming more “masculine,” women fail to meet gender expectations of being inviting, warm, and empathetic. In a Harvard study similar to Heldman’s, Dole’s campaign is studied in reference to the frame of a female gender. Despite her overwhelming contributions, the media reported more heavily on Dole’s personal traits than the issues she was promoting as a candidate for the executive office (Aday and Devitt 69). In comparison with the male candidates who ran against her (i.e., George W. Bush, John McCain, and Steve Forbes), Dole eventually broke out of the “novelty” identifications in the press. Even so, the coverage of Dole’s gender continued after the issue of novelty had subsided. Aday faults the media’s concentration on Dole’s personality to “a woman making a bid in the male-dominated world of politics being covered by an almost equally male-dominated press corps” (70). The gender gap continues with differences in perception of men and women in public office.

D. Barbara Jordan’s Successful Performance of Woman Rhetor

At the time of the 1976 Democrat National Convention, Barbara Jordan’s list of political accomplishments heralds her as a pioneer in her field as both a woman and an African American. As an African American, she was the first to be elected to the Texas legislature, the first African American woman to be elected to Congress, and the second elected to the House of Representatives since Reconstruction. Appointed to the Judiciary Committee by Lyndon Johnson, Jordan also worked actively toward the revision of the Voting Rights Act. Shortly

after the Watergate scandal exposed Richard Nixon's violation of his executive power, it was Jordan who spoke at the press conference explaining the elements of the impeachment process and the need to champion the Constitution of the U.S. (Jerry 250-253). Jordan continually sought to achieve her goals, running for U.S. Representative twice before becoming elected. Despite her popularity from giving a televised speech on the Watergate scandal, her work with civil rights legislation, and her ability to befriend her fellow representatives, Jordan rejected ideas that she could eventually be a Vice Presidential candidate. She knew that as a woman and as a black woman, America had not changed enough in her favor (Rogers 262).

Despite being representative of two different minority groups, Jordan does not draw on the vernacular style of these cultures in her speeches, noting on more than one occasion that she is neither a "Black politician" nor a "woman politician" but rather, just a "professional politician." This is noteworthy because of the rise of special interest groups looking to create voter blocks based on ethnic backgrounds. Jordan shied away from these groups, opting instead to focus on creating a persona with mass appeal to her constituents. Her constituents represented both African American and white working class people, and she worked to unify these groups rather than divide them in her representation (Fenno 108-109).

Jordan creates a new consciousness in which both African Americans and women are included under the umbrella of a national, political leader. She does this by creating rhetoric that explains to the consensus how she fits into the picture despite her position on the margin, and by appealing to broader values than those specific to "women" or "African Americans." Richard Vatz explains that, "except for those situations which directly confront our own empirical reality, we learn of facts and events through someone's communicating them to us" (228). Jordan's speech creates a new reality – by creating language to tailor that even to the idea of equality and

a successful ability to balance a minority status with an appeal to the majority. She wants to redefine the American community to include all people, “We cannot improve on the system of government handed down to us by the founders of the Republic. But what we can do is find new ways to implement that system and realize our destiny” (Jordan). Today, as previously noted, polls show that U.S. citizens are much more likely to elect women into office, even potentially the presidency. The legal and overtly sexist barriers to women in politics have been removed since the 1970s when Barbara Jordan was most prominent in her career. Jordan overcame traditional conceptions of her gender and race and renegotiated her marginality by claiming a mixed style of communication. Refusing to perform “female styles” or “African American styles,” Jordan created a new conception of the woman politician.

CASE STUDY: LOUISIANA AND MISSISSIPPI IN THE WAKE OF KATRINA

Remember Gov. Kathleen Blanco after Hurricane Katrina? She reacted the way any normal woman should have, and she was lampooned for it. If she wouldn’t have cried on camera, she probably would have been criticized for that too. A woman’s emotional reactions are natural and good. She shouldn’t have to suppress them, but to do her job as president, she would have to...

-- Emily Byers, “Presidency is Not a Job for Women”

The recent reaction of governors Kathleen Blanco of Louisiana and Haley Barbour of Mississippi during Hurricane Katrina recovery in the Gulf Coast communities illustrates the difficulty women have negotiating their presence in the political field. Despite similar responses to the disaster (both have “faced the camera in tears, made threats to lawbreakers, and rejected federal takeovers of relief efforts”), Blanco is characterized in a negative light for feminine leadership qualities. Jill Lawrence reports that one respondent said, “She’s an empathetic, nurturing kind of person...Maybe she is not the towering tower of strength that some people would hope or expect to see.”

Further in the article, Blanco's speaking style is compared directly to Haley Barbour's:

How does she cope? Her answer spills out rapid fire: "I have to tune out the political talking heads. The blame game can get in the way of protective efforts. It can sap your vitality. It's the vulture mentality. Woulda coulda shoulda, sitting in their clean spaces, not knowing what's going on in the trenches. They know not of what they speak."...

How does he cope? His answer reflects his Yahoo City roots: "You just hitch up your britches and do what you gotta do." (Lawrence)

This difference in speaking style is reflected in the response of Blanco's and Barbour's constituency. Barely a month after the storm, Barbour's approval rating rose among Mississippi voters from 43 percent to 58, and Blanco's fell among Louisiana residents from 58 to 38 percent (Baxter). Blanco suffered a dramatic loss and Barbour's advancement in approval ratings led to his name to be dropped as a potential presidential candidate for the 2008 race.

CASE STUDY

In order to study the reaction to Kathleen Blanco, the following methods are pursued. Governor Blanco's and Governor Barbour's speeches are compared against each other for differences in gender. Sen. Mary Landrieu is compared for gender differences against her male counterparts Sen. David Vitter of Louisiana, Sen. Thad Cochran of Mississippi, and Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi. The speeches to be analyzed are as follows:

Governor Kathleen Blanco, Special Session Address 2005

Governor Haley Barbour, Special Session Address 2005

Senator Mary Landrieu, Katrina Address to the Senate

Senator David Vitter, Katrina Address to the Senate

Senator Thad Cochran, Katrina Address to the Senate

Senator Trent Lott, Katrina Address to the Senate

It is important to note that as all these speeches are given to legislatures, the special session speeches given by the governors are not speeches that invite a direct, dialectical response. The material studied from the senators are excerpts taken from debates on the Senate floor regarding the federal response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and thus allowed the opportunity for the rhetors to modify their messages based on their feedback.

METHODS

Each speech is studied using both performative and rhetorical tools of analysis. Rhetorical tools include Lloyd F. Bitzer's elements of a rhetorical situation as he identifies in "The Rhetorical Situation": exigence, audience, and constraints. Exigence is a situation that calls for a response (in this case, problems and responses to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita), and is rhetorical when "it is capable of positive modification and when positive modification requires discourse or can be assisted by discourse" (221). Audience is defined by Bitzer as being "[1] capable of being influenced by discourse and [2] of being mediators of change" (221). The constraints of a rhetorical situation are made of the "persons, events, objects, and relations which are parts of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" and include "beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, motives, and the like" (222). Constraints occur in two classes: (1) constraints created and controlled through the rhetor and the rhetor's method and (2) other operative constraints (222). Within the speech itself, John Poulakos identifies three elements necessary for successful rhetoric: *kairos* (the opportune moment), *to prepon* (the appropriate), *to dynaton* (the possible). As Poulakos defines it, rhetoric is "the art which seeks to capture in opportune moments that which is appropriate and attempts to suggest that which is possible" (26). As the situation the speaker faces is examined through Bitzer's modes of analysis, Poulakos presents elements of the basic

rhetorical burden. After identifying the exigence, audience, and constraints, each speech is examined for the presence of the following:

1. Thesis/Purpose of the Speaker
2. Main Arguments of the Speech
3. Is the speech timely (does it uphold the notion of *kairos*)?
4. Is the speech appropriate (does it uphold the notion of *to prepon*)?
5. Does the speech present the vision of the possible (does it uphold *to dynaton*)?
6. Does the rhetor invite the audience to participate?
7. Does the speaker relate themselves to the exigence?
8. Does the speaker relate themselves to the audience?
9. Repeated ideas and Phrases
10. Dominant Figures of Speech (Metaphors, Arguments, etc.)

The performative analysis is conducted in each speech in two ways. First, each speech will be evaluated for the presence of a social, narrative myth using the elements of Burke's pentad: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency) and why (purpose). After these qualitative analyses, the rhetors will be compared against each other for differences in gender if any are present. This method of study hopes to find the following specific applications of the hypotheses:

SUCCESSFUL MEN AND WOMEN RHETORS USE BOTH FEMALE AND MALE STYLES OF SPEAKING, MEETING A BASIC RHETORICAL BURDEN.

Governor Haley Barbour and Senators Mary Landrieu, David Vitter, Thad Cochran, and Trent Lott uphold the notions of *kairos*, *to prepon*, *to dynaton*, invite the audience to participate, relate the exigence to themselves, and their purpose to the audience.

WOMEN RHETORS WHO FAIL TO MEET THEIR RHETORICAL BURDEN SUFFER FROM GENDER CRITICISMS BECAUSE OF THEIR POSITION ON THE MARGIN.

Kathleen Blanco's gender criticisms can be associated with her failure to meet a basic rhetorical burden, *failing to uphold* the notions of *kairos*, *to prepon*, *to dynaton*.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – EXIGENCE

As Bitzer describes it, exigence is a work of rhetoric that is pragmatic, one that “comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world; it performs some task” (219). Rhetoric comes into being based on a situation that calls for a response, in which the rhetorical response affects some change on the people involved and gives some meaning to the events that have taken place. On August 25, 2005, Hurricane Katrina approaches Florida from the Caribbean. Four days later, Katrina makes landfall near Buras, Louisiana. Within two days of Katrina’s landfall, the Superdome in New Orleans acting as a shelter suffers from significant roof damage. The levees in New Orleans breach, flooding most of the city, and Governor Kathleen Blanco orders a mandatory evacuation of the remaining residents of the city. The death tolls in Mississippi and Louisiana continue to rise as the Gulf Coast communities are wiped out by storm damage (“Katrina Timeline”). By May of 2006, the death toll from Katrina in Louisiana is at 1,200 people with over 200,000 damaged homes (Marshall). Blanco’s reaction to the situation in Louisiana causes her to be named one of the nation’s worst governors by *Time Magazine*. Reporters fault her reaction to the storm, “But it was her job to give her constituents heart by looking decisive, steadfast and capable” (Ripley 35). There are two things to note, however, when considering the hurricanes of 2005. While the damage in Mississippi was complex, it was not as severe as the damage in Louisiana and was spared the political disaster caused in New Orleans by the levee breach and the failed evacuation attempts of the government. Secondly, Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi remained supportive of the national administration while Blanco criticized the work of national officials, and Barbour’s friendship with the president and experience in Washington helped his work to recover the state (Cummings). Due to the damage in New Orleans, Blanco

had to respond to the failed levee system, which she blames the national government for failing to maintain (Stone). Thus, even though lawmakers in Louisiana and Mississippi faced the problem of emergency response, the Louisiana lawmakers had more to focus on the government responsibility for evacuation and destruction in the parts of South Louisiana that were damaged due to a failure to maintain federal levees.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – AUDIENCE

The simple audiences are the Louisiana and Mississippi legislatures, as well as the U.S. Congress. In a much larger sense, the Special Session addresses and the speeches on the Senate floor sought to appeal to the people who were affected by the hurricane. Both sets of speeches were printed to be published in local newspapers; clips were placed on websites and shown on television. The audience, then, includes the speakers themselves, the people of the Gulf Coast looking for relief from damage and guidance, and the legislatures who have the direct ability to provide relief for the victims of the 2005 hurricanes.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – CONSTRAINTS

A. Approval Ratings and Constituent Response

SuveyUSA, a nonpartisan political research group comprised of news journalists, tracks the approval ratings of governors and senators through their opinion polls.¹ The approval ratings for Governors Blanco and Barbour in 2005 are as follows:

Barbour	Blanco	Month (2005)
41%	54%	July
43%	50%	August
58%	41%	September
52%	38%	October
54%	34%	November
55%	33%	December

¹ available online at www.surveyusa.com

The approval ratings for Senators Mary Landrieu, David Vitter, Thad Cochran and Trent Lott are as follows:

Landrieu	Vitter	Cochran	Lott	Month (2005)
54%	57%	63%	65%	June
52%	57%	58%	60%	August
48%	58%	59%	62%	October
52%	64%	63%	66%	December

Haley Barbour gained the most significant increase in approval ratings while Kathleen Blanco suffered from the most significant decrease. The Senators held steady approval ratings throughout the six months surrounding the Katrina disasters, which is due to different expectations regarding the role of a senator in reacting to a state disaster. While the governor holds immediate responsibility for the actions taken, the senators are responsible for communicating the needs of the state to the national government.

As rhetors in elected position, one of the largest constraints of each rhetor's speech is the need to meet the expectations of their constituents. Without doing this, it is possible that the rhetor could be unemployed, highly criticized, or fail to motivate people to the proposed course of action. Approval ratings are a very real way of measuring the success or failure of a rhetor. The rhetor reacts and is constrained by the needs of the audience in literal and practical ways.

B. Legislative Barriers

Each speech is presented to a legislative body: the Mississippi Legislature, the Louisiana Legislature, or the U.S. Congress. All of the speeches seek to pass either legislative reform, change the budget, or seek funding for hurricane relief. The speaker is constrained by the ability to motivate their audience because the audience has certain requirements to meet as well. For example, Mary Landrieu's speech focuses on receiving more funding for hurricane victims but she confronts the possibility of not receiving funding because funding may not be available. Speeches in legislature also are constrained by specific amounts of allotted time for speaking, a

format which involves parliamentary procedure, and a focus more on policy than on emotional appeals. The Governor's speeches are uninterrupted speeches that do not benefit from a direct, dialectical response. The speeches of the senators, however, are in debate format which requires them to adapt their arguments to counter arguments in an effort to be persuasive.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS: KATHLEEN BLANCO SPECIAL SESSION ADDRESS

On November 6, 2005, Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco addressed the Special Session of the Louisiana Legislature, called in response to the hurricane disasters. Her specific purpose for the Special Session was to “urge [legislatures] to enact key legislative reforms,” specifically cutting \$500 million in spending from state agencies, to use money from savings (a Rainy Day fund of \$460 million), and to borrow “funds to meet critical state needs and provide relief for local governments”.² Her general thesis explains the current situation, “We pulled together to get through Katrina. We pulled together to get through Rita. And we are pulling together tonight to expand on our efforts underway to rebuild our state safer, stronger, and better than before.” Three main arguments compose her speech: (1) Louisiana is a business, (2) recovery will involve tough choices, and (3) bipartisanship is necessary for success.

While her speech does focus on events happening as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Blanco's speech comes nearly three months after the storm, and after the Louisiana senators have approached the federal government for funds. The issues the speech responds to are current but her response is not timely in that it comes three months after the initial exigence (the government's failed evacuation of South Louisiana). For the format of a speech to the legislature, Blanco upholds *to prepon* and speaks appropriately to the expectations of a speech to the Special Session. However, Blanco fails to present a picture of the possible. She ends her speech with the following appeal, “In closing, I extend my hand to each of you: Black and

² All quotations in this section refer to the Blanco's Special Session Address, cited in Works Cited section.

White, Republican, Independent, and Democratic, North and South. Together we must unite to give Louisiana something worthy of thanks. United leadership focused on rebuilding, recovery, and reform.” Yet this is the first time in the speech, *in the closing*, that she mentions any special interest groups. She does not provide anecdotes of unity already in existence in the status quo. She encourages her audience to unite with her for Louisiana, but throughout the speech, she challenges them to question her with statements that do not invite open debate such as, “I invite any critic to look more closely at the budget, as I have, then offer me reasonable suggestions” and “I am cutting some of your favorite programs. Some of you will consider these cuts too painful and you will try to avoid them. Let me warn you – this is just the beginning.” Blanco presents a list of business instructions and expects people to follow them. There are moments when she invites her direct audience to participate, such as, “I urge you to enact key legislative reforms” and “Let’s get to work,” but there is no address to the larger, more general audience of the storm-affected people of Louisiana. Without promoting a vision of what Louisiana could be like if working together, Blanco fails to provide an incentive to motivate people other than the current destruction of Louisiana.

While the speaker does reference her mother at one point (“My own mother, Lucille Fremin Babineaux, may be 86 years old, but you wouldn’t know it.... She took in eight evacuees before the storm”), Blanco does little to put herself within the context of the storm or relate herself back to the exigence. She also makes several dark references to the current situations, saying that the hurricanes “shattered our communities,” that we should see that “a new morning springs from Louisiana’s darkest night,” that this is “the toughest of times,” “times of sadness and extreme hardship”. Blanco never expresses her feelings toward the storm, never tells an anecdote of witnessing the destruction first hand (even though she had at this point), or and never

puts a personal statement within her speech. The closest she comes is “Many still mourn the loss of loved ones and we share their pain.” Blanco’s use of “we” throughout the speech refers to the “we” of the legislatures; it is an exclusive “we” that leaves out the general audience of Louisiana. Blanco does not create a story in which we can all share.

Blanco uses a variety of literary techniques in describing the events of the storm. She says the hurricanes “altered the fabric of our society,” “changed our geography,” “shattered our communities,” and “scattered our citizens.” To counter this, she repeats three times that “we pulled together” through Katrina, Rita, and in the moment of the Special Session specifically. She repeats the theme several times that recovery will not be a pleasant or easy process saying things like, “We all know that recover is not a sprint,” “I have outlined an ambitious agenda,” “our businesses...need far more than a shot of adrenaline to rebound,” and “we have a long way to go.” Her dominant metaphor represents Louisiana as a business, one that must be budgeted and maintained. At one point, she invokes God and quotes Saint Paul, “With God’s help and his wisdom, I know that Louisiana will prevail.” However, religious reference is neither a recurring nor persistent theme in her speech. Overall, Blanco’s speech avoids anecdotes about the storm and fails to link the audience and Blanco’s place in the context of the storm. Instead Blanco relies on a laundry-list of fiscal chores that need to be accomplished in order for Louisiana to recover.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – HALEY BARBOUR SPECIAL SESSION ADDRESS

Haley Barbour addressed the Mississippi Legislature’s Special Session on September 27, 2005.³ His specific purpose is to ask the Special Session to authorize \$25 million dollars of interest-free loans to small businesses in storm affected areas in order for them to recover, to authorize short-term credit up to \$500 million to bridge state and local government finances until federal money

³ All quotations in this section refer to the Barbour’s Special Session Address, cited in Works Cited section.

comes through, and to propose allowing the casinos to move further inland from the coast to protect their interests and avoid future damage from hurricanes, while not allowing them so far inland as to disrupt the communities of the coast. His more general thesis is a hopeful one, saying “in the last month I've learned that an awful disaster, with its myriad of tragedies for individuals and families, also brings out the best in most people. And that has surely been the case in our state”—a sentiment he supports throughout his speech with various examples and anecdotes in his speech. Barbour’s main arguments within the speech are: (1) Katrina and Rita produced heroes, (2) need for federal and local effort ,and (3) danger equals opportunity.

Barbour upholds *karios* (timeliness) as his address comes about a month after the storm and in concurrence with his own Senators’ addresses to the United States Congress. The speech also upholds expectations of *to prepon* as being appropriate for the format and time frame. Barbour, in addition to being timely and appropriate, upholds the notion of *to dynaton* by imagining a future Mississippi that could emerge as a result of taking action:

In 30 years, when I'm dead and gone, people will look at what the Coast and South Mississippi have become. If it is simply a newer version of today, we will have failed those people -- our children and grandchildren. If on the other hand, it has become what it can be -- bigger and better than ever -- world-class and looked up to by the nation as an example of what a great areas can be, then those people in 30 years will say, "These folks after Katrina. They got it right, and we're grateful to them."

Let us not fail them. Let's lead a renaissance for Mississippi, buoyed by the spirit of our people.

Barbour articulates an image of Mississippi as better and more improved, continually pointing out that the storm can be an opportunity for growth with statements like “Out of this terrible disaster, beyond all imagination, comes our opportunity, and I bet you not to let Mississippi miss it” and “They say that in the Chinese language, the symbol for danger is the same as the symbol

for opportunity. If so, that is a symbol for Katrina.” Barbour advocates a view of the storm not only as something to be overcome, but as a new possibility for a safer, stronger Mississippi.

Barbour invites participation from both his specific audience and the more general audience of the Gulf Coast residents. He uses personal language such as, “To help them, I’m asking you in this Special Session to authorize...” and “In this Special Session, I’m asking you...” to invite legislatures into his proposals. He uses phrases like “We must not fail our citizens” to call attention to the duty of the body assembled. Barbour also invokes images to invite audience participation as he describes the devastation: “First, of all of you who have been there, you’ve seen the catastrophic destruction of the casinos and the destruction wrought by those behemoths when they crashed into buildings and vehicles.” He also draws personal anecdotes: “The first person who put me on to this was Marsha. Marsha went to Gulfport to help on Monday night, the night of the hurricane. She’s been back to the affected areas 23 of the 28 days since.” Barbour places himself in context to the exigence in two ways: he mentions his position as governor, and he references his history in Mississippi. Barbour describes the efforts of other states and references his own feelings: “As Governor, I’m personally moved by it all.” In recounting Mississippi’s own history with disasters, Barbour explains his relation to the state: “I am a seventh generation Mississippian. My family has seen us survive disasters before.” He references visits to the storm-havocked coast: “Tuesday morning, the day after the storm, I was astounded by what I saw on the Coast. All of you who’ve been there must remember the gut-wrenching sights and the heart-rending experience.” By placing himself in context with the current rhetorical situation, relating himself to his audience of Mississippians, and explaining his own experiences with the storm, Barbour connects the audience to himself in a way that builds credibility and establishes more support for him as a rhetor.

Barbour repeats several images of people affected by the storm as “heroes” and “unselfish.” He describes “stories of ordinary people displaying extraordinary courage and uncommon selflessness,” and conservation officers as “fearless young men, who hung from helicopters, on ropes, dangling in the air in the dark that first night, pulling people from roofs and trees.” Even the affected people are pictured as heroic, “Our people aren’t whining or moping around, and they’re not into victimhood. From the very beginning Mississippians have been helping themselves, and God bless them, helping their neighbors. The unselfish, even selfless attitude of people who've lost everything is awe-inspiring to me.” He tells anecdotes supporting the statement that both the local officials and the people they represent make him proud. Overall, Barbour’s speech focuses on the positive elements of the recovery and the ability of Mississippi to rise to the occasion. As he describes them, “Our people aren’t leaving. They’re hitching up their britches and rebuilding Mississippi.” Haley Barbour’s Special Session address places himself in context of Mississippi and the hurricane disasters, promotes a picture of the possible in which Mississippi can rebuild, and supports the idea of local people as national heroes. In this way, his speech is both uplifting and inspirational, and supports his main thesis – “that awful disasters bring out the best in most people.”

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – Senator Mary Landrieu

On November 18, 2005 Senator Mary Landrieu addressed the Senate regarding a motion to allow Congress to go home for approximately twenty days and return in the middle of December to finish their work.⁴ Her immediate purpose is to prevent the passing of the motion that would allow Congress to adjourn without passing more legislation to give aid to the hurricane affected areas. Her thesis revolves around the argument that the legislation passed has not been effective, and that there is a need for better quality legislation. As she argues,

⁴ All quotations in this section refer to Landrieu’s Congressional Debate, cited in Works Cited section.

“Because we pass legislation does not necessarily mean it has been effective. Sometimes Congress has a way of passing legislation, but that is not any guarantee that it is actually working.” She has three main arguments in her debate. The first concerns the integrity of the legislation being passed. She states, “For the record, I say it is not the quantity of legislation but the quality of legislation, and that is why this supplemental Senator Cochran [proposed] has been so important. We think this may be the first major piece of legislation that actually gets money into the hands of people who can do something with it other than having it sit in bank accounts while people are suffering and trying to get their lives back together.” Landrieu’s second argument outlines why the current pieces of legislations are not working, as she cites number and figures regarding the failures of the elementary, secondary, and collegiate educational relief, the health care relief, and shelter relief. Her third argument explains how Katrina differs from other natural disasters. She argues, “We are dealing with an unprecedented natural disaster caused by the collapse of a Federal levee system that was not invested in, not maintained, and not funded. It is a disaster for the region and for the Nation.” Finally, Landrieu argues that immediate action is necessary (hence arguing against a resolution to adjourn) because by waiting until December, the people of Louisiana will not come home for Christmas.

Landrieu’s speech upholds notions of timeliness by addressing the immediate issue of urgency. She urges immediate action to pass the supplemental and allow for debate because the current legislation has more momentum and more effect if passed in November rather than December. She also speaks about the current failures in relief efforts and the need to remedy these efforts before there is permanent damage done to the U.S. For example, in discussing the flight of university faculty to other universities in the nation, she says, “The dean of the LSU Medical School took a job out of our State. It was announced this week. I don’t blame him for

leaving because he doesn't see any help on the way." Her most powerful rhetorical example is her plea for immediate help comparing going home for Thanksgiving versus going home for Christmas: "We are going home for Thanksgiving, but we will not be going home for Christmas until the people of the Gulf Coast understand they have a home they can go to, if not this Christmas, some Christmas soon." Landrieu also upholds the notion of appropriateness by speaking within her time restraints and following the expected format of a Senate debate. Landrieu addresses the issue of the possible, painting a picture of what life will be like for residents of the Gulf Coast if the supplemental bill is not passed. She explains that without shelter and job relief, "there will be many people who have no holiday table to go home to." She proposes finding solution for a number of issues, such as, "We need to find a solution for the small businesses that have been devastated and the thousands of people who have been left jobless." Her picture of the possible, however, is a negative one. Without taking action, she claims people will continue to suffer as they suffer in the status quo. She does not uphold a positive picture of what can happen if the Senate chooses to act. As John Poulakos describes it, "consideration of the possible affirms in man the desire to be at another place or at another time and takes him away from the world of actuality and transports him that of potentiality" (30). For the rhetor, this means "the rhetorician tells them what they could be, brings out in them futuristic versions of themselves, and sets before them both goals and the directions which lead to those goals" (30). The rhetor seeks to propose what has the potential to be, but that is not currently happening. While Mary Landrieu explains that without further action suffering will continue, she does not illustrate a future possibility that differs from the current suffering. Her possible future merely extends the current suffering, instead of a positive image of what the world could be like if action were taken, and in this way, Landrieu fails to uphold the notion of the possible.

Landrieu does invite her specific audience to participate, addressing both the Presiding Officer and the other members of the Senate. She says to leader, “I wanted to ask the leader from Tennessee what his intentions are when we get back, at least he can press the Senate and press our colleagues in the House to move that piece of legislation.” This invitation to debate is directly responded to by Mr. Frist as the debate on the resolution continues. This invitation can also be interpreted as merely meeting the restraints of the appropriate. Landrieu makes no particular address to invite the audience to enact legislation that will be more effective, or to explain why the supplemental bill will not face the same problems as the other twenty one pieces of legislation in the status quo. Landrieu invites her audience to address the exigence through passing the supplemental bill, but without explanation of the bill or a presentation of the possible world the bill would create.

Landrieu does relate herself to the exigence by explaining the importance of urgent action in providing hurricane relief. She explains her own frustrations in responding to the hurricane, saying, “I have tried to be a team player. We have tried to be cooperative...tried every strategy. We are running out of strategies.” She also refers to herself: “if we do not come back in December and pass a robust supplemental that reflects the values of this body – not what Mary Landrieu wants in it, not what Louisiana thinks it deserves...we will not be going home for Christmas.” She does not provide anecdotes relating to the storm, however, or reference her own personal experiences or emotions. In this way, she does not relate herself to her audience beyond the immediate audience of the Senate. Again, her acknowledgement of the Senate addresses the notion of creating a speech appropriate to its audience, but does not necessarily connote an invitation to the audience or the identification with the audience that urges motivation to a particular action.

The repeating themes of Landrieu's speech revolve around the government's failure.

One phrase in particular that is repeated is "that is not yet done" as she explains the failures of other packages of legislation:

I would call to the attention of the leader that *we have not passed* an emergency education bill which would cover tuition for children, 370,000 children who are today displaced from the school they were in the week before Katrina and Rita. Those 370,000 children *have not yet received word* from this Congress if their tuition will be covered. *That is not done yet....We have not passed* a comprehensive health care piece....*That has not yet passed. We have not passed* any loans to our governments....So for the record, *we have no health care relief, no significant elementary and secondary care relief*, our universities are teetering on bankruptcy and closure, and our medical schools are having difficulty. (Emphasis added)

The second theme of Landrieu's speech that continually recurs illustrates the need for immediate action since without it, residents of the Gulf Coast will have no homes to return to at Christmas. She says "We will not be going home for Christmas" twice, as well as stating that despite going home for Thanksgiving, there will be nothing in Louisiana to return to in the immediate and the long term without continued relief. "Without this protection," she claims, "all our other efforts will be for naught." The dominant figures of speech that Landrieu employs include deductive reasoning (in which she makes a claim and supports it with observations), heavy use of numerical figures, and specific, impersonal examples. Overall her speech clearly states a problem in the status quo, identifies failures of current legislation, and seeks to persuade her audience that continuing the Congressional debates is important to pass better and higher quality legislation for the future.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – SENATOR DAVID VITTER

On September 13, 2005, David Vitter addressed the Senate floor saying, "I arrived back yesterday from the battlefields of the other gulf war. I stand before you to offer my firsthand

report.”⁵ His primary purpose is to urge support for the Katrina relief legislation. The secondary purpose is to illustrate what is happening in the post-Katrina Gulf Coast area. His overall purpose is to convince the Senate that they can be heroes much in the same way as the affected people. He tells them that, “the best thing we can do as leaders is to follow – follow the basic goodness and common sense of Louisianans and Americans.” He has five main arguments within the speech. The first is that “Katrina was one of the most powerful hurricanes ever.” Using both historical examples and facts about the storm itself, Vitter describes not only the initial impact of the storm, but the damage communities have sustained within the past two weeks. Secondly, Vitter argues that the government failed in their relief efforts. He responds to quotations he had made previously:

I was quoted after the first few days as saying that the early government relief effort was a failure. I was quoted correctly and this was clearly, unequivocally, indisputably true. In that initial relief effort, FEMA failed us miserably and Louisiana’s hurricane preparation and emergency bureaucracy failed us miserably, too.

His third argument is that “while the bureaucrats failed, others succeeded.” Vitter cites anecdotes of Louisiana families and businesses that were able to provide relief from the storm even when the government was unable to provide care. He tells several stories, such as, “There were hundreds of private citizens such as David Fakaouri of Baton Rouge, who pulled his boat down to New Orleans and spent days combing the city for survivors, saving more than 60 people personally.” As Vitter describes them, local people were responsible for relief: “The local leaders and private citizens, heroes both from throughout the devastated area and around the country, got us through those first crucial days.” The fourth argument Vitter makes urges a focus on “what worked and what didn’t work.” Vitter’s final argument rests on the projection of the possible based on what local leaders were able to do through bipartisan relief efforts. Vitter

⁵ All quotations in this section refer to Vitter’s Congressional Debate, cited in Works Cited section

believes the most successful relief comes from following the example of the people giving relief regardless of party or background.

Vitter upholds the notion of *kairos* by addressing his audience two weeks after the storm in reference to the immediate relief taking place within Louisiana. He is also appropriate, in that his speech rests within the restraints and expectations of a Senate address: he thanks his audience, he promotes specific legislation, and he illustrates both a problem in the status quo and a mindset to change the problem at hand. Vitter presents a particularly strong image of the possible through his use of anecdotes of “heroes” contrasted to the destruction of the hurricanes. The following are just a few examples of stories he tells of local heroes, “Local leaders such as State Senator Ben Nevers of Washington worked tirelessly to secure police reinforcements, water, food, gasoline, even chain saws to cut out of isolated areas” and “There was the lunch crew at Belle Chasse High School in Plaquemines Parish, who, operating on emergency power only, fed hundreds of relief workers everyday.” Vitter connects these stories of local heroes with what the Congressmen in session could potentially become: “A new head bureaucrat is not the solution to a failed bureaucracy. We need to look at the successful can-do military culture and the startling success of people-power and private initiative.” He proposes bipartisanship by observing that Louisiana did not work divided in relief efforts unlike some of those in Washington, “what I sometimes heard coming out of Washington was more sickening – ridiculous arguments tying the suffering to the war in Iraq and the Reagan deficit, talk of boycotting bipartisan hearings and stonewalling independent commissions. Nobody in the stricken area is talking that nonsense. They are rebuilding lives.” He urges the Senate to follow the local leadership illustrated in the football comebacks of the New Orleans Saints and LSU

Tigers, claiming “even in dark times, hope springs eternal, prayers are answered, and a can-do attitude pays dividends....Let us all follow their example.”

Vitter invites the audience to participate by creating a vision of the possible which is to follow the spirit of the people of the Gulf Coast by using bipartisan methods to find relief. After describing the storm, he relates himself directly to the exigence; “During all of this I was in southeast Louisiana. My wife Wendy and I packed up our minivan...After leaving [my wife and kids] safely with family, I returned to Baton Rouge that Sunday.” He also relates himself directly to the audience of the people in Louisiana, as he explains his own personal experiences. “Much like in war,” he explains, “what I saw covered the whole spectrum of human activity. Indeed, it tended to concentrate on the two ends of the spectrum: great acts of personal heroism followed by a truly awesome military operation beginning on day five on one end of the spectrum; looting and worse and bureaucratic incompetence on the other end.” He invites audience participation through relating these events from his personal background, urging Congress, “As we tackle these challenges, let us remember what worked in the initial relief effort and what didn’t work.” Vitter calls for a harsh evaluation of the government’s role handling Katrina as a national disaster.

Vitter repeats three main ideas: Katrina as war, the failure of bureaucracy, and the heroism of local leadership. He refers to Katrina as the “other gulf war,” opening his speech with “I arrived back yesterday from the battlefields of the other gulf war....I don’t mean to be overly dramatic....I mean to effectively convey the magnitude of the destruction, the enormity and complexity of the ongoing human impacts, and, perhaps most important, the level of national resolve and commitment to what we need to win the recovery effort.” Vitter also explains that the bureaucracy failed the people: “FEMA failed us miserably”, and “Thank God that while the

bureaucrats failed, others succeeded.” Most of the second half of the speech, however, focuses on the heroism of local leaders who “held on and overcame amazing challenges in those first few days...local leaders and citizens on the ground.” Vitter’s dominant figures of speech include the use of anecdotes, metaphor, and deductive reasoning illustrated through the use a narrative of local heroes.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – SENATOR THAD COCHRAN

On September 1, 2005, Senator Thad Cochran addressed the Senate with the purpose of passing a supplemental appropriations bill to provide “needed funds to the Federal Emergency Management Administration and to the Department of Defense to carry on the disaster relief efforts that they have begun in the States that were so seriously affected by Hurricane Katrina.”⁶ Cochran’s main purpose is to garner support for the bill. His more general purpose is to establish the necessity for relief, as provided by the Senate. As he describes, “I am confident the Senate will continue to follow the progress of the disaster assistance effort to be sure that we make available to all Federal agencies and departments the funds they need to do the job to help in the recovery efforts in Mississippi and in Alabama and Louisiana and in the other states.” He has two main arguments: first, Hurricane Katrina has shown unprecedented Gulf Coast damage and secondly, that additional funds to the emergency agencies will provide relief.

Cochran’s speech upholds the notion of timeliness as he delivers his address the week after Katrina and focuses mainly on providing immediate relief, as well as providing a description of the damage on the Gulf Coast. His speech also upholds the notion of the appropriate, as it is within the restraints of a Senate speech and properly addresses the issues according to procedural rules. Cochran does not, however, present an image of the possible. He describes in great detail the destruction done to the area: “There are a few buildings that are left

⁶ All quotations in this section refer to Cochran’s Senate Address, cited in Works Cited section

standing – a few. Those may not be habitable, and the businesses that they house may not be able to continue to function until extensive repairs are made on those buildings, so it is virtually all a total loss for blocks and blocks beyond the beach area.” He proposes the solution, explaining what will happen to the federal funds: “The primary use of the funds that we give to the Department of Homeland Security, as requested by the President, will be used to reimburse Federal agencies for providing the relief effort that we have come to appreciate.” He does not connect the bureaucratic failures with the failed relief in each of the states, and does not describe a future possibility in which relief is aided through these groups. Cochran merely lists where the funding would go once approved.

While Cochran does not invite the audience to participate, he does place himself within the context of the storm. As he relates himself to the exigence, he describes, “I had the opportunity to travel to my State of Mississippi yesterday and spent the day touring the ravaged areas....I have never seen any storm inflict such great damage as I saw yesterday.” Cochran also does not relate himself to his audience, either in addressing the senators and their part in the process or in addressing the people of Mississippi directly.

The dominant figure of speech Cochran employs is the use of expert opinion (through the form of submitted letters into the record) and historical examples. Cochran submits four documents: a letter from the President providing federal support, a letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Joshua Bolton, describing where funds are needed and can be provided, the text of the proposed bill, and a list of challenges and accomplishments of the disaster relief effort. Rather than illustrate verbally the finer points of arguments, Cochran prefers to enter information into the record. Secondly, Cochran appeals to his own age and personal history: “I was on the Gulf Coast immediately following Hurricane Camille in 1969. I

was a practicing lawyer at the time....That was the worst storm that anybody in my age group had ever heard of, before or since – until Hurricane Katrina.” Cochran uses these two tools to establish credibility among his audience. Overall, his speech reads mainly as procedural, focusing on documents rather than persuading his audience to follow a particular action, such as passing a bill.

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS – TRENT LOTT

On September 6, 2005 Trent Lott delivered a descriptive and in-depth speech to the U.S. Senate. Using the metaphor of nature, Senator Lott begins his speech, “I have learned, once again, that Mother Nature is a great equalizer.”⁷ He has five main portions of the speech. The first part of the speech focuses on describing the damage in context to other disasters: “Now I have been dealing with disasters in Mississippi and in our region for 37 years, going back when I was a staff member for a Democratic Member in the House. So I have dealt with hurricanes....We have had everything in Mississippi but locusts.” The second argument supports focusing on future solutions rather than current government failures: “I told them: Look, I do not want to hear about the problems of yesterday. I want to hear what your problem is today. Tell me what the solution is, and we will fix it before the sun goes down.” The third portion of the speech thanks the agencies, local people, and visiting volunteers who have helped with the relief effort. The fourth argument continues the second by admitting the government failed while also focusing on the positive, and looking to the legislature for solutions. Lott asks, “But you make mistakes. Last time I checked, we are still human beings. I found out something else last week: Disasters bring out the worst in bad people but the best in good people.” Finally, Lott lists what kind of efforts and specific supplies are needed, and what changes can be made for the better. “We do

⁷ All quotations in this section refer to Lott’s Senate Address, cited in Works Cited section

need more action,” he says and later adds, “I also think the Federal Government needs to think innovatively.”

Lott’s speech upholds timeliness by addressing issues specific to Katrina approximately a week and a half after the storm’s landfall. He mentions specific thanks to current efforts, as well as the need to supplement those efforts due to some mistakes in the execution of emergency relief. His speech also upholds the notion of the appropriate, both thanking current senators and states for their work and urging the passage of legislation to aid those affected by the hurricanes. With a focus on the positive and several anecdotes, Lott continually mentions that everyone can have a hand in helping. “Yes, there is some criticism and negativism to go around,” he closes, “but there is a lot of positive out there, too, and I am making sure we build on that side of this equation.” He invites the audience to participate in the possible throughout the speech with statements such as, “If you are in Oklahoma and you are retired at 65 and you want to help, get in your truck and drive on down. Don’t ask where to go and don’t worry about what to do when you get there....You will see plenty you can do.” He references a more general group of the American people saying, “People from all over America are calling and crying, saying: How can I help? You can help. What we need right now are still basics.” Lott invites the specific audience of the senators to pass legislation: “We are going to need legislative help. We are going to need appropriations.” However, he also invites the participation of all Americans, people outside of the chambers of the Senate to provide their own help as so many people had already done.

Senator Lott relates himself to the exigence in a very personal way as well because his home was one of those destroyed in the hurricane. He uses the destruction of his home as evidence of Katrina’s unprecedented power: “The point though is, for 150 years, this house had

been able to withstand everything Mother Nature could deal her....No, there is not a building standing – this little community of 7,000 people.” He also connects himself to the exigence in New Orleans saying, “I flew over and saw three big fires going on in New Orleans. Nobody was trying to put them out... You could not get there.” Lott describes going through the rubble of his own neighborhood, talking on the phone with several people from across the nation about how they can bring help, and even receiving faulty information about friends passing away during the storm. Lott also relates himself to the audience, both as being affected by the storm (relating himself to the other members of his state) and as a Senator capable of change and admitting mistakes. Speaking in regards to the decision to put FEMA under the auspices of Homeland Security, Lott explains, “We thought about it. Heck, we did it. Who are we going to blame for that? We did that.” Despite past failures, Lott urges the Senators to “focus on the good.” Lott urges leadership among his specific audience telling them, “We need leaders, men and women in the Government and everywhere else, who can make a fast decision, be flexible when they make that decision, think innovatively when they make a decision, and use a very difficult thing – common sense.”

Lott’s dominant figures of speech include the use of narrative (told in dialogue form), the metaphor of Mother Nature, the use of anecdotes, the use of impersonal examples (including lists of contributions), and the use of “God” or Biblical references. At several points, Lott tells stories in dialogue form such as his interaction with Senator Kerry:

I don’t want to belabor this point, but one of the calls was from Senator Kerry from Massachusetts. He said that he and Teresa had been worried about my wife Trish and me and could they help. I said: You bet. He said: What can we do? What do you need? Where do you need it? I told him: Don’t worry about distribution. You let us know when you are going to land. We will have people for pickup and distribution.

The metaphor of Mother Nature occurs at the beginning of his speech, and Lott reuses it when describing his home: “this house had been able to withstand everything Mother Nature could deal her.” Lott offers many supporting examples for each of his points, split into two genres: personal anecdotes and impersonal examples. An impersonal example he uses describes the need for military aid in Mississippi: “You know when they got order in New Orleans? When the 82nd Airborne pulled in...They brought in a tough general that came off the plane cussing. Within 6 hours, things were under control.” Finally, Lott often invokes images of “God” or refers to the Christian *Bible* with statements, such as, the following: “I promised the Good Lord”, “We have had everything in Mississippi but locusts,” “I do believe we will persevere, and with God’s help.” Overall, Lott uses extensive narrative strategies and story-telling to illustrate his point: focus on the positives as legislatures work to provide relief.

PERFORMATIVE ANALYSIS – Party Allegiance

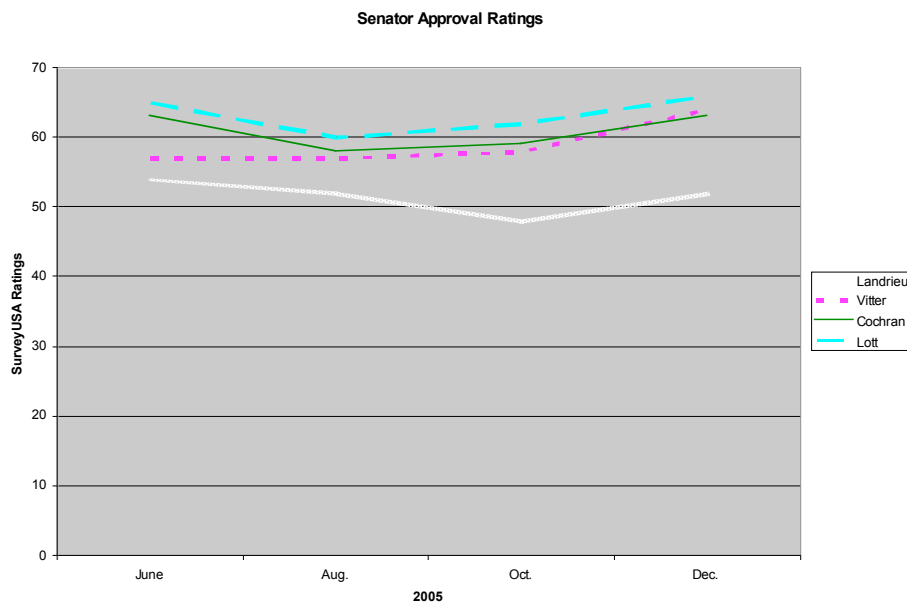
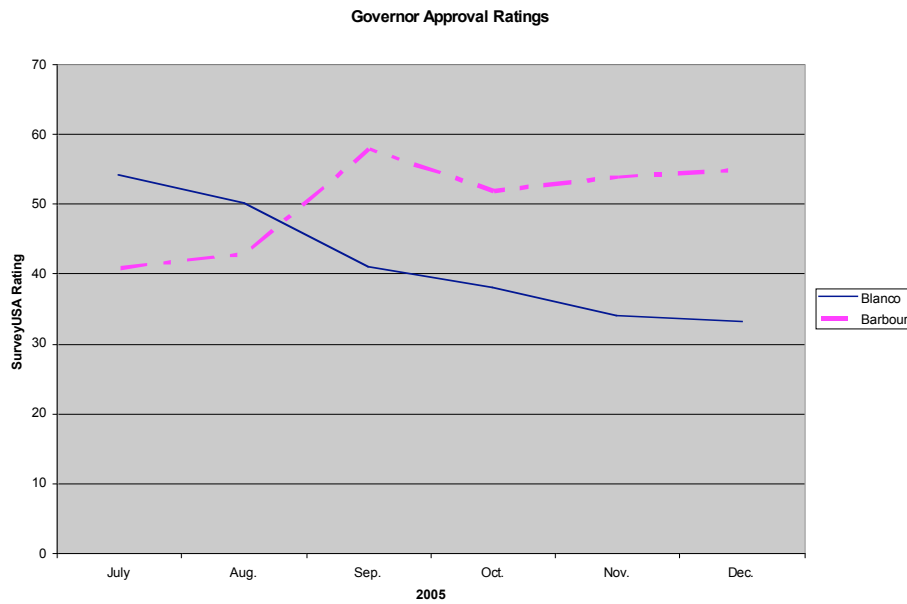
Congruent with the earlier cited studies of Kathleen Dolan, a performative analysis of the Governors and Senators revealed their performances upheld aligned more along party lines than gender differences. Both Governor Kathleen Blanco and Mary Landrieu presented a dramatic scenario in which the government had failed, but the government could be responsible for saving Louisiana. Both Democrats and Republicans create a scene of mass destruction in which the Gulf Coast is harmed significantly by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. What differs between parties is the ratio between the scene and the act of recovery. Blanco and Landrieu both admit failures of the government, and then propose that the agency (the government) can be the solution to the recovery. In the story of their addresses, they urge the government towards action as the solution to the destruction caused by the scene. The Republican candidates promote a different story. Given the destruction of the hurricanes (the scene), the government (agency) should

follow the example of the people (agent). The people within the story the Republicans advocate are “heroes,” capable of overcoming mass destruction and despair. The stories presented by both parties match the ideologies presented by both national parties. The Democrat’s national website explains their belief: “The Democratic Party is committed to keeping our nation safe and expanding opportunity for every American. That commitment is reflected in an agenda that emphasizes the security of our nation, strong economic growth, affordable health care for all Americans, retirement security, *honest government*, and civil rights” (“What We Stand For”; emphasis added). The Republican Party’s national website promotes a different ideology in which the people, not the government should be more considered stronger, “*Individuals, not government, can make the best decisions*; all people are entitled to equal rights; and decisions are best made close to home” (“GOP History”; emphasis added). In light of the government’s failures after the hurricanes and the immediate relief efforts initiated by ordinary citizens, the Republican’s addresses may have held more appeal to a constituency already extremely frustrated with their government.

RESULTS

When evaluating the speeches, it is important to consider the approval ratings in concurrence with observations regarding the speeches themselves. The following page charts the approval ratings of Governor Kathleen Blanco and Governor Haley Barbour, and also tracks the approval ratings of the Senators during the six month period before and after the storm (summer-December). In addition to these graphs, an item to consider is the dates the addresses were given. Haley Barbour calls the Special Session on September 27, 2005 and between August and September his approval ratings increase from 43% to 58%. Kathleen Blanco calls her Special Session on November 6, 2005 and between October and November her approval rating drops

from 38% to 34% (though it was already down from September's 41%). The Senators generally remained steady with their approval ratings, all showing increases after their Katrina address. Thus, in the case of the Senators, their approval ratings improved in association with their addresses to Congress, Blanco's rating went down after her Special Session address, and Barbour's ratings significantly increased.



The following chart illustrates the results of the rhetorical analysis:

Speech Elements	Blanco	Barbour	Landrieu	Vitter	Cochran	Lott
Timely	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Appropriate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vision of the Possible	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Invites audience participation	Yes – Legislature Only	Yes – Legislature/ Citizens	Yes – Legislature Only	Yes – Legislature/ Citizens	Yes -- Legislature Only	Yes -- Legislature/ Citizens
Relates speaker to exigence	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Relates speaker to audience	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Dominant figures of speech	Metaphor, Deductive Reasoning, Use of Figures	Anecdotes, Metaphor, Deductive Reasoning	Use of Figures, Impersonal Examples	Anecdotes, Metaphor, Deductive Reasoning	Expert Opinion, Historical Examples	Anecdotes, Dialogue, Narrative, Heavy Use of Examples

A rhetorical and performative analysis of Senator Mary Landrieu and Governor Kathleen Blanco show that both woman rhetors employ more masculine than feminine styles of speaking. Relying heavily on the use of the numerical figures, deductive reasoning, and impersonal examples, the women do not use particular parts of speech that reinforce gender stereotypes. They do not reference their emotions, use anecdotes or narratives, refer to their gender roles, or use noticeably longer sentences or more questions than their male counterparts. Overall, both Blanco and Landrieu’s speeches are highly masculinized with little to mark them as “feminine.” They also neglect visions of the possible, make no personal reference to the exigence, do not relate themselves to the larger audience of affected Katrina persons, and do not invite the audience beyond the legislators to participate. In this way, their speaking style mirrors the style of Thad Cochran.

In regards to the proposed hypotheses, the following results were found:

SUCCESSFUL MEN AND WOMEN RHETORS USE BOTH FEMALE AND MALE STYLES OF SPEAKING, MEETING A BASIC RHETORICAL BURDEN.

Governor Haley Barbour and Senators Mary Landrieu, David Vitter, Thad Cochran, and Trent Lott uphold the notions of *kairos*, *to prepon*, *to dynaton*, invite the audience to participate, relate the exigence to themselves, and their purpose to the audience.

Governor Haley Barbour, David Vitter, and Trent Lott employ more feminine means of communication within their speeches. Relying heavily on story-telling, Barbour, Vitter, and Lott use extensive anecdotes, metaphors, and personal examples to describe the events of Katrina. These three rhetors reference their emotions, their visual reactions to the storm damage, and their personal belief that the “heroism” of the local people sets the model for the government behavior. Contrasted to that is the rhetoric of Blanco, Landrieu, and Cochran. The latter three do not present a vision of the possible. Blanco faults the storm for the damage, and cites the government and massive legislative changes as the key to overcoming the disaster. Landrieu cites the government as the cause of the failed relief effort in the aftermath. She then argues that the government should provide better relief. Cochran differs from the latter two in that he does not focus on the negative aspects of relief; rather he describes the destruction and calls for legislative action. Because Cochran relies heavily on expert opinion, he avoids personal appeals or invitations to the audience to participate.

For the speeches studied, Barbour, Vitter, and Lott uphold their rhetorical burdens. Kathleen Blanco, Mary Landrieu and Thad Cochran fail to do so by neglecting to relate the audience to themselves, themselves to the exigence, or creating a vision of a possible future in which the proposed action is enacted successfully.

WOMEN RHETORS WHO FAIL TO MEET THEIR RHETORICAL BURDEN SUFFER FROM GENDER CRITICISMS BECAUSE OF THEIR POSITION ON THE MARGIN.

Kathleen Blanco’s gender criticisms can be associated with her failure to meet a basic rhetorical burden, *failing to uphold* the notions of *kairos*, *to prepon*, *to dynaton*.

Both Landrieu and Blanco failed to uphold *to dynaton*, failed to invite the audience to participate, failed to relate the exigence to themselves, and their purpose to the audience. Landrieu's appeals addressed the concerns of her constituents more specifically when she said, "We will not be going home for Christmas," but never broadened the "we" concerning the senators in the chamber to include her constituents. While Blanco failed to meet her rhetorical burden, and this occurs in conjunction with a falling approval rating, there does not appear to be an overt gender bias against her. Blanco does differ from Landrieu, however, in that her approval ratings consistently fell over the course of the six months following the hurricane disaster.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, there is no evidence in this case study to support the conclusion that the women rhetors were punished for feminine language. There is however rhetorical evidence that the women upheld masculine forms of speaking and that the rhetors that benefited most from the disaster – Barbour, Vitter, and Lott – employed both male and female forms of speaking. The women's use of masculine speaking supports earlier research results that women in public office employ more masculine use of language. As in the earlier discussion of Hillary Clinton, the use of purely masculine speech does not appear to be more successful than a mixed style of speaking. As previously cited, Kathlyn Kohrs Campbell identifies that while women may employ more masculine styles and this is minimally successful, it is not enough to be competitive against mixed-gender communication.

The rhetorician Kathleen Hall Jamieson links the "effeminate style" with the use of television, explaining that television "requires that those who speak comfortably through it project a sense of private self, unself-consciously self-disclose, and engage the audience in

completing messages that exist as mere dots and lines on television's screen" (81). This feminine style of being able to "comfortably express feelings" is one embodied by rhetoricians such as former President Ronald Reagan whose mixed gender style created enormous rhetorical success (88-89). Men appear to be more successful when incorporating a feminine, empathetic style of anecdotal wisdom and inviting language into their masculine styles. Women, however, are still caught between genders as Jamieson explains:

The style traditionally considered credible [masculine] is no longer suitable to television. But only a person whose credibility is firm can risk adopting a style traditionally considered weak. So a male candidate whose credibility is in part a function of presumptions made about those of his sex is more likely to succeed in the "womanly" style than is the equally competent but stereotypically disadvantaged female candidate. (87)

With regards to Katrina, the masculine style of speaking did not particularly benefit either Kathleen Blanco or Mary Landrieu. Thad Cochran's approval rating did not suffer despite his failure to invite audience participation or present an image of the possible, while Landrieu's approval rating remained lower and suffered a more drastic drop (four percentage points). Both Blanco and Landrieu fail to use mixed gender styles, and this failure punishes them more harshly than their male peers.

In regards to this particular case study, there are special considerations to take into account. First, the field of communication studies focuses strongly on the importance of communication (and the use of prepared public speeches) in evaluating successful communication. The evaluation of a competent politician rests on many more factors than this, such as: out-of-office behavior, interviews employing impromptu responses, political scandals, achievements in office, and the relation of the candidate to their constituency. While an analysis of selected speeches during the hurricane disasters shows an association between approval and

rhetorical strategies, it does not provide enough cause for criticism or rejection of a particular candidate. Secondly, the performance of gender focuses on a variety of elements besides language, such as: family relationships, appearances, sexual history, and so forth, and can be employed through other means than speech itself. Finally, differences in speech styles may reflect the regions from which they originate. The “story-telling” styles of Barbour, Vitter, and Lott may be more characteristic of Southern oratory, implying that gender roles in the Southern region of the country may operate differently than in other areas of the United States.

What can be said conclusively is the use of metaphor and anecdote seems to be associated with the southern rhetoric of the Louisiana and Mississippi leadership. This style of rhetoric also uses deductive reasoning in narrative form, a technique employed by the previously mentioned Barbara Jordan to negotiate her own marginality. Neither Landrieu nor Blanco use this technique to negotiate their position; rather they use directly masculine forms of speaking, and appear to be relatively successful in doing so. It is difficult to tell what the reaction would be if Blanco and Landrieu both began to use these “feminine styles.” Perhaps if Blanco had employed appeals to her audience or drawn on techniques such as anecdotes and storytelling, she would have built a connection with her audience and avoided such a negative reaction to her leadership.

In the future, the question of what the woman should do “when in Rome” might better be examined by identifying women who use mixed gender styles of speaking and comparing them against women who have merely conformed to the masculine style. Perhaps by teaching the latter type of politician to enact performances that promote more images of “femininity” (congruence with their sex), women politicians might be able to reduce the discomfort of seeing

a woman in a non-traditional field. Using eloquence from both styles, women might be able to overcome their marginality and provide leadership for future female leadership.

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