The Rhetorical Drama of Lyndon B. Johnson: a Burkean Analysis.

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THE RHETORICAL DRAMA OF LYNDON B. JOHNSON: A BURKEAN ANALYSIS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech Communication,
Theatre,
and Communication Disorders

by

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A.B.J., University of Georgia, 1978
M.A., University of Georgia, 1981
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ABSTRACT

The decade of the 1960s marked a turning point in the history of post World War II America. The presidency of Lyndon Baines Johnson took place during five pivotal years in the middle of that decade. His administration, representative of America in the 1960s and bearing the Johnson personality and political style, initiated foreign policies that set in motion a myriad of socio-political forces that changed the way Americans viewed themselves and the world. Within two years of Johnson's move into the Oval Office, his rhetoric regarding the conflict in Vietnam played a central role in this social transformation. This study analyzes Johnson's Vietnam rhetoric during the escalation period of 1964-1965 to uncover what effect his place in history, his personality, and his political style had on presidential rhetoric in the twentieth century.

For this purpose, the critical insights of Kenneth Burke are utilized not only to uncover what rhetoric Johnson used during this period but also what it meant to the American people and how it served the President's purposes. According to Burke, man views everything through a "fog of symbols." His dramatic critique of symbols, what is sometimes referred to as "logology," attempts to get men to realize that they have to look through this "fog" at nature, that men tend to make themselves and nature over in the image of their own symbols, and that their efforts often end
in disaster.

The first part of this study analyzes the symbols Johnson used to describe the Vietnam conflict to the American people. A cluster analysis is used to break the symbols down into equations in an attempt to discover "what goes with what and why." The equations are built around the components of Burke's dramatistic pentad: scene, agent, act, agency, and purpose. Formal speeches of the period are studied as well as smaller rhetorical units from Johnson's press conferences.

The second part of this study, accordingly, lifts the "fog" off Johnson's symbols regarding Vietnam. Once the speeches are broken down into logological equations, a more extensive criticism takes place using another aspect of Burke's analysis of language as symbolic action. Applying what Burke calls the "grammar of rebirth," the symbolic meaning of Johnson's Vietnam rhetoric is traced in three representative speeches: his remarks at Syracuse University the day after the North Vietnamese attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin; "Peace Without Conquest," delivered at Johns Hopkins University; and the opening statement from his news conference of July 28, 1965.
INTRODUCTION

Lyndon Baines Johnson personified twentieth century America. Whether creating headlines or observing the events which fomented them, no single individual represents the expansiveness of the United States since 1900 better than its thirty-sixth president. Johnson's tenure as a public official encompassed many of the great moments experienced by American politics: the Depression, the New Deal, World War II, the Cold War, Korea, McCarthyism, civil rights, the New Frontier, the Great Society, and, of course, Vietnam. "He was an All-American president," his vice president, Hubert Humphrey, once said. "He was really the history of this country, with all of the turmoil, the bombast, the sentiments, the passions. It was all there. All in one man."  

Indeed, beyond the great events of our century in which Johnson was personally involved, the former president represented much more. In the ultimate American melting-pot known as the District of Columbia, Johnson found the perfect market place in which to peddle his skills. It is a city where lobbyists, special interests, and a full spectrum of congressmen meet to form a mecca of representative government. Johnson could adapt to all of these. With all persons, on a one-to-one basis, Johnson could identify. LBJ could lunch with conservatives just as easily as he could dine with liberals. He could court a civil rights vote out
of liberal Senator Stuart Symington because the
"disadvantaged had been treated as second-class citizens
long enough." In the next instant he could warn
conservative Senator John Stennis that an important vote on
that "nigger bill" was approaching. Johnson embodied what
Karnow has called a "kaleidoscopic personality, forever
changing as he sought to dominate or persuade or placate or
frighten his friends and foes"--a huge man in stature who
"could be cruel and kind, violent and gentle, petty,
generous, cunning, naive, crude, candid, and frankly
dishonest."  

As a result of his consummate ability to accommodate
opposing viewpoints throughout his career, Johnson became
the ironic figure of American politics in the American
Century. That Johnson never held a long standing, unpopular
ideology until the twilight of his public career underscores
the irony. It was the refusal of the great moderator to
accommodate opposition to his Vietnam policies that directly
contributed to his fall. In an address to a nationwide
television audience from Johns Hopkins University in April
of 1965, the President said that the conflict in Vietnam was
"filled with terrible irony." Through the course of this
study, the role irony played in Johnson's handling of
Vietnam escalation during 1964 and 1965 will receive close
attention.

Although Johnson represents twentieth century American
politics both because of his involvement and because of his ideosyncratic ideological interests, the former president held a most peculiar view of rhetoric. His disdain for public discussion and oratory approached that of Plato. Public speaking for Johnson hindered the political process of negotiation and compromise. As a thorough pragmatist, Johnson's style of political action was that of one-on-one deliberation. Speeches were tools used for explaining decisions to the public and for garnering public support. In the words of George Reedy, a speech for Johnson was "a performance whose success was measured by the immediate reaction of the audience . . . a device to produce moods." For Johnson, the public speech was a limited tool for establishing a short-term consensus and deflecting criticism.

This attitude both influenced and was fed by Johnson's constant ideological wavering. Viewing the public speech simply as a performance, the former president never had to worry about mincing words in speeches after he had turned his back or changed his mind on a specific program or proposal. In effect, Johnson refused to connect his public words with reality. When he barked "Do me a speech" to an aide, he really meant "Give me a script so I can entertain the audience."6

Because of the ironies present in Johnson's representative stature as a twentieth century politician,
his peculiar political style, his ideological wavering, and his apparent disdain for public statements, a study is needed to discover what effect these variables had on presidential rhetoric. Since the aspects of Johnson's presidency discussed above became painfully evident during the Vietnam War, this study will focus on the rhetoric regarding that conflict. More specifically, the rhetoric of the escalation period between November 1963 and July 1965 will be studied in an attempt to discover what characteristics exist in such rhetoric while the public remains uninformed. Specific questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. What inventional strategies did President Johnson use in his rhetoric to reveal the Vietnam conflict and its escalation to the American people?
2. What kind of verbal patterns did Johnson form in his rhetoric and what do these patterns indicate?
3. How did Johnson symbolically move the United States toward a land war in Southeast Asia during 1964 and 1965?
4. To what extent was the President's personality and political style revealed in his rhetoric?
5. On which arguments did Johnson rely the most in his rhetoric and what was their effect?
Because of their inadequate consideration in the corpus of literature on Johnson's rhetoric, such questions need to be addressed and answered in greater detail.

Review of Literature

Even though the corpus of historical literature on Johnson and the United States's involvement in Vietnam is vast, American foreign relations is one area scholars of rhetoric have failed to criticize with the intensity of their colleagues in the history and political science fields. The lack of research further prompted McGuire to call for more frequent studies of the rhetoric of foreign relations in that global concerns affect the average citizen's life now more than ever.7

The recent publication of Lyndon Johnson's Dual War by Kathleen J. Turner is the first book of rhetorical analysis concerning LBJ and Vietnam. Turner traces the influence of Johnson's press relations on his statements regarding the war and provides excellent insight. Of the existing, published literature on the Vietnam War in speech communication journals, only three articles solely treat Lyndon Johnson's involvement.8 Of the literature pertaining to Johnson in those same journals, sixteen articles treat Johnson's speaking in general, rhetorical strategies used during the congressional years, or presidential rhetoric involving domestic issues, while only five articles critique
Johnson's war rhetoric, two only marginally as part of genre studies. Even though David Zarefsky's research deals exclusively with the Great Society and the "War on Poverty," his findings are important to Johnson's presidential rhetoric as a whole. This study intends to draw from and contribute to that same body of knowledge.

Further, the published material pertaining to Johnson's Vietnam War rhetoric critiques only two of the speeches intended for use in this study of the escalation period: Richard Cherwitz's survey of Johnson's address following the Tonkin Gulf crisis and Robert L. Ivie's use of perhaps the President's best speech from this period, the Johns Hopkins University Address, for his genre studies of presidential justifications for war. An evaluation of Johnson's information strategy for the war by Walter Bunge, et al., offers insight into the President's careful use of language, a point which shall be argued in this study as indicative of the time period. F. Michael Smith focused his study on the rhetoric of the Administration pertaining to escalation but only traced its thesis of aggression on the part of North Vietnam.

While dealing specifically with the President's decisive speech of March 31, 1968, John Patton's study offers insights into Johnson's personality as a rhetor. Other helpful studies pertaining to the subject matter of this work include Robert Newman's studies in Cold War
rhetoric. These surveys of public discourse following the conversion of China to Communism offer a great deal of insight into Johnson's rhetoric of the Vietnam period. For presidential speech texts, the best sources are Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Lyndon B. Johnson, volumes 1-4, and The Johnson Presidential Press Conferences.

In the period since Johnson left the White House, Dissertation Abstracts notes thirteen Ph.D. dissertations analyzing President Johnson's Vietnam War rhetoric. Only two, however, have utilized the critical insights of Kenneth Burke to focus on the rhetoric of the period. Robert V. Seltzer attempted to draw a Truman-Johnson analog by studying the rhetoric of limited war. George Bradley completed a more traditional pentadic analysis of Johnson's war rhetoric focusing on the agent-agency ratio. Unlike this analysis, however, Bradley's study treated the United States as the primary agent and American citizens as the agency. Not a single dissertation has attempted to dissect Johnson's verbal arguments or analyze his symbolic acts in the manner of this study.

A review of historical literature on Johnson is much more a matter of finding key texts. Such a voluminous body of research requires one to utilize those sources most helpful to the rhetorical critic. As a comprehensive narrative to the period of history in question and of the
personality of Johnson, David Halberstam's *The Best and the Brightest* is unsurpassed. As a reporter in Saigon for the *New York Times* during the early 1960s, a keen observer of Washington politics throughout the decade, and a researcher who, in the Burkean sense, uses "all that is there to use,"12 Halberstam is unusually equipped to lend insight to this topic. Another correspondent in Vietnam during the period, Stanley Karnow, offers additional critical perceptivity on the historical context in his recent publication, *Vietnam: A History*. One work which deals exclusively with the escalation period is Larry Berman's *Planning a Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam*. Strategists who took part in the policy planning of the period have since written reflections on their involvement which should prove helpful. These writers include George Ball, Clark Clifford, Daniel Ellsberg, Roger Hilsman, Nicholas Katzenbach, Bill Moyers, and Walt Rostow.

Biographical works on Johnson are plentiful. Again, importance lies in the use of key texts by those closest to the former president and/or those capable of lending critical insight. Perhaps no one outside the Johnson family knew the former president as well nor was able to make critical judgments on his personality better than Doris Kearns. After working in the Johnson Administration as a White House Fellow from Harvard, Kearns spent most of her holidays over the four years following the Johnson
presidency not at Cambridge, but on the LBJ Ranch helping the former president write his memoirs. Out of these visits came two books, Johnson's *The Vantage Point* and Kearns' *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. The former described "the man Lyndon Johnson thought he should be," while the latter attempts to describe Johnson as he was.¹³ It is from this work that much biographical information will be extracted.

Other biographical works of importance include one published early in the Johnson presidency by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak. *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power* is a political biography tracing Johnson's rise to national prominence. George Reedy's *Lyndon B. Johnson: A Memoir* attempts to reveal what the former press secretary calls "the two faces of Lyndon B. Johnson--one that of a magnificent, inspiring leader; the other of an insufferable bastard."¹⁴ Merle Miller's *Lyndon: An Oral Biography* is not so important for the insights of the author as it is for Miller's allowing those who knew Johnson best to tell the story and for the comprehensiveness of the author's interviewing. Finally, Tom Wicker's *JFK and LBJ: The Influence of Personality Upon Politics*, analyzes how the former president's demeanor lost his much cherished consensus government.
Methodology

This study attempts to analyze Johnson's Vietnam War rhetoric during the escalation period from a broad perspective. A traditional neo-Aristotelian approach concentrates on the speaker and his response to specific speaking situations by analyzing the speaker himself, his speech, the occasion, audience composition and reaction, etc. While these considerations will be included in the overall analysis, this criticism aims at a wider approach. For this purpose, the critical insights of Kenneth Burke will be utilized to uncover not only what rhetoric Johnson used during this period but also what it meant to the American people and how it served the President's purposes.

Although sometimes criticized for a lack of "method," Burke's approach to "language as symbolic action" offers an extensive critical framework from which to approach Johnson's rhetoric. McGuire hints at the importance of Burke's theories by insisting on research which focuses primarily on the language of a speech. From such a starting point, McGuire argues, the ultimate importance of "meaning" can slowly be extracted from the verbal symbols of a work.15

Symbolic meaning is the single most important variable that distinguishes Burke's perspective from a more traditional approach. Through the study of symbolic acts, the critic is able to understand better the interaction of rhetors with their social environment. Between November of
1963 and July 1965, the social environment of the United States, as with any other period in American history, changed dramatically. A traditional analysis of one speaker, giving one speech, to one audience, on a specific occasion would confine the tracing of Johnson's interaction with a society in process. This would further be complicated by the repetitive wording and structure of Johnson's speeches.

In contrast to the traditional separation of form from content, the Burkean perspective treats form as inseparable from content. As changes take place in the social environment, symbolic responses to the environment also change. As symbols change, symbolic form changes as well in interaction with the social environment. The recursive influence of symbols on reality and vice versa allows the critic to view Johnson's rhetoric from a more holistic perspective. This approach not only provides an intricate process of "unpacking" Johnson's symbols during the entirety of the period but also utilizes a flexible framework which takes into consideration traditional questions as well.16

According to Burke, man views everything through a "fog of symbols." His dramatistic critique of symbols, what later came to be known as "logology," attempts to get men to realize that they have to look through this "fog" at nature, that men tend to make themselves and nature over in the image of their own symbols, and that their effort often ends
in disaster. The first part of this study will thus attempt to study the symbols Johnson used to describe the Vietnam conflict to the American people. A cluster analysis will be used to break the symbols down into equations in an attempt to uncover "what goes with what and why." The equations will be built around the components of Burke's dramatistic pentad: scene, agent, act, agency, and purpose. This process of "unpacking" Johnson's symbols will take place from a qualitative rather than a quantitative perspective. Statistical data will not be utilized because of the nature of Burke's emphasis. In an effort to chart symbols according to both their repetitive use and their emotional intensity, Johnson's public statements will be examined for specific references to scenes, agents, acts, agencies, and purposes. These symbols will then naturally cluster into the President's perceptions of different scenes, agents, acts, etc. and be recorded in equation form.

The second part of this study, accordingly, will attempt to lift the "fog" off Johnson's symbols regarding Vietnam. Once the speeches are broken down into logological equations, a more extensive criticism can take place using another aspect of Burke's analysis of language as symbolic action. Applying what Burke calls the "grammar of rebirth," the symbolic meaning of Johnson's Vietnam rhetoric will be traced, enlarging the perspective of this study to include
both symbols and fog.\textsuperscript{19}

Other Burkean concepts will be used as well. By viewing the patterns of Johnson's symbols as "motives," the expression of the President's personality and political savvy in his rhetoric can be revealed. Here the concepts of secrecy, identification, division, and irony will prove most useful. Burke's use of Aristotle's "entelechy" will help in viewing the entire symbolic process from the formation of "god-terms" to Johnson's ultimate excessiveness as a twentieth century president. The entelechial motive will also aid in understanding the importance of agency.\textsuperscript{20}

Accordingly, the structure of the dissertation will follow the same critical pattern. Chapter II will begin the cluster analysis of Johnson's symbols, breaking down the scenic and agent clusters into equations. Formal speeches of the period will be studied as well as smaller units from Johnson's press conferences. Chapter III will continue the analysis, clustering the act, agency, and purposive aspects of Johnson rhetoric into logological equations. In chapter IV, dominant patterns found in the clusters will be noted and discussed as to their potential persuasiveness.

Part II of this study will analyze three representative speeches from the escalation period. In chapter V, Johnson's speech delivered at Syracuse University one day after the North Vietnamese attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin will be scrutinized for its redemptive aspects. The Johns
Hopkins speech, "Peace Without Conquest," will receive similar treatment in chapter VI as will the President's opening statement of his historic July 28, 1965 news conference in chapter VII.

A final chapter of evaluation will chart a concordance of symbols as they cluster around significant god-terms in Johnson rhetoric. Symbolic meanings will also be considered in the index, the result being a "dictionary of war." By turning the assets of language on a rhetoric of escalation, a few more steps toward Burke's "purification of war" can be taken. With the cry of "No more Vietnams" entering the contemporary rhetorical situation with such frequency, such assessments are not only appropriate but possibly vital to the future of man himself.
NOTES

2 Such a scenario is described by Doris Kearns in *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* (New York: New American Library, 1976), 157.
3 Karnow, p. 319.
6 Reedy, p. 13.
7 Michael McGuire, Remarks made as respondent to the Debut Program of the Southern Speech Communication Association Convention, Baton Rouge, La., April, 1984.
1972), 217-224.


12 Kenneth Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941), 23.

13 Kearns, p. 15.

14 Reedy, p. 158.


16 For a more extensive comparison of the traditional and Burkean perspectives, see Bernard L. Brock and Robert L. Scott, Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth Century Perspective, Second ed. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 461-463.

17 William H. Rueckert, Kenneth Burke and the Drama of

18 For a discussion of the cluster analysis, see Rueckert, pp. 83-90 and 128-162.

19 Rueckert, pp. 96-111.

PART I: A CLUSTER ANALYSIS OF LYNDON B. JOHNSON'S VIETNAM RHETORIC, 1964-1965

No slight critical ability is required for one to hate as his deepest enemy a people thousands of miles away. When criticism can do so much for us, it may have got us just to the point where we greatly require still better criticism.

--Kenneth Burke

"Rhetorical studies," writes Robert L. Ivie, "can and should function as an instrument of life."1 While man considers language a prime tool of living, even, perhaps, a defining characteristic of himself, few have taken into account the critical impact of this medium. Because language is the universal agency of communication, it is vital to monitor how this tool works—or to talk about how we talk.

Some critics, like Kenneth Burke, explain how this tool has begun to work to the detriment of man, leaving him with a "language-ridden view of himself, his products, and the universe" in which "every aspect of non-verbal, socio-political, and extra-verbal reality is viewed by man through a fog of symbols."2 The rhetorical study, therefore, acting as an instrument of life, attempts to lift the fog off reality through a study of the medium itself. The result is not only a clearer view of our world but also increased understanding of how we view the world through language or rhetoric.

Ivie continues, however, noting that rhetorical studies function as instruments of life "especially through the
Agreeing with Ivie, Burke goes further in his critique of language by attempting to "purify" or teach man how to avoid war through criticism. The world as we know it, the world in history, cannot be described in its particularities by an idiom of peace . . . We are actually in a world at war—a world at combat—and even a calculus must be developed with the dialectics of participation by "the enemy"—hence the representative anecdote must contain militaristic ingredients. It may not be an anecdote of peace—but it may be an anecdote giving us the purification of war.

Viewing rhetoric as an attempt to "identify" separate and competing entities in the world, be they individuals or nations, Burke says "men are brought to that most tragically ironic of all divisions, or conflicts, wherein millions of cooperative acts go into the preparation for one single destructive act." Here, Burke refers to that "ultimate disease of cooperation: war."

In the end, the writing of a critical analysis of Lyndon Johnson's war rhetoric will help in the quest to "purify" war, especially by revealing how nations may avoid sliding into the quagmire of battle. The next three chapters will deal specifically with Johnson's rhetorical units presented between the time of his ascension to the presidency through the July 28, 1965 announcement to
increase America's military commitment to South Vietnam. The units will be examined collectively as a body of literature by a single speaker. A cluster analysis will act as the magnifying glass through which Johnson's symbolic action will be studied. In subsequent chapters, the "fog" surrounding these symbols will be dealt with in more detail.

The cluster analysis, as used by Kenneth Burke in the study of poetry as symbolic action, has been chosen as a critical framework in this chapter for two reasons. First, this method allows the critic to deal exclusively with the symbols or language as a body of literature. The object is to find out "what goes with what and why." According to William H. Rueckert, perhaps the single greatest authority on Burke's writings outside Burke himself, the study is achieved by making an index and/or concordance of a single speech or body of speeches by a single speaker.

The index is necessarily selective; one is guided by terms that are either of high intensity or high frequency. The former are terms which are naturally charged, such as love, sex, society, or are particularly significant in a given author, such as the rose garden in Eliot; the latter are frequently repeated terms or group of terms.

The results of such an analysis provide more than a directory of terms, however. The main point of clustering is to provide the equational structure of the literature and
this is nothing less than a statement of form. The revelation of formal principles in a work is important for several reasons. As certain patterns become prevalent in the text, indications of the speaker's motives, connotations, and world view are revealed as well as implications of the situation and culture in which the words were spoken. Form in literature is "an arousing and fulfillment of desires," according to Burke. "A work has form in so far as one part of it leads the reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence." Form, thus, not only exposes much about the speaker but also the audience as well and the concordance provided by these chapters will prove to be a valuable framework in the subsequent analysis of the speeches as symbolic action.

Secondly, the cluster analysis will be applied due to the nature of the discourse. Clustering, to Burke, is an act of "logologic," a set of intertwined terms which imply each other. Logologic reduces the substance of any act, thing, or place to its equational cluster. Choosing to call man's "language-ridden view of himself" and his destructive tendencies "logomania," Burke has set out to "find ways to save ourselves from ourselves and save the rest of the world (non-verbal nature)." Logology thus is an important medium in the purification of war and what better application is there than to the discourse of war-making?
The analysis will first consider intensities and repetitions as they cluster around the five terms of Burke's pentad: scene, agent, act, agency, and purpose. In addition, movement and progression will be studied within the clusters from a chronological standpoint as well as the opposition of terms or what Burke calls an "agon analysis."

In an attempt to focus this part of the study on Johnson's language, Burke's pentad will not reveal a rhetoric bound by time or place. President Johnson will not be seen as an agent speaking in a particular scene through the agency of public speaking for a certain purpose. Rather, this study will focus on the drama within Johnson's rhetoric or the language the President chose to use in portraying the Vietnam conflict to the American people. This study is an analysis of "symbolic action." The best place to begin is with the symbols themselves. "Action" means choice. The choices behind the symbols will be studied in Part II.

The Scenic Cluster

By far, the most discussed scene in Lyndon Johnson's war discourse was, of course, that of Vietnam. His references can be analyzed as those concerning the country itself, the war situation in general, and scenic conditions pertaining to the quality of life.

As for the country itself, Johnson described Vietnam as "important to us" but a country which was "half a world
away.13 Indeed, most of the President's references to the country of Vietnam took into account its geographical location and clustered around "far away." This aspect, however, was not mentioned until August 10, 1964. During the spring of 1965, distance apparently became more of a consideration to the President as references to the country's remoteness became more frequent. On April 7, he said, "Vietnam is far away" and referred to it as a "corner of the world." The "corner" reference was made again on June 1 and in the famous news conference of July 28, called Vietnam a "remote and distant place." The beginning, thus, of a long and complex equation could read "Vietnam" equals "far away," equals "corner," equals "remote and distant," but "important to us."

Most of Johnson's references to Vietnam as a scene for his unfolding drama took into account the effects of war and clustered around "conflict." Early in his presidency, the President referred to the scene as "a very dangerous situation," and "that problem" as having "long standing difficulties." By the time of the attack on two United States destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin in August of 1964, the scene was "already serious" and with "a good many problems." In the Spring of 1965, there was "great danger there." It was "a very serious matter." The fighting was considered "dirty, brutal, and difficult" in an area that was "not a serene or peaceful place." The war had a "confused nature," and by June of 1965 had become a "clear

It was not until April of 1965 that President Johnson introduced a human factor into his scenic descriptions of Vietnam. The country suddenly became the home "for millions of impoverished people," "a hungry land." The President called Vietnam's villages "helpless," which "sustain millions of people whose first desire is for food and shelter and hope of progress." In Vietnam, "medical care is often impossible to find," "poverty and neglect take their inevitable toll in human life," as do the ravages of "unchecked disease."

President Johnson made far fewer references to the scene of his own country but the intensity of these symbols warrants mention. At a news conference from the LBJ Ranch in Texas, Johnson criticized the press for "involving" the United States in wars while he could see for himself "the serene atmosphere of the Pedernales."

It was not until the President made his crucial commitment of July 28, 1965, however, that another scenic reference to the homeland was made. Stating his reluctance to send Americans into battle, Johnson said they had been "born into a land exultant with hope and with golden
promise." In this scene, therefore, the United States equals "serene," "exultant with hope," and "golden promise."

A final and very important scene Johnson spoke of repeatedly was that of "the great stage of the world." Early in his presidency, Johnson described the planet as becoming "small and turbulent" and tended to cluster the rest of his comments around these terms. He attributed "the shrinking distances" to "the ready access of information about other countries and other people." The world was "developing," a "cauldron of violence and hatred and revolution without some assistance." We lived, Johnson said, in a "dangerous and difficult world." By 1965, the world had become "troubled and perilous." Because of what happened in the Gulf of Tonkin in August of 1964, Johnson said the "world is challenged," and identified the United States with the fate of the world in his State of the Union Address of January, 1965 by saying that "the state of the Union depends, in large measure, upon the state of the world." The world, thus, equals "small and turbulent," "shrinking," "developing," "a cauldron of violence and hatred and revolution," and, like Vietnam, "dangerous and difficult."

To sum up, while making scenic references to the home front, the world, and most of all to Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson probably did not consider the scene to be a great factor in his foreign policy planning regarding Southeast Asia or in his war discourse. Vietnam was "half a world away" but
remained from the time Johnson became president until July 1965 "a situation that is . . . important to us." That the President made fewer comments regarding scene than of any other component in the dramatic pentad points not only to the disregard of scenic conditions in decision making but also leads the critic to look elsewhere for the dramatic element around which Johnson clustered his arguments. To use the language of Burke's logologic, the "materialistic substance" of Johnson's rhetoric obviously did not weigh heavily in the decision making because of a lack of scenic clustering.14

What is available in the speeches for use in the first stage of building a logological equation is as follows: Vietnam equals "remote and distant," equals "danger," equals "brutality," equals "impoverished," equals "death." The United States, meanwhile, equals "serene," equals "hope," equals "promise." The world, which unified the two other scenes, equals "shrinking," equals "small and turbulent," thus rendering distance or scene of little consequence in Johnson's thought and/or rhetorical process.

The Agent Cluster

Far more numerous than references to scenic conditions in Lyndon Johnson's war discourse is the clustering of symbols around the agents involved in the drama. Again, there were three groups of people or agents appearing frequently in the Vietnam rhetoric: individuals and groups
affiliated with the United States or its government, the
people of South Vietnam and their governmental
representatives, and the Vietcong/North Vietnamese who
Johnson spoke of as a single opposing group.

Surprisingly, and in contrast with scenic clustering
where more emphasis was given to symbols of the Vietnamese
situation, President Johnson devoted a vast majority of his
allusions to American agents including the people and their
leaders. Not until the Gulf of Tonkin incident did the
President begin to elaborate on the nature of the
opposition, and then only marginally. Even at the time of
commitment in July 1965, the North Vietnamese were still
described in the same ambiguous terms Johnson had been using
for months.

To begin with, there was a great discrepancy in the
manner in which Johnson "named" the agents involved.
Americans were always identified by their proper name and
usually their title. Johnson referred to himself as "your
president" or "the present president." Joining him
frequently throughout the period were several co-agents
within his administration: "Secretary McNamara," [Robert
McNamara, Secretary of Defense], "General Taylor," [Maxwell
Taylor, Ambassador to South Vietnam, 1964-1965], "Secretary
Rusk," [Dean Rusk, Secretary of State], "General Wheeler,
[Earle Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1964-
1970], "Ambassador Lodge," [Henry Cabot Lodge, Ambassador to

In stark contrast, only one South Vietnamese was named in Johnson's discourse. "General Khanh" or "Prime Minister Khanh" [Nguyen Khanh, Prime Minister of South Vietnam in 1964] was alluded to constantly in a period of great optimism early in 1964 following the fall of Diem's regime. No other South Vietnamese individual was mentioned in Johnson's discourse following Khanh's unsuccessful rule and fall thirteen months later. Other members of this group of agents were referred to as "the people of South Vietnam," or "the South Vietnamese people," "the South Vietnamese Government," "the new Government of South Vietnam," "the people and Government of South Vietnam," "the villagers of South Vietnam," and the "simple farmers."

The most abstract group of agents by far were "the Vietcong," "Vietcong guerrillas," or the "North Vietnamese." Not a single North Vietnamese individual was mentioned in Johnson's war discourse during the period prior to July
1965. Variations of titles given to this set of agents include "Communist masters in the North," "the Government of North Vietnam," "the Communist regime," "Communism," "Communist totalitarians," "the aggressors and their dupes," which included the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong, and the "willful aggressors."

Not only was there a marked difference in the manner in which Johnson labelled the respective groups of agents, but descriptions of the characters also revealed contrasts. Officials of the United States Government mentioned above tended to cluster around such adjectives as "cautious," "determined," "compassionate," and "patient." In the early months of 1964, these men were revealed as "most cautious," "extremely careful," and "helpful." By the time of the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, Johnson introduced the cluster of determination by labelling administration members as men of "conviction," "actively concerned with threats to the peace" of South Vietnam. They were also men of "wisdom and patience and restraint."

In January of 1965, the same group of agents had not only "concern and interest," but had also become men of "compassion and vigilance." As the hostilities continued to escalate in the spring of 1965, Johnson made many more references to himself and those around him as having "patience and determination." They were "reasonable" men having a president with great "responsibility." Because they were "reasonable," these agents remained "ready for
unconditional discussions" from April through July. Further, they were "ready to begin discussion next week, tomorrow, or tonight." Ultimately, they were "ready to talk anytime, anywhere, with any government without conditions." They would "go anywhere," "discuss any subject," "listen courteously and patiently to any point of view that may offer possibilities of a peaceful solution." On top of this, they were men that would "not weary in the search for peace" and men that stayed in "constant consultation" with one another.

References Johnson made regarding the government as a whole clustered around the symbol of "unity." From the time of the hostilities in the Gulf of Tonkin through July of 1965, Johnson constantly pictured the US government, the American people, and, surprisingly, the press as one. In August of 1964, Johnson said "our Government is united in its determination" and was "pleased with the unanimity with which the Congress and the people--and, if you will pardon me, the press--supported" the retaliation of the Tonkin attacks. The "unanimity of the Congress," according to the President, also "reflects the unanimity of the country."

By April of 1965, Johnson turned to the use of the negative by saying that there was "no division in the American government." There was, instead, "strengthened unity of American purpose . . . in the Congress and in the press." In July, the President assured the American people that the "distinguished chairman of the committees and the
members of both parties" all had "met as Americans, united and determined to stand as one" in the deliberations leading up to the 1965 build-up.

As a result, Johnson pictured the official representatives of the United States government as broad-minded, all-encompassing men. They were not only "helpful," "convicted," "concerned," and "determined," but, at the same time, "careful," "wise," "patient," "restrained," full of "compassion," and "vigilant." Above all, they stayed in "constant consultation" with one another and were always "united."

In many ways, the President depicted the governmental representatives just as the Constitution would—as a microcosm of American beliefs and attitudes. These men, according to Johnson's rhetoric, embodied many of the same qualities the President attributed to the American nation in general. Johnson described the country as "a sentinel on the frontiers of freedom," and a "watchtower seeking out the horizons of peace." Like the government, America was depicted as "one nation united and indivisible" and "shall remain" that way. While individuals in the government were ready to negotiate "anywhere, any time," America was a country that "keeps her word" and "shall honor our commitments." It was like her commander-in-chief, "the most responsible of all nations," and like the other individuals in the government, reflected "patience" and "determination" by having "the firmness to defend freedom, the strength to
support that firmness, and a constant, patient effort to move the world toward peace instead of war."

In the spring of 1965, following a mounting campaign of terrorism by the Vietcong, the country, like the government, not only had "compassion," but also "outrage" and "indignation." Like the principle characters, Johnson said the country now faced the problems in Vietnam with both "firmness" and "moderation," a "readiness for peace" but "with a refusal to retreat." By May, this alertness became an "unhesitative readiness of the United States of America."

Above all and more frequently mentioned, was the overriding quality, again, of "unity." Following the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, Johnson referred to the "unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in Southeast Asia." In April 1965, the country remained "united on the need to resist aggression" and by the summer, a nation of "general unanimity and a willingness to provide."

One quality the President attributed to America frequently will have more bearing in the clustering of agencies but bears mentioning at this time. On several occasions, Johnson referred to the physical "power" possessed by the nation. In April 1964, the President said the United States was a "great, powerful, rich country" and after the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, flexed the country's might by saying "we are the most powerful of all nations" but also "the most responsible of all nations." Again, it is
interesting to note how the active is tempered by the passive. America is everything--both "powerful" and "responsible." In the Johns Hopkins address, Johnson attributed the United States' benevolent efforts in South Vietnam to the fact that "we are rich and powerful" and because "it is right in this world that the strong and the wealthy should help the poor and the weak."

Very much like the country in general, Johnson saw the American people as an expanded version of the same values and qualities accredited to individuals in his administration. Early in his presidency, Johnson called the country "a sentinel on the frontiers of freedom" and a "watchtower seeking out the horizons of peace." In the same speech, he referred to Americans as the "servants and guardians of these high causes." Like their official representatives, the citizenry was described as "determined," full of "concern and sympathy," but facing modern challenges "with courage" and "with strength."

Again, the facet of being a little bit of everything is evident in Johnson's discussion of the U.S. population. "American people," Johnson said in June of 1965, "want their own Government to be not only strong but compassionate." After saying that the U.S. was a "great, powerful, rich country" early in his presidency, Johnson countered, saying that "concern and sympathy . . . concern of equal for equal, the concern of brother for brother" are often as important.
The only unusual characteristics the President attributed to Americans were found in two of the more important speeches Johnson made during the first two years of his presidency—upon signing the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and when committing ground forces to Vietnam in July of 1965. After the American response to the Tonkin attacks, Johnson said "Americans of all parties and philosophies can be justly proud—and justly grateful" for the "understanding, accord, and unity" among the national government. This, however, was another disguised way of clustering both the American people and Congress around the symbol of "unity." Being more sensitive to Americans as individuals, Johnson inserted a "personal note" in his address of July 28, 1965. Referring to imminent draftees as "the flower of our youth, our finest young men," the President said he did not find sending them into battle easy since they were "filled with hope and life."

To sum up briefly, those agents identified as cabinet members, congressmen, or Americans at large contribute a great deal to the equational cluster surrounding "the United States of America." Some of the more intense symbols in this cluster include "your present president," equals "responsibility," equals "Secretary Rusk," equals "cautious," equals "cabinet members," equals "careful," equals "helpful," equals "conviction," equals "concerned," equals "wisdom and patience and restraint," equals "discussion," equals "Congress," equals "interest," equals...

The clustering of symbols around those agents identified as "South Vietnamese" is closely allied with the United States agent cluster just mentioned. The similarities are so striking in Johnson's rhetoric that the physical "mixing" of U.S. ground troops with those of South Vietnam in 1965 may have been predictable had the President's speeches been monitored more closely.

While Johnson said that "peace must be our passion" in the United States, the South Vietnamese also clustered with symbols of "peace." Johnson described them early in his presidency as a "people who seek only to be left in peace" and further as a "peaceful, liberty-loving, free people," or just as "the peaceful people of South Vietnam." Following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, the President referred to "the peaceful villagers of South Vietnam." This, interestingly enough, was the only reference to the agents of South Vietnam in the days following the alleged attacks thus rendering the matter of concern only to those characters affiliated with the United States or North Vietnam. Not until February of 1965 were the "liberty-loving people" of South Vietnam mentioned again.
Johnson used the symbols of "courage" and "strength" to describe the way in which Americans faced modern challenges. Likewise, he identified the South Vietnamese not only with "peace" but also with "bravery." In March, as Vietcong terrorism increased in South Vietnam, "the people and government of South Vietnam" were described as "a brave and independent people" and increasingly as "an independent nation" or "independent South Vietnam." Having what it would take to stay "peaceful" and "independent," the President said these men and women had "patience as well as bravery, the will to endure as well as the will to resist," like the Americans. As terrorism escalated in 1965 without substantial American ground involvement, Johnson called the South Vietnamese "brave and enduring people."

Unlike the Americans who were strong, however, Johnson described Vietnam as a "small and brave nation" full of "simple farmers" who were "loyal to their government." Upon committing ground forces to Vietnam, the President described the land as a "small and valiant nation . . . crippled and scarred by war," thus necessitating the "power" and "compassion" of the United States.

Until it became painfully evident to the American principals in the summer of 1964 that General Khanh's attempt to consolidate power in South Vietnam was failing, President Johnson made several specific references to the South Vietnamese leader and his government. In the first official statement made by Johnson dealing solely with the
situation in Vietnam, the President said General Khanh and his government were "basically sound" and that the General's leadership was "vigorous." On May 18, 1964, Johnson said Prime Minister Khanh provided South Vietnam with "new energy and leadership and new hope" while the government made "vigorous decisions."

The cluster of symbols around South Vietnamese agents, then, focuses on the key terms of "peace," "independence," and "bravery"—all words that could easily fit into the United States cluster. Both logological equations involve "peace" and "patience." The Americans have "courage" whereas the South Vietnamese are "brave." Americans are "determined" and the South Vietnamese are "vigorous." The equation for this group of agents is as follows: "South Vietnamese" equals "peaceful," equals "liberty-loving," equals "free," equals "brave," equals "independent," equals "simple," equals "farmers," equals "South Vietnam," equals "small," equals "crippled and scarred," equals "loyal," equals "patience," equals "enduring," equals "General khanh," equals "sound," equals the "Government," equals "vigorous."

The last group of agents to be considered in this section are those identified by Johnson as "North Vietnamese" or the "Vietcong." Judging from the way the President treated these two groups, he apparently perceived little difference in them. Aggression against the South
Vietnamese was attributed alternately to both groups in the speeches.

Only on two occasions did President Johnson refer to the two groups jointly. In May of 1964, the President spoke of the "Vietcong guerrillas, under orders from their Communist masters in the North." In March 1965, Johnson called the enemy "the aggressors and their dupes" but confined the rest of his comments regarding the opposition to discussions of the North Vietnamese Communist alone.

All of Johnson's references to the North Vietnamese deal with the government or Communism in general. The symbols which cluster around these titles are similar to the point of interchangeability. At the same time of the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, the "vessels of the Government of North Vietnam" are referred to as "hostile." The same day, Johnson called the North Vietnamese regime "threatening," part of the "aggressive Communist nations," and said they had "violated the Geneva accords for Vietnam."

As far as peace was concerned, Johnson said in the spring of 1965 that there was "no indication and no evidence that they are ready and willing to negotiate under conditions that would be productive." The North Vietnamese were people with a "violent and ruthless disregard for life, happiness, and security" seeking only "domination and empire, conquest and aggression." If South Vietnam were to fall to these people, Johnson said, the country would be delivered into "terror and repression."
Johnson's "violence/aggression" thesis took other forms as well. North Vietnam was a "source of brutality" displaying "arrogance and adventure" in Southeast Asia. The North Vietnamese were the "enemies of freedom," "willful aggressors" who were examples of "the violence and weakness of man at his worst." By the time of Johnson's decision to deploy ground troops to Southeast Asia, the North Vietnamese had become simply "men who hate and destroy."

"Communism" in general to Johnson "wears a more aggressive face" but was an empire whose "unity . . . has begun to crumble." The President labelled the communists of North Vietnam "totalitarians" who were "spurred on by Communist China." Further, the North Vietnamese were an integral part of "the growing might and the grasping ambition of Asian communism."

When compared to other peoples of the world, Johnson spoke of the North Vietnamese from two completely different perspectives. In the Johns Hopkins address, the President empathized with the North Vietnamese seeing them as members of a region united by common struggles. "The people of North Vietnam want . . . what their neighbors also desire: food for their hunger; health for their bodies; a chance to learn; progress for their country; and an end to the bondage of material misery." In the same speech, Johnson expanded this united group of agents to also include Americans. "The ordinary men and women of North Vietnam and South Vietnam--of China and India--of Russia and America--are brave
people," Johnson said, "filled with the same proportions of hate and fear, of love and hope." The Vietnamese "want the same things for themselves and their families." They "do not want their sons to ever die in battle, or to see their homes, or the homes of others, destroyed."

Such a view of the North Vietnamese contrasts markedly with Johnson's "violence/aggression" cluster which he emphasized in other comparisons with peoples of the world. Johnson tried to isolate North Vietnam from the rest of civilization by predicting in June of 1965 that these "enemies of freedom shall become the inheritors of man's world-wide revolt against injustice and misery." Later that month, the President said the North Vietnamese were "willful aggressors contemptuous of the opinion and the will of mankind" and a people who placed "their ambitions and their dogmas or their prestige above the peace of all the world."

In summary, Johnson pictured this last group of agents with inconsistent symbols. For the most part, the North Vietnamese/Vietcong agents clustered around the term "aggression" except in the Johns Hopkins speech when the President spoke of all agents united by common necessities. The logological equation for this group, then, is as follows: "Vietcong" equals "dupes," equals North Vietnamese," equals "aggressors," equals "hostile," equals Communist," equals "domination and empire," but equals "crumbling unity," equals "unwilling to negotiate," equals "violent and ruthless," equals "terror and repression," but
equals "weakness," equals "source of brutality," but equals "does not want to see their sons die," equals "enemies of freedom," but equals "desire for food, learning, and progress," equals "men who hate and destroy," but equals "do not want to see their homes destroyed," equals "hate and fear," but equals "love and hope."

In contrast to the scenic cluster, President Johnson made many more references to agents in his speeches than to the scenery. In addition, the President devoted a majority of his arguments to American agents living on American soil whereas most of his comments regarding scene depicted the situation in Vietnam. As a result, one must conclude that Johnson concerned himself more with persuading his audience of his administration's "concern" and "compassion" than with the Vietcong's "brutality" and "ruthlessness."

As the clusters begin to take equational form, an entire series of events or terms suddenly collapse into, in Burke's words, "a single chord" that "must be strung out in arpeggio." As the clusters collapse, the similarity of terminology leads to the obvious identification among agents or actions as with the "mixing" of Americans with South Vietnamese and the North Vietnamese with the Vietcong. Within the chords or equations, however, inconsistencies appear that, in musical terms, would be considered atonal notes and by literary standards, logical incongruities. When these inconsistencies appear, the audience is prepared, by the nature of form, to expect persuasive change.
Within the agent clusters, logical incongruities exist in both the American and North Vietnamese equations. Johnson described members of his administration and the country as "determined" or "powerful" and "restrained." The North Vietnamese, on the other hand, represented both "aggression" and "love and hope." In order to follow what change these seeds of inconsistency may have initiated, a look into the progressions these terms may have taken will follow the cluster of "purpose."

A final observation at this point deals with the scene-agent relationship. In light of clustering developments around agent, the recursive nature of the pentad allows one to view the scenic cluster in a new perspective. While Johnson made a majority of his scenic references about Vietnam, the most important scene to the President probably was the world. Since the President was preoccupied with American agents and, subsequently, their actions, the smallness and turbulence of the world became a vital link in the drama between the players and their scene of concern—Vietnam. Not only was international opinion of America's image at stake but the "shrinking" state of the planet due to "the ready access of information" allowed the principal agents to "act" in a scene thousands of miles away.
NOTES


2 William H. Rueckert, Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 130.

3 Ivie, p. 337.


5 Burke, p. 22.

6 Rueckert, p. 84.

7 Rueckert, p. 84.


9 See Kenneth Burke, Philosophy, p. 35; Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (1950; rpt. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 137; and Rueckert, p. 70.


11 Rueckert, p. 154.

12 Rueckert, p. 254.

13 For all of Johnson's speech references, see Lyndon B. Johnson, The Presidential Press Conferences, vol. 1, ed. George W. Johnson (New York: Earl W. Coleman, 1978) and Lyndon B. Johnson, Public Papers of the Presidents of the

14 Rueckert, p. 154.

15 Burke, *Philosophy*, p. 75.
STANDING FIRM, POWER, AND PEACE: 
THE ACT, AGENCY, AND PURPOSE CLUSTERS

In many respects, the clustering of terms around the actions of the characters in Johnson's drama is most pivotal. It is at this point that the critic must go beyond the symbols used to describe actions, agents, or scenery alone. When cataloguing actions, one must also take into account what agents are doing the acting. Thus, an important step takes place in the building of a final equational cluster in that the agent cluster must be considered when forming the act cluster.

The Act Cluster

Just as President Lyndon Johnson discussed American agents much more than any other group of characters, United States actions comprised a vast majority of the President's comments as well. Ironically, while U.S. agents were pictured with "concerned restraint" a majority of the time, an overwhelming number of their actions clustered around the imagery of "standing firm" in Vietnam. Not surprisingly, this more aggressive posture did not appear frequently in Johnson's statements until after the Gulf of Tonkin attacks. Only on one occasion in May of 1964 did the President say that "we are pledged before all the world to stand" in Vietnam.¹

Following the alleged hostilities in the Gulf of

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Tonkin, however, the United States took a much more active involvement in Johnson's speeches. The President said the nation "acted at once" with a "positive reply"—but only in reply to the actions of others. Further, the action taken by the U.S. was "air action" so as to not give the impression of involvement in a ground war. A week later, this reply became a "prompt and unmistakable reply" and the country would "stand firm against the present aggressions."

In the spring of 1965 as America took a much more "active" role in defending South Vietnam from escalating terrorism, President Johnson tempered his rhetoric of firmness with a "but/only" approach. While the United States was "increasing our response" and making "attacks by air" with a "much more massive effort," Johnson said, "We will do everything to reach that objective" but "we will do only what is absolutely necessary" to reach the objective of defending South Vietnam. On May 4, the President used the same strategy in saying that, "We will do, though, what must be done and we will do only what must be done."

Another strategy Johnson used to temper America's more active role in 1965 was to use the negative—describing actions the United States would not take. "We will not grow tired," Johnson said in the Johns Hopkins address and "we will not withdraw." The following month the President reiterated that "we will not and we must not withdraw or be defeated." By saying what the country would not do, Johnson
could reinforce his commitment to "stand firm" without actually saying it.

The greatest number of aggressive actions on the part of the United States can be found in the last speech under consideration in this study: Johnson's July 28 commitment to a ground war in Vietnam. Americans were said to "toil and suffer and sometimes die." They also "fight for freedom." Johnson said he found it necessary "to increase our active fighting forces" and that, as a country, "we are going to continue to persist."

By July 28, 1965, President Johnson was no longer tempering his statements regarding America's active role in defending South Vietnam. "America," the President said, "will stand united behind her men" and that "Americans will do whatever is necessary"—without doing "only" what was necessary. Further, "this Government is going to do all it can to see it continue." In Johnson's final sentence of the speech, he reemphasized America's firm actions saying, "We will stand in Vietnam."

Another group of actions the United States was involved in clustered around the single action of "discussion." Second only to the country's determination to stand firm in Vietnam was the administrations never-ending "discussions," "consultations," "examinations," "decisions," etc. All of these actions were taken by agents within the administration with representatives of Congress, the Defense Department,
the South Vietnamese Government or Military establishment, and sometimes the North Vietnamese.

The most common act taking place in this group was that of simple "discussion." Early in his presidency, Johnson said Vietnam presented "new difficulties demanding discussion and consultation and decision." The President said he liked "to reflect on these moves before I make them," and that he liked "to consider everyone's judgment." Further, military representatives in Vietnam were "constantly examining" operations there to keep the discussion process as up to date as possible.

Following the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, Johnson praised the "free and serious debate" in Congress as to the passing of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution. In March of 1965, the President said he thought "debate is healthy" and that "I think we have had debate." That same month, Johnson noted that the United States had been in "rather active and continuous consultation" with other governments regarding a settlement with North Vietnam and that "we have discussed it directly through diplomatic channels."

By late April, President Johnson intensified American attempts to carry on discussions with the North Vietnamese. "I will talk to any government," Johnson said, "any time, without any conditions," and that "we will discuss any subject and any point of view with any government concerned." A week later, the President claimed to "have listened to every voice" but that he had "searched high and
wide" for someone to negotiate with without success. "I can't even rope anybody and bring him in that is willing to talk and reason and settle this thing by negotiation," Johnson said.

All the while, the President said "we have had discussions" and that he had "reviewed the situation in Vietnam." Even as he sent ground troops into South Vietnam in July, Johnson assured America that the administration had "communicated with most of the friendly nations" and that he personally had "to ask Congress for their judgments," because "one of the principal duties of the Office of President is to maintain constant consultation."

Another prominent group of actions by Americans cluster around the act of "helping." At first, the President justified American assistance as "not only one of the most Christian acts," but also "an act of necessity." In addition to the United States "following the Golden Rule not only at home but abroad," Johnson said, "we must help developing countries because our own welfare demands it." For these reasons, advisors were sent to Vietnam, "providing leadership and judgment, and making decisions."

As the United States became more involved in the defense of South Vietnam, however, helpful actions were based solely on a religious motive. Following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, Johnson said America was "working against poverty and disease and ignorance" and upon accepting his party's nomination for President said, "our
nation will continue to extend the hand of compassion and
the hand of affection and love to the old and the sick and
the hungry." In his State of the Union address in January
of 1965, Johnson claimed "our Nation was created to help
strike away the chains of ignorance and misery and tyranny."

Help came from a variety of sources as well. Since the
Geneva accords in 1954, Johnson said, "every American
president has offered support," and to do his part, Lyndon
Johnson proposed a massive economic development program of
New Deal proportions. "A billion dollar American
investment" could extend this country's helping hand so that
"the wonders of modern medicine can be spread through
villages." "We will build clinics and provide doctors," the
President said, "to help heal the wounds of war." Further,
Johnson proposed a program "to assist in feeding and
clothing the needy in Asia" with American surpluses. "We
will help South Vietnam import materials for their homes and
their factories" and so that "schools can be established."
Even as the President announced plans to build a ground war
in Southeast Asia, he said the United States would continue
to "enrich the condition of their life, to feed the hungry
and to tend the sick, and teach the young, and shelter the
homeless, and to help the farmer to increase his crops, and
the worker to find a job."

A fourth group of American actions President Johnson
described in his speeches were acts mentioned above as those
intended to temper the predominant acts of firmness. In
addition to Johnson's "but/only" strategy of hiding firm military actions, the President used a varied vocabulary to describe acts of "restraint." Following the Gulf of Tonkin incident, our nation's response was said to be "limited and fitting." The armed action America took in the form of air raids was "appropriate." Regarding future responses, Johnson said such actions "should be careful and should be measured."

By the spring of 1965, acts of restraint had become official U.S. policy. "We have our policy," the President said, "of responding appropriately, fittingly, and measured." Regarding his July 1965 decision to give General Westmoreland what was needed to expand the war, Johnson said the United States "would not bluster, bully, or flaunt our power" and "like our actions in the past, [present ones] are carefully measured to do what must be done."

The last group of actions Johnson attributed to American agents cluster around the terms of "peace" and "freedom." Ironically, such acts appear less frequently in the speeches than any other of the actions discussed above. It is even more unusual when considering the fact that American agents clustered around such terms as "careful," "compassionate," "helpful," "united," and "ready for peace," are at the same time accredited most recurrently with making "firm stands" in Vietnam. Nonetheless, the "peace/freedom" motif plays an important role in the American agent-act equation.
In all of Johnson's references to "peace" and "freedom," the United States is seen as doing all it can in pursuit of those goals. Early in 1964, Johnson claimed Americans "do all that strengthens the hope of peace." In the 1965 State of the Union address, the President said "we have taken more steps toward peace" and that "we shall help men defend their freedom." A month later, Johnson called for the U.S. to "continue to be more effective and efficient in aiding the people of Vietnam to preserve their freedom" and tied this effort in with the fight against the Vietcong: "We are there to be as effective and efficient as we can in helping the people of South Vietnam resist aggression and preserve their freedom."

In summary, the building of a logological equation which represents the actions in Johnson's speeches attributed to Americans would represent a varied and sometimes conflicting pattern. Based upon the five act groupings discussed above, a primary equation follows: the "United States" equals "stand firm," equals "air action," equals "do everything," equals "do only what is necessary," equals "will not withdraw," equals "toil and suffer and sometimes die," equals "discussion," equals "reflect on these moves," equals "debate," equals "willing to talk and reason," equals "helping," equals "Christian acts," equals "billion dollar American investment," equals "restraint," equals "limited and fitting," equals "peace," equals "freedom," equals "effective and efficient."
Although President Johnson discussed American actions much more frequently than the acts of any other group of agents, those of the South Vietnamese were mentioned as well. Early in 1964, when confidence in General Khanh as a leader of the South Vietnamese people was high in Washington, Johnson cited and praised his acts often. In March, Khanh was said to be "acting vigorously and effectively" on a new program designed "to clear and to hold, step by step and province by province." In May, the President claimed Khanh had "declared his intention to mobilize his nation"—an industrious undertaking which included all the following acts: "Expanding the Vietnamese army...and integrating their operations with political, economic and social measures...Greatly expanding and upgrading the Vietnamese civil administrative corps...and manifold expansion of training programs."

Following such acclamations, Johnson did not mention the acts of Khanh or of any other South Vietnamese agent until, in a telling statement of his Johns Hopkins address of April 7, 1965, said "some of the people of South Vietnam are participating in attack on their own government." Other actions Johnson credited to the South Vietnamese on two more occasions later that summer included "fighting and dying" on the part of their soldiers and that the country, as one of the "non-Communist nations of Asia cannot, by themselves and alone, resist the growing might and grasping ambition of Communist aggression."
An equation, then, for this group of actions, albeit a short one, would include "the South Vietnamese," equals "General Khanh," equals "vigorously and effectively," equals "mobilize," equals "expanding," equals "upgrading," equals "integrating," equals "participating in attack," equals "fighting and dying," equals "unable to resist."

As the United States gradually "Americanized" the war in Vietnam during 1964 and 1965, President Johnson came to pit American actions against North Vietnamese or Vietcong actions in his speeches. As a result, the acts of the opposition appeared much more often than those of agents to the South. From the time of his third month in office when the North Vietnamese were "attempting to envelop South Vietnam," until the final speech of the period on July 28, 1965 when "the leaders of men create division," President Johnson's perception of Vietcong/North Vietnamese actions never wavered from the single guiding theme of "aggression."

Johnson clustered a variety of symbols around the act of "aggression" during the twenty month period. "Aggression," the President told the audience at UCLA's charter day ceremonies, "is a deeply dangerous game." The commander in chief called the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin a "new act of aggression," "open aggression," "deliberate, willful, and systematic aggression," "aggression unchallenged," which became to Johnson, "aggression unleashed," "an act of aggression on the high seas," and "deliberate and unprovoked acts of aggression." At other
times, the President referred to "aggression by Communists," and aggression that "has been rising," or "has increased."

Instead of treating North Vietnamese actions abstractly as he had in describing the agents who committed them, President Johnson elaborated on types of aggression. Such detail, however, did not appear in his speeches until after the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin. Other verbal forms that Johnson used to describe aggression included "intensified terrorist actions," "renewed hostile actions," or "hostile operations," and "repeated acts of violence." The attacks were said to be "deliberate," and "unprovoked." "The North Vietnamese," Johnson said, "has conducted a campaign of subversion" and "carried out combat operations."

As "terrorist actions" intensified during the spring of 1965, the President became more graphic. In the wake of attacks on the U.S. bases at Dong Hoa and Pleiku, Johnson referred to the North Vietnamese "hitting our compounds at 2 o'clock in the morning," to "women and children" who are "strangled in the night," to "helpless villages" that are "ravaged by sneak attacks," and said they "attacked these aircraft." The President continued in the Johns Hopkins speech saying that "raids are conducted on towns, and terror strikes in the heart of cities." There were "those who explode their bombs in cities and villages." Further, there was "no indication" that Hanoi was "prepared or willing to stop doing what it is doing against its neighbors." Johnson
concluded, finally, that such "armed hostility" was "futile."

President Johnson described the North Vietnamese aggressive acts in yet another form by implying what results such actions would lead to. "Urged on by Peking," Johnson claimed Hanoi was following a regime that had "destroyed freedom in Tibet," "attacked India," had supported "aggression in Korea," and were "helping the forces of violence in almost every continent," thus leaving no doubt as to the enemy's intentions. The aggressors, the President said, were "attempting to envelop South Vietnam" and intended "to envelop peaceful, liberty-loving people." Among the other results were that Americans were "struck down in the cruel course of battle," that "men must still die and families still be left homeless." "Men and women and children," the President continued, "are killed and crippled by the Vietcong everyday in South Vietnam." In addition, "soldiers and civilians, men and women, were murdered and crippled." What the aggressors sought, Johnson said, was "conquest by force" and "plunder."

One important act the North Vietnamese were unwilling to do, according to Johnson, was negotiate or recognize negotiated settlements. The President referred to "those who are ignoring the agreements" of 1954 and 1962 and who are in the process of "willfully and systematically violating those agreements." As for present discussions, Johnson said, "They want no talk with us, no talk with a
distinguished Briton, no talk with the UN. They want no talk at all." In the end, however, the President concluded that "those who seek conquest by force will learn to seek settlement by unconditional discussions."

In summary, the logological equation for the actions of the North Vietnamese/Vietcong agents is as follows: "The North Vietnamese" equal "aggression," equals "deeply dangerous game," equals "deliberate, willful, systematic, unprovoked," equals "terrorist actions," equals "combat operations," equals "hitting our compounds at 2 o' clock in the morning," equals "strangled in the night," equals "unwilling to stop," equals "urged on by Peking," equals "violating those agreements," equals "no talk at all," equals "futile."

In many ways, Johnson's descriptions of North Vietnamese actions were less ambiguous than those of American actions. With much greater consistency, the enemy was said to "aggress," "attack," "strangle," and "ignore." U.S. actions, on the other hand, reflected the confusing aspects of limited war. Not only did the Americans waver between "compassionate help" and "determined, firm stands," but while the help came in unlimited quantities, the military stands were constantly restrained by their administrators. Here, again, was another logical incongruity or atonal note in the equation that could initiate change to a more helpful or more militaristic American agent.
Secondly, not only is the act cluster pivotal in the formation of an overall equation, but in light of subsequent historical developments, is the cluster most revealing of Johnson's personality and motives. The acts of the agents involved in Johnson's drama dominate his speeches and for every cluster of actions, like "helping" or "standing firm," corresponding terms can be found in all of the other elements of the pentad except scene. With the centrality of act in the drama, the importance Johnson placed on "action" is clear and the frequency of "standing firm" reveals the President's intentions and motives more accurately than the dominance of "caution" and "concern" in the agent cluster.

The Agency Cluster

The formation of equational clusters continues with a consideration of the "means" by which the agents committed certain acts. Obviously, important cross-overs between clusters, mentioned at the beginning of the act discussion, occur once again when studying the logologic of the agency. For one cannot study "means" without consideration of the act requiring a means or the purpose for which the means is used.

In many ways, the agencies used to perform actions will directly reflect the acts themselves. When considering President Johnson's most frequently stated purpose, that of "resisting aggression and preserving freedom" in South Vietnam, all of the acts which clustered around "standing
firm," "discussion," and "helping," must be taken by the critic as means of achieving that purpose. In addition, however, the actions which contributed toward reaching that goal, also required agencies of their own.

Regarding the agencies needed to perform the United States' basic mission in Vietnam, that of "resisting aggression and preserving freedom," President Johnson identified America's ability or its "power" as a means of achieving the end. "For the first time in our history," the President said in reference to aiding Vietnam, "man has the real power to overcome poverty." When the use of this power came to include military armaments in 1965, Johnson claimed "our resources are equal to any challenge" but said that "we will use our power with restraint and with all the wisdom that we can command." To stop "aggression," the President said, America will "use what power we must, but no more than we need." The United States' basic act or course, "resistance to aggression" according to Johnson, required "moderation in the use of power" which was synonymous, the President said, with "a constant search for peace." Just as Johnson had tempered his comments regarding the act of "standing firm" in Vietnam, the agency of sheer "power" received a similar rhetorical treatment. It was "power alone," however, that "in the final test can stand between expanding communism and independent Asian nations."

President Johnson identified the source of America's power as an agency which pervaded his entire discussion of
acts and means throughout the two year period. Americans have proved, Johnson said, that "real power" is the result of the "wise application of modern technology." The President elaborated on this technological dependence before the United Nations in June of 1965. "The promise of the future," said Johnson, "lies in what science, the ever more productive industrial machine, the ever more productive fertile and usable land, the computer, the miracle drug, and the man in space all spread before us."

As a means of "resisting aggression and preserving freedom," Johnson said the United States would use this technology to "take all necessary action," to do "whatever must be done to insure the safety of South Vietnam from aggression." The United States Government, further, was "united in its determination to take all necessary measures." Even as the President committed the country to a ground war in Vietnam on July 28, 1965, with confidence he said, "Americans will do whatever is necessary."

More important to Johnson than the "anything and everything" manner in which technology was to be used, however, was that American efforts be as "effective and efficient" as possible. All agencies used in achieving the overall goal, proclaimed Johnson, whether they were American "operations" in Vietnam, the "effort" in general, the use of specific pieces of equipment, or agents themselves, were to be as "effective and efficient as possible."
The channels through which the United States used its "effective and efficient technological power," were voiced by President Johnson to a group of editors and broadcasters attending a conference on foreign policy in April of 1964. "We are asking to distribute in the form of help, aid, and military assistance to all the nations who want to have freedom," said Johnson. Quoting President Kennedy upon another occasion, Johnson said the U.S. would give less developed nations "any help, economic as well as military."

Judging from the frequency of comments in Johnson's speeches, however, the flow of the agency cluster reflected that of the act cluster in that America's technological assistance took the form of military agencies more often than either economic assistance or humanitarian help. At first, military assistance took the form of abstract, general necessities. "Limited but significant additional equipment" was needed in March of 1964. By May, "equipment, ammunition, training, and supplies" were agencies needed by South Vietnam in the form of "additional aircraft, pilot training for the Vietnamese and airfield improvements."

When the quality of these technological agencies was questioned a month later, President Johnson said that "in the best of equipment you will find flaws from time to time, in the helicopter, in the plane, that is true in every engagement that any people have ever been faced with." The President went on to voice his faith in American technology,
saying, "we are furnishing good equipment" and "I don't share any concern about the quality of it."

Following the gunboat attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, Johnson relied heavily on technological agencies for an effective reply. "Throughout last night and within the last 12 hours," the President asserted, "air units of the United States Seventh Fleet have sought out the hostile vessels and certain of their supporting facilities." Not only is Johnson's reliance on technology evident, but American agencies were said to be better than the scientific agencies of the North Vietnamese as well. "I had therefore directed air action," said the President, "against gun boats and supporting facilities used in these operations."

Johnson's belief in machinery continued in his State of the Union message in January of 1965. Boasting that "we have built a military power strong enough to meet any threat and destroy any adversary," Johnson said "that superiority will continue to grow so long as this office is mine." In the Johns Hopkins address of April, the President said the "bombs and bullets" of "force must often precede reason, and the waste of war, the works of peace." Further, the air attacks begun in February were termed "a necessary part of the surest road to peace."

The flow of military agencies continued into the summer of that year. In May, Johnson claimed "American boys have not only the best but the most modern supplies and equipment in adequate quantities" including an "abundant inventory of
ammunition and other expendables." Upon signing a resolution authorizing additional funds for the Vietnam effort, the President said the "money will be spent for arms, for weapons of war, for helicopters, for ammunition, for planes." The greatest buildup of military agencies occurred in July of 1965, however, when Johnson sent "the Air Mobile Division" to Vietnam along with an additional 75,000 soldiers and an increase in the draft of 18,000 men per month.

During his election campaign and into the spring of 1965, Johnson gradually softened his commitment to technological, war-making agencies just as he had in discussing those actions which clustered around "standing firm" and the agency of "power." In the same month that "air action" made such a positive reply in the Gulf of Tonkin, Johnson said upon his nomination, "Weapons do not make peace. Men make peace." In March of 1965 as criticism began to mount against operation "Rolling Thunder," an escalating series of bombings against North Vietnam, Johnson said "military actions of the United States will be such, and only such, as serve that purpose--at the lowest possible cost in human life to our allies, to our own men, and to our adversaries, too."

The President lamented in April that he wished it were possible "to convince others with words of what we now find it necessary to say with guns and planes" and that "independence will never be won . . . by arms alone."
Johnson went out of his way on many occasions to stress the fact that the American agency in the form of the B-52 bomber, was only directed at "radar stations, bridges, and ammunition dumps, not at population centers . . . at concrete and steel, and not human life."

In addition to these attempts to soften or justify the use of military force in South Vietnam, President Johnson devoted a good deal of his speeches to the agencies through which the United States provided humanitarian aid to that country. In his first public request for additional funds for Vietnam as president, Johnson said the money would be used for "more fertilizer, medical supplies and services, repair parts and replacements for war-damaged railway rolling stock, school supplies and building materials, well-drilling equipment and teams to bring fresh water to the villages, and enlarged advisory staffs in the provinces."

Indeed, the President said he looked forward to the day when the people of southeast Asia "will need not military support" or agencies, "but only economic and social cooperation for progress in peace."

Late in March of 1965, Johnson predicted that "major programs of development . . . wider and bolder programs can be expected in the future from Asian leaders and Asian councils--and in such programs we would want to help."

Johnson went on to say that "this is the proper business of our future cooperation." It was the United States, however, that proposed massive agencies of "helping" two weeks later.
in the Johns Hopkins address. The President called for "a greatly expanded cooperative effort for development" and listed all the agencies that would be put to use as a part of "a billion dollar American investment": "the wonders of modern medicine can be spread through villages . . . schools can be established to train people . . . a program to make available our farm surpluses to assist in feeding and clothing the needy." Contradicting the trend set by other speeches, President Johnson said that he did not find "power" impressive at all. "Guns and bombs, the rockets and the warships," said the President, "are all symbols of human failure." In this speech, Johnson claimed only humanitarian agencies to be impressive: "A dam build across a great river is impressive." Recalling how electricity was brought into his childhood "along the humming wires of the REA," the President said "electrification of the countryside--yes, that, too, is impressive." Among other humanitarian agencies listed by Johnson were "food," "medicine," and "education": "A rich harvest in a hungry land . . . the sight of healthy children in the classroom is impressive." All of these, "not mighty arms," said Johnson, are the achievements which the American Nation believes to be impressive." If Johnson had viewed both military "power" and humanitarian implements as agencies in the act of "resisting aggression and preserving freedom," however, a common denominator may have been discovered: technology.
One particular agency which was a central means for achieving not only America's primary goal in Vietnam, that of "resisting aggression and preserving freedom," but also a medium by which other agencies discussed above could be used was "money." On May 18, 1964, Johnson made his first monetary request of the Congress for Vietnam funding asking for "$125 million in addition to the $3.4 billion already proposed for foreign assistance." At that time, forty-four percent of the monies would be used for economic assistance and fifty-six percent for military funding. Upon accepting his party's nomination for president, Johnson boasted that "we have spent $30 billion more on preparing this Nation in the 4 years of the Kennedy administration than would have been spent if we had followed the appropriations of the last year of the previous administration." In expressing his disappointment over the rejection of his "billion dollar investment" plan by the North Vietnamese, Johnson was careful to point out that the United States had "spent more than $2 billion for economic progress in the area" while "the necessities of war have compelled us to bomb North Vietnam."

Two weeks later, the President approached Congress once again for an additional 700 million dollars "to meet mounting military requirements in Vietnam." None of this money was intended for economic or humanitarian assistance. On June 1, however, an additional appropriation was requested from the Congress of 89 million dollars "to help
in the peaceful economic and social development of southeast Asia." This amount equaled only thirteen percent of the amount spent on military machinery a month earlier. Of the additional monies called for publicly by the President during the period, humanitarian agencies received sixteen percent while eighty-four percent was spent on military technology.

President Johnson considered one final agency to be of vital importance in fulfilling the end of "preserving freedom" in Vietnam. This agency clustered around the symbol of the "conference table" and corresponded with the act cluster of "discussion." Referring to the Geneva accords of 1954, Johnson said in July of 1964 that "we had already had one conference, and that we would carry out agreements reached at that conference table." Following the Gulf of Tonkin attacks, the President said the carrying out of "existing agreements in the area" was equal to "peace."

In the Johns Hopkins address, Johnson said "discussion or negotiation with the governments involved" as well as "the reaffirmation of old agreements or their strengthening with new ones" were among the many ways to "peace." Lamenting the fact that the North Vietnamese had not been willing to negotiate, the President said he knew "how difficult it is for reason to guide passion, and love to master hate." Reflecting this sentiment two months later, the President said, "I wish it were possible to convince others with words of what we now find it necessary to say
with guns and planes" and that "the only path for reasonable men is the path of peaceful settlement." On other occasions, Johnson said the United States "has been in rather active and continuous consultation" since the Geneva conference of 1962 and in "direct discussions with almost every signatory." Such a "readiness to exchange views," the President said, was a "civilized solution."

In addition to the use of discussion with the North Vietnamese as an agency in "preserving freedom," Johnson said the same medium was used in the act of "standing firm" in Vietnam. "Now we have difficulties from day to day and sometimes they increase with the hours," Johnson noted in February of 1965. "We have Mr. Bundy out in Viet-nam now on a regular exchange of views with our spokesmen and our representatives in that area. Normally," the President continued, "about every 6 weeks or 2 months we ask our Ambassador and our military advisers to bring us a full exchange of views." Discussion, then, was used as both an agency for both peaceful and aggressive actions. In perhaps a revealing statement made during the last speech of the period, President Johnson placed the "conference table" on the same plane with American military action in saying that "we fear the meeting room no more than we fear the battlefield."

A summary at this point calls for an equation of agencies used by Americans to carry out either the overall acts of "resisting aggression and preserving freedom" or the
more specific actions needed to fulfill the basic action. When all of these means are pieced together in a logological equation, an abundance of contrasting connotations occurs unlike any other equation to this point. American agency equals "power," equals "modern technology," equals "restraint and wisdom," equals "all necessary measures," equals "effective and efficient," equals "bombs and bullets," equals "surest road to peace," equals "fighting strength of 125,000," equals "men make peace," equals "wider and bolder programs," equals "billion dollar American investment," equals "power," equals "dam" and "electrification of the countryside," equals "destroying concrete and steel, and not human life," equals "technology," equals "impressive," equals "$914 million in assistance," equals "peace," equals "the conference table," equals "the only path for reasonable men," equals "civilized solution," equals "how difficult it is for reason to guide passion," equals "ask our military advisors to bring us a full exchange of views."

Predictably, President Johnson barely mentioned agencies used to commit South Vietnamese actions. Such a rhetorical strategy was appropriate due to not only the limited number of South Vietnamese actions but also helped justify the need for American economic and military assistance. According to Johnson's speeches, South Vietnam had only those agencies surrounding American hope for the leadership of General Khanh during the first five months of
1964. In this brief period of confidence in Khanh when he was "acting vigorously and effectively," his government was said to have a "National Mobilization Plan" which would better utilize "parliamentary forces" and create a "highly trained guerrilla force that can beat the Vietcong on its own ground." By using agencies sent from the United States, Johnson continued, increased efficiency could be expected from "the air forces, the river navy, and the mobile forces." Two months later, the President announced that this same "National Mobilization Plan" would expand the "Vietnamese Army, Civil Guard, Self-Defense Corps, and police forces," and integrate "their operations with political, economic and social measures in a systematic clear-and-hold campaign."

What few agencies Johnson attributed to South Vietnamese acts create a short, limited equation. South Vietnamese agencies equal "General Khanh," equals "National Mobilization Plan," equals "air, river, mobile, and guerrilla forces," equals Vietnamese Army," equals Civil Guard," equals "Self Defense Corps," equals "systematic clear-and-hold campaign." What is perhaps most important about this equation was not mentioned by President Johnson. As George Ball points out, every South Vietnamese leader understood how much American leaders wanted to "save face" in Vietnam and could therefore write his own prescription for what that goal required. Any of the American agencies could have easily been considered a part of the South
Vietnamese arsenal. Finally, one could even consider the "United States" itself as an agency in the hip pocket of South Vietnam.

In the attempts of North Vietnam to "envelope South Vietnam," Johnson labelled "aggressive means" as the primary agency. This took the form of "aggression by Communists" or "aggression from the North." The various acts of aggression discussed in the above section such as "terror and violence" or "hitting our compounds at 2 o'clock in the morning," qualify as means toward the end of "envelopment of South Vietnam." In addition, the more specific acts of aggression must also be considered agencies used to attain the overall goal.

Agencies which frequented Johnson's discussion of the North Vietnamese assault were those of a military nature. Early in 1964, the President noted that "the supply of arms and cadres from the north has continued." Statements following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin were full of references to agencies used by the North. The entire incident was labelled "aggression by means of armed attack." "A number of hostile vessels" attacked two U.S. destroyers with "torpedoes." The American reply was made against "gunboats and certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam." At issue, however, was a much larger problem according to Johnson. For some time, the North Vietnamese had "systematically conducted a campaign of subversion, which includes the direction, training, and supply of
personnel and arms for the conduct of guerrilla warfare in South Vietnamese territory."

By April of 1965, the North Vietnamese had intensified their assault on the South and at Johns Hopkins University, Johnson specified more clearly the type of agencies used by the "aggressors." As before, "trained men and supplies, orders and arms, flow in a constant stream from north to south." In addition, however, "assassination and kidnapping," "sneak attacks," "large-scale raids" and "terror" were used to show "the new face of an old enemy."

After the North Vietnamese rejected Johnson's "billion dollar investment" plan and related peace offerings, his descriptions of the enemy's ruthless tactics continued. They utilized "the most outrageous and brutal provocation against Vietnamese and against Americans alike." "Constant attacks of terror" took place including "bombs exploded in helpless villages, in downtown movie theaters, even at sports fields where the children played." The reply to Johnson's call for negotiation was "attack, and explosions, and indiscriminate murder."

In his appeal to the Congress for additional aid to Vietnam, the President reminded representatives of the unusual nature of the war. "Instead of the sweep of invading armies," he said, "there is the steady and the deadly attack in the night by guerrilla bands that come without warning, that kill people while they sleep." Saying that America's "patience had been transformed from a virtue
into a blunder," the President enumerated several agencies of aggression.

"There was, last November, an attack on the Dong Hoi airfield. There was the Christmas Eve bombing of the Brinks Hotel in Saigon. There was the February attack at 2 o'clock in the morning, while our American soldiers slept, at Pleiku, where 14 Americans were killed and 269 seriously wounded."

Claiming that the enemy passed this militaristic attitude on to their children, finally, the President said "we must stop preaching hatred, we must stop bringing up entire new generations to preserve and to carry out the lethal fantasies of the old generation, stop believing that the gun or the bomb can solve all problems."

Just as important to Johnson as the agencies the North Vietnamese utilized to achieve their ends, were the means the enemy did not use to further the American cause. These grouped once again around the agency of "discussion," or in the case of the North Vietnamese, "a refusal to talk." In April of 1965, the President said there was "no indication and no evidence that they are ready and willing to negotiate." Further, he knew of "no information we have received that would indicate that any conference at this time would be productive or would hold out hopes of achieving what we all desire so much--peace in the world."

When the North Vietnamese did talk in their reply to
Johnson's peace offer of April 1965, the President said he was met "with tired names and slogans--and a refusal to talk." The President went on to say that "peace is too important, the stakes are far too high, to permit anyone to indulge in slander and invective."

The addition to the logologic of Johnson's speeches by these agencies is, as expected, reflective of North Vietnamese actions. North Vietnamese agencies equal "aggressive means," equals "campaign of subversion," equals "supply of arms and cadres," equals "armed attack," equals "hostile vessels," equals "guerrilla warfare," equals "outrageous and brutal provocations," equals "assassination and kidnapping," equals "Christmas Eve bombing," equals "a refusal to talk," equals "preaching hatred," equals "slander and invective," equals "lethal fantasies," equals "the gun or the bomb."

The most interesting aspect of the agency cluster is the pervasiveness of modern technology throughout the cluster. The reliance of all the agents on machinery causes several inconsistencies to appear. Both the Americans and the North Vietnamese, opponents in every other cluster, use the same agencies due to their technological nature. Technology also caused Johnson to associate "peace" with several contrasting agencies. While the President said "power" in the form of aggressive "bombing" was "the surest road to peace," he also claimed that "restraint" or "moderation in the use of power" was synonymous with a
"constant search for peace." Further, technology played a role in the agency of "discussion" or the "full exchange of views" due to the need for instantaneous communication with Southeast Asia.

The agency of "discussion" also added to the ironic or confused nature of limited war. Even though Johnson constantly pleaded for negotiations as a means of achieving peace, a "full exchange of views" helped the U.S. to "stand firm" in South Vietnam thus intermingling the two scenes of the "conference room" and the "battlefield." Further, Johnson many times used the agency of "armed attack" as a means of forcing the North Vietnamese to negotiate.

The Purpose Cluster

While this discussion of purposes in Johnson's speeches lies at the end of the pentadic clusters, it must be considered a starting point in the recursive nature of the pentad. Just as the nature of certain agents influence the type of actions they commit or as specific actions call for particular agencies to be used, one's purposes many times identify the actions and agencies utilized to attain the stated end. As President Johnson himself said in reference to the 1954 agreements: "Its purposes still guide our actions."

Regarding the United States' purposes in Vietnam, Johnson stressed the importance of ends as they influenced American actions. "There can be," the President said,
"there must be no doubt about the policy and no doubt about the purpose." If there was any doubt during 1964, Johnson attempted to lay to rest the uncertainty in his State of the Union speech in January 1965. Johnson said "the United States has reemerged into the fullness of its self-confidence and purpose."

As 1965 progressed, American purposes in Vietnam took on a two-fold mission. One, according to Johnson, was to "prevail over the enemies within man," and the other was to prevail "over the natural enemies of all mankind." Such ends, said the President, required the United States to "fight for values and . . . for principles, rather than territory and colonies."

In attempting to achieve the general purpose of prevailing "over the enemies within man," President Johnson focused on several more specific purposes that aided the overall end. Among these, the most frequently stated clustered around the terms of "peace" and "freedom." At U.C.L.A. in February 1964, Johnson said, "Our constant aim, our steadfast purpose, our undeviating policy, is to do all that strengthens the hope of peace." One month later, the President said "the crucial role of economic and social, as well as military action [is] to ensure that areas cleared of the Vietcong survive and prosper in freedom." Following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, Johnson told the American people that he intended "to take all necessary measures in support of freedom and in defense of peace in southeast
Asia." Leaving no doubt as to America's purpose in Vietnam, Johnson emphatically told the Congress the next day that "Our purpose is peace."

Lyndon Johnson stated the United States purpose of "peace" in southeast Asia in various ways. As an end, Johnson associated "peace" with other advantages. America fought in South Vietnam so that "peace and security of the area will be preserved." Peace was also linked with American security in that "to reach our goals in our own land," said Johnson, "we must work for peace among all lands." As the President's "billion dollar investment" proposal gained popularity in the spring of 1965, Johnson associated peace with progress in Vietnam. "Peace must not simply be an end to conflict," the President said. "It must be the beginning of progress and hope of the elimination of material misery." Reiterating this theme in a news conference, Johnson said the "conditions of hope and progress" were "really the only lasting guarantees of peace and stability."

One asset the President tied to peace most frequently was self-determination. "Our one desire," announced Johnson, "is that the people of southeast Asia be left in peace to work out their own destinies in their own way." The President also associated the freedom cluster with the South Vietnamese ability to govern themselves. Not only did Johnson frequently announce that the purpose of U.S. involvement was "to help the people of Vietnam preserve
their freedom," but that America "must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny," "free to shape its relations and associations with all other nations," or simply, "the right to choose their own way of life." The President elaborated on this purpose when requesting additional appropriations for Vietnam in May of 1965. "We believe that Asia should be directed by Asians," said Johnson, "but that means that each Asian people must have the right to find its own way, not that one group or one nation should overrun all the others." The President tied this principle to the initiating of democratic rule in saying on another occasion that America's purpose was "to have the people of South Vietnam exercise their choice and establish a government of their choosing."

The cluster of purposes around "peace" and "freedom" also included references to acts of "discussion" or enforcement of past negotiations. Following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, Johnson said one purpose was to "seek the full and effective restoration of the international agreements signed in Geneva in 1954, with respect to South Vietnam, and again in Geneva in 1962, with respect to Laos." The President varied this theme one day later saying the purpose was to "defend freedom and preserve peace in southeast Asia in accordance with obligations of the United States under the southeast Asia Treaty." Johnson reiterated this same purpose throughout the spring of 1965 and upon sending troops into a ground war on July 28, announced that
the purposes of the 1954 agreements "still guide our actions."

A related American purpose to both the preservation of peace and freedom and to the upholding of negotiated agreements, was that of saving face in Vietnam. All Americans, according to Johnson, were determined "to carry out our full commitment to the people and the government of South Vietnam" in order to " preserve our image in the world and our leadership in the world." In the Johns Hopkins address, Johnson said American forces were in Vietnam because "we have a promise to keep," and "we have made a national pledge to help South Vietnam defend its independence." On another occasion, the President said we were in Vietnam "because of our commitments, because of our principles."

Interestingly, President Johnson used the face saving purpose more than any other during the tense months of the summer of 1965 and upon announcing the country's commitment to a ground war on July 28. "Our national honor is at stake," Johnson said on July 13. "Our word is at stake." Acknowledging the probable response of both the enemy and the allies, Johnson claimed "our goals in that war-strained land" were "to convince the Communist that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power... If we are driven from the field in Vietnam," continued Johnson, "then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise, or in American protection." Elaborating,
the President said "we just cannot now dishonor our word, or abandon our commitments, or leave those who believed us and who trusted our word."

Another purpose justifying American presence in Vietnam clustered around "resisting aggression." Second only to the peace/freedom theme, Johnson uttered this goal more frequently than any other. In 1964, the U.S. was said to be in southeast Asia in order to "bring Communist aggression and terrorism under control" or "to bring about the end of Communist subversion and aggression in the area."

Most of the time, President Johnson coupled "resisting aggression" with another purpose. In the wake of the Gulf of Tonkin incidents, Johnson said America fought for the "purpose of helping these countries to repel aggression and [to] strengthen their independence." Associating "resistance" to "support," the President said "we should be resolute in our reply to aggression and steadfast in support of our friends." More often, though, the President related "resistance" to "peace." "America has not changed her essential position, and that purpose is peaceful settlement," Johnson said. "That purpose is to resist aggression. That purpose is to avoid wider war." Further, Johnson said upon sending 75,000 additional troops to Vietnam that America's purpose was "to bring an end to aggression and a peaceful settlement."

Elaborating on the American goal of "resisting aggression," Johnson many times visualized a future Vietnam.
The President said America would continue its efforts until "the people and governments of all southeast Asia may be free from terror, subversion, and assassination--when they will need not military support and assistance against aggression, but only economic and social cooperation for progress in peace." In short, Johnson said at Johns Hopkins University, "We dream of an end to war."

Johnson addressed a third group of purposes dealing more with the "natural enemies of all mankind" and clustered them around a correlative from the equation of American actions: "helping." In the State of the Union address on January 4, 1965, Johnson said America's purpose was "to help strike away the chains of ignorance and misery and tyranny wherever they keep man less than God means him to be."

Narrowing this end specifically to Vietnamese, the President said on February 4 that the U.S. goal was "in helping the people of South Vietnam help themselves," and in the Johns Hopkins speech on April 7, "to replace despair with hope, and terror with progress," "to enrich the hopes and the existence of more than a hundred million people," and to "manage the process of development." On a different occasion, Johnson personally enlisted the North Vietnamese in the purpose of helping the people of South Vietnam. President Johnson said, in the wake of the Tonkin Gulf incident, he personally still sought a goal by which the North Vietnamese would "devote their talents to bettering
the lives of their peoples by working against poverty and
disease and ignorance."

In another vision of the Vietnam yet to come, the
President restated this purpose, saying, "We dream of a
world where all are fed and charged with hope." In his July
28 announcement, finally, the President claimed this end
could be in jeopardy if America did not act. "I do not want
to see all those hopes and all those dreams of so many
people for so many years," Johnson said, "now drowned in the
wasteful ravages of cruel wars."

There were times that President Johnson used the United
States itself as a purpose for fighting in Vietnam. The
safety of our country represented the final domino in
Johnson's speeches but was not used as a justification until
the winter of 1965. Speaking before Congress, the President
claimed that "our first aim remains the safety and the well­
being of our own country" and that "our own security is tied
to peace in southeast Asia." At Johns Hopkins, Johnson
reiterated this idea saying that "we must fight if we are to
live in a world where every country can shape its own
destiny. And only in such a world will our own freedom be
finally secure." This reasoning continued throughout 1965
including statements like, "Our own welfare, our own freedom
would be in great danger" and "our national interests demand
it." In the July 28 commitment, finally, the President
identified "communism" as the greatest danger saying that
"communist domination would certainly imperil the security of the United States itself."

In addition to discussing the purposes America sought in Vietnam, President Johnson utilized the negative repeatedly in revealing what the country's purposes were not. The President told Congress that "we have no military, political, or territorial ambitions in the area" and that "the United States intends no rashness, and seeks no wider war" following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964. No less than seven more times during the period did Johnson deny seeking an expanded conflict and America's covetous nature. "We threaten no regime and covet no territory."

To sum up, Johnson stated a variety of purposes for American presence in Vietnam. These goals clustered around the familiar terms of "peace" and "freedom," "resisting aggression," and "helping," as well as purposes new to the logologic file like "our own welfare, our own freedom" and "we seek no wider war." The equation for American purposes thus would include such terms and phrases as "all that strengthens the hope of peace," equals "beginning of progress," equals "right to choose their own way of life," equals "full and effective restoration of the international agreements," equals "we have a promise to keep," equals "preserve our image in the world," equals "do all we can to resist aggression," equals "seeks no wider war," equals "no military, political, or territorial ambitions," equals "the
safety and well-being of our own country," equals "peaceful settlement," equals "help strike away the chains of ignorance and misery and tyranny," equals "we dream of an end to war."

While President Johnson never ascribed purposes to the South Vietnamese or their government, the goals of the enemy or North Vietnamese were not explained to the American people until April of 1965. The object of that country, said Johnson at Johns Hopkins, was "total conquest."
Stating that "independent South Vietnam has been attacked by North Vietnam" twenty days later, Johnson claimed "the object of that attack is total conquest."

A week later on May 4, however, the President began to elaborate. "The aim in Vietnam is not simply the conquest of the south," Johnson said, "It is to show that American commitment is worthless and they would like very much to do that, and once they succeed in doing that, the gates are down and the road is open to expansion and to endless conquest." In other words, the enemy was out to make the Americans look weak thus necessitating the U.S. purpose of saving face. Without such a goal, the dominoes would begin to fall and "our own freedom would be in great danger."
Reemphasizing the North Vietnamese objective in the July 28 commitment speech, the President said, "Its goal is to conquer the South, to defeat American power, and to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism."
What few purposes Johnson discussed in his speeches add only limited information to the building of logologic equations. A short summary of terms for North Vietnamese purposes includes "the conquest of the South," equals "to show that American commitment is worthless," equals "to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism," equals "total conquest."

The inconsistencies prevalent in other clusters appear again in the purpose equations. The overall American purpose of "preserving freedom and resisting aggression" is contradictory especially considering that in the defense of freedom and peace, Johnson used forms of aggression. In addition, whereas aggressive actions and agencies dominated those respective clusters, the President mentioned "peace" and "freedom" more frequently as purposes for American presence in Vietnam than goals having a militaristic association.

Perhaps the most unusual additions to the logologic of the speeches was the purpose of "saving face." If the U.S. had been in Vietnam "to preserve our image in the world," the inconsistencies between the use of aggressive and peaceful agencies for seemingly conflicting purposes would have been eliminated. In other words, negotiation and B-52 bombers could be considered equally effective in the preservation of America's image of trustworthy protector.

With the completion of the purpose cluster analysis, clear patterns in Johnson's rhetoric have become apparent in
not only his verbal associations but also in the logical incongruities. To merely list the President's clusters, though, is not enough. In the next step of this logological analysis, a closer look will reveal more important aspects of the clusters: progressive and agonistic form.
NOTES


PROGRESSIVE AND AGONISTIC FORM WITHIN THE CLUSTERS

Kenneth Burke calls his study of literature "logology." Rueckert describes this approach as "the science of unpacking words and symbol systems."\(^1\) Part I of this study has compiled inductively the "equations" inherent in Johnson's rhetoric during the escalation period. Part II will view representative speeches from the period as symbolic acts within a larger perspective. With the speeches thus "unpacked," at this point though, this study will take a further step in the logological method by uncovering the progressive movements within the clusters and how Johnson set certain images and clusters against one another in opposing forms.

Progressive Form in the Clusters

"Since literature is in a progressive form," writes Burke, "the matter of equations always verges on the matter of the arrow."\(^2\) By "literature," the author means all language, written or spoken.\(^3\) "The matter of the arrow" implies movement within the clusters and the speeches themselves from one point to another. In studies such as this where structural relationships are charted, the main symbols, according to Burke, "would be the sign for 'equals' and some such sign as the arrow ('from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_')."\(^4\) In this section, therefore, the progressive movement within
the clusters will be examined for increases and decreases in intensity as they occurred chronologically. In addition, progressions will also be monitored for persuasive tendencies in the wake of logical incongruities found in the above clusters.

All of the movement in Johnson's speeches depicts a subtle type of progressive form or what Burke calls "qualitative progression." By "form," Burke means a writer or speaker placing a desire before an audience and then satisfying that desire. "If, in a work of art," he writes, "the poet says something, let us say, about a meeting, writes in such a way that we desire to observe that meeting, and then, if he places that meeting before us--that is form." In instances of qualitative progression, however, the presence of a certain quality rather than an incident prepares the audience for the introduction of another quality. "We are prepared less to demand a certain qualitative progression than to recognize its rightness after the event," claims Burke. "We are put into a state of mind which another state of mind can appropriately follow." The progressive movement within the clusters, therefore, can be seen as the rhetorical equivalent of Halberstam's quagmire theory in which the United States took very small steps toward becoming involved in the Vietnamese conflict rather than moving in with ground troops all at once.

Scenic progressions took place in Johnson's speeches but only to a slight degree. The situation in southeast
Asia, the President said, increased in quality from "an already serious situation" to "a very serious matter." On other occasions, Johnson described the scene as worsening from "dirty and brutal and difficult" to one of "unparalleled brutality" and "very difficult." Also, the President's reference to the world as "shrinking" defines a progression from big to small, leading the audience toward the conclusion that Vietnam was closer than they thought.

In his discussions of American agents, President Johnson saw those around him and the general populace as increasingly united, determined, and compassionate and the country as progressively powerful. Johnson spoke of the "determination of all Americans" moving to America "united in its determination" to a country "united and determined to stand as one." From "united in its determination," America also progressed to "unending patience and determination."

As for the country's sympathy, Johnson said his administration's "close concern" advanced to "actively concerned" to "concern and sympathy" to, finally, "concern and interest, compassion and vigilance." Not surprisingly, whenever the President spoke of American power, he balanced the discussion with mention of United States compassion. From "rich and powerful," the country became "the most powerful of all nations," but then was tempered by its quality of concern as "strong and compassionate." Just as "compassion" and "powerful" appeared as unequal terms in the equations, the progressions involving each were just as
confusing. If anything, Johnson pictured American agents as increasingly determined, whether they were determined to be compassionate or powerful.

Qualitative progression can also be found in Johnson's discussion of South Vietnamese agents. Over time, the President described the people of that nation in greater detail and with more intensity. "Peaceful, liberty-loving, people" became "peaceful villagers." Clustering most of his comments around "bravery," Johnson changed the South Vietnamese from "brave and independent people" to "small and brave" to having "patience as well as bravery" to "brave and enduring people" and from "small and brave" to "small and valiant."

The progressiveness of North Vietnamese agents is evident in Johnson's images of "growing might." From merely "threatening," the President increased their quality to "aggressive Communists" to wearing "a more aggressive face" to "violent and ruthless" to "domination and empire, conquest and aggression" to "growing might and grasping ambition." Significantly, Johnson's last reference to the North Vietnamese during the period left the impression of growth, grasping, and ambitiousness. Whatever doubt his references of "love and hope" at Johns Hopkins left in the minds of his audience, the North Vietnamese progression toward "aggressiveness" and "brutality" extinguished.

Since Lyndon Johnson made more comments regarding American actions than any other cluster, it is not
surprising that more progressive movement can be found among these acts. Forming around familiar terms like "peace," "discussion," "stand firm," etc., changes within the clusters are of a variety of types. Acts toward peace reflect geographical movement within the chronology of the period. The imagery pictures Americans walking toward peace from doing all that "strengthens the hope of peace" to "building the citadels of peace" to having "taken more steps toward peace" to actions having "brought us much closer to peace."

A numerical progression characterizes the American act of discussion. The quality of discussion is intense and becomes more intense. The agents of the United States move from "constantly examining" to "free and serious debate" to "rather active and continuous consultation." When mentioning a more specific type of discussion, "negotiation," Johnson went from general "discussion and consultation" to "I will talk to any government, anywhere, anytime, without conditions" to "I have searched high and wide . . . I can't even rope anybody and bring him in that is willing to talk and reason and settle this thing by negotiation" to "I have listened to every voice." These statements leave the impression that the avenue of negotiation had been exhausted.

American actions clustering around the act of "helping" reflect a tonal progression or one of intensity. In Johnson's words, the United States went from committing "an
act of necessity" to "a Christian act" to "working against poverty and disease and ignorance" to extending "the hand of compassion and the hand of affection and love to the old and the sick and the hungry" to, finally, enriching "the condition of their life, to feed the hungry and to tend the sick, and teach the young, and shelter the homeless, and to help the farmer to increase his crops, and the worker to find a job." In other words, the help America could provide for South Vietnam was limitless.

Regarding the acts of "standing firm" and actions of "restraint," very little movement takes place within the clusters. Here, the President diverged from the progressive form typical of many other clusters and utilized repetitive form or, in Burke's words, "the consistent maintaining of a principle under new guises."9 "We are pledged before all the world to stand," Johnson said just prior to the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin. Without contrast, his last public statement of the period reiterated the same attitude in tone and quality: "We will stand in Vietnam."

Actions of "restraint" following the Tonkin Gulf incidents were said to be "limited and fitting" whereas, months later, while the same acts had become part of official policy, Johnson said they were made "appropriately, fittingly, and measured." The acts of limited war, thus, were limited actions from the beginning of the period to the end. The inequality of "standing firm" and "restraint" remained constant but Johnson led his audience to expect
more and more humanitarian aid and efforts to negotiate instead of military arms in light of the movement from "an act of necessity" to the promises of the Johns Hopkins speech.

Due to President Johnson's infrequent comments regarding South Vietnamese actions, a sense of progressive movement never pans out in arpeggio. However, two brief statements bear mentioning in that the acts of South Vietnamese move from "vigorously and effectively" to "clear and hold, step by step and province by province" suddenly to "participating in attack on their own government." Such a catastrophic shift not only points out a change in South Vietnamese behavior and Johnson's corresponding willingness to acknowledge such action but also leads the critic to question why the President remained silent on the issue of South Vietnamese actions for many months.

Progressions within the cluster of North Vietnamese actions are, for the most part, tonal and increase in intensity while surrounding the act of "aggression." From "attempting to envelop South Vietnam," President Johnson said the North Vietnamese moved on to "intensified terrorist actions" to "repeated acts of violence" to "a campaign of subversion" to "deliberate and unprovoked acts of aggression" to "hitting our compounds at 2 o'clock in the morning" to "women and children are strangled in the night." Johnson depicted the aggressive acts of the North Vietnamese, therefore, as more personal and individualistic
as time progressed and the Vietcong attacks became more frequent.

A chart of progressions in clusters of U.S. agencies provide a most interesting view of Johnson's and America's thought processes. Such movements are not only tonal progressions but can also be considered ideological progressions as well. In reference to general means, Johnson promised Vietnam "real power" to the "application of modern technology" to "help, aid, and military assistance" to taking "all necessary measures" to "firmness in the right." With such a progression of ideas present in the President's public statements over a period of eighteen months, a military conflict seems now to have been inevitable.

As for President Johnson's willingness to provide the American forces in Vietnam what equipment they needed to "resist aggression," the progression of terms indicates an eagerness to use the U.S.'s abundant technology. From "limited but significant additional equipment," the President promised "equipment, ammunition, training and supplies" to "additional aircraft, pilot training for the Vietnamese and airfield improvements" to "air units of the United States Seventh Fleet" to "the best but the most modern supplies and equipment in adequate quantities." With time, thus, Johnson called for more and more and better and better military instruments.
In much the same fashion, humanitarian forms of "helping" grew in intensity and size during the spring and summer of 1965. From "more fertilizer, medical supplies and services, repair parts and replacements for war-damaged railway tolling stock, school supplies and building materials" in 1964 to "wider and bolder programs" to "a greatly expanded cooperative effort for development" to "a massive new effort to improve the lives of the people," the President extended the theme of more massive and expansive help.

In many ways, the progression of U.S. agencies represents the overall movement of Johnson's speeches from February 1964 to July 1965. The incongruities caused by the use of technology for both hostile and humanitarian agencies continues throughout their respective progressions. As more and more technological machines became available, more bombs and bullets as well as humanitarian supplies were sent to Vietnam thus reflecting the increasing compassion and firm stands made by American agents.

Very much like its action cluster counterpart, the progressiveness of Johnson's comments regarding North Vietnamese agencies increased with detail and intensity as the decision to commit the United States to a ground war neared. From the "aggressive means" used by the enemy in February of 1964, the President advanced its definition to "terror and violence" to "supply of arms and cadres from the north" to "gunboats and certain facilities of North Vietnam"
to "assassination and kidnapping" to "blood and men" and finally to "bombs exploded in helpless villages, in downtown movie theaters, even at sports fields where children played." With time, then, the Vietcong/North Vietnamese used increasingly brutal tactics in their attempt to "envelop" the South.

Very little progression exists in Johnson's stated purposes for fighting in Vietnam. From beginning to end, goals clustering around "peace" remained very much the same representing "repetitive form" rather than "qualitative progression." Early in 1964, the President declared that the U.S. would "do all that strengthens the hope of peace." By 1965, America's purpose was "peace in Southeast Asia" or "to bring an end to aggression and a peaceful settlement."

While repetitive form also characterizes purposes clustering around "freedom," subtle differences are found in Johnson's statements pertaining to the goal of "standing firm" in Vietnam. From "to bring Communist aggression and terrorism under control," the President modified this purpose to "repel aggression" to "slow down aggression" and finally to "bring an end to aggression."

In summary, the charting of progressive movement in the clusters offers some predictable conclusions. Within a scene that became increasingly serious and brutal, several concurrent changes took place among the agents, their actions, and the manner in which they acted. As the situation became more serious in Vietnam, American agents
were increasingly united, determined, powerful, and compassionate, discussed the matter until "every voice" had been listened to, took steps that led the world closer to peace by using all the military equipment, American dollars, and humanitarian help that the U.S. industrial machine could crank out in order to "end aggression" once and for all in Southeast Asia. In addition, the "small and valiant" South Vietnamese became more courageous and, as time passed, more enduring even though they never took any action to support these claims. If anything, they "attacked their own government."

On the other side of the coin, agents from the North appeared to have been the cause of the increasingly serious and brutal scene. They became more and more aggressive and ambitious and enhanced the violence of their actions by using increasingly brutal agencies like bombs and strangulation.

**Agonistic Form in the Clusters**

Before building the final equational clusters inherent in Johnson's rhetoric, one more aspect of form must be taken into account. Throughout the clustering process, certain qualities, actions, agencies, and purposes tended to cluster around specific terms and agents. This clustering was due to the persuasive nature of the speeches which, according to Burke, implied "the presence or threat of an adversary," thereby creating an "agonistic" or competitive stress.\(^\text{11}\)
When compared side by side, conflicting or "agonistic" terms appear and, "can be said to 'cooperate' in the building of over-all form." While the dramatic elements of the agon will be discussed in chapters five, six, and seven, this section will recognize the basic conflicting terms in the clusters or "what vs. what."

Even though President Johnson made few remarks regarding the domestic scene prior to July of 1965, several comments bear mentioning in relation to his perception of the over-all situation. In a November 1964 news conference from the LBJ Ranch in Texas, Johnson related his "sitting here in this serene atmosphere of the Pedernales" and a year later spoke of young Americans who were "born into a land exultant with hope and with golden promise." In opposition to this, the President revealed Vietnam as a country which was "not a serene or peaceful place" whose villages were "wracked by disease" and "plagued with hunger." Agonistic equations within the scenic cluster, thus, include "serene atmosphere" vs. "not a serene or peaceful place" and "exultant hope with golden promise" vs. "wracked by disease" and "plagued with hunger."

Surrounded by such contrasting scenery, an agonistic chord played out in arpeggio throughout the clusters. Regarding the agents involved, Johnson created typical protagonistic and antagonistic characters. Most of the time, the protagonists were American and the antagonists were either Vietcong or North Vietnamese. The President
referred to America as being a "sentinel on the frontiers of freedom" and "in supporting freedom and in protecting peace" and the North Vietnamese as "foes of freedom" and the "enemies of freedom."

On the central issues of "peace" and "freedom," these two characters could not have been farther apart. Johnson said the United States had "the firmness to defend freedom" and that there was "no place in today's world for weakness." The North Vietnamese, on the other hand, represented "the violence and weakness of man at his worst." Further, the U.S. had the patience to "move the world toward peace instead of war" while the enemy represented those who placed "their ambitions or their dogmas or their prestige above the peace of all the world."

Behavior displayed by the characters concerning "peace" and "freedom" also revealed agonistic qualities. According to Johnson, the Americans set out to "do all that strengthens the hope of peace" while the North Vietnamese pressed "against the lives and the liberties of a people who seek only to be left in peace." Paradoxically, each utilized the same type of instruments in these seemingly different acts. The President said the Vietcong used such tactics as "assassination and kidnapping," "sneak attacks," "large scale raids," and "terror" while the American used "air attacks," an implement, he said, that was "a necessary part of the surest road to peace."
The most frequently mentioned and perhaps the most polarized issue splitting the United States and North Vietnam, according to Johnson, concerned the act of "discussion" or negotiation. In reference to previous agreements, the President declared, "America keeps her word" and "shall honor our commitments." The Communist regime, however, had "violated the Geneva accords for Vietnam" and were still "willfully and systematically violating those agreements."

Regarding future negotiations, Johnson stated many times America's willingness to talk. "We are ready to talk anytime, anywhere, with any government without conditions," he said. "We will go anywhere. We will discuss any subject. We will listen courteously and patiently." In strict opposition to this, the President said there was "no indication and no evidence that [Hanoi was] ready and willing to negotiate under conditions that would be productive." Reiterating this unwillingness in the Summer of 1965, Johnson claimed, "They want no talk with us, no talk with a distinguished Briton, no talk with the UN. They want no talk at all." The President even went as far as to embellish the split with a personal metaphor: "I have searched high and wide" and "I can't even rope anybody and bring him in that is willing to talk and reason and settle this thing by negotiation."

In response to American pleas for "a civilized solution and a readiness to exchange views across the conference
table," Johnson concluded the North Vietnamese answer to be "attack, and explosions, and indiscriminate murder." The response to the President's proposed "regular exchange of views" and the "billion dollar investment" program at Johns Hopkins, was, according to Johnson, "tired names and slogans" and "slander and invective."

Among a host of other opposing attributes ascribed to the characters by Johnson were "caution" vs. "recklessness." Of Dean Rusk, the President stated that he was "most cautious" and "extremely careful." In much the same manner, the U.S. reply to the Gulf of Tonkin attacks was "limited and fitting" or "carefully measured." Likewise, the peacemakers of the world, according to the President, were men of "wisdom and patience and restraint." On the other hand, when commenting on the guerrilla warfare of the Vietcong, Johnson said there was "no place in today's world for recklessness."

On the issue of "unity," the President pointed out that America was "one nation united and indivisible" while "the unity of the Communist empire has begun to crumble." The United States, furthermore, was "prepared to live as good neighbors with all" and even "small" South Vietnam was "a friendly nation." Communism, on the other hand, "wears a more aggressive face." Finally, Johnson's rhetoric made a clear demarcation between the young men actually fighting the battles." America's troops were "the flower of our youth, our finest young men . . . working and laughing and
building, and filled with hope and life." Their North Vietnamese counterparts, however, were young men who "hate and destroy."

The actions taken by these distinctly different groups of agents also diverged from one another markedly. The most prominent action taken by the North Vietnamese, of course, was "aggression--deliberate, willful, and systematic aggression." The Americans, on the other hand, were in Vietnam to "stand firm against the present aggressions" or to "resist aggression and preserve [South Vietnamese] freedom." In related acts, the enemy was composed of men who have "hated and killed," "strangled in the night," and "ravaged by sneak attacks" while the Americans continued to "extend the hand of compassion and the hand of affection."

In no other cluster are terms less agonistic but still used by Johnson in a conflicting context than in discussion of agencies. For example, following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, the President contrasted the "hostile vessels of the Government of North Vietnam" with the "air units of the United States Seventh Fleet" and the "renewed hostile actions" of the enemy with the "air action" committed by Americans.

By the spring of 1965, President Johnson decided to lend more contradistinction to the agencies by focusing on the targets of "hostile actions" and "air action." "Soldiers and civilians, men and women, were murdered and crippled" by the North Vietnamese, according to Johnson.
"Bombs exploded in helpless villages, in downtown movie theaters, even at sports fields where the children played." Opposing these acts of "brutality," the President said, "We have no desire to destroy human life." Instead, the Americans destroyed "concrete and steel." The U.S. bombs were "aimed at radar stations, bridges, and ammunition dumps, not at population centers."

The agonistic chord also affected the goals each of the opposing agents aspired to. "The aggressors," according to the President, displayed "arrogance and adventure" and sought "conquest and plunder" or "conquest by force" or, in his final speech of the period, "total conquest." On the other hand, the President said the U.S. did not "seek the destruction of any government, nor do we covet a foot of any territory."

Another goal separating the characters of Johnson's drama dealt with the American act of "saving face." "Our national honor is at stake . . . our word is as stake," said the President time and time again. "If we are driven from the field in Vietnam, then no nation can ever again have the same confidence in American promise, or in American protection." In opposition to this, Johnson said the aim of the North Vietnamese was "to show that American commitment is worthless and they would like very much to do that."

Aside from the obvious conflict between the Americans and the North Vietnamese, stress is apparent in other relationships as well. When comparing the United States--
South Vietnamese affiliation with the North Vietnamese—Vietcong alliance, Johnson used similar terms again with different intentions. The President referred to the enemy as "the aggressors and their dupes," to the Vietcong as being "under orders from their communist masters in the north" or their "cadres from the north." Further, the North Vietnamese supervised the "careful and sophisticated control of Vietcong operations." In contrast, though, America was "providing leadership and judgment, and making decisions" for the South Vietnamese or helping to "provide advice, assistance and counsel." The point being, the United States surely maintained "careful and sophisticated control" of military operations in South Vietnam and the North Vietnamese provided "leadership and judgment," and made "decisions" for the Vietcong.

When President Johnson specifically mentioned the kinds of help each patron provided for the "dupes" and "helpless villagers," identical terms appeared. The "cadres from the north" provided the "direction, training, and supply of personnel and arms for the conduct of guerrilla training in South Vietnamese territory." To the South, the United States sent "equipment, ammunition, training, and supplies." In addition, the U.S. provided "additional aircraft, pilot training for the Vietnamese and airfield improvements." Once again, these acts of patronage are nearly identical.

On many occasions, Johnson pitted the South Vietnamese against the North Vietnamese. The President painted South
Vietnam in the image of a "small and valiant nation" while the north represented the "growing might and the grasping ambition of Asian communism." Southerners were seen as "brave and independent people" while Johnson termed their counterparts, "Communist totalitarians." The populace of South Vietnam was composed of "peaceful-liberty loving free people" while their neighbors were "violent and ruthless," with a "disregard for life, happiness, and security."

On only one occasion during the period in question did Lyndon Johnson identify South Vietnam with North Vietnam. During the Johns Hopkins address, the President claimed that the communists wanted "what their neighbors also desire: food for their hunger; health for their bodies; a chance to learn; progress for their country; and an end to the bondage of material misery." This identification between the two adversaries Johnson called a "terrible irony."

A final agonistic element in Johnson's rhetoric bears mentioning. On many occasions, the President criticized the press for second guessing or speculating on the military strategy of the United States. While his own military advisors were said to be "very cautious and wise, and intelligent" and "extremely careful," Johnson said "no good purpose would be served by speculating on the military strategy" and that those press members who did had "a good hat but not a very solid judgment on their shoulders or on their head."
President Johnson's rhetoric was rife with agonistic elements during the period prior to the American build-up of July 28, 1965. As with other speeches belonging to the genre of war rhetoric, a "we vs. them" form emerged as the hostilities between the protagonist and the antagonist intensified. Because form is created by the expectancies of the audience, their collaboration in the form of the agon is necessary and, as Burke notes, could have led many to support the President unwittingly.

Imagine a passage built about a set of oppositions ("we do this, but they, on the other hand, do that; we stay here, but they go there; we look up, but they look down," etc.). Once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation regardless of the subject matter. Formally, you will find yourself swinging along with the succession of antitheses, even though you may not agree with the proposition that is being presented in this form.

On the impulse of Burke's simplification of agon form, a summary of the conflicting terms in Johnson's rhetoric produces the same "collaborative expectancy": We live in a "serene atmosphere," but they, on the other hand, live in a place that is "not serene or peaceful"; we are a "sentinel on the frontiers of freedom," but they are "foes of freedom"; we "stand firm" and "do all that strengthens," but
they display "weakness"; we launch "air attacks," but they
spring "sneak attacks"; we "honor agreements," but they
"violate agreements"; we are "ready to talk," but they "want
no talk"; we offer a "civilized solution," but they offer
only "attack, explosions, and indiscriminate murder"; we
propose a "full exchange of views," but they answer with
"slander and invective"; our responses are "careful and
measured," but their attacks are "reckless"; we are "united
and indivisible," but their unity is "crumbling"; we are
"friendly," they are "aggressive"; we "extend the hand of
compassion," but they "hate"; we "build," they "destroy"; we
seek the "day of peace," but they "strangle in the night";
we take "air action," they take "hostile action"; we target
"concrete and steel," but they target "blood and men"; "our
purpose is peace," but "their object is total conquest."

As a result of clustering Johnson's rhetoric into the
equations in the first three chapters, several conclusions
can be drawn regarding the material in Part I for further use
in the continuation of this study:

1. While President Johnson devoted a majority of his
comments regarding scene to Vietnam, the
"shrinking world" loomed larger and larger as the
President revealed the importance of American
agents and especially actions.

2. The aspects of a "limited war" became apparent as
Johnson presented both American and North
Vietnamese agents with inconsistent qualities.
The President pictured the Americans as both "determined" or "powerful" and "restrained" or "cautious" while the North Vietnamese represented both "aggression" and "love and hope."

3. As Johnson made more references to "action" in his drama, the frequency of "standing firm" reflected more accurately the President's motives and intentions than the "compassion" or "caution" attributed to American agents. In addition, the ambiguity brought about by Americans "standing firm" for "peace" could have only created confusion among the audience in a limited war setting.

4. The pervasiveness of and reliance on technology as an agency by both the Americans and North Vietnamese not only identified otherwise agonistic clusters, but caused a further confusion among "means" and "ends." Did Johnson intend to "stand firm" in order to "negotiate" or did he intend to have a "full exchange of views" in order to "stand firm?"

5. Johnson's overall stated purpose of "preserving freedom and resisting aggression" further reflects the confusion of limited war by equating unequal terms.

6. The "matter of the arrow" or progressions throughout the clusters generally reflects
tendencies found in the equations except that Americans tend to become more helpful over time rather than more aggressive.

7. Johnson succeeded in rhetorically constructing an agonistic form separating the Americans from the North Vietnamese/Vietcong. This dichotomy broke down only with the reliance on technology by both sides and in Johnson's analysis of the relationships among the U.S. and South Vietnam and that of North Vietnam and the Vietcong.

The first step in the analysis of Johnson's speeches as symbolic action is thus complete. Given the form of the clusters, Johnson generated certain expectancies in his audience and gave an indication of his own and the country's motives during the period. Using these equations as a foundation, the analysis of symbolic meaning in Johnson's rhetoric will follow in a much more pluralistic analysis. The clusters reveal the Vietnam drama Johnson presented to the American people. The "action" which produced this rhetorical drama, its conflict and choices, will now be uncovered.
NOTES

1 William H. Rueckert, Kenneth Burke and the Drama of Human Relations, Second ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 257.


4 Burke, Philosophy, p. 74-5.

5 Burke, Counter-Statement, p. 124.

6 Burke, Counter-Statement, p. 31.

7 Burke, Counter-Statement, p. 124-125.


9 Burke, Counter-Statement, p. 125.

10 Burke, Counter-Statement, p. 125.


12 Burke, Rhetoric, p. 23.

14 Burke, Rhetoric, p. 58.
"Government is, in the last analysis," notes Cornwell, "communication."¹ The equational clusters uncovered in President Lyndon Johnson's rhetoric and presented in the preceding chapters reveal the images with which the United States government and the Johnson administration in particular presented the impending Vietnam conflict to the American people. To this point, the analysis has only been concerned with the symbols Johnson chose to make certain war issues salient for the American people. In order to fully comprehend the public actions of the administration in 1964 and 1965, this study must go further to encompass the entire realm of communication. For this, not only must the President's symbols be taken into consideration but his symbolic acts as well. In layman's terms, now that we know what Johnson said, what did his words mean?

To initiate this type of criticism, one must start from the premise that "man does not live in a vacuum." Specific symbols are chosen by rhetors in order to have an intended effect upon others. To understand the entire "realm of communication," the critic must decide why certain symbols were chosen by a speaker, what effect the rhetor intended to have, and judge the success or failure of these choices. This requires the critic to consider myriad situational, sociological, political, and psychological influences which contribute to the relations among human beings.
In order to take these influences into consideration and to extend the logological format of this analysis, another aspect of Kenneth Burke's literary/rhetorical criticism will be utilized. On different occasions, Burke has termed this approach "the dialectic of the Upward Way," "the Mystic Way," "the search for the self," "the dialectic of the Platonic dialogue," "the grammar of rebirth" or the "sin-guilt-expiation-redemption pattern." Rueckert has consolidated all these ideas, though, into the "drama of human relations." It is an ethical drama in which all men participate due to its origins in language and its implications for the entire realm of communication.

Language introduces the negative into human experience, as opposed to man's natural, positive state of being. Communication linked with the negative dictates "rules" by which human behavior is judged acceptable or unacceptable. With the tool of language, man, in turn, constructs various kinds of hierarchies by which social order is maintained. The cement holding all hierarchies together is the hundreds of "thou-shall-nots" made possible by the negative. In order for each hierarchy to work, man must take part in a "covenant" to maintain the status of the social ladder, but no human is ever capable of meeting all the terms of the agreement and in some way fails or disobeys. Failure or "the fall" causes guilt which encumbers man and makes necessary a means of catharsis or purification. The two most common vehicles of unburdening are mortification and
victimage, the end result of both being redemption or the alleviation of guilt.\textsuperscript{3}

Given President Johnson's rhetoric, the initial requirement for the drama to unfold is present--language. Rather than studying all of his public statements during the period in question, three of his most important speeches will be examined: the Syracuse University speech following the Tonkin Gulf incident, the Johns Hopkins University speech in April of 1965, and the opening statement of his July 28, 1965 presidential news conference announcing his escalation decisions.

The Syracuse University speech was Lyndon Johnson's first definitive statement on U.S.-Vietnam policy since becoming president. Much speculation had taken place in 1964 on whether or not the new president would continue the policies of his fallen predecessor. The American mission in South Vietnam had failed by the summer of 1964 and the political base of the South Vietnamese government gradually disintegrated. Johnson desperately needed to clarify his position regarding the Vietnam conflict with a presidential election approaching and Tonkin gave him that opportunity.

In April of 1965, President Johnson responded to an entirely different set of circumstances with his speech at Johns Hopkins University. Following his landslide victory and his promises to keep American troops out of Vietnam the preceding November, the President faced a growing tide of dissent due to the initiation of a continuous bombing
campaign in February. In what National Security Adviser McGeorge Bundy called "the most important foreign policy speech" to that time, Johnson signaled a shift in the emphasis of his Vietnam policy at Johns Hopkins that haunted him throughout the rest of his presidency.

Finally, the President's opening statement of his news conference on July 28, 1965 is representative of the period due to its ultimate articulation of commitment. After Johnson responded in a "limited and fitting" manner to the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin and offered a "billion dollar American investment" to Southeast Asia at Johns Hopkins, the commitment of ground troops to Vietnam was still in doubt. In announcing the escalation decisions, Johnson revealed not only his policy intentions but also a part of himself central to the understanding of his rhetoric.

The manner in which the drama of escalation unfolds in these speeches at key moments—negative, hierarchy, guilt, mortification, victimage, catharsis, and redemption—will be analyzed. In addition, the way each speech represents certain aspects of the drama more than others will also be noted. By viewing the speeches from the perspective of the "drama of human relations," an expanded critique involving more aspects of the communication process can be conducted.
NOTES


3 For a more detailed explanation of the drama of human relations, see Rueckert, pp. 96-99 and 131-134.

EXPLAINING TONKIN:  
SECRECY, VICTIMAGE, AND THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER

The incidents which occurred in the Gulf of Tonkin on August 2 and 4, 1964 marked watershed moments in Lyndon Johnson's involvement with the Vietnam War. Upon assuming the presidency in November of 1963, Johnson continued the Vietnam policies that President Eisenhower originated in 1954 and President Kennedy expanded during his White House years. In his wish to provide as much continuity as possible in the wake of Kennedy's assassination, Johnson relied almost solely on the judgments of the same advisers Kennedy listened to. At the same time, these advisers participated in the "cult of continuity" by providing Johnson with the information they thought he wanted and perhaps needed to hear. After all, Johnson had told all of Kennedy's aides and advisers following the assassination that "I need you more than he did."1 In addition, President Johnson hoped to postpone any major decisions on Vietnam until after the November 1964 elections, a political maneuver John Kennedy had also planned on. However, the incidents in the Gulf of Tonkin changed everything.

On the evening of August 2, 1964, three North Vietnamese PT boats opened machine-gun fire and launched torpedoes at the U.S.S. Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin. In the ensuing engagement, aircraft from the carrier Ticonderoga damaged two of the boats while the Maddox's
five-inch guns sunk a third. Americans woke the next morning to hear Secretary of State Dean Rusk say that, "The other side got a sting out of this. If they do it again . . . they'll get another sting."³

That they did. At forty minutes past seven o'clock (Tonkin Gulf time) on the evening of August 4, the Maddox, now joined by the U.S.S. Turner Joy, radioed CINCPAC headquarters that an intercepted message indicated a second attack was imminent.⁴ The communique created a flurry of activity in Washington. Having ordered the navy to "wipe out" any attackers in the area, President Johnson went about developing an American assertion of power. Two meetings with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and all-day conferences with close advisers and cabinet members produced a decision late on the afternoon of August 4. After conferring with congressional leaders at 6:45 p.m., Johnson eventually revealed his plans to a national television audience at 11:36 p.m. as aircraft screamed off the decks of the carriers Ticonderoga and Constellation to attack ports and support facilities of the PT boats.

The following day, August 5, President Johnson delivered an expanded version of his late-night address at the dedication of the Newhouse Communications Center at Syracuse University. Although crisis was in the air, large crowds and brass bands welcomed the President to a campaign atmosphere. Placards in downtown Syracuse proclaimed that, "Syracuse Loves Lady Bird and Lyndon," "Up This Way We Like
The public of this university town was indeed behind their President.

Johnson began his speech in a manner typical for the period by trying to identify all peoples of the world or, at least, opposing forces. "On this occasion," the President said, "it is fitting, I think, that we are meeting here to dedicate this new center to better understanding among all men." Further, Johnson said this was his "purpose in speaking" to the audience. According to Burke, such an appeal for understanding is not uncommon under modern global conditions which require greater identification.

Division and conflict were very much on the President's mind. After addressing "all the people of all nations," Johnson recounted the events of the previous three days. "On August 2 the United States destroyer Maddox was attacked on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin by hostile vessels of the Government of North Vietnam. On August 4 that attack was repeated in those same waters against two United States destroyers." Inherent in such division and conflict was Burke's concept of the negative. Johnson's audience easily associated "thou-shall-not" with such words as "attacked," "hostile," and "attack was repeated."

This same passage is significant not only for aspects of the negative but also for the roots of a hierarchic structure. Given the history of America's involvement in the Cold War, the association of North Vietnam with communism among audience members immediately placed the
To Burke, all such socio-political hierarchies are products of language and President Johnson went far to reinforce its viability. By using what Burke calls "god-terms" and "devil-terms," Johnson associated the United States closely with such god-terms as "peace" and "freedom" and North Vietnam with such devil-terms as "hostile" and "aggression." In doing so, the President placed the U.S. above that communist country on a hierarchy which reaches upward to "peace" and "freedom" as perfection. Johnson said that "peace is the only purpose of the course that America pursues" and not only associated North Vietnam with "attack" and "hostile" but also with "aggression." "Deliberate, willful, and systematic aggression," the President said, "has unmasked its face to the entire world." He went on to say that "aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed."

Along with the formation of hierarchies, man assumes a "hierarchic motive," defined by Rueckert as "the desire to mount the hierarchy, either through action or possession." From Johnson's perspective, the North Vietnamese attack would have constituted such action. Rueckert goes on to say, however, that "people are goaded by the threat of descending the hierarchy, again either by action or possession, but also by failure to act or inability to possess certain things."
LBJ: The Pragmatic President

The threat of descending the hierarchy away from "freedom" was very much present but no one in the United States, or Vietnam for that matter, could have accused Lyndon Johnson for failing to act on August 4, 1964. According to the President, "we have answered this aggression with action." While Johnson did not emphasize "action" as much as "freedom" or "peace" in his speeches, it was another god-term Johnson used to evaluate personal attributes. High on this particular hierarchy was the pragmatic man, a man of action who "got things done," the "can-do" man. Much farther down this ladder of personal evaluation were the "thinkers," men who formulated great thoughts, who argued for principles. "It is the politician's task to pass legislation," Johnson told Doris Kearns, "not to sit around saying principled things." The difference in the two men the President often described as "work horses" and "show horses."

To reply to "aggression," a low hierarchy devil-term, then, Lyndon Johnson, the pragmatic man who did not have time to waste talking, turned to the highest personal attribute at his disposal: "action." When he sought advice from others, the conclusions were the same for they too were men of "action." There were those can-do men from the Kennedy team which he "needed more than Kennedy did." There was Bob McNamara, who Halberstam described as "a man of force, moving, pushing, getting things done, Bob got things
done, the can-do man in the can-do society, in the can-do era." Tom Wicker said President Johnson was surrounded by men whose pragmatism insisted on a reply of "action." "He would look around him and see in Bob McNamara that it was technologically feasible, in McGeorge Bundy that it was intellectually respectable, and in Dean Rusk that it was historically necessary"--the can-do team.

For the Johnson administration, Tonkin Gulf was no time for reflection or the questioning of basic assumptions regarding Vietnam. The U.S. had been "attacked" by "hostile vessels" and they deserved a "sting," the practical reply, "action." Writing thirty years earlier, Burke prophesied the many aspects of the can-do men, of the can-do administration, in the can-do decade, in our can-do society, particularly regarding American policy in Vietnam. On the side of the practical, Burke said, is "efficiency, prosperity, material acquisitions, increased consumption, 'new needs,' expansion, higher standards of living, progressive rather than regressive evolution, in short, ubiquitous optimism." As if writing a biography of Johnson himself, Burke further noted that pragmatism would lead to "enthusiasm, faith, evangelizing, Christian soldiering, power, energy, sales drives, undeviating certainties, confidence, co-operation, in short, flags and all the jungle vigor that goes with flags." In summary, "patriotism."
To sum up, President Johnson announced that the United States, whose purpose was "peace," had encountered the "hostile vessels" of North Vietnam who "attacked." Clearly, the North Vietnamese, suffering from "hierarchic psychosis" or an "uneasiness stemming from the social order," rejected the existing hierarchy. With world hierarchy thus threatened, the pragmatic president took "action" to maintain order within the hierarchy.

The Entelechial Motive: American Power in the American Century

Order and its justification was the purpose of Johnson's address. In the terminology of the preceding cluster analysis, "to survive and prosper in freedom," "our own security," "the safety and well being of our own country," "peace and security," and "to bring communist aggression under control" all equal order. Johnson went on in the Syracuse address to justify "action" by envisioning order and the tools that would bring it about.

Typically, President Johnson invoked the negative as a requirement for the maintenance of order in the hierarchy. The President went on to list three "thou-shall-nots" as objectives sought by the U.S.: "That the governments of southeast Asia honor the international agreements which apply in the area; That those governments leave each other alone; That they resolve their differences peacefully." In other words, "thou-shall-not break agreements, thou-shall-not harass other governments, and thou-shall-not make war."
Human experience is guided by sets of customary hierarchies which are located in our view of the past. Personal motives are thus driven by our individual views of the past and national motives by our national past. As a result, Johnson envisioned the order that several international agreements in the past were supposed to maintain. "In 1954 we made our position clear toward Vietnam," Johnson said. "In June of that year we stated we 'would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the 1954 agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security.'" In addition, September of 1954 was the month "the United States signed the Manila pact on which our participation in SEATO is based." The pact recognized that "armed attack on South Vietnam would endanger the peace and the safety of the nations signing that solemn agreement." Johnson thus invoked the negative and a sense of the hierarchic past to justify "action" taken to maintain order.

The kind of "action" President Johnson took, though, was extremely specialized and typically American. This action involved force and it involved technology. "Throughout last night and within the last 12 hours," the President said, "air units of the United States Seventh Fleet have sought out the hostile vessels and certain of their supporting facilities." In addition, the action was "armed" and "appropriate."
With the lessons of the Cold War fresh in Lyndon Johnson's memory, that his "action" should involve force is not surprising. "One thing is clear," Johnson told the House of Representatives in 1947. "Whether communist or fascist or simply a pistol-packing racketeer, the one thing a bully understands is force and one thing he fears is courage." As he told his Syracuse audience in more formal rhetoric nearly twenty years later, Johnson's purpose was "peace" and "aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed." "I want peace," the Texan told the House. "But human experience teaches me that if I let a bully of my community make me travel the back streets to avoid a fight, I merely postpone the evil day. Soon he will chase me out of my house."17

On most occasions, Johnson called this the lesson of Munich where British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain negotiated a peace with Hitler only to have the Führer occupy the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia. Historian Eric Goldman, who worked within the Johnson Administration for several years, claims the President's determination not to appease aggression was coupled with another lesson of history--Truman's decision to intervene in Korea--to produce an unwavering belief in the use of force to "halt the bully."18 Thus, "No more Munics!" became the essence of the Johnson foreign policy.

Being the man of pragmatism and action that Johnson was, Burke again predicted that any reply utilizing "action
of an external sort" would "eventually lead to combat in one form or another." Such action, Burke says, "involves patterns of striving, competition, and conquest which reach their ultimate conclusion in war."\textsuperscript{19}

Not only was the use of force historically legitimate for Johnson but the hierarchic motive in the twentieth century had produced a means of preserving world hierarchies. To understand the workings of the motive, Burke borrowed the concept "entelechy" from Aristotle in which the individual in any hierarchy constantly strives to define itself in terms of a perfected self, god-head, or god-term.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, Johnson used an entelechial motive to define the United States as peace-loving—striving for perfection in the peace-aggression hierarchy—rather than aggressive. In the words of the President, "Peace is the only purpose of the course that America pursues."

Burke concluded that man constantly attempts to refine his original, natural self toward perfection or a second nature through the use of language. For thousands of years, language remained the primary agency of this redefinition process. With the constant refinement of the tool and the coming of the Industrial Revolution, however, Burke says man began to reshape himself in terms of machinery. "In contemporary America," Burke observes, "the distinguishing emergent factor is obviously mechanization, industrialism, as it affects our political institutions, as it alters our way of living, as it makes earlier emphases malapropos or
even dangerous." Man thus sees machinery, and more recent technological advances as extensions and perfections of himself. "We have tended to consider machinery an absolute good," concludes Burke, "as witness the frequent identification between mechanization and progress." The hierarchic motive is thus an entelechial motive and the "hierarchic psychosis" has turned into a "technological psychosis." "It is the one psychosis which is, perhaps, in its basic patterns, contributing a new principle to the world," says Burke. "It is at the center of our glories and our distress." Technology or the entelechial motive was indeed at the center of Johnson's glories on August 5, 1964. The pragmatic president had taken "action" with "air units of the United States Seventh Fleet." It was technology that had allowed LBJ reach out to the Tonkin Gulf and give the enemy a "sting," allowed him to "touch Ho up a little bit," as he said frequently.

Perhaps more than any other president, Lyndon Johnson was a twentieth century president, a president of modern America, and above all, a technological president. He had grown up and matured politically in periods of unprecedented industrial growth in the U.S. The "technological psychosis" prevailed in many quarters of American society, according to Halberstam, "a belief in American industrial power and technological genius which had emerged during World War II." Johnson was there from beginning to end.
As a teacher in South Texas during the 1930s, one of Johnson's favorite history lessons surrounded Charles Lindbergh's historic trans-atlantic flight. Not only did Johnson revel in the hierarchies of the past by picturing Lindy as though he were a reborn pioneer of the frontier, but Kearns relates that the former school teacher found something more important in the lesson of Lindbergh. "Side by side with this nostalgia there was also the more ominous fact that Lindbergh's exploit was a window to the future; a victory for the machine, a triumph for the plane as well as for the man."25

Later, on the eve of World War II, Johnson, the Representative from Texas, spoke infrequently on the House floor. When he did speak, however, Johnson became a spokesman for the New Deal and the "technological psychosis" which pervaded the social engineering of its many programs. Congressman Johnson promised to help President Roosevelt, advocated modernizing the rural farms of his home state with electricity, milking machines for the farmer, washing machines for his wife, light to intrude upon the night, and heat to warm the cold farmhouse.26

Technology perhaps did not become an intrinsic aspect of Johnson's political outlook until it threatened the world hierarchy in America's consciousness on October 4, 1957. As Johnson later described it to Doris Kearns, he was at his ranch when the news of Sputnik came across still another technological innovation of his lifetime, the television.
That night, he took a walk along the Pedernales, "with eyes lifted skyward, straining to catch a glimpse of that alien object which had been thrust into the outer reaches of our world." He remembered, as did most Americans, "the profound shock of realizing that it might be possible for another nation to achieve technological superiority over this great country of ours." Johnson's response was very much the same in 1957 as it was following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin. Something had to be done. What the situation required was "action" and "action" in the form of "technology." The Space Race had begun and with the imagery of climbing the hierarchy higher and higher toward perfection on the moon, no one, benefited and suffered from the extending and redefining characteristics of technology more than Lyndon Baines Johnson.

With more power at his disposal than any other individual in the free world, President Johnson manipulated technology "with the unqualified excitement of an eleven-year-old." Electronic technology was his constant companion and his link to the outside world and, perhaps, reality. Push-button telephones were installed in every conceivable place that Lyndon might frequent--in his bathroom, in his bedroom, in his sitting room, in his dining room, in his theater, in his cars, on his motorboats, and in his planes. The swimming pools at the White House and the LBJ Ranch sported special rafts for floating phones. A
short-wave radio allowed Johnson to reach any guest to the Ranch in an LBJ car within twenty miles of the house.29

Enamored with the technology of communication, the President had the famous triple console televisions installed in the oval office. Here, partially fueled by his "technological psychosis" and partially by his frantic need for consensus "identification" (which will be discussed later), he could watch the nightly news on all three networks simultaneously. A remote control allowed Johnson to manipulate the volume on the sets so he could "tune in" whatever station was covering a story on administration policy.30

Control, usually remote control (which equals the maintenance of order), was the impetus behind Johnson's psychosis. Sometimes, however, the machines became such close extensions of Johnson himself, they took the form of companionship. To the left of the triple console in the oval office, stood three wire tickers from AP, UPI, and Reuters. "Those tickers," he later told Kearns, "were like friends tapping at my door for attention. I loved having them around." The tickers could also perform the dual function of control. "They kept me in touch with the outside world. They made me feel that I was truly in the center of things. I could stand beside the tickers for hours on end and never get lonely."31

As Burke mentions above, technology is at the center of our glories and our distress. Johnson's suffering began
when he began to reach too far, to extend himself technologically into Vietnam at Tonkin Gulf. Everything in the war had the Lyndon Johnson seal of approval. Every piece of equipment appeared to be an extension of the Johnson persona. "This is your helicopter, sir," said a young corporal showing Johnson to his presidential craft. "They're all my helicopters, son," said the President.32 While this did not denote possession in the usual sense, Johnson's words reveal an extension of himself at the time through the technology of war. "My boys in Vietnam," "my planes," and "my ships" were all machines that Lyndon Johnson was going to use to "slip his hand up Ho Chi Minh's leg before Ho even knew about it."33

The use of such technology was found in the cluster analysis above to have been a common agency mentioned by Johnson in his Vietnam rhetoric. According to Tom Wicker, the assumption of seemingly unlimited, personalized resources goes far toward explaining U.S. failure in Vietnam. With what J. W. Fulbright would later call "the arrogance of power," Johnson following Tonkin reflected the "ubiquitous optimism" and "undeveloping certainties" Burke ascribed to the practical man:

How could Lyndon Johnson, in his moment of triumph, with his sense of the golden touch, doubt that his superbly equipped forces, representing all the technological and industrial genius of America . . . could deal with a few ill-clad
guerrillas, if necessary with the old-fashioned Chinese-style infantry divisions of Vo Nguyen Giap, with an enemy who had to steal his weapons, bring in supplies on bicycles and the backs of old women, and whose soldiers were regimented Communist slaves without the incentives of freedom and democracy to make them fight well?³⁴

Perched high atop the hierarchy and recreated in the image of their own technology, the main characters in the administration thought failure of American policy in Vietnam to be inconceivable. When George Ball predicted almost to the man where U.S. policy in Vietnam would lead as early as 1961, a prophesy he continued to articulate until its actual occurrence, President Kennedy uttered a representative response to such pessimism: "George, you're just crazier than hell! That just isn't going to happen."

By 1966, evidence suggesting that Lyndon Johnson had extended himself too far began to mount. While American technology had "touched Ho up" and provided a political victory for Johnson at Tonkin Gulf, the escalated bombing campaign initiated in February of 1965 had not achieved the predicted results. The following year, Secretary McNamara's "systems analysis" specialists began to uncover evidence that our own machinery was working to the detriment of the war effort. The bombing was estimated to have caused some 600 million dollars worth of damage in the north in 1966 but
at a cost in lost aircraft alone of six billion dollars. Meanwhile, sixty-five percent of our bombs and artillery rounds were aimed at unobserved targets killing about 100 North Vietnamese or Vietcong per year. In the process, however, sixty-five percent of our own ammunition provided 27,000 tons of dud bombs and shells which the enemy used to make booby traps that killed over 1,000 Americans.35

By war's end, the United States had dropped more than seven million tons of bombs in Indochina. This figure represented more than the total tonnage of bombs dropped in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific during World War II. It equaled three hundred of the atomic bombs that fell on Japan in 1945. The bombs that Johnson said could not be dropped on "the smallest outhouse north of the 17th parallel without checking with me,"36 had left twenty million craters.37

The bombing had devastated the natural forests which played a critical part in the formation of the Mekong Delta. It depleted the organic layer of soil and disturbed the chain of life in the animal world. Defoliants such as Agent Orange never discriminated between jungle and crops and with the foliage stripped away, rainwater runoff crested into massive floods.38 At this point, according to Rueckert, the entelechial process had reached its extreme manifestations in the "systematic destruction and desecration of nature and the natural by the engines of industry in the exalted name of 'Progress,' with the very idea of progress as well as the
engines of industry being products of 'reason' (or as Burke would have it, 'symbol using')."39

All of this brings us back nearly ten years to the symbols themselves--"air units of the United States Seventh Fleet"--the initial step in the entelechial climb to disaster. In many ways, the "technological psychosis" is symbolic to this point in the Tonkin "drama of human relations." In the cluster analysis above, "the wise application of modern technology" was found to be a principal agency in both acts of "standing firm" and acts of "peace." The meaning of those symbols is now uncovered in the rhetoric of rebirth. "Air units of the United States Seventh Fleet" represent the negative (thou-shall-not be hostile to Americans on the high seas), the peace-aggression hierarchy, and the maintenance of order.

Guilt and the Secrecy Motive: Operation 34A

According to Burke, order "makes for a tangle of guilt, mystery, ambition ('adventure') and vindication."40 The North Vietnamese were goaded by the "mystery" of independent nationalism thus giving way to their own ambition to overturn the existing hierarchy of colonialism. Johnson himself once described the Communist regime as having "arrogance and adventure." Failure to maintain order in the face of such ambition thus produces guilt.

In his study of poetry as symbolic action, Burke concluded that all men have burdens or "sins" which produce
guilt. Indeed, burdens themselves are the very subject of symbolic action and the drama of human relations. For Lyndon Johnson in August of 1964, his burden was the maintenance of peace and order in Southeast Asia. Speaking to the Syracuse University audience, guilt was behind his statements justifying the carrying of the peace burden.

Announcing that "America's course is not without long provocation," the President justified the maintenance of order on the guilt inherent in his failure to uphold the "solemn pledge" of his predecessors. "For 10 years three American Presidents—President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and your present President—and the American people," Johnson said, "have been actively concerned with threats to the peace and security of the peoples of southeast Asia from the Communist government of North Vietnam." The burden of peace also contributed to Johnson's remarks regarding the 1954 SEATO pact. The President said, in the words of the treaty itself, that America "would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the 1954 agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security."

Guilt thus played a decisive role in Johnson's rhetoric not because the President expressed remorse openly but because of what a "fallen hierarchy" would mean to America, the Johnson Administration, and to Lyndon Johnson himself. The United States had to respond militarily in the Gulf of Tonkin to avoid the guilt, or at least the recognition of
guilt, in losing South Vietnam to a country far down the peace-aggression world hierarchy.

One particular aspect of the entire Tonkin episode is vitally important to the understanding of the role guilt played in the drama. President Johnson described the North Vietnamese PT boat attacks as "deliberate" and "unprovoked." Within days after the incident, the truth of these statements started to come into question and suspicion continued until Senator Fulbright's foreign aid hearings in 1966 and subsequently the Pentagon Papers revealed their outright falsity.

The reason for the utterance of such statements, according to Burke, is affiliated with the hierarchic motive. In order for any hierarchy to stay in order, secrecy must be involved to discourage the lower elements from any type of climbing or mounting. In Johnson's situation, secrecy, or the secrecy motive, was necessary not just to disincline the enemy from attacking but also to dissuade potential critics from questioning his version of the events in the Tonkin Gulf. Here, though, Johnson's comments involved a hierarchy of credibility with the President at the top (or God) and possible critics at the bottom.

What the President failed to reveal in his Syracuse address, to a national television audience the night before, and to congressional leaders the evening of the second attack, was the existence of a covert war against the North
Vietnamese and the Vietcong which had prompted both the first and the second attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin. On the evening of July 30, 1964, South Vietnamese coastline patrol forces made a midnight attack on the islands of Hon Me and Hon Nieu, both coastal fortifications of the North Vietnamese. The attacks were part of what the Pentagon Papers called "an elaborate program of covert military operations against the state of North Vietnam" begun on February 1, 1964 under the code name "Operation Plan 34A." Instigated at the request of Secretary of Defense McNamara following a depressing visit to South Vietnam in December of 1963, the operation ranged from U-2 spy flights over the North and kidnapping of its citizens for intelligence information, to parachuting sabotage and psychological warfare teams into enemy territory, to naval commando raids to blow up bridges and coastal installations.

During the summer of 1964, the United States had also initiated the "DeSoto Patrols." While their purpose was mainly to show force in the area, American destroyers collected intelligence along the North Vietnamese coast that might be useful to 34A raids. In the wake of the island raids on July 30, a fleet of North Vietnamese PT boats and junks moved into the area to search for the attack force and mistook the U.S.S. Maddox, on a DeSoto mission, for a South Vietnamese escort vessel.

The following day, the Washington Post carried North Vietnamese accusations that the U.S. had shelled the
offshore islands of Hon Me and Hon Nieu thus confirming the case of mistaken identity and revealing what Johnson would hide by secrecy two days later. That night, two more clandestine 34A attacks occurred as South Vietnamese crews bombarded the Rhon River estuary and radar installations at Vinhson. All of the PT raids had been planned and initiated by National Security adviser McGeorge Bundy and General Paul Harkins in Saigon. Both Secretaries McNamara and Rusk had full knowledge of them. "In a real sense," notes Halberstam, "these were American operations." On August 4, as DeSoto missions resumed, the alleged second attack on the Maddox and the Turner Joy took place, later prompting the Pentagon Papers to conclude that the presence of the destroyers provided all the elements needed for both clashes to have taken place. According to Johnson, though, "the attacks were unprovoked."

The motive of secrecy, based on the need to maintain order or control within a hierarchy, can also be seen in the evolution of the Southeast Asia Resolution and ultimately the crisis itself. As the military situation continued to deteriorate and pressure began to mount for a show of strength in South Vietnam from both the South Vietnamese leaders and from Capitol Hill in the summer of 1964, Johnson carefully calculated the international and domestic political climates before making any of his moves in public. As early as February of that year, Walt Rostow, then head of the State Department's policy planning staff, had suggested
a legislative resolution to allow the President to freely make military decisions to "maintain control" in Vietnam. By May, Johnson asked his closest advisers to start thinking in terms of a resolution and Bill Bundy, McGeorge Bundy's brother at the State Department, incorporated the idea in a thirty-day scenario of escalated attacks aimed at culminating in a full-scale bombing campaign against the North Vietnamese. Drafting the first copy of the resolution, Bundy emphasized "speed" as a vital ingredient for the document to achieve the desired purpose: to protect Johnson from pressures on the right, to force the Republican candidate in a presidential election year to support whatever the President was doing in Vietnam, and to picture Johnson as a moderate, practical president refraining from the use of too much force.

By early June, the resolution was ready. Suddenly, however, the entire scenario was postponed at a meeting on June 15. McGeorge Bundy informed Secretaries Rusk and McNamara and other senior officials that the President feared appearing like a warmonger to American voters. "Better to wait until after the November election."

Included with the resolution in Bundy's scenario, the plan called for a full statement of the administration's position on Vietnam policy. Hoping to avoid criticism, Johnson again chose to be secretive, fearing that a full explanation would draw attention to Vietnam as one area of concern, create a flurry of congressional debate, and
plaster the issue all over the editorial pages with advice from columnists.56

The resolution, the speech, and the rest of the thirty-day plan of action would thus have to wait. It would have to be molded to events. Something would have to come along --and it did. In the terminology among White House officials of the period, the "street car" arrived and the administration with the Southeast Asia Resolution tucked under its arm jumped aboard. In the words of Karnow, "Johnson and his staff, desperately seeking a pretext to act vigorously, seized upon a fuzzy set of circumstances to fulfill a contingency plan."57

Not only did the secrecy motive encourage the President to omit the covert war from his public explanations of the Tonkin Gulf incident, but the very manner in which Johnson portrayed the events to the American people was the result of this same motive. According to Halberstam, the entire Tonkin episode reflected the power of the presidency and, thus, the entelechial motive as well. "In terms of processes," he notes, "the presidential reach had become longer and swifter than that of any competitor or challenger" due to the "power" granted Johnson by modern technology. With technology came speed and with speed, according to Bill Bundy, the successful passage of the resolution. "Speed was vital to his new power," says Halberstam:
Thrown into an instant international crisis, the country and the Congress had no time to inquire, no time to doubt, only time to accept. The American Air Force planes were already on the way back from the Tonkin Gulf; the President had already talked to the entire nation.58

Because of the pressing need to "catch the street-car" on time, then, President Johnson did not have to explain the covert war in Southeast Asia, Bill Bundy's thirty-day scenario, or the confusion in the administration over whether the second attack ever occurred at all. The incident left Johnson with a feeling of total control. "The President could in effect control events, or so it seemed," says Halberstam, "control the flow of information, and virtually control how the events were reported."59

The need for secrecy at the time of the Tonkin Gulf clashes, thus, was but another manifestation of the hierarchic motive and the accompanying need for order or control, especially on the part of Lyndon Johnson. At a time when many of the accepted socio-political assumptions of the previous decade were beginning to come into question, Johnson, unlike his predecessor Kennedy, tried desperately to hold on, maintain control, keep intact the hierarchic patterns of thought prevalent among his own generation.

In a 1968 interview on the Johnson personality, Harold Laswell said Johnson's childhood reaction to his mother's strong desire for him to achieve placed the young man in a
dilemma: "On the one side there is the tendency to accept domination and on the other hand a rebellious tendency to reassert one's independence and masculinity and sense of adequacy. . . . It is a reasonable inference," Laswell continued, "that Johnson was very much concerned about remaining independent of outside influence. His subsequent political career—with his demand to make his own decisions, and his demand to control a situation [italics Laswell's]—has these very deep roots."60

In summary, President Johnson's burdens included not just the burden of peace, for which he, the leader of the free world, had to maintain control, but also the burden of credibility in a society where the presidential "god" of the trust-deceit hierarchy and the hierarchy of power was expected to tell the truth. "At the heart of the relationship between the President and his fellow citizens was trust," said Halberstam, "and Tonkin damaged that trust."61

Mortification, Victimage, or "Ho made me do it."

Encumbered by the maintenance of peace and by credibility, President Johnson, nearing the beginning of a campaign in which he could be elected in his own right, needed a vessel by which his guilt could be purged. Open to the President were two choices: mortification and victimage, both being modes of purification.
Throughout his years in office, Johnson had limited success with the use of mortification to justify the fighting in Southeast Asia and thus cleanse his guilt. As a means of purgation, mortification is a victimage of the self or suicide. Not before his speech of March 31, 1968 in which he announced his decision to withdraw from the presidential race did he use mortification effectively. Attempts were made before but the President always spoke of a collective mortification, bringing others into the sacrifice so he would not have to "die" alone.

In the speech at Syracuse University, Johnson utilized mortification in only limited passages. Johnson said ambiguously, "there can be no doubt about the responsibilities of men and the responsibilities of nations that are devoted to peace." The President implied in this statement that America and her allies must be willing to take "action," to die if need be, in order to relieve the tension caused by North Vietnam's rejection of world hierarchy. In more concrete terms, Johnson stated that "peace," the burden, "requires that we and all our friends stand firm against the present aggressions of the government of North Vietnam."

The use of mortification for peace was atypical of Johnson's rhetoric during the period. Basing his assumptions on the domino theory, another manifestation of the hierarchic principle, Johnson never clearly convinced his audience that losing Vietnam would mean taking up our
defenses in San Francisco. Nor, ironically, did he try very extensively, as the Syracuse speech exemplifies. "To show that a good is worth having," says Burke, "one shows that it is worth sacrifice . . . by the picture of heroic sufferings, sacrifice, and death." The President usually saved mortification to alleviate other burdens besides that of "peace" and its effectiveness was apparent when he did (see chapters 6-7).

Disdaining the use of mortification, President Johnson used victimage of others, the counterpart of mortification, much more extensively for the burden of peace. "If you look for a man's burden," says Burke, "you will find the principle that reveals the structure of his unburdening; or, in attenuated form, if you look for his problem, you will find the lead that explains the structure of his solution." Johnson's burden was the maintenance of peace or order within the hierarchy. The cause of the burden was a rejection of the hierarchy by the North Vietnamese. Therefore, the structure of the solution should inevitably move to purge the source of the burden by forcing the agents of hierarchic mounting to accept blame for their evil deed.

Near the beginning of the Syracuse speech, Johnson reported that the Maddox "was attacked on the high seas in the Gulf of Tonkin by hostile vessels of the Government of North Vietnam." Further, "that attack was repeated in those same waters against two United States destroyers." Any act of purification through victimage, according to Rueckert,
must be preceded by a transfer through identification of the guilt or burden to the victim. This transfer "is always effected through the manipulation by oneself or others of the negative and positive values within any given hierarchy."64

Reexamining Lyndon Johnson's guilt, it must be recalled that peace was a burden because of both America's failure to maintain a peaceful, orderly hierarchy in the first place and for the enforcement of order through superior technology. Since the North Vietnamese also used technology in the form of "hostile vessels," the President could identify with the enemy in order to transfer the burden of peace. While both sides fired bullets, torpedoes, dropped bombs, etc., Johnson manipulated the positive and negative values within the hierarchy by labeling American acts simply as "appropriate armed action." Meanwhile, he associated the North Vietnamese acts with the devil term of "aggression."

The transference of the burden complete, the North Vietnamese were thus pictured as a scapegoat, "the chosen vessel of iniquity, whereby one can have the experience of punishing in an alienated form the evil which one would otherwise be forced to recognize within."65 That Lyndon Johnson in 1965, a keen student and believer in the great lessons of Munich and the Cold War, would decide to invoke armed force to restore peace in the Gulf of Tonkin and then use the totalitarian communists as scapegoats is not
surprising. Interestingly, however, Johnson used the scapegoat strategy for the purification of the burden of credibility more extensively in the Syracuse speech than for the burden of peace.

Needing to purge the burden of credibility, Johnson focused a large portion of his speech on the international agreements signed by both the United States and North Vietnam, thus establishing the identification needed for the transfer of guilt.

In June of that year [1954] we stated we "would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the 1954 agreements with grave concern" . . . In September of that year the United States signed the Manila pact on which our participation in SEATO is based. . . . In 1962 we made our position clear toward Laos. We signed the Declaration of Neutrality of Laos. . . . The agreements of 1954 and 1962 were also signed by the government of North Vietnam.

In establishing these grounds of identification, Johnson prepared his audience not only for the transfer of his own burden of credibility but also for America's failure to sign the 1954 Geneva accords, closely associated with the burden of peace. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles had refused to even look at Ho Chi Minh at Geneva in 1954 and eventually walked out of the meetings. Strongly criticized by Johnson
for this move, Dulles returned to the U.S. to devise a treaty of his own for Southeast Asia--SEATO.

Identified by their common pacts, President Johnson went about transferring secrecy and deceit to the North Vietnamese. Recounting each treaty, Johnson pictured a country that had said one thing and done another, not unlike the American approach to Operation 34A.

In 1954 that government pledged that it would respect the territory under the military control of the other party and engage in no hostile act against the other party. In 1962 that government pledged that it would "not introduce into the Kingdom of Laos foreign troops or military personnel." . . . That government of North Vietnam is now willfully and systematically violating those agreements of both 1954 and 1962.

While Johnson failed to mention the United States' role in planning and executing the covert war against the communists or the elaborate plans of Bill Bundy's scenario to escalate overt war, the President transferred both the burdens of peace and credibility as he portrayed the communists striking out in all directions in the name of "aggression" and against their word.

To the south it is engaged in aggression against the Republic of Vietnam. To the west it is engaged in aggression against the Kingdom of Laos.
To the east it has now struck out on the high seas in an act of aggression against the United States of America.

Through the use of victimage, the scapegoat in particular, President Johnson purged his guilt and transferred his burdens onto the aggressive North Vietnamese communists. Having done so, an expression of redemption in the rhetoric of rebirth was all that was left for the peroration of the Syracuse speech.

The Rebirth of Consensus Government

According to Burke, "the alienating of iniquities from the self to the scapegoat amounts to a rebirth of the self." Through the vehicle of the scapegoat, President Johnson justified American military action against North Vietnam, paved the way for the passage of the Southeast Asia Resolution, and successfully made a move toward escalation while portraying himself as a "peace" candidate.

The moment of rebirth occurred in the speech with the reaffirmation of U.S. foreign policy. "A thorough job of symbolic rebirth," says Burke, requires "the revision of one's ancestral past." Johnson's view of the conflict in Vietnam was but a continuation of Cold War intervention against the same enemy. The communist scapegoat thus not only redeemed the "air action" in the Gulf of Tonkin but also the guilt of insurgency past. "The challenge that we face in southeast Asia today," said the President, "is the
same challenge that we have faced with courage and that we have met with strength in Greece and Turkey, in Berlin and Korea, in Lebanon and in Cuba."

The sense of redemption most important to Johnson, though, dealt with the domestic political scene. "Finally, my fellow Americans," the President said—and he was talking to all Americans—"I would like to say to ally and adversary alike: let no friend needlessly fear—and no foe vainly hope—that this is a nation divided in this election year."

Always a man of some timidity and caution when big decisions had to be made, Lyndon Johnson was not a man with a sense of history, or the lone believer dissenting, going against the grain. He was a consensus president, in Halberstam's words, "trying to get everyone on board in an office where the best decisions were often the loneliest ones." Among his personal staff, Stroessinger points out that Johnson did not have advisers to provide wisdom, judgment, and advice, but rather "to elicit emotional support for his personal beliefs." Consensus, unity, and loyalty branded the Johnson style of government and decision-making. "I don't want loyalty," the President once said. "I want loyalty. I want him to kiss my ass in Macy's window at high noon and tell me it smells like roses. I want his pecker in my pocket."70

Regarding foreign policy, Johnson conceptualized the presidency as an omniscient institution that was above
questioning and certainly criticism from the press. As he liked to tell potential critics, Lyndon Johnson was "the only President you have."71 Fearing communist influence if there were but a trace of dissent in the U.S. government, Johnson once told Doris Kearns that he wanted "to make absolutely sure that the Communists don't play one branch of the government against the other, or one party against the other as happened in the Korean War."72

This consensus motive worked in tandem with the secrecy motive throughout the day of August 4, 1964. Using secrecy and speed as a means, Johnson hastily met with sixteen congressional leaders at 6:15 the night of the second attack.73 He outlined the day's events, omitting any mention of the 34A activities, informed them of his intentions for a limited retaliation, and said he wanted a congressional resolution. Of course, he was assured of their support. "In the world of men," Tom Wicker was later to write, "governments believe they cannot afford to show anything less than resolution at such a time; even less can legislators afford to impair the leadership of a President or Prime Minister by rejecting his executive actions, handicapping his responses as a commander, or embarrassing him before the world."74

Thus, the Southeast Asia Resolution passed through the Congress with a minimum of debate and only two dissenting votes. Senator J. William Fulbright agreed to usher the resolution through the Senate, a decision he regretted the
rest of his life. "All I can say is that I was deceived," Fulbright later said. "The greatest mistake I made in my life was to accept Lyndon's account of what happened and those of his men."75

According to Burke, the need for consensus and unity is very much a part of the redemptive process. Accompanying rebirth is an evangelizing tendency, the need to tell others what one has seen or believes to have seen, "the tendency to justify one's change by obtaining the corroboration of others."76 Universal agreement with what had occurred in the Gulf of Tonkin and with Johnson's responses came not just from the Congress but from a variety of sources. At the President's direction, allies and adversaries alike swallowed his words. From Joseph Alsop and the Chicago Tribune on the right to Walter Lippmann and Harry Truman on the left, everyone celebrated in LBJ's rebirth.77

Perhaps the most important aspect to Johnson's redemption, however, was the consensus gained at the expense of presidential opponent Barry Goldwater. Almost immediately after news of the first attack reached the American public, Goldwater issued a press release saying, "We cannot allow the American flag to be shot at anywhere on earth if we are to retain our respect and prestige," a statement no American could disagree with.78 By phoning Goldwater in California for his consent prior to his television announcement the night before, Johnson diffused any possible criticism to the effect that he had not done
enough to protect the flag or the world hierarchy. The day of Johnson's address at Syracuse, Goldwater was quoted in the Washington Post, saying, "I am sure that every American will subscribe to the action outlined in the President's statement. I believe it is the only thing that he can do under the circumstances." Indeed, Johnson's redemption seemed complete as he ended the Syracuse speech with the words: "We are one nation united and indivisible. And united and indivisible we shall remain."

The unity of rebirth could be found in the general public as well. In the wake of the incident, a Lou Harris public opinion poll found that eighty-five percent of the American public supported Johnson's version of the attacks and his military retaliation. Before Tonkin, only fifty-nine percent felt Johnson could handle Vietnam better than Goldwater. Afterward, though, Johnson's show of strength redeemed him in the eyes of the public. By seventy-one to twenty-nine percent, Americans believed Johnson could handle Vietnam policy better than Goldwater. **80**

Conclusion

History generally looks upon the Gulf of Tonkin episode as an abuse of power, both military and presidential. The above analysis corroborates this view from a dramatistic perspective. The major conclusions drawn in this chapter are as follows.
1. Steeped in the traditions and basic assumptions of the Cold War, Lyndon Johnson viewed the conflict in Vietnam not as a war of national liberation but as a threat to the established world hierarchy of the post World War II period. Inherent in such a view was the negative or certain "thou-shall-nots": thou-shall-not be aggressive, attack, be hostile, break agreements, harass other governments, or make war. The resulting hierarchy placed "peace" or "freedom" at the top as the essences of perfection or "god-terms" with "aggression" at the bottom acting as a "devil-term." Johnson associated the United States with "peace" and North Vietnam with "aggression."

2. In order to avoid any further hierarchic "mounting" or climbing by the communists, President Johnson turned to what he felt to be his most admirable quality: pragmatism. The attacks were thus answered with "action," specifically "air action." At this point, the entelechial motive in the form of technology appeared as the most practical agency of maintaining order and control within the hierarchy.

3. The failure of the United States to keep peace in the Gulf of Tonkin and order in the world hierarchy, produced a sense of "categorical guilt" in American policy-makers. The United States had carried the burden of peace since World War II, as Johnson noted in his address. Adding to the sense of guilt, Lyndon
Johnson's personal burden of credibility made the need for redemption or catharsis greater.

4. Principally through the vehicle of the scapegoat, Johnson transferred the American burdens of peace and credibility onto the communist North Vietnamese. It was the communists who had attacked with hostility, Johnson said. In addition, the attacks were unprovoked. Regarding credibility, the President enumerated three breaches of promise on the part of the North Vietnamese.

5. The redemption and rebirth of American policy in Vietnam was beneficial more to Lyndon Johnson than to the South Vietnamese. Tonkin was a domestic political victory for the President rather than a foreign military success. The overriding result was American unity, just in time for a presidential reelection campaign.

Now that the drama of human relations has proved its usefulness in the critique of war rhetoric, this study will move on to President Johnson's most intriguing address of the period: "Peace Without Conquest."
NOTES

1 See, for example, George Ball, The Past Has Another Pattern: Memoirs (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 313.
7 Rueckert, p. 142.
9 Rueckert, p. 132.

13 Halberstam, p. 643.


15 Burke, *Counter-Statement*, pp. 111-112.

16 See Rueckert, p. 132.

17 Kearns, p. 100.


22 Burke, *Permanence*, p. 207.

23 Burke, *Permanence*, p. 44.


39 Rueckert, p. 136.


43 *Vietnam Voices*, p. 168.

44 *Pentagon Papers*, p. 235.


46 *Pentagon Papers*, p. 240.

47 *Vietnam Voices*, p. 168.

49 Pentagon Papers, p. 240.

50 Halberstam, The Best, p. 499.

51 Pentagon Papers, p. 260.


54 See Karnow, p. 361 and Halberstam, The Best, p. 491.

55 Karnow, p. 362.

56 Turner, p. 74.

57 Karnow, p. 373.


59 Halberstam, "CBS," p. 69.

60 Cited by Halberstam, The Best, p. 537.

61 Halberstam, "CBS," p. 69.

62 Burke, Permanence, p. 196.

63 Burke, Philosophy, p. 92.

64 Rueckert, p. 151.

65 Burke, Grammar, p. 301.

66 Burke, Grammar, p. 407.

67 Burke, Philosophy, p. 41.

68 Halberstam, The Best, pp. 556-557.

69 Stroessinger, p. 186.

70 Halberstam, The Best, p. 526.
71 Goldman, p. 413.

72 Kearns, p. 149.


74 Wicker, p. 224.


76 Burke, Permanence, p. 154fn.

77 See Turner, p. 85.

78 Miller, p. 382.


"PEACE WITHOUT CONQUEST": CRITICISM, HIERARCHY, AND "ELECTRIFICATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE"

The reprisal air strikes in the Gulf of Tonkin marked an important threshold in the war against Vietnam. While psychologically preparing to escalate the stakes against the North Vietnamese, Tonkin rendered the administration much less flexible in its decision-making ability. In the words of a Pentagon Papers analyst, "the number of unused measures short of direct military action against the North had been depleted." Thus, when a decision to use technological force against the North was faced again, "it was much easier to take."1

With the intensification of Vietcong terrorist activity in South Vietnam during the fall of 1964, President Johnson had many chances to retaliate with force again. On November 1, the Vietcong struck the American air base at Bienhoa, killing four Americans, destroying five B-57 bombers, and damaging eight.2 Because the attack occurred two days before Johnson's landslide victory over Senator Barry Goldwater, the President declined to retaliate.

The political and military considerations mentioned above also changed the nature of the rhetorical situation as well. Pressure had been building on Johnson to make a decision regarding Vietnam all during the presidential campaign. Continually portraying himself as the candidate of reason and moderation, Johnson was perceived by many as
the candidate opposed to deeper involvement. In addition, the President was described as a healing man and he referred to one of his main speeches as the one in which he was "healing the wounds." Thus, while military factors encouraged Johnson to retaliate, the presidential campaign placed constraints on his rhetoric and his ability to seek alternatives. The only result of this rhetorical situation, according to press secretary George Reedy, was "to produce a record that would haunt him as the casualty lists piled in from Vietnam" the next year.

On Christmas Eve, 1964, Johnson had another chance to retaliate but was still hesitant. The Vietcong bombed the Brinks Hotel, an American officer billet in downtown Saigon, proving to the South Vietnamese that the Americans, with all their technological firepower, were vulnerable and could not be counted on for protection. Because Johnson wanted to avoid bombing the North during the Christmas season, his rhetorical alternatives were once again limited and the United States resembled a "Paper Tiger" to foreign observers.

With the coming of the new year, the pressure continued to build on Lyndon Johnson. South Vietnam was on the verge of falling into communist hands, a prospect Johnson thought would ruin his presidency. With political chaos in Saigon, apathy among the South Vietnamese populace, corruption everywhere, an aggressive Vietcong pushing its way through the countryside, tough North Vietnamese units and
replacements arriving daily in the south, and the South Vietnamese army led by an inept and politically divided officer corps, a major defeat was at hand unless something was done, and quickly, in Washington.  

In late January, McGeorge Bundy and Secretary of Defense Bob McNamara decided it was time to move the President in the direction of military escalation. Their idea was to have Bundy take a trip to Vietnam acting as the eyes and ears of Johnson. While he was in Vietnam during the first week of February, the Vietcong attacked the American advisers' billets at Pleiku on February 7, leaving eight dead and one hundred and eight wounded. Striking at two o'clock a.m. Vietnam time, the terrorists used grenades wrapped in bamboo or placed in American beer cans. The television coverage was extensive and pressure to retaliate with force would soon build among conservatives on Capitol Hill.  

Joining Ambassador Maxwell Taylor and General William Westmoreland at U.S. Military headquarters in Saigon after the attack, Bundy was clearly shaken, acting tense and abrupt. Westmoreland later said that Bundy exhibited a "field marshall psychosis"--a typical behavior of civilians once they have "smelled a little gun powder." Cabling the President, Bundy said that he, the Ambassador, and the commanding general in Southeast Asia, believed that "the best available way of increasing our chance of success in Vietnam is the development and execution of a policy of
sustained reprisal against North Vietnam—a policy in which air and naval action against the North is justified by and related to the whole Vietcong campaign of violence and terror in the South."11

Even though Johnson would later say that Bundy had reacted like a "preacher's son in a whorehouse,"12 the national security adviser's memo from Saigon had an effect on the President. Storming into an emergency National Security meeting that February 7, Johnson was furious. Even though Pleiku was no different from any other attack over the past four years, the Vietcong had attacked "his boys" who were still assigned as military advisers for the South Vietnamese, not as combat personnel. "I've had enough of this," he raged. "This is just like the Alamo; someone damn well needs to go to their aid; well, by God, I'm going to Vietnam's aid."13 The military pressure to escalate the war had been building ever since the raids in the Gulf of Tonkin the previous August. Finally, external events produced the rhetorical climate Johnson was waiting for.

When the Vietcong staged another attack at Qui Nhon on February 10, the President authorized Operation FLAMING DART as an event-related bombing reprisal aimed at decreasing the North's resolve to attack American forces. Again, echoing the rhetoric of Tonkin Gulf, the President ordered "air operations" which were "appropriate and fitting." When the operation seemed to increase Vietcong willingness to attack,
Johnson ordered Operation ROLLING THUNDER to embark on the sustained reprisals that Bundy had suggested from Saigon.\textsuperscript{14}

The \textit{Pentagon Papers} report that Rolling Thunder was intended to bring Hanoi to its knees, convincing the North that it should agree to negotiate a settlement to the war in the South. After a month of bombing, however, no response was forthcoming from the North Vietnamese.\textsuperscript{15} Instead, the bombing brought about exactly what the Johnson Administration feared most, the massive, gradual introduction of North Vietnamese troops into the South. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Earle Wheeler told McNamara, the strikes "had not reduced in any major way" North Vietnam's ability to make war and Hanoi "continues to maintain, at least publicly, stoical determination."\textsuperscript{16} Rolling Thunder, in short, had failed. Optimism within the Administration began to wane and public outcry against the bombing intensified.

While Johnson had favored the air campaign over the introduction of ground forces because it required fewer military personnel and thus incurred fewer casualties, the President was in dire need of an alternate course in late March of 1965. "Bomb, bomb, bomb. That's all you know," Johnson complained to his Joint Chiefs. "I want to know why there's nothing else. You generals have all been educated at the taxpayer's expense, and you're not giving me any ideas and any solutions for this damn little piss-ant country."\textsuperscript{17} This statement reveals a different side of the
President. Instead of the "cold warrior" that evidence from the period portrays, the Joint Chiefs saw a man who had "painted himself into a corner" rhetorically. His pleas for a military alternative in Vietnam were also requests for a rhetorical alternative at home.

At the time, Johnson appeared to outsiders a tormented man, fearing that failure awaited him whichever way he turned. David Wise, a correspondent for the New York Herald Tribune, recalled a conversation he had with the President at the time. Johnson described his predicament like that of a man standing on a newspaper in the middle of the ocean. "If I go this way," Johnson said, tilting his hand to the right, "I'll topple over, and if I go this way," tilting his hand to the left, "I'll topple over, and if I stay where I am, the paper will be soaked up and I'll sink slowly to the bottom of the sea." Saying this, he lowered his hand slowly to the floor. Feeling cornered by the failure of his own military policies in Vietnam and facing a crescendo of public criticism at home and abroad, Johnson decided it was time for a thorough statement on American intentions in Southeast Asia.

Public Dissent: The New Negative

Because of a long-standing invitation from Dr. Milton Eisenhower, President of Johns Hopkins University, Johnson decided to use the campus as his forum on Monday, April 5. On the preceding Friday, however, Prime Minister Lester
Pearson of Canada advised Johnson to order a halt in the bombing. Thinking Hanoi was hesitant to negotiate for fear of looking weak against American fire power, Pearson thought a pause in the air campaign would give North Vietnam the needed stimulus. While Johnson did not reply to the Canadian Prime Minister publicly, his private response to such criticism was livid. "Oh yes, a bombing halt," he said. "I'll tell you what happens when there's a bombing halt: I halt and then Ho Chi Minh shoves his trucks right up my ass. That's your bombing halt." Furious that as close an ally as Pearson would make such a suggestion, Johnson canceled Monday's delivery only to reconsider and schedule the speech for Wednesday, April 7.

At nine o'clock p.m., eastern standard time, President Johnson addressed a nationwide television audience estimated at over sixty million from Shriver Hall on the Johns Hopkins campus. In low, grave tones, Johnson began the speech with a reference to a seventeen nation plea for peace in Southeast Asia. "We are joining those 17 countries," the President said, "and stating our American policy tonight which we believe will contribute toward peace in this area of the world." That Johnson opened the speech with a reply to the peace initiative is significant in that it marked a public shift away from the "peace-aggression" hierarchy of world order that was of utmost concern at the time of the Tonkin Gulf raids. Instead, with his opening statement, Johnson's ultimate concern by this time had come
to be the hierarchy of credibility—unity, consensus government, and above all, loyalty. This shift revealed a change in the rhetorical situation which manifested itself not only in the President's growing concern for criticism but also in Johnson's personal insecurity as president. "If a man takes great pains to obtain the approval of his group," writes Burke, "does he not thereby give evidence that he needs to be approved?"22

With more attention being paid to the hierarchy of credibility in the spring of 1965, a new set of "thou-shall-nots" came to the fore. The overriding taboo within the Administration at this point was "thou-shall-not criticize the President or his policy." Criticism represented a rejection of the hierarchy of credibility and the President, understandably, was concerned about his reputation as a trustworthy president. The fear of dissent and the avoidance of confrontation had been a lifelong tendency of Johnson. According to George Reedy, the President "abhorred dissent to a point where he sought to quell it long before protagonists had talked themselves out."23

As President, Johnson systematically eliminated sources of criticism left over from the Kennedy Administration, especially if the dissent was directed at Vietnam policy. By late 1964, those advocating a political solution in Vietnam had been eased out of the decision-making posts. Because of their approval for the coup which toppled South Vietnamese Prime Minister Ngo Diem in November 1963,
principally, President Johnson quickly made such men as Averell Harriman, Roger Hilsman, William Trueheart, Michael Forrestal, and Paul Kattenburg non-players. This left the Joint Chiefs of Staff and those advocating a military solution to advise the President. That Johnson surrounded himself with military men was no mistake for, in Halberstam's words, "the public statement of the military man allowed no dissent, it was built totally upon loyalty to policy, to chief," and the President wanted loyalty. "The true army man fights when he is told," says Burke. "It is the "glamour" of caste [or hierarchy] alone that makes him ready to subordinate his will to the will of the institution." The two men most likely to influence Johnson at the time were men who strictly adhered to the new negative and supported a military solution: Secretaries Rusk and McNamara. So as not to present Johnson with the slightest trace of dissent, both believed they should try to advise the President with a common view or, at least, harmonize their opinions to save Johnson from difficult choices.

Just as Johnson attributed the god-value of "pragmatism" to those "real men" whom he admired and agreed with him, he credited dissenters with the devil-values of "weakness" or "femininity." Hearing that one member of his Administration was favoring peaceful negotiations in 1965, Johnson said, "Hell, he has to squat to piss," considering doubt itself a feminine quality. The doubters were not
people to take "action" as the President had done at Tonkin. Thus, when Vice President Hubert Humphrey opposed Operation Flaming Dart in the wake of the Pleiku attack, he was henceforth not invited to strategy meetings or informed of general policy matters.²⁹

From other sectors, criticism of Johnson's policy in Vietnam was mounting as well. The "peace bloc" in the Congress had begun with the dissenting votes to the Southeast Asia Resolution cast by Senators Wayne Morse of Oregon and Ernest Gruening of Alaska. With the onset of Rolling Thunder, the liberal wing of Johnson's own party joined the ranks of dissent. George McGovern, Frank Church, Mike Mansfield, and Gale McGee gave "credibility" to a movement that had once been looked upon as radical.³⁰ In late March of 1965, Senator William J. Fulbright, who had ushered the Resolution through the Senate, warned the President that a "massive ground and air war in Southeast Asia" would be a "disaster."³¹ Such was the initial doubt of a very important character in the credibility hierarchy.

April brought more bad news from the Congress. The week before the speech, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee rejected Johnson's request for a "blank check" of funds that might be used for South Vietnamese aid.³² Perhaps even more damaging was a survey of constituent mail on Capitol Hill. Three days before the speech, the New York Times reported that a majority of the mail supported "negotiations that would permit the United States to
extricate itself from the Vietnam war." One letter to Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, complained that "bad means cannot accomplish a good end." "When the United States makes war on people who use poison arrows as part of their weaponry, something is wrong," the author said. "When, in addition, the United States employs a poison gas upon these same people, everything is wrong." 33

Perhaps the sector which produced the most vicious rejection of the hierarchy was the media and it was this particular "mounting" that drove Johnson to the point of paranoia. With the episode in the Gulf of Tonkin, the President had proven that short of controlling events themselves, he could at least control how events were reported to the American people, thus maintaining his god-like control of the hierarchy. To Johnson, thus, the press was an enemy. Halberstam notes how this fear of dissent developed into an imagined anti-Johnson conspiracy:

Critics of the war became his critics; since he was patriotic, clearly they were not. He had FBI dossiers on war critics, congressmen and journalists, and he would launch into long irrational tirades against them: he knew what was behind their doubts, the Communists were behind them--yes, the Communists, the Russians... 34

Though not exclusive but representative of this conspiracy was Walter Lippmann. Throughout the spring of
1965, the columnist's dissatisfaction with the bombing in Vietnam grew as negotiations failed to materialize. According to Turner, Lippmann became somewhat of an ideologue for the peace bloc. Knowing this, the pragmatic President sought Lippmann's approval of his eminent speech at Johns Hopkins. Inviting the columnist to the Oval Office the day before, Johnson read Lippmann the entire speech. At the suggestion of McGeorge Bundy, the President deemphasized the section regarding "unconditional discussions" so as to not foster an overbearing image of "softness." The strategy worked, Lippmann approved the speech, and the secrecy motive was once again employed to appease war critics.

That the President had been losing his battle with the press that spring was evident. Important segments of the public including educational and religious representatives favored a negotiated settlement as well. While nearly seventy percent of the respondents to a national poll after the initiation of Flaming Dart supported the President, discontent with foreign policy was growing by April. On March 24, students and faculty at the University of Michigan held the first "teach-in" against the Vietnam war. Speakers for and against U.S. policy participated in a twelve-hour marathon seminar with the intention to inform the university community. The seminar was so successful, that organizers planned a second "teach-in" for Washington to be held in May. On April 2, twenty-three scholars
attending the annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies in San Francisco signed a petition urging President Johnson to negotiate a peace in Vietnam.³⁸ Twenty-five hundred ministers, priests, and rabbis of the Clergymen's Committee for Vietnam took out a full-page advertisement in the New York Times three days before the speech which said in bold face type: "Mr. President: In the Name of God, STOP IT!" The Committee went on to urge Johnson to "admit our mistakes and work for an immediate cease-fire."³⁹

Finally, representatives of America's closest allies condemned Johnson's credibility hierarchy as well. In addition to Prime Minister Pearson's call for a bombing pause, Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart of Great Britain told the House of Commons on April 1 that there were "some signs" the North Vietnamese would be willing to negotiate,⁴⁰ thus placing the burden of peace squarely on Johnson's shoulders. At the same time, Prime Minister Harold Wilson met with one of Johnson's most vicious critics of the Vietnam war, President Charles de Gaulle of France. After the French disaster at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, de Gaulle repeatedly warned the U.S. against becoming involved militarily in Vietnam thus bringing Johnson's policy into serious question. While Wilson and de Gaulle remained divided over America's conduct of the war, both agreed that "some sort of basis must be found for a peaceful settlement."⁴¹
With such a wave of dissent facing President Johnson in early April of 1965, a new negative had truly taken priority over the "thou-shall-not attack" dictum prevalent at the time of Tonkin Gulf. Johnson thus addressed dissent first in the Johns Hopkins speech. "There are those who say that all our effort there will be futile—that China's power is such that it is bound to dominate all southeast Asia," Johnson said. In answer to this charge, the President invoked the negative of the peace-aggression hierarchy, the lesson of Munich, and holy scripture.

The central lesson of our time is that the appetite of aggression is never satisfied. To withdraw from one battlefield means only to prepare for the next. We must say in southeast Asia—as we did in Europe—in the words of the Bible: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

As a result, "there is no end to that argument until all of the nations of Asia are swallowed up." Interestingly, Johnson said, in effect, "thou-shall-not criticize the president" because "thou-shall-not attack." Both negatives were at the center of hierarchies protecting Johnson and the United States as "gods."

"There are those who wonder why we have a responsibility there," Johnson continued in response to critics. "World War II was fought in both Europe and Asia,
and when it ended we found ourselves with continued responsibility for the defense of freedom." Once again, in enforcing the new negative, both the burdens of peace and credibility were very much apparent.

With the rhetorical situation thus changed due to criticism and failure in Vietnam, Johnson faced as many rhetorical alternatives as he did military alternatives in Southeast Asia. Immediately after his landslide election victory in November of 1964, Johnson appointed a commission, headed by Bill Bundy, to study American alternatives in Vietnam. The group gave the President three choices, one too soft (withdraw American troops from Vietnam), one too hard (take the war to the North Vietnamese with massive escalation), and one just right (continue the course the U.S. was on but add something extra—graduated air strikes against North Vietnamese infiltration routes).

In the face of mounting criticism, Johnson also faced several rhetorical alternatives in April of 1965. As a model of successful reaction to dissent, Dr. Martin Luther King's "Letter From Birmingham City Jail" provides a framework from which Johnson's rhetorical choices can be summarized. Like his military options, Johnson could have chosen a rhetorical course too soft, that of ignoring his critics and reasserting the peace-aggression hierarchy. The President could have followed King's example and taken a harder approach by attacking his critics' points one-by-one and making the necessity of resisting aggression in Vietnam
an accepted point of departure. Like his choice of military moves, though, Johnson took the one in the middle, the moderate or centrist alternative. The President decided to refute his critics by reasserting the peace-aggression hierarchy. Rhetorically, he continued what he had done in the past but added something extra by shifting to the primacy of the new negative regarding credibility.

By taking this alternative, Johnson attempted to transfer the burden of proof onto his critics by making salient the threat of North Vietnamese aggression. This, in turn, would justify the American use of force. King's letter provides some rhetorical techniques Johnson could have used. Rather than redefining the peace-aggression hierarchy, Johnson could have constructed a different hierarchy to change American perceptions of the Vietnam conflict. If the President placed South Vietnam at the bottom of a hierarchy depicting developing democracies, Americans could sympathize with a small country struggling upward toward peace and freedom. Otherwise, they had to identify with an industrial giant, unleashing its power to maintain the status quo in Southeast Asia.

Secondly, Johnson needed to personalize the battle of cold war doctrines in Vietnam. The battle-cry of "No more Munichs" was effective when there was an apparent threat to American vessels in the Gulf of Tonkin but it was not enough to sustain support for Operation Rolling Thunder. In order to enhance public support for a struggling South Vietnam,
the President could have made effective use of the atrocities committed against the South Vietnamese by the communists.

These were President Johnson's alternatives at Johns Hopkins. Following is an analysis of the rhetorical approach Johnson chose to take.

Redefining World Hierarchy

Immediately following his response to the seventeen nation appeal, President Johnson spent a majority of the first half of the speech reviewing "once again with my own people the views of the American Government." This summary was a restatement of the peace-aggression hierarchy invoked at the time of the Tonkin attacks but with a new vocabulary.

According to Rueckert, a hierarchy is "any kind of order; but more accurately, it is any kind of graded, value-charged structure in terms of which things, words, people, acts, and ideas are ranked." Kenneth Burke's terms of "identification" and "division" are also important in the understanding of this complex web of intrigue that defines social order and goads those within it to climb upward, as in the case of the North Vietnamese, or to force others to stay put, as with the United States. If pure identification existed, life would be devoid of strife or conflict. Thus, no hierarchies would exist, no attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, at Pleiku, etc., and no criticism of the President. Likewise would be the case if absolute separateness,
fragmentation, or division prevailed. When identification and division are brought ambiguously together verbally, however, "you cannot know for certain," according to Burke, "just where one ends and the other begins, and you have the characteristic invitation to rhetoric."43

In defining the existing hierarchy in Vietnam, identification and division were very much evident. Describing the scene as a point of reference, Johnson said "Vietnam is far away from this quiet campus." The war there is "dirty and brutal and difficult." Some four hundred men, "born into an America that is bursting with opportunity and promise, have ended their lives on Vietnam's steaming soil." Division is evident in the hierarchy in that Vietnam is "far away," "dirty and brutal and difficult," and has "steaming soil" while America is "quiet" and "bursting with opportunity and promise."

While the scenery depicts division, Johnson identified the agents involved in the hierarchy. For the first time since the early days of his administration, the South Vietnamese are introduced into the world hierarchy. At the time of the Tonkin raids, the South Vietnamese were not even a concern of the President's. "Tonight Americans and Asians are dying for a world where each people may choose its own path to change," Johnson said. Further, they are both fighting for the principle "for which our ancestors fought in the valleys of Pennsylvania" and "for which our sons fight tonight in the jungles of Vietnam." Thus, even though
Vietnam is "far away," agents and principle identify them as one near the top of the peace-aggression hierarchy. Both Asians and Americans fight side-by-side, according to Johnson "because we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny." Not only was "democracy," a related term associated with "peace," necessary, but America's own "freedom" was at stake also.

Johnson's identification of Americans with South Vietnamese was the result of a twentieth century movement to equate America's prosperity with the well being of the rest of the world. In the wake of the attack on Pleiku, Johnson reflected his personal inheritance of, what Karnow calls, the "mythology of the Alamo, where Texas boys had "fought for freedom." Writing in his college newspaper in 1927, the young Lyndon Johnson said it was necessary for the United States to "make the world safe for democracy." 44

Throughout the rest of the twentieth century, Eric Goldman says this paternalistic trend was accepted by both Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives and eventually, took on the case of a law of history. "Human beings everywhere, the law ran, sought peace and democracy," 45 the same values Johnson said Americans and Asians fought for on Vietnam's steaming soil.

With the crowning glory of a World War II victory under its belt, America's pragmatic optimism reached an all time high. It was during this period that Johnson's unlimited belief in action, pragmatism, the can-do man in the can-do
country, had its genesis. "We in America are the fortunate children of fate," he said in 1946 and went on to infer that the United States had the ability and the obligation to share this fortune with the rest of the world.

From almost any viewpoint ours is the greatest nation; the greatest in material wealth, in goods and produce, in abundance of the things that make life easier and more pleasant . . . Nearly every other people are prostrate and helpless. They look to us for help—for that inherent courageous leadership. . . . If we have excuse for being, that excuse is that through our efforts the world will be better when we depart than when we entered.46

That this attitude would be applied to Vietnam was inevitable. First the French helped the Vietnamese to become modern but that ended in 1954 at Dien Bien Phu. Surely, the can-do Americans could succeed where the French failed. The law of history was on the American side. In a cable from Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge to McGeorge Bundy on October 31, 1963, American paternalism was very much evident. The United States, Lodge said, was trying "to bring this medieval country into the 20th Century and . . . we have made considerable progress in military and economic ways but to gain victory we must also bring them into the 20th Century politically.47 Three weeks later, Lodge told
the new President that very difficult decisions would have
to be made regarding Vietnam and Johnson, the pragmatic
President during the American century, replied, "I am not
going to lose Vietnam. I am not going to be the President
who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went."48

The bond thus complete, America and South Vietnam could
not be parted. With the purging of political "doubters"
from the Johnson Administration (another act of
identification within a different hierarchy), the American
commitment would remain military and economic. That
Americans and Asians would die together for "principles" in
the "jungles of Vietnam," was entirely predictable.

While identification takes place across the "mysteries"
of the hierarchy, division is also necessary. At Johns
Hopkins, Johnson hinted at this in saying that "the
infirmities of man are such that force must often precede
reason, and the waste of war, the works of peace." The
sources of "infirmities," "force," and "the waste of war"
were to be found in what Johnson called "the world as it
is." The President defined hierarchic division at first
from a scenic perspective. "The world as it is in Asia is
not a serene or peaceful place," said the President.
Regarding the agents involved, Johnson said, "The first
reality is that North Vietnam has attacked the independent
nation of South Vietnam," he said, and that "trained men and
supplies, orders and arms, flow in a constant stream from
north to south." Such support, Johnson said, "is the
heartbeat of the war . . . a war of unparalleled brutality." Already obvious division existed between the "peace," "quiet," and "opportunity and promise" of America and the "trained men and supplies, orders and arms," and "unparalleled brutality" of the North Vietnamese in a place that is not "serene or peaceful."

If the United States and South Vietnam are "identified," though, there must be division between North and South Vietnam. In this demarcation, Johnson pitted the quality of South Vietnamese agents against the acts of the North Vietnamese. Here, the information Johnson received regarding Vietcong atrocities after the attack at Qui Nhon is evident.

Simple farmers are the targets of assassination and kidnapping. Women and children are strangled in the night because their men are loyal to their government. And helpless villages are ravaged by sneak attacks. Large-scale raids are conducted on towns, and terror strikes in the heart of cities.

Johnson continued to draw clear lines of division within the world hierarchy with the announcement of "another reality." North Vietnam, the President said, was the "new face of an old enemy" and identified the North with "the deepening shadow of Communist China" in much the same way he associated South Vietnam with the United States. "The rulers in Hanoi," Johnson pointed out, "are urged on by
Peking." Peking, in turn, had "destroyed freedom in Tibet," "attacked India," "has been condemned by the United Nations for aggression in Korea," and has helped "the forces of violence in almost every continent." "The contest in Vietnam," the President concluded, "is part of a wider pattern of aggressive purposes."

Other verbal cues Johnson gave to division within the world hierarchy included the "small and brave nation" of South Vietnam. America, meanwhile, had the objective of "independence" and "freedom." We used "prayerful judgment" and had "patience as well as bravery." The United States fought for "values and we fight for principles" which was the "only path for reasonable men." The North Vietnamese, meanwhile, were "bound to dominate all Southeast Asia." They fought for "territory and colonies" and were "unreasonable."

To sum up, Johnson defined the world hierarchy with one principal division between the identified entities of America and South Vietnam and an identified enemy consisting of North Vietnam and China. No longer was this the limited conflict of Tonkin between the U.S. and the North Vietnamese. Johnson placed the U.S./South Vietnamese partnership high on the hierarchy near the god-term of "peace" and its correlative "freedom." The resulting bond had "opportunity and promise," was "independent," "loyal," "brave," "prayerful," "reasonable," and at times, "small" and "helpless." The President placed the North
Vietnamese/Chinese entity near the bottom of the hierarchy in association with the devil-term of "aggression." In addition, these agents were "dirty and brutal and difficult," who "attacked," "destroyed freedom," and helped "the forces of violence" through "assassination and kidnapping." They "strangled," launched "sneak attacks," and "large-scale raids," with "terror." Johnson further contrasted the "forces of violence" with "simple farmers" and "helpless villagers." Light and dark were used to further symbolize the gap. "The deepening shadow of Communist China" supported forces which "strangle in the night" but the United States supported a "bright and necessary day of peace."

Illusion vs. Reality: Hierarchic Abstraction

President Johnson seemed to have drawn the lines of the world hierarchy clearly at Johns Hopkins. Yet, he said the conflict had a "confused nature," a state of confusion that Johnson quickly brought into focus as the "new face of an old enemy." Whatever confusion existed in the mind of Lyndon Johnson or in American policy toward Vietnam, was explained away with the use of this generalization or abstraction. Communists were communists whether they were from Moscow or Peking. If they further shared skin color and eye shape, all the more reason to believe in the communist monolith and a North Vietnamese/Chinese alliance. If Johnson identified the United States with South Vietnam,
finally, all the more reason to believe in a falling domino hierarchy.

Whenever abstraction or generalization is put into use, however, a danger exists. "Orientation can go wrong," according to Burke. "Consider, for instance, what conquest over the environment we have attained through our powers of abstraction, of generalization; and then consider the stupid national or racial wars which have been fought precisely because these abstractions were mistaken for realities." 50

The "realities" Johnson utilized in the construction of a world hierarchy in the speech were indeed abstractions mistaken for reality. As mentioned above, Johnson and the contemporaries of his generation assumed a law of history to be taking shape in the aftermath of World War II. The United States was the most powerful and most abundant nation on the face of the earth and the law of history dictated that the country should share its power and abundance with nations less privileged—helping them to become more modern, more democratic, more middle-class.

One particular repercussion of this orientation was the tendency on the part of American policy-makers to over-abstract, over-generalize, to see the rest of the world through red, white, and blue lenses, as potential Americas with American values. Such was the case with South Vietnam, a paradigm of over-generalization. President Johnson tried to portray that "damn little piss-ant country" as American as possible so as to justify the maintenance of the
hierarchy. However, the realities of South Vietnamese society differed from Johnson's abstractions. The rural population simply was not as anti-communist as the Johnson Administration was. It came to resent the presence and force unleashed by the American marines more than it feared the enemy it was supposedly being saved from.51

The South Vietnamese government and armed forces, with whom Americans had the most contact and who were allegedly the "most Western," did not live up to Johnson's identification either. Their society, according to Halberstam, who served as a New York Times correspondent in Saigon, was a "corrupted, cynical society where the bribe, the lie, the decadence had become a way of life, where Vietnamese officers lied frequently and readily to their American counterparts, thinking this was what the Americans wanted, surprised later that the Americans should feel a minor betrayal in this."52

That South Vietnamese officials behaved this way is not surprising in that the Americans in Saigon differed from the President's portrayal as well. The good American official was a solid anti-communist and, above all, a pragmatist. They were told not to consider the opposition, not to think of alternatives, but rather to get the job done, that was what the Administration wanted.53 The South Vietnamese bureaucrat thus followed the example of his American counterpart. Still, officials in Washington pictured them both as perfected "freedom fighters," "defenders of
democracy." In the words of John Stroessinger, "they simply superimposed their own misperceptions on Asian realities."54

Johnson's personal misperceptions had their root in the Texas hill country where he grew up. As a child, Johnson spent long, summer evenings listening to his grandfather tell stories of the cattle drives of the frontier days. From such tales, says Kearns, Johnson formed his perceptions of what constituted manhood and success—models he would carry with him the rest of his life.55

The conflict in South Vietnam thus presented Johnson with a challenge that was not unlike the challenges of the cattle drives on the Texas frontier. Just as the cowboys risked life and limb for the loved ones back home, Johnson too would put himself on the line for the "simple farmers" and "helpless villagers" in South Vietnam and protect the freedom of those back home in the states. According to Stroessinger, this perception of a "personal challenge" made Johnson's approach to Vietnam unique. "He saw himself, Western-style, locked in a shoot-out with Ho Chi Minh."

Once, the President went as far as to tell press secretary Pierre Salinger to develop an image of himself as a tall, tough Texan in the saddle, believing, according to Halberstam, in all those old John Wayne movies.57

In addition, Johnson's perceptions of the North Vietnamese fit very well into his experience with minorities back home. The President felt secure in dealing with people like Ho Chi Minh. He knew something about these kind of
people, he told others. They were like the Mexicans back in Texas. They were alright, "but if you didn't watch, they'll come right into your yard and take it over if you let them. And the next day they'll be right on your porch, barefoot and weighing one hundred and thirty pounds, and they'll take that too. And the day after that, they'll be in your bedroom raping your wife." If one thing worked with these people, though, it was force. "If you say to 'em right at the start, 'Hold on, just wait a minute,' they'll know they're dealing with someone who'll stand up. And after that you can get along fine." In other words, America had to "stand firm" in Vietnam.

Because all these illusions and misperceptions found their way into the American hierarchic concept of the Vietnam conflict, the results in reality were unexpected. Since the United States officials in Saigon and Washington were more desperately anti-communist than either the peasants or the South Vietnamese rulers, America was much more willing to prop up illegitimate South Vietnamese governments and hold the line against communism. "Like a heroine in an eighteenth-century novel who got her way by fainting if anyone spoke crossly," wrote George Ball in retrospect, each provisional government knew how to manipulate the American trust in anyone who opposed communism. "If we demanded anything significant of it, it would collapse; so we never made any serious demands." In other words, while American officials expected the South
Vietnamese to act like the American of his word, they never demanded that they do so. As a result, the United States was constantly in danger of becoming a "puppet of our puppet." For all the effort expended to maintain the world hierarchy as it was, our own efforts habitually threatened to place South Vietnam above the United States on a hierarchy of decision-making.

The Dream of World Order: Phase II

Another result of the Johnson Administration's tendency to see the rest of the world through American lenses found its way into the Johns Hopkins address as the much needed alternative to bombing that Johnson had been looking for. "This war, like most wars," Johnson admitted half-way through the speech, "is filled with terrible irony." That the United States was in danger of becoming a "puppet of its puppet" was indeed an irony existing in the United States' relationship with South Vietnam. A more complex irony, however, prevailed in Johnson's relations with the North Vietnamese.

When bombing failed to bring North Vietnam to the conference table and maintain order and control in the world hierarchy, Lyndon Johnson reached out through his abstractions and illusions to "identify" with the enemy and the enemy with the South Vietnamese. "What do the people of North Vietnam want?" asked the President. "They want what their neighbors also desire: food for their hunger; health
for their bodies; a chance to learn; progress for their country; and an end to the bondage of material misery." All of this, Johnson said, the enemy could find in "peaceful association with others" rather than "in the endless course of battle." In other words, if the North Vietnamese ceased aggression and adhered to America's peaceful, hierarchic view of the world, they could have anything the United States had to offer.

This ironic identification with a communist nation was still another manifestation of the law of history. Johnson once told Kearns that he was persuaded the people of the world had no grievances against one another. "The hopes and desires of a man who tills the soil are about the same whether he lives on the banks of the Colorado or on the banks of the Danube."61 As far as Southeast Asia was concerned, the President had always found it "greatly appealing," probably because its impoverished, rural areas reminded him of the Texas hill country. "You can sense how these people feel," he remarked following a visit to a Vietnam village in 1961. "They want the same things we do."62 These desires included "not a big debate on fundamental issues; he wants a little medical care, a rug on the floor, a picture on the wall, a little music in the house, and a place to take Molly and the grandchildren when he retires."63 Under the law of history, this translated into the American duty to help feed the needy, educate them,
convert them, in Goldman's words, "nudge them along toward the middle-class life."64

"The American people have helped generously in times past in these works," Johnson said at Johns Hopkins. "Now there must be a much more massive effort to improve the life of man in that conflict-torn corner of the world." The first requirement of this effort, according to the President, was "cooperation" or a proposed identification of all members of the world hierarchy:

The first step is for the countries of southeast Asia to associate themselves in a greatly expanded cooperative effort for development. We would hope that North Vietnam would take its place in the common effort just as soon as peaceful cooperation is possible. . . . And I would hope tonight that the Secretary General of the United Nations could use the prestige of his great office, and his deep knowledge of Asia, to initiate, as soon as possible, with the countries of that area, a plan for cooperation in increased development.

As far as the United States was concerned, Johnson announced that he planned to ask Congress "to join in a billion dollar American investment in this effort as soon as it is underway." The President also said he intended "to expand and speed up a program to make available our farm surpluses to assist in feeding and clothing the needy in Asia." To
help facilitate this program, Johnson announced that he would shortly "name a special team of outstanding, patriotic, distinguished Americans . . . headed by Mr. Eugene Black, the very able former President of the World Bank." In addition, the President hoped "that all other industrialized countries, including the Soviet Union, will join in this effort to replace despair with hope, and terror with progress."

The objective of this proposal, of course, was hierarchic order or "peace." Lamenting that the earth "will be a disorderly planet for a long time," Johnson recognized North Vietnam's rejection of the world hierarchy in saying that "the forces of the modern world are shaking old ways and uprooting ancient civilizations" and that "for centuries nations have struggled among each other."

Against such a backdrop, Johnson candidly reveals his intentions as those of an entire generation. "Our generation has a dream," said the President. "It is a very old dream. But we have the power and now we have the opportunity to make that dream come true." The "dream" Johnson spoke of was the dream of hierarchic order:

We dream of a world where disputes are settled by law and reason. And we will try to make it so. . . . We dream of an end to war. And we will try to make it so. . . . We dream of a world where all are fed and charged with hope. And we will help
to make it so.

When Operation Rolling Thunder failed to maintain order in Southeast Asia, then, President Johnson reevaluated his hierarchic perspective of the conflict. Still viewing the situation with abstractions, illusions, and misperceptions, Johnson decided that by identifying all the divisive elements with one common denominator (economic development), the same ends could be achieved: order or control of the hierarchy.

Mortification and the Rebirth of World Peace

By identifying the North Vietnamese people with the South Vietnamese and calling for all members of the world hierarchy to join together in a cooperative effort, Johnson sought the redemption of his policy toward Vietnam. The use of force had failed to maintain order and peace and the President further rejected his own hierarchy by proposing the international cooperative effort.

Johnson purged the guilt resulting from these actions in much the same way as he had in the Syracuse University speech following the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin. The President transferred the burden of peace, which he said the United States had "continued responsibility" for, to the North Vietnamese scapegoats once again. Acknowledging that the "air attacks" will not accomplish all of America's purposes and that "it is our best and prayerful judgment that they are a necessary part of the surest road to peace,"
Johnson said a "swift" peace was "in the hands of others besides ourselves." The following day, a New York Times editorial made the transferal of this burden legitimate in saying neither the communist countries nor anyone else could "dispute the fact that a serious offer for peace has been made. It is now clearly up to them to make a reasonable response."65

As far as the burden of cooperation was concerned, though, President Johnson turned to mortification as a means of purging guilt. Mortification, unlike victimage according to Burke, "is a scrupulous and deliberate clamping of limitation upon the self."66 At Johns Hopkins, the President's limitation took the form of total self sacrifice for the goal of world cooperation and peace. "Every night before I turn out the lights to sleep I ask myself this question," the President said. "Have I done everything that I can do to unite this country? Have I done everything I can to help unite the world, to try to bring peace and hope to all the peoples of the world? Have I done enough?"

Johnson encouraged his staff members as well to sacrifice themselves for the cause in Vietnam. As early as November, 1963, the President spoke to the Vietnam policy planners from the Department of State, many of whom he would soon ignore under the dictums of the new negative. "And before you go to bed at night I want you to do one thing for me," Johnson said, sending cold chills into a few of the doubters working under Averell Harriman. "Ask yourself one
"What have I done for Vietnam today?"67

Having sacrificed himself and his Administration, the President sought a national rebirth by presenting the country with a list of choices. Here, Johnson returned to the scapegoat as a means of purification by contrasting American and North Vietnamese actions. With the judgment of the apocalypse seemingly awaiting America's decision, Johnson said this generation "may well be living in the time foretold many years ago when it was said: 'I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.' His generation of the world, Johnson said knowing how his audience would respond, must choose between acts of aggression and acts of peace: "destroy or build, kill or aid, hate or understand." With only one logical option among those listed, Johnson joined with the rest of the nation by concluding in the rhetoric of rebirth, "Well, we will choose life." By taking this course, the President said Americans would achieve universal identification within the hierarchy by prevailing "over the enemies within man, and over the natural enemies of all mankind."

Enthusiasm for the speech was evident in many quarters. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, who had begun to question the Administration's bombing policy, found
Johnson's address a "profoundly moving and constructive statement which reveals both the great strength of President Johnson's resolve and his deep concern for the welfare of all people." Emphasizing South Vietnam's identification with America and associated god-terms, Mansfield said further that "the door is open to a bona fide settlement which will permit the people of Vietnam to live in peace and freedom." Speaker of the House John McCormack responded to the President's call for the cooperative development program. "All the free world can well be proud of President Johnson's forthright speech, for he has offered to all the brotherhood of man and the recognition of human dignity."  

The day following the speech, the New York Times voiced approval of Johnson's offer for "unconditional discussions" with an editorial entitled, "The President Opens the Door." Saying that "President Johnson last night projected an American policy on Vietnam in which the country can take pride," the editors claimed Johnson "has accepted the concept of ultimate American military withdrawal and of an independent South Vietnam that would be neutral and yet free to seek outside assistance if threatened."  

Indications of public approval poured into the White House mail room as well. In the four days prior to the address, Johnson received two thousand letters, 304 telegrams, and 208 postcards running at an average of five to one against the President's policies in Vietnam. In the five days after delivery at Johns Hopkins, the White House
received approximately 789 letters and 559 telegrams with a four to one ratio in favor of the Administration policy.\textsuperscript{71}

International opinion praised the President's proposals. The speech received a warm welcome from America's allies in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization including France. One source in Paris said Johnson had finally followed the policy recommended by President de Gaulle as long ago as August, 1963.\textsuperscript{72} The Canadian Government, whose Prime Minister Pearson had called for a bombing pause a week before the speech, offered to play a "full part" in Johnson's international development effort. "Canadians were generally enthusiastic about the speech," reported the \textit{New York Times}, "and took some of the credit for having helped to shape Mr. Johnson's course of action."\textsuperscript{73}

Seemingly, the President had achieved what he set out to do at Johns Hopkins: to redeem his policies regarding Vietnam by quieting his critics and obtaining more support for the air war by offering to participate in "unconditional discussions" and by identifying all the divisive elements within the world hierarchy. The euphoria of rebirth did not last, however.

The Carrot and the Stick: Same Agency, Same Purpose, Same Result

According to Evans and Novak, "Peace Without Conquest" had a haphazard pattern that was disturbing and that "would mark future policy initiatives in the President's desperate
search for a solution to Vietnam." While initial reaction to the speech was favorable, the disturbing aspects of the speech became more apparent as responses started to trickle in from the communist bloc.

The Chinese claimed that Johnson's speech was "full of lies and deceptions" and that his offer of peace negotiations was a trick. Partially, this response was due to Johnson's reaction to peace overtures in the past. The President historically took a negative view of negotiations for negotiations meant defeat. Each time the U.S. Government had been faced with the possibility of negotiating with the Vietcong or the North Vietnamese during his Presidency, Johnson responded with the requirement that aggression had to cease prior to discussion and, in turn, raised the level of killing in Vietnam.

The Chinese communists responded further in saying the offer was a move to force Hanoi to negotiate for peace on United States terms. According to the Pentagon Papers, the Chinese were correct in their assumption because of Johnson's unusual expression of the secrecy motive. The speech, says the analyst, masked unstated conditions for peace that "were not 'compromise' terms, but more akin to 'cease and desist' order that, from the DRV/VC [North Vietnamese and Vietcong] point of view, was tantamount to a demand for their surrender." As North Vietnamese diplomat May Van Bo put it, "In the present circumstances, to
negotiate would signify capitulation." Ironically, the enemy viewed negotiation the same way Johnson did.

In the swirl of hopeful talk of "negotiations" following the speech, Johnson's actual words had gotten lost. The President had never offered to "negotiate." His offer was for "unconditional discussions." Just as he had diffused the Panamanian crisis a year before, Johnson's offer for discussions promised only to talk, not to reach a settlement that the term "negotiation" implied. Besides, knowing that the North Vietnamese were winning the war and that discussions or negotiations meant only capitulation, Johnson felt that the enemy would refuse to do so.

Confiding with members of his staff at the time, Johnson admitted use of the secrecy motive, saying, "If I were Ho Chi Minh, I would never negotiate." China's response to the speech uncovered yet another disturbance hidden by President Johnson's secrecy. "While the United States trumpets peace by word of mouth," they said, "it is actually pushing on with preparations for expansion of the war." In addition, Hanoi claimed that Washington was using the "peace" label to conceal its aggression and the development program as a "carrot" to offset the "stick" of aggression. Filled with such phrases as "we will do only what is necessary" and "it became necessary to us to increase our response and to make attacks by air," the Johns Hopkins speech gave the public the impression that only the American air war continued in
Vietnam. In reality, however, ground troops had already landed on the beaches near Danang and more were on the way.

In late February, General William Childs Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam had requested two marine battalions to protect the American air base at Danang from which many of the Rolling Thunder missions were initiated. On February 26, with a minimum of debate, President Johnson approved the request and on March 8, 1965, 3500 U.S. marines splashed ashore at Danang. Although the landing was to be as low key as possible, the South Vietnamese arranged a greeting party for the marines. Grinning Vietnamese girls draped garlands of flowers around the necks of the soldiers and displayed a banner proclaiming: "Welcome to the Gallant Marines."85

On April 1, six days before the speech at Johns Hopkins, Ambassador Maxwell Taylor returned to Washington for high-level discussions on the progress of the war. At that time, the President decided to give Westmoreland two more marine battalions as well as eighteen to twenty thousand logistical troops. In addition, Johnson dictated a change in tactics for the soldiers. Agreeing with Westmoreland who argued that "a good offense is the best defense," the President consented to "search and destroy" missions in the area around Danang.86

According to George Reedy, Johnson could never trace a connection between public words and private actions.87 Even though these decisions marked a radical turn in U.S. policy,
Johnson claimed in a news conference following the meetings that he knew "of no far-reaching strategy that is being suggested or promulgated." Further, the use of ground troops was not mentioned in "Peace Without Conquest."

According to National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 328, the President asked that "premature publicity be avoided by all possible precautions," thus invoking the secrecy motive to protect the hierarchy of credibility.

The actions themselves should be taken as rapidly as practicable, but in ways that should minimize any appearance of sudden changes in policy, and official statements on these troop movements will be made only with the direct approval of the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Secretary of State. The President's desire is that these movements and changes should be understood as being gradual and wholly consistent with existing policy.

With a great deal of irony, again, the Chinese and the North Vietnamese could have told Americans more about U.S. military intentions than their own President, criticizing the Johnson speech as "full of lies and deceptions." As members of more primitive societies, the Asians likely viewed behavior as more credible than words. The North Vietnamese knew of U.S. troop movements while the American public did not. On the day following the speech, North
Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong reacted with his famous "Four Points," which enunciated the requirement of American evacuation before peace talks could begin. Further, the enemy viewed the acts of benevolence that Johnson found "impressive" with a great deal of distrust.

In the preceding cluster analysis of Johnson's speeches, "power" or "the wise application of modern technology" was found to be a primary means of achieving both "peace" and for "standing firm" in Vietnam. When the "stick" of Rolling Thunder failed, President Johnson turned to the "carrot" of his American billion dollar investment. Ironically, both shared a common goal (peace and order) and a common means: America's big technology.

According to Johnson, the use of technology as a carrot could "replace despair with hope, and terror with progress" and there was much to be done. Linking the pathos of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal to Vietnam, the President said, "A dam built across a great river is impressive" and "the vast Mekong River can provide food and water and power on a scale to dwarf even our own TVA." Further, the technological "wonders of modern medicine can be spread through villages where thousands die each year from lack of care." Schools could be built in order to "manage the process of development" and that "the sight of healthy children in a classroom is impressive."

In a testament to Johnson's personal hierarchic illusions, the President cited as evidence the vital role
technology played in the development of the Texas hill country.

In the countryside where I was born, and where I live, I have seen the night illuminated, and the kitchens warmed, and the homes heated, where once the cheerless night and the ceaseless cold held sway. And all this happened because electricity came to our area along the humming wires of the REA. Electrification of the countryside—yes, that, too, is impressive.

On the one hand, the offering of such "carrots" to the North Vietnamese can be seen as acts meant to redeem the President in the eyes of the enemy and the American public and to transfer the burden of peace onto the Vietnamese. According to Doris Kearns, Johnson was never an anonymous donor. "Rather, his was a most visible benevolence which reminded recipients at every turn of how much he had done for them." Giving, and therefore the offer of technological "carrots," "was a necessary part of a mission to reform, reshape, and thereby redeem."^90

On the other hand, Johnson's extension of American technology to Vietnam is exemplary of Burke's conception of "entelechy." Again, entelechy is the principle of perfection by which all members of a certain class define themselves. "Man's entelechy is technology," says Burke in that man redefines and tries to perfect himself through his

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own machines. At a certain point, however, Burke concludes that man becomes "rotten with perfection," his machines so perfected that they rot and destroy him. At such a point, technology is ironic.

The turning point of "Peace Without Conquest" occurred after the President had redefined world hierarchy and before the offer of economic development to Southeast Asia. "This war, like most wars," Johnson said, "is filled with terrible irony." The President then differentiated between the technology of the carrot, which the American nation believed to be "impressive," and the power of the stick, which he considered to be "witness to human folly." "The guns and the bombs, the rockets and the warships," he said, "are all symbols to human failure." So impressed was Johnson with his offering of "good" technology to the needy of Southeast Asia, on the helicopter flying back to Washington following the speech, the President leaned over and patted Bill Moyers' knee, saying, "Old Ho can't turn that down. Old Ho can't turn that down." Ho Chi Minh turned it down. While impressive to Lyndon Johnson, the promise of electricity not only illuminated the night and heated kitchens in east Texas but also carried his words around the world. The electric speed by which Johnson's speech brought world-wide social and political concerns together, in the words of Marshall McLuhan, "heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree." In Vietnam, the President's words only created
more tension, though, more anxiety toward western influence. Throughout the address, Johnson had portrayed the Vietnamese as unreasonable, underdeveloped, and unschooled. When electronic messages bring together East and West, the non-literate with the literate, and the irrational with the rational, the results are explosive. "The mere existence of a literate and industrial West," says McLuhan, "appears quite naturally as dire aggression to non-literate societies."94

Coupled with the rhetorically oriented "cold war," the North Vietnamese likely viewed all American machines and promises of technological development as weapons of invasion. As the President made Ho Chi Minh an offer he could not possibly refuse, the entelechial principle carried technology, in Burke's words, "to the end of the line" in Vietnam. To Johnson, "a dam built across a great river is impressive." To Ho Chi Minh, however, the same dam represented an act of war. As Johnson spoke, American marines carried out the logistics of NSAM 328 including an intensification of the air war. The President's "electrification of the countryside" certainly impressed the North Vietnamese in that it came in the form of B-52 bombers instead of by "humming wires." The distrust Johnson suffered with the Vietnamese as a result of his deceptions gives credence, in retrospect, to Prime Minister Pearson's urgings for a bombing halt to induce negotiations.
Irony and the "Arrogance of Power"

President Johnson's policy of the "carrot" and the "stick" was thus doomed to failure before its unveiling. The presence of "terrible irony" presented Johnson with the unique opportunity to identify with Ho Chi Minh, to form a cooperative effort among the world hierarchy, and to bring the opposing forces together for "unconditional discussions" and ultimately, peace.

The failure to take advantage of these ironic conditions can be found in Lyndon Johnson's lifelong attitude toward public speaking. "The difficulty," says George Reedy, "was his inability to see a public speech as anything other than a crowd pleaser." At the beginning of this analysis, Johnson's preoccupation with a new negative was noted and that "thou-shall-not criticize the President" had taken priority over "thou-shall-not attack the United States." Johnson failed to achieve the lofty goals of the Johns Hopkins speech because he never intended to. To understand this, a closer look at the concept of irony is needed.

Irony is a technique which deals with opposites. Johnson's terminology at the beginning of the speech clearly demarcated two opposing viewpoints in his hierarchy of reality. "True irony, humble irony," Burke says however, "is based upon a sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy, as one needs him, is indebted to him, is not merely outside him as an observer but contains him within, being
consubstantial with him." In irony there is
identification whereby diametrically opposed forces can be
brought together into a state of oneness. Johnson thus
needed Minh as much as he opposed him. By identifying with
Ho Chi Minh, by identifying South Vietnam with North
Vietnam, and by urging the members of the world hierarchy to
join together in a cooperative development program, the
burden of peace could be easily unloaded on the North
Vietnamese when they refused America's technology,
cooperation in the development program, and a part in
"unconditional discussions." Remember the President's
words: "If I were Ho Chi Minh, I would never negotiate."

Further, by expecting the communists to refuse such
"crowd pleasing" offers, Johnson portrayed himself as a
mortified martyr, transferred the burden of credibility onto
his critics, and diffused dissent against his Vietnam
policies. Every night, before he turned out the lights,
Johnson asked himself if he had done everything he could to
"bring peace and hope to all the peoples of the world." He
also told his audience to ask themselves the same question.
If they did, they would think of their President, doing all
he could. He had tried his best to bring the North
Vietnamese to the conference table. He had offered them a
billion dollars and all the marvelous technology America had
to offer. Yet, they had responded, as Johnson said ten days
later, with "tired names and slogans," and "a refusal to
talk."
As President Johnson failed to achieve the peaceful objectives of "Peace Without Conquest," he would also continue to fail in his military goals as well. The reason was the same: the inability to fully understand the "terrible irony" inherent in his contest with Ho Chi Minh. "True irony, however, irony that really does justify the attribute of 'humility,'" according to Burke, "is not 'superior' to the enemy." In his instinct to personalize the war in Vietnam, President Johnson thought he could achieve a certain political victory over Ho. In Halberstam's words, the President thought he could "find Ho's price, Ho's weakness, whether it was through bombing the North or through threatening to use troops and then offering Ho a lollipop, massive economic aid and regional development, a Mekong River Delta development project." Johnson thought he could give Ho Chi Minh "the treatment" as he gave it to senators and bureaucrats--standing face to face, imploring, cajoling, flattering, maybe threatening, putting the squeeze on him, touching him up a little bit, squeezing his small, thin arms with his massive hands--then Ho would see the light.

Exemplary of the basic hierarchic illusion regarding the Vietnamese, Johnson thought he could meet Minh on American terms. This was a grave mistake for it implied what Stroessinger calls, "the strategy of the strong against the weak." By offering Ho Chi Minh massive economic development, the President offered the North Vietnamese the
avoidance of pain, death, and material destruction. Such was a logical strategy for someone who feared pain, loved life, and owned a ranch in southeast Texas. For the first time in his life, though, Lyndon Johnson dealt with a true revolutionary, someone who could withstand pain, being "touched up," someone who was willing to die for his cause, and who did not care about "a little medical care, a rug on the floor, a picture on the wall, a little music in the house, and a place to take Molly and the grandchildren when he retires."

Such a person was beyond Johnson's comprehension. Ho Chi Minh appreciated and took advantage of irony. He shunned monuments, military uniforms, general's stars, and always preferred his simple tunic—the "black pajamas" that LBJ made fun of. Ho's tunic was symbolic of his appreciation for irony, for it allowed the person at the top of the North Vietnamese social hierarchy to walk humbly among the peasants, his own people.\textsuperscript{100}

In their own arrogance, Johnson and his American advisers fully expected the Vietnamese to roll over and die once the American soldier took the field. With all their technological firepower, their helicopters, their air support, their napalm, their dams, their schools, their hospitals, and "electrification of the countryside," the North Vietnamese would have to cave in. "Old Ho can't turn that down," Johnson said. Ho Chi Minh turned it down and in
the ultimate irony of all, turned world hierarchy upside down.

Conclusion

"Peace Without Conquest" was by far President Johnson's most important statement on the war in Vietnam to date. The analysis above reveals a tormented Johnson who sought to relieve domestic criticism while escalating the military war at the same time. Viewing the speech as a rhetoric of rebirth, the following conclusions can be made.

1. A new negative emerged in Johnson's Johns Hopkins address. The President's attempt to quell domestic criticism had become a priority by April, 1965 and was Johnson's primary purpose in giving the speech. "Thou-shall-not attack the United States" became a justification for the more important "thou-shall-not criticize the President or his policies." The primacy of the new negative was proven by the revelation that Johnson never thought the North Vietnamese would negotiate or accept his offers of economic development.

2. In order to support the new negative, President Johnson redefined the peace-aggression hierarchy of the world. For the first time since early 1964, he included the South Vietnamese and identified them with the god-terms of "peace," "democracy," and "freedom" thus linking them with the United States. At the same time, Johnson identified North Vietnam with Communist
China and associated the two nations with the devil-term of "aggression." A sharp division between the two groups constituted the majority of the hierarchy.

3. A tendency to over generalize caused Johnson and his Administration to replace the realities of the conflict in Vietnam with incorrect abstractions. This resulted in the practice of viewing the Vietnamese as Americans and judging them on the basis of American values. Since the American military code dictated that the South Vietnamese subordinates produce results at any cost, the lie became the norm and the U.S. intelligence network suffered. The Administration's decision-makers thus based many of their actions on illusions.

4. Abstractions and illusions within the peace-aggression hierarchy allowed Johnson to attempt a new strategy of controlling the war and maintaining order within both the peace-aggression hierarchy and the hierarchy of credibility. When Operation Rolling Thunder failed to do either, the President offered to take part in "unconditional discussions," identified North with South Vietnam based on economic need, and proposed the identification of all members of the world hierarchy through cooperation in an economic development program for Southeast Asia.

5. In rejecting his own hierarchy, Johnson created a burden of cooperation. Through the vehicle of
mortification, the President transferred this burden onto the North Vietnamese after explaining that he had done everything he could to help unite the world. Once again, Johnson used the North Vietnamese as scapegoats for the guilt produced by the burden of peace.

6. In a rhetoric of rebirth, Johnson offered the national audience choices between the effects of aggression and the works of peace—really no choice at all. Given the choice between life and death, the President announced that "we will choose life" and prevail "over the enemies within man, and over the natural enemies of all mankind." This rebirth of national goals and Presidential policy, though, was based on Johnson's hierarchic illusions of seeing all peoples as western or potential Americans.

7. The concept of "irony" played a central role in both Johnson's offering of discussions and an economic plan and their failure to be accepted by the North Vietnamese. It was "ironic," first of all that both Rolling Thunder and the economic development plan depended on the same agency for success: American technology. Because of this, both plans failed in that any introduction of western technology into the primitive Asian culture was seen as aggression.

Secondly, while the "terrible irony" of the war offered Johnson a chance to permanently redeem himself and his Administration through negotiations, the President
failed to take advantage of this unique opportunity. Johnson chose rather a temporary transfer of burdens to the enemy through scapegoating. President Johnson's hierarchic illusions kept him from seeing Ho Chi Minh as he really was and the American's own "arrogance of power" kept him from approaching the conflict with a sense of "humility" characteristic of any truly "ironic" situation.

In the end, Lyndon Johnson failed and Ho Chi Minh triumphed. The reasons for this failure were first chronicled in "Peace Without Conquest," thus making it the President's most important speech of the period. Johnson, though, had one more statement to make before the scores of flag-draped coffins began returning from Southeast Asia and the tragedy of Vietnam became apparent to the American public.
NOTES

2 Pentagon Papers, p. 320.
8 Halberstam, p. 627.
10 Karnow, p. 412.
12 Halberstam, p. 632.

15 *Pentagon Papers*, p. 383.

16 Karnow, p. 415.

17 Halberstam, p. 684.

18 Karnow, p. 410.

19 Halberstam, p. 758.

20 Turner, p. 123.


24 Halberstam, p. 450.


28 Halberstam, p. 645.
29 Halberstam, pp. 647-648.


31 Karnow, p. 418.


34 Halberstam, p. 757.

35 Turner, p. 118.

36 Turner, p. 125.

37 Turner, p. 115.


43 Burke, Rhetoric, p. 25.

44 Karnow, p. 321.
45 Goldman, p. 385.
46 Cited by Kearns, p. 101.
47 Halberstam, p. 354.
48 Wicker, p. 205.
49 Halberstam, p. 624.
50 Burke, Permanence, p. 6.
51 Halberstam, p. 259.
52 Halberstam, p. 668.
53 Halberstam, p. 476.
54 Stroessinger, p. 197.
55 Kearns, p. 73.
56 Stroessinger, p. 183.
57 Halberstam, p. 644.
58 Halberstam, pp. 643-644.
59 Ball, p. 359.
60 Ball, p. 387.
61 Kearns, pp. 98-99.
62 Goldman, p. 391.
63 Kearns, p. 159.
64 Goldman, p. 386.
66 Burke, Permanence, p. 289.
67 Halberstam, p. 366.

Turner, pp. 129-130.


Evans and Novak, p. 544.


*Pentagon Papers*, p. 388.


Turner, p. 124.

Karnow, p. 419.


Karnow, p. 416.

See Karnow, pp. 417-418.

Reedy, p. 12.
90 Kearns, p. 57.
91 Rueckert, pp. 262-263.
94 McLuhan, 299.
95 Reedy, p. 12.
97 Burke, Grammar, p. 514.
98 Halberstam, p. 532.
99 Stroessinger, p. 200.
100 Stroessinger, p. 199.
"Dear Mr. President:

In my humble way I am writing to you about the crisis in Vietnam. I have a son who is now in Vietnam. My husband served in World War II. Our country was at war, but now, this time, it is just something that I don't understand. Why?"

With this letter, President Lyndon Johnson opened his press conference on July 28, 1965. In an attempt to answer the questions of "a woman in the Midwest," the President revealed his failure thus far to rally support for his policies regarding Vietnam. In April, his concern for a seventeen nation appeal for negotiations was evident at the beginning of "Peace Without Conquest." Now, by giving primacy to the doubts of the common citizen, concern for his reputation, evident at Johns Hopkins, had intensified, rendering the hierarchy of credibility of utmost importance.

In the drama of human relations, according to Rueckert, all men have their burdens. Two principal types of burdens are guilt and identity. The ensuing guilt from North Vietnam's rejection of the world hierarchy and from the critics' rejection of the hierarchy of credibility has been discussed. In turn, Johnson's "burden of credibility," produced a "burden of identity"--a continuous struggle to project himself as a trustworthy President of the United States at the top of a credible, decision-making hierarchy.

More and more, as Johnson continued to face doubt and
criticism from greater segments of the American society, his "drama of the self in quest" became more important than the saving of South Vietnam from communism. That the defense of that "small and brave nation" played an integral role in that quest is unmistakable. Somehow, Johnson apparently felt he could find himself or "identify" himself with the presidency by preventing the loss of South Vietnam, by standing up to the communists. Later, the President told Doris Kearns, in effect, that the maintenance of order in the hierarchy of credibility depended almost entirely on his control over the peace-aggression hierarchy. "Everything I knew about history told me that if I got out of Vietnam and let Ho Chi Minh run through the streets of Saigon," he said, "there would follow in this country an endless national debate--a mean and disastrous debate, that would shatter my presidency, kill my administration, and damage our democracy." If South Vietnam fell to the communists, Johnson would say later in his press conference, "all will be swept away."

Living in the Past: Peace-Aggression

In answer to the questions asked in the opening letter, Johnson said he had already "discussed it fully in Baltimore in April [the Johns Hopkins speech], in Washington in May, in San Francisco in June." As if repeating the same justifications would work, the President chose the authority
of the scene to make his points saying, "Let me again, now, discuss it here in the East Room of the White House."

As noted in chapter five, Johnson returned to the world hierarchy of the past to define the requirements of a "lasting peace" at the time of the Tonkin Gulf attacks. In much the same manner, the President looked to the glories of his past in an attempt to define himself. "Three times in my lifetime, in two World Wars and in Korea," Johnson said, "Americans have gone to far lands to fight for freedom." Applying the lesson of Munich, the President claimed Americans "have learned at a terrible and a brutal cost that retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace."

Instead of addressing public doubts and possible criticism within the hierarchy of credibility, Johnson restated the question to fit his own purposes, asking, "Why must young Americans, born into a land exultant with hope and with golden promise, toil and suffer and sometimes die in such a remote and distant place?" The letter and much of the criticism at the time dealt with the public's inability to understand Vietnam policy. Yet, Johnson answered with the same ambiguous peace-aggression hierarchy on which his foreign policy and, in his mind, his identity as president, stood.

As in the past, the President associated the United States and South Vietnam with the god-term of "peace." It was the lesson that "weakness does not bring peace" that
brought the United States to Vietnam in the first place, Johnson said. America's technological power was "a very vital shield" and Americans themselves were "the guardians at the gate."

At the same time, Johnson continued to identify North Vietnam and China with the devil-term of "aggression." In announcing that "this is really war," the President claimed "it is guided by North Vietnam and it is spurred by Communist China." Their goal was "to conquer the South, to defeat American power, and to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism." Johnson said this dominion had "growing might" and "grasping ambition." This image of hierarchic "growth," claimed the President, "would certainly imperil the security [order or control] of the United States itself."

In keeping with his traditional approach of dealing with communist "aggression," Johnson chose a typically American response. When force did not work at Tonkin or with Operation Rolling Thunder, the President offered Ho Chi Minh a "carrot." When Johnson found out he could not buy peace in Southeast Asia, he answered once again with entelechial force--more, bigger, and better. "I have asked the Commanding General, General Westmoreland, what more he needs to meet this mounting aggression," the President said in his news conference. "He has told me. We will meet his needs."

President Johnson announced that he had ordered the Air Mobile Division and other forces to Vietnam raising American
fighting strength from 75,000 to 125,000 men. Additional men would be sent later. Three days earlier the President had said American success in Vietnam required "power," "power on land, power in the air, power wherever it is necessary."  

The entelechial impulse is very much evident in any military escalation. This was Johnson's response to "aggression." This was the President's way of maintaining order or control in the peace-aggression hierarchy and of "finding" himself. Johnson knew, though, that inherent to any escalation is a "terrible irony." In the words of a New York Times editorial, "the less effective it [escalation] proves, the more insistent become the demands to do more and more."  

Lyndon Johnson In Quest

Even though Johnson found solace in a vision of himself as a cold warrior, a flaw appeared in the safety of the peace-aggression hierarchy and its enforcement. While the President claimed that the lesson of Munich had brought the United States to Vietnam and that Americans had fought for freedom in three other far off wars, he admitted that the current struggle was "a different kind of war." A different war would have required a different policy or approach. A different policy would have required a different agent or president. Since Johnson felt he was dealing with a
"different kind of war," it is apparent that he had not really "found" himself in the persona of a cold warrior.

According to Rueckert, the searcher for the self often "finds what seems to be his proper self, defines himself in those terms, and begins to act. It soon becomes apparent, however, that this is not the true self." Given the importance of Johnson's hierarchy of credibility, his quest for peace in the peace-aggression hierarchy could not have left the President at "peace" with himself.

The control and order with which Johnson came away from his Baltimore speech in April was only temporary. Following the North Vietnamese rejection of the "billion dollar American investment" and offers of "unconditional discussions," the bombing continued and so did public dissent. Within the Administration, only George Ball, Under Secretary of State, remained to argue forcefully for a U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. In a memorandum circulated exactly one month prior to the President's announced escalation, Ball stated that the United States could not avoid losing face before its Asian allies if it negotiated its way out of Vietnam. The loss in prestige, Ball claimed, would be of only short term duration. Johnson read the memo one weekend at Camp David and was deeply affected by it. Ball's "cold-blooded analysis," says Berman, may have even caused the President to question whether or not to make a major military commitment to South Vietnam.
Other members of the Administration saw Ball's dissent not as insightful but as a challenge to the President's credibility. In order to maintain order in the hierarchy of his own administration, President Johnson followed the consensus of the paper trail on his desk which included recommendations for escalation from the secretary of defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Westmoreland, and, perhaps most important, Ball's superior, the secretary of state.®

Ball persisted throughout the month of July, though, and finally received one last chance to make an appeal before the President on the twenty-first. On that day, Johnson began a week long series of meetings described by Bill Moyers as "a thorough and penetrating review of the many facets of the situation in South Vietnam."® The discussions, however, resulted from the President's motive of secrecy. Receiving great publicity, Johnson used the conferences, in the words of the New York Times, "to prepare the country psychologically for a stepped-up United States military effort in Vietnam."® Further, the paper said the meetings were held in an atmosphere of "urgency and secrecy"® and that there was "daily official emphasis on the secrecy by which the President has bound the participants to reveal no details of the conferences."® Ultimately, Evans and Novak emphasize the control the President had over the hierarchy of his administration at the time. "Johnson never had been more authoritative, more
restrained, or more in control of the debate than he was during that fateful week."\textsuperscript{13}

Unfortunately, Johnson planned the meetings for the psychological benefit of himself and his advisers as well---especially Ball. The President had sent Secretary of Defense McNamara to Saigon the previous week for a review of the American military situation. On July 17, the secretary received a cable from his deputy, Cyrus Vance, reporting that the President had decided to go ahead with General Westmoreland's request for an additional forty-four battalions. On the first day of conferences back in Washington, representatives from all parts of the Administration patiently listened to McNamara's report on the situation in Vietnam. Most of them did not know of Johnson's decision because the President still wanted debate on the issue---something he felt a president ought to do. That afternoon, Ball argued for well over an hour for withdrawal. His attempts were fruitless, however. Johnson merely used the occasion to give the impression that every alternative had been considered.\textsuperscript{14} In the search for himself, the President wanted everyone to think that he had patiently listened to all sides.

Dissent continued on Capitol Hill as well during the summer of 1965. The White House had been taking soundings from the Congress as to its response to a major military commitment. Most Democratic Senators who did not speak out in favor of the President, said they did not want to
encourage any expansion of the war. Members of the "peace bloc" attacked Johnson's policies as vociferously as ever. "No doubt about it," Senator Wayne Morse said upon hearing Johnson was to address the nation with his findings of the policy review, "we are galloping toward a major, massive war in Asia." An addition to the "peace bloc" most disturbing to Johnson was that of Senator J. W. Fulbright. A strong supporter of Johnson's "Great Society" and a man who ushered the Southeast Asia Resolution through the Senate, Fulbright had been a reluctant critic of Vietnam policy. When the President sent marines to the Dominican Republic in late April, the Senator bitterly attacked the action claiming Johnson had acted on misinformation. According to Turner, this marked a breaking point in the relationship and Fulbright henceforth felt less constrained to criticize the President's foreign policy.

The day before the address, Johnson called congressional leaders to the White House to brief them on his intentions. In previous meetings that summer, the President had been extremely careful to call on the "hawks" of Capitol Hill first, especially if Senator Mike Mansfield and Fulbright were there together. This way the burden of proof fell on those who wanted to justify a way out of Vietnam, rather than a way in. Again, Johnson fostered the appearance of listening to all sides.

The Republicans in Congress generally called on the President with two requests. Senator Everett Dirksen urged
the President to give a nationally televised speech on his findings saying the public should be fully informed as to the nature of the commitment. Senator Gerald Ford asked that Johnson obtain congressional approval before calling up the reserves. Both of these suggestions had been avoided all summer by the President due to his secrecy motive. It was generally felt in the Administration that either a national address or a decision to activate the reserves would have set off an intense debate in the Senate damaging Johnson's domestic support and giving the international community the impression that the nation did not stand behind its president.

Even though the President delivered a nationally televised speech on July 28, he prepared the Congress and the general public for what was to come with the publicity surrounding his policy review. In addition, Johnson insisted that the speech take place at mid-day, when the television audience would be much smaller. In contrast with the sixty million that watched his address at Johns Hopkins, only twenty-eight million viewed the news conference on July 28. In an attempt to avoid discussion and subsequent criticism over the use of reserve forces, Johnson merely decided not to use them. "After this past week of deliberations," the President said in his news conference, "I have concluded that it is not essential to order Reserve units into service now." By downplaying the announcement and by sidestepping the opposition, this speech clearly
lacked the "evangelizing tendency" that Burke says usually accompanies experiences of rebirth. Lyndon Johnson was still clearly searching for himself.

The quest had by this time become a spiraling struggle and all of Johnson's efforts to avoid criticism and enhance his own credibility turned into an irony more terrible than the war itself. "In deciding not to mobilize the Reserves, not to seek a congressional resolution or declaration of national emergency, not to present the program in a prime-time address to Congress or to the nation," Berman points out, "the president's credibility soon came unraveled."22 In his paranoia to control the hierarchy of credibility, the secrecy motive eventually negated what order existed. In his search for himself, those aspects he had apparently "found," disappeared and he was left with nothing to hang on to.

By attempting to be a consensus president, a president for all the people, Johnson reached up the hierarchy toward perfection. The entelechial motive goaded the President to reach for it all. Due to what Berman has called Johnson's "greatest fault as a political leader," the President feared the loss of his precious domestic legislation if he emphasized foreign over domestic policy or vice versa. Instead, says Berman, "he sought a pragmatic guns-and-butter solution for avoiding what he believed would have surely been a divisive national debate in order temporarily to protect his Great Society."23
Events in Vietnam also contributed to the hierarchic, spiraling effect of Johnson's quest. Quoting Emerson, George Ball warned Johnson that once certain commitments were made, the United States would not be able to pull out of Vietnam, saying, "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." Unfortunately, President Johnson did not listen to Ball. In March, Johnson had sent "my boys" to protect "my planes." By April, he sent more of "my boys" to protect the "boys" who were already there to protect "my planes."

Late that month, military intelligence confirmed the presence of a regular North Vietnamese regiment in the Kontum province and by mid-June, according to the Pentagon Papers, a "Vietcong summer offensive was in full stride." On June 12, another coup toppled the South Vietnamese Government and on July 1, the Vietcong launched another mortar attack on the Danang airbase. Although there were few casualties, world-wide publicity pointed to the failure of American technology to stop the aggression and to the continued vulnerability of American bases.

In late July, President Johnson found himself back where he had started in February. South Vietnam was on the brink of collapse and something had to be done quickly--in Washington. Two glaring exceptions faced the President though. Unlike his alternatives in the aftermath of Pleiku in which Johnson ordered the initiation of Operation Rolling Thunder, the President did not have the option of "touching Ho up a bit" with "air action." That option had failed.
Secondly, the American casualty list grew daily inducing not only public nervousness but also Johnson's determination that their suffering not be in vain. According to George Reedy, "this meant that the United States had to 'win' in order to vindicate its casualties." In other words, the President felt he had to send "more boys" to atone for the deaths of "my boys." Coupled with his "solemn pledge," Johnson concluded in his press conference: "We just cannot now dishonor our word, or abandon our commitment, or leave those who believed us and who trusted us to the terror and repression and murder that would follow."

President Johnson felt not only the pressure of events and his critics but the judgment of history as well. On the day he disposed of George Ball's dissent, the President reminded his closest advisers that the historians were going to write books about his and their decisions. "They are going to write stories about this like they did in the Bay of Pigs," Johnson said. "That is why I want you to think carefully, very, very carefully about alternatives and plans." Reedy says one of the President's greatest fears was becoming "the first president ever to lose a war" in American history.

Outsiders saw a tormented man in July of 1965, in search of a policy that would work which, for Johnson, equaled a search for himself. "I think that period was the most anguished I ever saw," said Reedy. "He wanted to do anything, anything rather than send more troops." The
morning of the news conference, John Sparkman says Johnson sought assurance up to the very last minute. "If I ever saw a man literally torn to pieces, it was he that morning," recounts Sparkman. "He asked each one—he went around the fifteen or twenty of us who were there, and said, 'What would you advise?'"31 Here was the pragmatic president, in the pragmatic country in the pragmatic century and he could not maintain control of a "fourth-rate, little piss-ant country." As a result, with dissent among members of his administration, with the numbers of the congressional "peace bloc" growing by the day, with a skeptical press, with a steady increase in national bewilderment, with the arrival of more and more body bags from Vietnam, and with a failing foreign policy, Lyndon Johnson felt he was no president at all and in search of himself. Further, he did not know where to start looking. As Johnson told Bill Moyers at the time, "I feel like a hitchhiker caught in a hailstorm on a Texas highway. I can't run. I can't hide. And I can't make it stop."32

Guilt, Identity, and the Irony of Dying: "I know them all."

As Lyndon Johnson searched for a workable policy in Vietnam and thus for a successful presidential role, the presence of guilt in his opening statement on July 28 was evident. Guilt appeared once again in the form of the burdens of peace and credibility, now no longer separate but
intertwined and dependent on one another just as their respective hierarchies had become.

Johnson, in his torment, realized to a certain degree that the application of himself as a cold warrior would not be adequate in the summer of 1965. Given his sensitivity to criticism and public opinion, something else was needed for success—at least for the appearance of success. According to Rueckert, when the search for the self reaches a point where the true self is not found in the present persona, "a gradual, agonizing in-turning" occurs culminating in the loss of the self.33 The initial steps of this "in-turning" resulted from the President's burdens of peace and credibility and materialized in a series of statements which mixed war with peace, aggression with goodwill, etc.

The burden of peace, of course, was evident in Johnson's orders to send an additional fifty thousand men to Vietnam to maintain order within that hierarchy. The soldiers were there "to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms or by superior power." In addition, said Johnson, steps were being taken to "substantially increase" the effort of the South Vietnamese on the battlefield.

Along side this burden, though, was the burden of credibility. While it was necessary to send fifty thousand troops to Vietnam and increase the monthly draft from seventeen thousand to thirty-five thousand, Johnson concluded that "it is not essential to order Reserve units
into service now," thus avoiding congressional debate. If that necessity arose, the President said he would give the matter "most careful consideration." Since some congressional members had voiced concern over the expansion of the war, Johnson sent Secretaries Rusk and McNamara to the Congress to increase accountability with the "peace-bloc." "I have asked them to be able to answer the questions of any Member of Congress," Johnson said.

Johnson sought to transfer the burdens of peace and credibility to the North Vietnamese by mixing the images of the "battlefield" and the "conference table." "I have stated publicly, again and again," the President said, "America's willingness to begin unconditional discussions with any government, at any place, at any time." Johnson claimed that fifteen efforts had been made with the help of forty nations throughout the world, "but there had been no answer" from the communists. In offering a "carrot" to both North Vietnam and domestic war critics, the President said he was ready to discuss North Vietnam's "Four Points," a peace plan initiated by the communists after the Johns Hopkins address: "We are ready to discuss their proposals and our proposals and any proposals of any government whose people may be affected, for we fear the meeting room no more than we fear the battlefield."

While Johnson's offers appeared to be "unconditional," the President made it clear that North Vietnam must become "identified" with the United States before discussions could
take place. The enemy first had to realize, like the United States, that "aggression" was not the answer. "Once the Communists know, as we know, that a violent solution is impossible," Johnson said, "then a peaceful solution is inevitable." The only way to prove this point to the North Vietnamese, though, was for the United States to use aggressive means. War was thus necessary for "unconditional discussions." "We are going to persist," continued the President, "if persist we must, until death and desolation have led to the same conference table where others could now join us at a much smaller cost."

The entelechial motive had once again reached the point of irony. Johnson had become "rotten with perfection" in proposing the use of military aggression in order to attain peace through negotiation. To the President, the conference table depended on the battlefield for its importance just as Johnson depended on Ho Chi Minh for a scapegoat. As a result, the mortification from the deaths of "my boys" on the battlefields of Vietnam could ritualistically transform Lyndon Johnson from a cold warrior president to a president of moderation and restraint, transfer the burden of peace onto Ho Chi Minh, and the burden of credibility onto his critics.

The President's "agonizing in-turning" became sharper in the last section of the speech as mortification took place resulting in a redefined self and ultimately, rebirth. By adding what Johnson called "a personal note" to the
speech, the President drew attention to the personal quest that the issue of Vietnam had become. Revealing his torment, Johnson said he "did not find it easy to send the flower of our youth, our finest young men, into battle."

With every form of victimage, however, whether it be scapegoating or mortification, a symbolic sacrifice is involved. Johnson, the cold warrior, could symbolically die alongside "his boys" in Vietnam if he could "identify" closely with them. Even though a major portion of the President's speech dealt with the divisions of the peace-aggression hierarchy, Johnson linked himself with the soldiers in order to become a president of restraint and bring together the divisions of the hierarchy of credibility.

I have spoken to you today of the divisions and the forces and the battalions and the units, but I know them all, every one. I have seen them in a thousand streets, of a hundred towns, in every state of this Union--working and laughing and building, and filled with hope and life. I think I know, too, how their mothers weep and how their families sorrow. This is the most agonizing and the most painful duty of your President.
Rebirth: "And now I am the President."

As the old self dies, a new one is born and the President's statement reflected this transformation. While Johnson filled the first part of his statement with images of "standing firm," the latter sections revealed acts of restraint. All of the steps announced in the speech, Johnson said, were "carefully measured to do what must be done to bring an end to aggression and a peaceful settlement." In reference to America's technological superiority which made escalation possible, the President said, "we will not surrender and we will not retreat," but at the same time, we will not "bluster or bully or flaunt our power." While "we insist and we will always insist that the people of South Vietnam shall have the right of choice, the right to shape their own destiny in free elections," Johnson said "we do not seek the destruction of any government, nor do we covet a foot of any territory."

Following the week of consultations at the White House, President Johnson had sought to gain approval for his actions from those he needed approval from the most: critics. On July 27, the first of these groups, congressional leaders, attended a briefing in which Johnson carefully outlined the alternatives he had been faced with. The first choice was to blast the North off the face of the earth with bombers. Far from being a Curtis LeMay (who had advocated, "Bombing the chinks into the stone age"), the President said he had been painstakingly cautious about
Chinese intervention from the north, personally approving which targets were to be bombed and the many more to be avoided.35 "They can't bomb the smallest shithouse without my approval," Johnson boasted. The second choice was simply to pack up and go home. But this was just like the Alamo: "someone had to go to their aid." A third was to "hold the line" in our present positions, maybe lose more territory and suffer more casualties. The President countered, however, "You wouldn't want your boy to be out there crying for help and not get it." The fourth choice was to ask the Congress for great sums of money, to call up the reserves and go on a wartime footing. In doing this, though, Johnson said North Vietnam would turn to China and Russia and receive even more aid than the U.S. gave to the South. The fifth choice was the best choice of all. This choice allowed Lyndon Johnson to do all the things called for in the fourth choice but with secrecy attached, without alarming everyone to the idea that America was becoming involved in a land war in Asia. This choice called for the expansion of the war without going on a wartime footing, to give the commanders what they needed. This was the correct choice, the centrist, moderate one. As Halberstam noted afterward, "only Lyndon Johnson could go to war and be centrist and moderate."36

Nonetheless, the President's decision to redefine himself as a president of restraint seemed to please the congressmen. Tom Wicker of the New York Times said after
the speech that it had been the reluctance of Democratic Senators to accept a great expansion of the war that kept Johnson from announcing stronger action in the first place. The President thus formulated the right message for the right audience to have the desired effect. In addition, representatives said Johnson's choice would find favor with the country as a whole. Republican George D. Aiken, an influential member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said this alternative "won't satisfy those who have been advocating a great expansion of the war or those who say 'get out, lock, stock, and barrel.' Under the circumstances," the Senator continued, "the President's middle course will find general acceptance throughout the country and will probably be more conducive to ultimate peace than a more extreme statement would have been."38

The only group dissatisfied with Johnson's restraint were those actually fighting the war for peace. Many officers told Hanson Baldwin of the New York Times that the slow pace of the expansion thus far had barely compensated for the deterioration of the U.S./South Vietnam military position. They feared that America was doing "too little, too late."39 As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, though, the negative of "thou-shall-not criticize the President" along with the hierarchy of credibility had become much more important than the "thou-shall-not attack" of the peace-aggression hierarchy. In short, President Johnson gave salience to the domino theory only as it
pertained to the falling dominoes of his Administration, not to the countries of Southeast Asia.

For the moment, though, he had pulled it off, adopting what Goldman called the "dawk" policy—halfway between the doves and the hawks. It was good for the country and, better yet, politically sound. The country breathed a sigh of relief. Johnson acted with restraint. The country was not going to war—or so it seemed. According to Evans and Novak, the President acted as he always had in the Senate, "refusing to make an all-out commitment to one side or the other, keeping all paths open." This was not the Senate, however. This was war, but the President was talking peace; this was guns, but the President still wanted guns and butter.

In his search for himself, Johnson always came back to the Great Society. It was as if Johnson and the Great Society were one. Since the hierarchy of credibility, his administration, his presidency, and his own identity depended on the conflict in Vietnam, so the Great Society would stand or fall with the war's outcome as well. In addition to knowing the suffering and sorrow, Johnson said there was "something else" in his personal note. "When I was young, poverty was so common that we didn't know it had a name," he said. "An education was something that you had to fight for, and water was really life itself."

Remembering this, Johnson proclaimed the end of his quest for the self: "And now I am the President."
said it was now his "opportunity to help every child get an education, to help every Negro and every American citizen have an equal opportunity, to have every family get a decent home, and to help bring healing to the sick and dignity to the old." Since his identity depended on "victory" in Vietnam, the President identified himself (the Great Society) with Vietnam as he had done at Johns Hopkins—even though the technological irony of "electrification of the countryside" was more evident with the introduction of fifty thousand more soldiers and more materiel.

As battle rages, we will continue as best we can to help the good people of South Vietnam enrich the condition of their life, to feed the hungry and to tend the sick, and teach the young, and shelter the homeless, and to help the farmer to increase his crop, and the worker to find a job.

All of these things, the new President said, were "what I have lived for, that is what I have wanted all my life since I was a little boy." All of these things, were what Johnson was reborn to do and their success, his identity as a paternal provider, depended on the fight in Vietnam.

I do not want to see all those hopes and all those dreams of so many people for so many years now drowned in the wasteful ravages of cruel wars... But I also know, as a realistic public servant, that as long as there are men who hate and
destroy, we must have the courage to resist, or we will see it all, all that we have built, all that we hope to build, all of our dreams for freedom—all, all will be swept away on the flood of conquest.

Speaking to a colleague at the time, Johnson voiced his dependence on Vietnam in more parochial terms. "If I don't go in now and they show later I should have gone, then they'll be all over me in Congress," the President said. "They won't be talking about my civil rights bill, or education, or beautification. No sir, they'll push Vietnam up my ass every time. Vietnam. Vietnam. Vietnam. Right up my ass."42

In answer to this challenge, Johnson ended his statement proclaiming, "This shall not happen. We will stand in Vietnam." The President could have confidence in this statement due to his new identity. Again, however, in redefining himself as a president of restraint, Johnson failed to consider the alternatives down the road as he had failed to do at Tonkin Gulf. The next time the military situation or the domestic political climate called for a change in policy or a redefining of the presidential persona (a continued search for the self), his alternatives would be even more restricted, having used the "moderate, centrist" option in July of 1965. What alternatives would he have then, and the time after that, and the time after that? This, Johnson did not consider. His "finding" of himself
was again temporary due to the fact that Johnson had really not come to terms with himself or policy in Vietnam.

According to Rueckert, as a new self is found, the searcher continues "equipped with some knowledge he did not previously have." Johnson's redefinition of himself was not new or unexpected, however. In attempting to find a workable policy in Vietnam, the President clearly looked for a successful persona to present to the American people. By softening his escalation decisions via the secrecy motive, Johnson returned to the familiar theme of "restraint" that was present in both the Syracuse and Johns Hopkins addresses. Extending the Great Society to the third world also reflected his "billion dollar American investment."

In short, Lyndon Johnson took nothing away from July 28, 1965 that he did not know already. In the quest for himself, the President had not yet considered the possibility that this policy too would fail. He had not yet considered the possibility that a president of restraint could fail. Coupled with his unspoken belief in pragmatism and "action," the can-do president figured like the others in his Administration that if they kept their shoulders to the wheel long enough, old Ho would give in. Despite all the gloomy predictions rolling in from trained analysts in the field, Johnson shared a staunch faith with his advisers that somehow everything would turn out alright.

By focusing almost exclusively on the domestic political effects of the decision, Johnson's search for
himself neglected those aspects of the presidency regarding foreign policy. "Restraint" and the Great Society were short-term domestic concerns that had little or nothing to do with the Vietnamese—no matter how hard Johnson tried to make them apply. Because of the importance the President attached to Vietnam, it is surprising that he did not find a part of himself that was willing to deal with Vietnam as a foreign war instead of a domestic barnstorming tour. This only led to failure—failure to find himself, failure to convince his critics, and failure in Vietnam.

So, the quest continued. Almost every night for five months after the July 28 announcement, the President failed to sleep. Inevitably, he found his way to the White House situation room well past midnight to learn the results of the engagements between the Americans and the Vietcong. How many planes had been shot down? Did they rescue any of "my boys"? Lyndon Johnson was still a deeply troubled president.

Conclusion

The decisions made by the Johnson Administration during July of 1965 defined the temper of American political life in the 1960s. The President's announcement of these decisions, though, was far from momentous. Softening his statements with a veil of secrecy, Johnson feared negative reaction to his decision to escalate the war in Vietnam. The curious manner in which the President led the country
into war has been revealed by this study with the following conclusions.

1. In order to justify his decision to send an additional fifty thousand troops to Vietnam, President Johnson relied on the peace-aggression hierarchy that American presidents had used, including himself, during the cold war era. The existence of this hierarchy not only called for the maintenance of order or control through the use of force but also succeeded in identifying Johnson's persona as that of a classic cold warrior.

2. In addition to the burdens of peace and credibility that Johnson had been carrying since the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin, a burden of identity began to emerge as the President became more tormented by and unsure of his policy in Vietnam. As he had done at Johns Hopkins, Johnson transferred the burden of peace onto the North Vietnamese and the burden of credibility onto his critics by offering to "talk anywhere, anytime, to anyone" about "our proposals, their proposals, or anyone's proposals."

3. Because the President announced that the conflict in Vietnam was "a different kind of war," the situation called for a different kind of president. Facing a mounting wave of protest over the war, Johnson needed more than a cold warrior persona in order to define himself as a successful president. Dissent, criticism,
and failure in Vietnam made Johnson feel like no
president at all. Events, history, and his own secrecy
motive made Johnson's quest for himself a spiraling
struggle.
4. Once again, irony allowed the President to purify
his guilt and redefine his identity through the vehicle
of mortification. By identifying with "his boys" in
the field, Johnson used their suffering to "die" and,
in turn, emerge with a new identity.
5. Reborn as a president of restraint, escalation of
the war in Vietnam did not seem like war to the
American people at all. Johnson had scored yet another
short-term, domestic political victory--one that would
come back to haunt him. By defining himself as a
president of restraint and the curator of the Great
Society, Johnson neglected the needs of the foreign war
in Vietnam. This spelled failure not only in his
domestic quest but also on the battlefield. The
President's search for himself thus continued.

In closing out the first chapter of America's tragedy
in Vietnam, President Johnson said, "We will stand in
Vietnam." Few could foresee at the time that such a stand
would initiate such a climactic fall for a nation and a
president.
NOTES


6 Rueckert, p. 108.


8 Berman, 145.


14 See Berman, pp. 99-128.


22 Berman, pp. 146-147.

23 Berman, 150.

25 Pentagon Papers, 409.


28 Berman, p. 118, emphasis Berman's.

29 Reedy, p. 148.


31 Miller, p. 417.


33 Rueckert, p. 108.

34 Ball, p. 410.

35 Evans and Novak, pp. 538-539.

36 Halberstam, pp. 727-728.


41 Evans and Novak, p. 550.

42 Halberstam, p. 643.

43 Rueckert, p. 109.
44 Evans and Novak, p. 553.
CONCLUSION

The decade of the 1960s marked a turning point in the history of post World War II America. The presidency of Lyndon Baines Johnson took place during five pivotal years in the middle of that decade. His administration initiated the policies that set in motion a myriad of socio-political forces that changed the way Americans viewed themselves and the world. The effects of his social legislation and his policies in Vietnam are still felt today.

The driving force behind Johnson's domestic and foreign policies was technology. Its prevalence in the western world allowed Americans to reach into unfamiliar realms of their own land and the world through the technology of communication. The result was a heightened sensitivity to the point of anxiety. With the presidency of Lyndon Johnson, Americans seemed to lose their innocence. They began to realize that the people who lived in tar-paper shacks on the other side of the tracks were Americans too, that the so-called international conspirators who lived in bamboo huts on the other side of the world were human, that American soldiers don't always pass out chewing gum, and that American presidents don't always wear white hats and tell the truth.

Within two years of Johnson's move into the Oval Office, all of these changes had begun to take place and the President's rhetoric played a central role in the
transformation. This study has attempted to bring into focus some of the words and symbols that we now associate with the rhetorical blur of the 1960s. As critics, we, along with the rest of the world, are forced to view history and reality through Burke's "fog of symbols." Our duty is to help man realize he is looking through this fog and that he tends to perfect himself and the world through the symbolic use of language. With President Johnson's example before us, it is evident that the entelechial process can often have disastrous results.

In Part I of this study, the fog surrounding President Johnson's symbols of Vietnam was lifted with the use of a cluster analysis. Johnson's verbal acts were clustered together to produce a variety of equations charting meaning, intentions, and ultimately motives in the President's rhetoric. Part II analyzed the larger symbolic meaning of the verbal acts as they produced a rhetoric of rebirth for Johnson. The following concordance is a compilation of equations and their relationship with symbolic meaning. The emerging patterns reveal Johnson's perception of what particular agents did, in certain situations, using specific means, for a single purpose. The patterns also reveal how certain parts of the dramatistic pentad can be stressed for the purpose of redemption or rhetorical rebirth.

The concordance also reveals what Burke calls the "particular recipe of overstressings and understressings peculiar to the given institutional structure." These
patterns show the tendency of the Johnson Administration, if not the American government, the United States, and perhaps our culture at the time, to see the Vietnam conflict in terms of this particular recipe and to use such terms as symbolic acts in justifying policy.

The equations are grouped around the symbolic "god-terms" that emerged during the cluster analysis. Each cluster takes the form of the "arrow," progressing from one symbolic point to another. In this way, a sense of process emerges in Johnson's rhetoric always moving toward the goal of redemption or rebirth.

The God-term of "Peace"

From The Symbolic Negative: Thou-Shall-Not Make War

Act: "that they resolve their differences peacefully," and:

Symbolic Negative: Thou-Shall-Not Criticize the President

Act: "we are joining those 17 countries and stating our American policy tonight which we believe will contribute toward peace in this area of the world," to:

The Symbolic Place of America in World Hierarchy

Scene: "this quiet campus," "bursting with opportunity and promise," "exultant with hope and with golden promise," "serene atmosphere," equals:
Agent: "sentinel of peace," "readiness for peace," and "flower of our youth," "working and laughing and building, and filled with hope and life," equals:

Act: "do all that strengthens the hope of peace," "preserve their freedom," and "we dream of an end to war" equals:

Agency: "air action," and "full exchange of views," equals:

Purpose: "peace," "to survive and prosper in freedom," "to prevail over the enemies within man," "Peace is the only purpose of the course that America pursues" and "we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny," and:

Symbolic Place of North Vietnam in World Hierarchy

Scene: "not a serene or peaceful place," and:

Symbolic Place of Communist China in World Hierarchy

Act: "destroyed freedom," to:

Symbolic Maintenance of Order (Entelechy)

Act: "retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace," "raise our fighting strength from 75,000 to 125,000 men," equals:

Agency: "we have answered this aggression with action," "air units of the United States Seventh Fleet," "armed," "appropriate," "a much more massive effort," "greatly expanded cooperative effort for development," "billion dollar American
investment," "program to make available our farm surpluses," "we have the power and . . . the opportunity to make that dream come true," "a dam built across a great river is impressive," "wonders of modern medicine," "electrification of the countryside," "a very vital shield," to:

Symbolic Burden of Peace

Agent: "for 10 years three American presidents . . . and the American people have been actively concerned with threats to the peace and security of the peoples of Southeast Asia," to:

Symbolic Scapegoat for the Burden of Peace

Agent: "swift peace in the hands of others besides ourselves," and:

Symbolic Mortification for the Burden of Peace

Act: "there can be no doubt about the responsibilities of nations that are devoted to peace" and "peace requires that we and all our friends stand firm against the present aggressions of the government of North Vietnam."

The Devil-term of "Aggression"

From The Symbolic Negative: Thou-Shall-Not Attack the United States

Scene: "hitherto shall thou come but no further," equals:
Act: "the United States destroyer Maddox was attacked," equals:
Agency: "by hostile vessels of the Government of North Vietnam," and:
Symbolic Negative: Thou Shall Not Make War
Act: "North Vietnam has attacked the independent nation of South Vietnam," to:
Symbolic Place of America in World Hierarchy
Scene: "will be a disorderly planet for a long time," "forces of the modern world are shaking old ways," "for centuries nations have struggled among each other," "this is really war," and:
Symbolic Place of North Vietnam in World Hierarchy
Scene: "Vietnam is far away," "remote and distant place," "dirty and brutal and difficult," "Vietnam’s steaming soil," "not a serene or peaceful place," "conflict torn," "very dangerous," "serious," "death," "desolation," "war strained" and "the world as it is," equals:
Agent: "hostile," "the infirmities of man,"

Act: "deliberate, willful, and systematic aggression,"
"aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed,"
"To the south it is engaged in aggression against the Republic of Vietnam. To the west it is engaged in aggression against the Kingdom of Laos. To the east it has now struck out . . . in an act of aggression against the United States of America," "North Vietnam has attacked the independent nation of South Vietnam," "assassination and kidnapping," "strangled in the night," "ravaged by sneak attack," "terror strikes," "create division," "renewed hostile actions," "attempt to envelop," "explode their bombs," "hitting our compounds at 2 o'clock in the morning," "the cruel course of battle," "acts of violence," "intensified terrorists actions," "men must still die," "combat operations," and "large-scale raids," equals:

Purpose: "fight for territory and colonies" "total conquest" "to show that American commitment is worthless" and "to conquer the South, to defeat American power, and to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism," and:

Symbolic Place of Communist China in World Hierarchy

Agent: "old enemy," "deepening shadow," and "forces of violence on almost every continent," equals:

Act: "attacked," "condemned," and "aggression in Korea," and "destroyed freedom," equals:

Agency: "war . . . spurred by Communist China,"

equals:

Purpose: "aggressive purposes" to:
Symbolic Burden of Credibility

Act: "the attacks were deliberate," and "the attacks were unprovoked," to:

Symbolic Scapegoat for the Burden of Peace

Act: "Maddox was attacked," "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you," and "aggression unchallenged is aggression unleashed," equals:

Agency: "by hostile vessels of the Government of North Vietnam."

The God-term of "Stand Firm"

From The Symbolic Negative: Thou-Shall-Not Criticize the President

Purpose: "there are those who say that all our effort there will be futile," "there are those who wonder why we have a responsibility there," and "there is no end to that argument until all the nations of Asia are swallowed up," and:

Symbolic Negative: Thou-Shall-Not Attack the United States

Scene: "hitherto shall thou come but no further," and:

Symbolic Negative: Thou-Shall-Not Break Agreements

Purpose: "that the governments of Southeast Asia honor the international agreements which apply in the area," and:

Symbolic Negative: Thou-Shall-Not Make War

Purpose: "that those governments leave each other alone," to:
Symbolic of World Hierarchy

Scene: "small and turbulent world" "not a serene or peaceful place," "conflict torn," "very dangerous," "serious," "death," "desolation," "will be a disorderly planet for a long time," "forces of the modern world are shaking old ways," "for centuries nations have struggled among each other," "this is really war," and "war strained" and:

Symbolic Place of America in World Hierarchy

Agent: "patience as well as bravery," "conviction," "determination," "not weary," "firmness to defend," "strength to support firmness," "outrage," "indignation," "courage," and "most powerful," equals:

Purpose: "our generation has a dream," "our own security," "the safety and well-being of our country," "to reach our own goals in our own land," "we fight for values and we fight for principles," "to work out their own destinies in their own way," and "we must fight if we are to live in a world where every country can shape its own destiny," to:

Symbolic Maintenance of Order (Entelechy)

Act: "Americans and Asians are dying," "acted at once," "we will do everything necessary," "continue to persist," "we will not withdraw,"
"resist aggression," "stand firm," "we will stand in Vietnam," "prompt and unmistakable reply,”
"toil and suffer and die," "air action," "action," and "retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace," equals:

Agency: "75,000 to 125,000 men," "air units of the United States Seventh Fleet," "the wise application of modern technology," "ammunition and training," "additional equipment," "resources equal to any challenge," "military assistance," "700 million dollars," "a full exchange of views," "air units," "bombs and bullets," "warships and rockets," "power" and "three times in my lifetime, in two World Wars and in Korea," equals:

Purpose: "to carry out our full commitment," "to preserve our own image in the world," "peace and security," "to bring communist aggression under control," and "to be free from terror, subversion, and assassination," to:

Symbolic Burden of Credibility

Act: "we just cannot now dishonor our word, or abandon our commitment," and:

Symbolic Burden of Peace

Purpose: "to convince the Communists that we cannot be defeated by force of arms," to:
Symbolic Mortification for the Burden of Peace

Act: "Americans and Asians are dying," "there can be no doubt about the responsibilities of nations that are devoted to peace," "peace requires that we and all our friends stand firm against the present aggressions of the government of North Vietnam," and:

Symbolic Mortification for the Burden of Credibility/Identity

Act: "most agonizing and most painful duty of your President," "toil and suffer and sometimes die," "I know them all, every one," and "I know, too, how their mothers weep and how their families sorrow," and:

Symbolic Scapegoat for the Burden of Credibility

Act: "we are going to persist . . . until death and desolation have led to the same conference table," to:

Symbolic Redemption

Act: "the challenge that we face in southeast Asia today is the same challenge that we have faced with courage and that we have met with strength in Greece and Turkey, in Berlin and Korea, in Lebanon and in Cuba," "as long as there are men who hate and destroy, we must have the courage to resist," and "this shall not happen. We will stand in Vietnam," equals:
Purpose: "I would like to say to ally and adversary alike: let no friend needlessly fear—and no foe vainly hope—that this is a nation divided in this election year."

The God-term of "Discussion"

From The Symbolic Place of America in the World Hierarchy

Scene: "exultant with hope" equals:


Act: "carry out existing agreements," and:

Symbolic Place of North Vietnam in the World Hierarchy

Scene: "half a world away," and "remote and distant," equals:

Agent: "unreasonable," "unwilling to negotiate," and "violating," to:

Symbolic Burden of Credibility/Identity

Act: "unconditional discussions," "discussed it fully in Baltimore in April, in Washington in May, in San Francisco in June," "let me again, now, discuss it here in the East Room of the White House," "I have asked them to be able to answer the questions of any Member of Congress," "America's willingness to begin unconditional
discussions," "provide leadership and judgment,"
"consider everyone's judgment," "making
decisions," and "reflect on these moves," to:
Symbolic Mortification for the Burden of Credibility/
Identity
Act: "Have I done everything to help unite the world,"
"America's willingness to begin unconditional
discussions," "I will talk to any government,
anywhere, any time, without any conditions," "we
are ready to discuss their proposals," "free and
serious debate," and "I have listened to every
voice," equals:
Agency: "full exchange of views," "active and
continuous consultation," "the meeting room," and
"the conference table," and:
Symbolic Victimage for the Burden of Credibility
Act: "that government of North Vietnam is now
willfully and systematically violating those
agreements of both 1954 and 1962," "there had been
no answer," "ignoring the agreements of Geneva,"
and "they want no talk with us," equals:
Agency: "a refusal to talk," "tired names and
slogans," "slander and invective," and "campaign
of subversion," equals:
Purpose: "to show that American commitment is
worthless."
The God-term of "Restraint"

Symbolic of the Burden of Credibility/Identity

Agent: "most cautious," "extremely careful,"
"patience," "restraint," and "moderation," equals:
Act: "actions careful and measured," "carefully measured to do what must be done to bring an end to aggression," "will not bluster or bully or flaunt our power," "we will do only what is absolutely necessary," "not essential to order Reserve units into service," and "limited and fitting," equals:
Agency: "effective and efficient," "power with restraint," and "moderation in the use of power," equals:
Purpose: "no military, political, or territorial ambitions" and "do not seek the destruction of any government, nor do we covet any foot of territory."

The God-term of "Helping"

From The Symbolic Place of America in the World Hierarchy

Scene: "exultant with hope" and "golden promise"
equals:
Agent: "helpful," "actively concerned," "compassion," and "most powerful," and:
Symbolic Place of North Vietnam in the World Hierarchy

Agent: "they want what their neighbors also desire,"
equals:
Act: "destroy or build, kill or aid, hate or understand" and "take its place in the common effort," to:

The Symbolic Burden of Credibility/Identity

Scene: "exultant with hope" and "golden promise"
equals:
Agent: "helpful," "actively concerned," "compassion," and "most powerful," equals:
Act: "American people have helped generously," "strike away the chains of ignorance," "act of necessity," "Christian act," "extend the hand of compassion," "to build," "to help manage the process of development," "to help South Vietnam import materials for their homes," "to enrich the condition of their life," "to teach the young," and "to help the farmer increase his crops," equals:
Agency: "the wise application of modern technology," "billion dollar American investment," "89 million dollars," "cooperative effort for development," "a dam built across a great river is impressive," "wonders of modern medicine," "medical supplies," "electrification of the countryside," "fertilizer," and "power," to:
Symbolic Redemption

Purpose: "and now I am the President," "opportunity to help every child get an education," "as battle rages, we will continue as best we can to help the good people of South Vietnam," "Well, we will choose life," "to prevail over the natural enemies of all mankind," "for progress and hope," "a world where all are fed and charged with hope," "to replace despair with hope and terror with progress," and "to reach our goals in our own land."

Thus ends a "dictionary of limited war escalation" compiled from President Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam speeches in 1964 and 1965. Since the war in Vietnam was a "limited" conflict, some unusual aspects appeared in Johnson's rhetoric. Those characteristics are among the major findings of this study and are listed along with other conclusions as follows.

1. As the starting point in the symbolic process leading to rebirth, the negative played an important but highly predictable role. In the wake of North Vietnamese attacks against United States destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin, the President's primary negative or "thou-shall-not" dealt with attack or aggression, two "acts" found in the aggression cluster. As criticism of policy
began to mount in the spring of 1965, Johnson, fearing a loss of consensus, gave primacy to a new negative regarding presidential criticism. Significantly, the new negative not only revealed itself through the "act" of joining seventeen countries in an effort for peace, but also as a "purpose" for "standing firm." Further, in assuming that Ho Chi Minh would "never negotiate" or accept Johnson's development plan, the President could silence his critics and continue to escalate the war in Vietnam. Hence, both negatives worked to reinforce each other as in both the "peace" and "stand firm" clusters.

2. From the negatives of "thou-shall-not attack, make war, break agreements, etc.," President Johnson used agonistic form to establish a world hierarchy, referred to as the "peace-aggression" hierarchy. Johnson identified the United States and South Vietnam with "peace" at the top of the hierarchy and North Vietnam and Communist China with "aggression" at the bottom. The importance of this hierarchy to the President's arguments is underscored by the extent to which the symbolic place of America and North Vietnam are revealed in the "peace" and "aggression" clusters. A tendency to over generalize, though, caused Johnson and his Administration to replace the realities of the
Vietnam conflict with incorrect abstractions. The resulting confusion found its way into the President's rhetoric as he pictured U.S. agents as being both "determined" or "powerful" and "restrained" and "cautious," the South Vietnamese as both "vigorous" and "helpless," while the North Vietnamese represented both "aggression" and "love and hope." A corresponding hierarchy of credibility grew out of "thou-shall-not criticize the President." Although unspoken in the speeches, this hierarchy, like its inherent negative, relied on the maintenance of the "peace-aggression" hierarchy for stability. As the North Vietnamese continued to reject the world hierarchy in 1965, critics of the President continued to reject the hierarchy of credibility.

3. In an effort to maintain "order" or control of both hierarchies, Johnson relied on the "act" or "action" and even more so on the "agency." Appearing in both the clusters of "peace" and "standing firm," agency clearly emerged as the term around which the President clustered his escalation rhetoric, principally because of its inherent characteristic of "irony." As "technology is man's entelechy" and as technology was Johnson's primary if not sole agency in achieving peace and standing firm, the inescapable
result was irony. Thus, the "confused nature of this war," a war "filled with terrible irony," revealed itself with agents who were both "powerful" and "restrained," with acts of "peace," "compassion," "restraint," etc. and acts of "standing firm" or "air action" by the same agents. In committing these acts, whether they were retaliatory raids, Operation Rolling Thunder, or initiating an economic development plan, the President relied on the same agency: technology. The results of each action were thus the same. Any introduction of an American agency into the primitive Asian culture, whether for peaceful or aggressive ends, was an invasion to Ho Chi Minh. The use of technology thus failed to maintain both the hierarchies of "peace-aggression" and of credibility. The American belief in its technology fostered a false sense of superiority while the "terrible irony" of the war demanded equality and humility on the part of its opposites. Seeking only to redeem himself, Johnson never took advantage of the ironies created by technology to consider Ho as an equal.

4. American guilt appeared in the form of burdens. Johnson's burden of peace appeared in the "peace" cluster in the form of an agent, "your present President," and as a purpose in the cluster of
"standing firm." The importance of the burden of credibility to Johnson and ultimately his identity, though, is reflected in its appearance in the clusters of "aggression," "stand firm," "discussion," "helping," and constitutes the entire cluster of "restraint." At first, this burden appears only in the form of "actions," in the form the pragmatic president felt most comfortable with. As Johnson's credibility burden turned into a burden of identity in the summer of 1965, more extensive references were made in the forms of scene, agents, agencies, and purposes in the clusters of "helping" and "restraint."

5. Once again, technology played an important role in Johnson's symbolic transfer of his burdens onto other parties. Generally, American use of technology in an agent-act-agency relationship constituted mortification of Johnson's burden of credibility and the North Vietnamese use of machinery in the same ratio created the scapegoat the President needed to transfer the burden of peace. In most cases, the President identified with the suffering of "his boys" to expiate the burdens of peace, credibility, and identity and points to the aggression of the communists as the cause of war. In the "discussion" cluster, Johnson sacrificed himself through the
technologies of communication and transportation, saying, "I will talk to any government, anywhere, any time." The North Vietnamese were likewise used as scapegoats for "refusing to talk." Irony again played an important role here by fusing the "conference table" and the "battlefield" and "mortification" with "victimage." In attempting to transfer his burdens on July 28, 1965, President Johnson said the communists would have to experience "death and desolation" before a negotiated peace would be possible. The ultimate irony of Johnson's rhetoric exists in the use of technological warfare as a means for peace and the offer of peace negotiations as a means of escalating technological warfare.

6. Statements of redemption or President Johnson's "rhetoric of rebirth" appear only in the clusters of "stand firm" and "helping," clusters with actions totally reliant on the agency of technology. Johnson was totally reliant on "agency" when proclaiming the three key phrases of rebirth: "We will choose life," "Now I am the President," and "We will stand in Vietnam."

And so it goes. If there is in this study what Burke calls a "representative anecdote" or if there is to be found in Johnson's symbolic acts "some underlying principle of the agent's character, some fixed trait of his personality,"² it
can be found in the three statements above. Whether standing firm or choosing life, Lyndon Johnson never learned to be the president, to rely on himself. Laswell claims Johnson "was very much concerned about remaining independent of outside influences."3 The agency-oriented president, however, never relied on himself as an agency. Johnson's rhetoric reveals a presidency reliant on outside forces, technological and human. At the mercy of his own technology, he became a slave to public opinion, submissive to his own consensus government, and, eventually, a "workhorse" with "things in the saddle, riding mankind."

In the end, there was nothing left to hold on to. By failing to rely on himself, Johnson never had faith in his own rhetorical expressions. Whenever he had the chance to avoid escalation and propose a meeting with Ho Chi Minh as an equal, his reliance on superior "power" impeded such a rhetorical alternative. Such was the legacy Lyndon Johnson left on the rhetoric of the twentieth century presidency. With similar alternatives facing presidential rhetoric in the 1980s, the lessons of the past must become the agenda for the future.
NOTES


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Major Field: Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: The Rhetorical Drama of Lyndon B. Johnson: A Burkeian Analysis

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