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The Four Speeches Every Leader Has to Know

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Joar Haga

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Bård Norheim
Department of Theology, Religion and Philosophy
NLA University College
Bergen, Norway

Joar Haga
Department of Theology, Religion and Philosophy
NLA University College
Bergen, Norway

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Preface

How should a leader speak to motivate his audience? Should he promise success and progress, or should he appeal to a sense of duty? In his opening address to the House of Commons on May 13, 1940, Winston Churchill proclaimed: "I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this government: I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat…".

A leader is someone who invites followers, but how should the leader speak to move the audience? The leader wants to motivate his audience to follow him with action and dedication. Churchill speaks of *suffering* as he invites the audience to follow him into the future. Why doesn't he promise success or appeal to a sense of duty? Churchill aims to speak with authority. In order to achieve this, he addresses *suffering* in what he thinks is a credible way. His aim is to *persuade* his listeners to take on suffering. He even tries to make suffering attractive.

But how should the leader speak in order to address suffering in a credible way? In this book, we have developed a typology of four speeches to help the leader cope with that particular challenge. We believe that there are four speeches every leader has to know—*the opening speech, the executioner speech, the consolation speech,* and *the farewell speech.* This typology of four speeches provides the leader with tools to develop and evaluate her work as a speaker. The book also offers constructive advice on how to deliver speeches and analytic tools for self-reflection.

The book is written for leaders in business, politics, sports, institutions, NGOs, religious leaders, and elsewhere. In short, the book is for anyone

who is interested in the noble art of leading through speaking. The book deals with *rhetoric*—the art of speaking well—and how a leader stages her authority by speaking publicly with credibility. Rhetoric is the art of seeing and using the possibilities of persuasion available in any given situation. The book, therefore, looks at how a leader should speak with authority to motivate someone to give their very best, take on suffering, go to war, or even die.

Bergen, Norway

Bård Norheim
Joar Haga

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: A Rhetoric of Suffering

Abstract The opening chapter offers an introduction to the art of speaking well through an innovative view on leadership which highlights the importance of interpreting suffering. Using a wide range of examples, the book offers practical help for the leader who leads through speaking. The chapter presents three fundamental claims that define the art of speaking for a leader: (1) every leader is a speaker; (2) life as suffering; and (3) every speech is a story of life. Based on these three claims, we argue that there are four speeches every leader has to know—the *opening speech*, the *executioner speech*, the *consolation speech*, and the *farewell speech*.

Keywords Leadership rhetoric · Rhetoric of suffering · Rhetorical persuasion · The opening speech · The executioner speech · The consolation speech · The farewell speech

We believe that there are *four speeches every leader has to know*—the *opening speech*, the *executioner speech*, the *consolation speech*, and the *farewell speech*. This typology of speeches helps the speaker to address suffering in a credible way.

The *opening speech* addresses suffering by calling the audience to invest time, hope, energy, and talents in the preferred future the leader envisions. An efficient speaker draws the listeners into this vision, which

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may include suffering and sacrifice, famously expressed at the end of John F. Kennedy's inaugural address:

> And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

We do not believe that the opening speech is a one-time event, however. Versions of the opening speech occurs on many different occasions—at weekly staff meetings, when the leader presents a new product line of the company, meeting stockholders, or at press interviews. At all these instances the leader has to motivate the audience to participate in the vision outlined in the opening speech. To exercise leadership the leader continuously envisions the preferred future. Therefore, the different versions of the opening speech are all directed to the future. This is what ancient rhetoric referred to as the political, or *deliberative* speech.

In the *executioner speech*, the leader himself brings suffering to his audience by executing a verdict by the power of his office as a leader. It could be by announcing budget cuts and letting people go, or it could be a judge giving a verdict. Curiously enough, in the executioner speech the leader inflicts suffering with his very words. At the same time, the leader offers a rationale for the suffering he executes, some sort of defence of the verdict. The leader does this by appealing to the legacy of the company. In this sense, the executioner speech is directed to the past. It articulates the legacy of a company—its past narrative—and draws the consequences of that legacy to give a verdict, which involves suffering. In rhetorical theory such a speech is referred to as *forensic* speech, originally a verdict spoken by a court judge, summoning the offences of the past in the light of the law (the legacy). For strategic reasons many company leaders give their executioner speeches, like cutting budgets, in the form of a press release in order to escape the media spot light. A typical example of such a speech is Yahoo CEO Scott Thompson's downsizing speech from April 2012, where he announces that 2000 out of 14,000 workers will lose their jobs:

> We are intensifying our efforts on our core businesses and redeploying resources to our most urgent priorities. Our goal is to get back to our core purpose – putting our users and advertisers first – and we are moving aggressively to achieve that goal.

In the *consolation speech* the leader addresses immediate suffering experienced in an organization when a large-scale tragedy strikes, or when workers pass away. This could be in the form of a funeral address or a speech at a memorial gathering. In form, the consolation speech is a *eulogy*, an appraisal. It is directed to the present. In rhetorical theory it is referred to as an *epideictic* speech. The appraisal resembles the speech a leader gives when a worker celebrates her fiftieth anniversary or when someone retires. Michelle Obama's eulogy at the memorial service for African-American poet and civil rights activist Dr. Maya Angelou in 2014 is a typical example of such a eulogy:

> She (Maya Angelou) showed us that eventually, if we stayed true to who we are, then the world would embrace us. {Applause.} And she did this not just for black women, but for all women, for all human beings. She taught us all that it is okay to be your regular old self, whatever that is – your poor self, your broken self, your brilliant, bold, phenomenal self.

Like the consolation speech, the *farewell speech* is traditionally understood as a eulogy. We will argue that alongside this epideictic motif in all farewell speeches, there is a more deliberative line of argument, an appeal to the future: A good farewell speech addresses the leader's farewell or future absence, but more importantly: It articulates anew the legacy of the organization as *something still worth suffering for*. In this sense a farewell speech is a *deliberative* speech directed to the future. This is evident when General David Petraeus, leader of the US armed forces, gave his retirement address on August 31, 2011. As with many farewell speeches it was a long and detailed "thank you!" looking back on the years that had passed. Simultaneously, it was a political speech directed to the future. In the speech, Petraeus wants to secure and strengthen the institution he had been leading. One of the ways Petraeus does this is by frequently using the term "our men and women in uniform" to identify the military and the soldiers with the American people, and what it means to be American:

> As our nation contemplates difficult budget decisions, I know that our leaders will remember that our people, our men and women in uniform, are our military, and that taking care of them and their families must be our paramount objective.

The Leader Speaks

Tom Hopper's 2010 movie *The King's Speech* portrayed 1939 Britain on the verge of waging war with Nazi Germany. The main character, King Edward VI, suffers from stuttering. He was ashamed of his lack of verbal flow and refrained from speaking publicly. However, the King's silence was noted. His absence from situations where an oral address was expected gave rise to speculation. Unintended as it may have been, his silence spoke.

On some occasions silence may be appropriate for a leader. Some politicians and lawyers deliberately use the phrase "No comment!" to stop further inquiries. If such a phrase is uttered, silence is intentional. They are saying that they cannot or will not say anything. The politicians and lawyers use their silence to protect their interests or their clients. The King's silence, however, was unintentional. He wanted to speak but was unable to.

We encounter a slightly different art of silence in Shakespeare's play *King Lear*. The jealous king summons his three daughters to a merciless love-test, where he asks them to praise him. The two oldest daughters claim that they love their father, but they sing their father's praise with a cleaved tongue. The youngest daughter Cordelia, cannot speak, although she loves her father with a true heart—hence the name *Cordelia*, from the Latin word for heart, *cor*: "Love, and be silent," she moans, but only the audience can hear her voice. The father is pleased by the fake praise of the oldest daughters and dissatisfied with Cordelia's response. He finally turns his head towards her and commands: "Speak!" She replies: "Nothing, my Lord." The King becomes furious with her silence, disinherits her, and passes on *her* part of the kingdom to her treacherous sisters. Shakespeare's play becomes a tragedy because of this misinterpreted silence. When the sisters seize power, they force away both King Lear and Cordelia.

In January 2013 a gas facility at In Amenas, deep into the Algerian desert, was attacked by a terrorist group. Five workers at Norway's biggest oil company, Statoil (now Equinor), were killed. At a memorial service in one of the oldest cathedrals in Norway, the CEO of Statoil, Helge Lund, gave a speech to honour the departed workers and comfort families and friends. Throughout the speech he spoke with a low-key voice. When he came to a point in the speech where he described one of the departed

employees, his voice failed him, and a moment of silence occurred. He tried to stick to his script, but he struggled. He paused, and his silence—only for a second or less—probably left a deep impression on the audience. This short moment of silence portrayed a leader overwhelmed by grief and loss.

Why does a book on rhetorical leadership start with the notion of silence? The aim of this book is to understand the leader through the lens of the spoken word. The unsaid, the silence, pausing, is all part of the totality that we call communication. It comes down to this: every leader is a speaker, and she is speaking whether she is silent or giving a speech.

Perhaps the leader of Statoil did not pause intentionally. His short second of silence probably came spontaneously. Maybe a planned pause would have failed to persuade the audience. Classical rhetoric has a word to describe such an intended pause. It is called *aposiopesis*, a deliberate silence after speaking. Jazz musician Miles Davis—maybe inspired by composer Claude Debussy—is often quoted to have said:

> Music is the space between the notes.
> It is not the notes you play.
> It is the notes you don't play.

This strategy of 'speaking' can be traced in Davis famous interpretation of *Summertime*, where he intentionally omits some of the expected notes of the melody.

Public speakers like musicians, kings, actors and leaders can learn how to use the effect of pausing, and other rhetorical strategies, in their public speeches to arouse feelings. In this way, a leader can rehearse on how to appear sincere and empathic by the use of pausing. Shakespeare uses this artefact in his play *Julius Caesar*. When Anthony, Caesars friend, stands beside the coffin of the departed Julius, he bursts out:

> My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
> And I must pause till it come back to me.

An actor was once asked to give advice to future pastors. Among the stories he told, was his father's experience of meeting the local pastor when

one of his children were to be baptized. When the pastor entered their home, he looked at his watch. At that very moment, the pastor lost his authority as a speaker. In the wink of an eye, he had spoiled his possibility to convey a credible message. The pastor had committed the cardinal sin of communication, equivalent to looking at your watch during lovemaking.

Quintilian, one of the great Roman teachers of rhetoric, had a lengthy discussion on the role of gestures in his main work, *On the education of the speaker*. Quintilian found that the posture of the speaker has great impact on the effectiveness of communication. If the body of the speaker is not serving the voice, it may stand in the way of the message. Although some of his concrete advice may seem a little outdated, 2000 years after his death, his main questions are of enduring relevance: How should you hold your hands? How quickly should they move? When should they be placed alongside the body? Let us at this stage leave the possible faults and listen to one recommendation from the old Roman master of rhetoric: If you want to raise the dramatic effect of moving the hand, do it slowly. Even if the reasons for the effect might differ, it works astoundingly well even today. If a leader speaks significantly slower, moves his hand even more slowly, and intensely follows the movement with his eyes, the audience will hold their breath.

A representative from one of the major cruise ship companies once arrived at a family-run hotel by one of the fjords on the West Coast of Norway. This was at a time of economic regression, but the leader of the cruise ship company came with the intention to negotiate a discount. She drove a Jaguar, was dressed in fur, and wore expensive necklaces, but her mission failed. In the City of London, where the woman came from, her outfit may have been appropriate. From her perspective, the decision to wear her standard outfit was perfectly understandable. In Norwegian society, where egalitarian ideals are eagerly valued, this was perceived as an offense. From a rhetorical point of view, however, the example illustrates the problem the leader faces when she speaks: How do you speak to appear credible? How do you dress to support your argument? If the clothes overshadow your argument, you will have a hard time conveying your desired message.

Consider the examples of the pastor and the cruise ship representative. The first concerns a movement of the body; the second concerns how the leader is dressed. They remind us of the broad scope of rhetoric. When the leader's act of speaking is critically examined, all the elements

of his or her appearance come into review. A gesture with the head or with the hand can alter the effect of the spoken word. It can serve as an amplification of the intended message, or it may diminish the effect of the message. Dress may be seen as an expression of personal taste or class in our contemporary culture, but a rhetorical evaluation of the outfit asks how well it fits with the speaker's address.

There are different standards as to how different cultures understand the speaker's "dress code." It is not universally wrong for leaders to check what time it is, nor is it universally wrong to dress in expensive clothes. In order to be efficient, gestures and dress code have to fit the message in a particular context. The leader needs to understand what "the situation demands." Knowing what is required in a particular context is a prerequisite for choosing the best style of appearance. Appearance or style is in the rhetoric tradition referred to as *decorum*. The Latin use of the word *decorum* here has a slightly broader meaning than the contemporary use of the word *decorum*, which means "proper or fit for an occasion."

For a speech to be successful, the leader has to know himself, the audience and the specific time and place. Therefore, the old rhetorical handbooks stress that you leave the so-called timeless truths of successful oratory. Instead of asking what great leaders and speakers have done, rhetorical analysis presupposes a range of relative values. The speaker needs social, historical, cultural and linguistic competence to see how the speech can fit in order to be effective. What does your "rhetorical wardrobe" look like? What are the "clothes" fitting for a particular speaking occasion? What words, metaphors, symbols, gestures, and verbal "dress code" should the speaker use to communicate well with the audience? Many of the experiences in the rhetorical tradition can be used to shed some light to help the speaking leader pick the right garments out of her "rhetorical wardrobe," but these ancient experiences cannot be transferred directly.

Let us return to the woman in fur and make use of Quintilian's comments on the problem of "dress code." Quintilian claimed that there is no special garment that the speaker has to choose. The speaker's outfit is visible to the public eye, and for Quintilian, the choice of outfit reflects the speaker's authority: If the speaker had a sub-par toga, the suit of his day, the audience would consider him as an inferior. He should not, Quintilian found, pay too much to his dressing. Such excess is just as great a failure as negligence. What Quintilian has in mind is arguably

the problem of the woman in fur. In addition to the lavish impression it must have left, her excessive dressing was too noticeable to her Norwegian counterparts. If Quintilian had seen Steve Jobs presenting new Apple products, he would probably have applauded the use of black turtleneck on a dark stage. One could discuss whether jeans was appropriate "dress code" for such a leader, but the black has a simplicity to it that is suited to draw attention away from his clothing and toward his message. This is similar to the appropriateness of wearing black at funerals. Other than the fact that black symbolizes grief and sorrow, it is also an outfit that does not draw too much attention.

A leader who speaks is involved in *total communication*. This implies that communication takes place on many levels simultaneously. This does not only include the use of gestures and "dress code," but it also includes the use of the voice, the raising of eyebrows, and much more. If we take speaking in this broadest sense of the word, it is fundamental perspective to most aspects of the work of a leader. *The leader always speaks*. When the leader appears in public, every aspect of her appearance is exposed. The leader cannot hide easily. If the leader does try to hide, the act of hiding is on display. Speaking as we understand it in this book is not only concerned with the leader's formal communication, like speeches, blogs, interviews, and press releases, but speaking also encompasses the whole appearance of the leader's work. Rhetoric has been used to educate and shape leaders for more than two thousand years. In contrast to grammar, where the student can learn to speak *correctly*, rhetoric teaches the student how to speak *well*. Why should a leader speak well? To some ears, an insistence on a well-speaking leader might even sound as a suspicious idea. Perhaps the picture of a sly, cunning demagogue comes to mind. However, even a leader who is sceptical of the art of oratory should be interested in effective communication. It is one thing to sit by your desk with a great idea in mind, or perhaps present it to colleagues and friends who share your interest and references. It is quite another thing to present that idea to a whole company or a big organization and "drive that idea home." Rhetoric does not exclusively focus on developing the leader (*ethos*) and framing the message (*logos*). It also includes the response of the audience (*pathos*).

Rhetoric is defined as the art of persuasion. Evaluating whether a leader speaks well is not a closed case until the listeners are taken into account. By looking at actual speeches and with the help of the analytical tools of the rhetorical tradition, we will identify the main elements

of persuasion. The idea is not to present ideals or tricks to be copied. Instead, we will try to explore how the speech of a leader is connected to her life. This is not a plea for the leader to make use of her biography in a private sense. The leader may very well use glimpses of her personal biography in her speeches. Barack Obama drew on his personal narrative for his first presidential campaign, but when Obama told the story about himself, he simultaneously told a greater story. He embodied the American dream and tried to ignite the listeners' hope for the future.

The English poet T. S. Eliot once said that the meaning of a poem is like the meat the thief throws "to distract the house-dog." The content is there to distract us so that the form can do its work in hearts and minds. Eliot's comment is amusing because he turns our expectations on its head. Instead of being a handmaiden of the message, form becomes the main element of the poem. The speaking leader may infer two arguments from Eliot's dictum. First, the choice of media is crucial to the art of oratory. If a company is going to fire employees, the leader has to ask himself how to communicate the verdict. Should he appear in person? Or should he send an email? This choice is not only important for the people being fired, but also for those who are still employed. How will they look at their leader following the execution of the verdict? If the leader chooses the form of an email, the absence of the leader may speak louder than the content of the electronic message. Second, Eliot's comment blurs our perception of foreground and background. It is not necessarily the intended and expressed meaning that will remain as the most memorable aspect of the speech.

A highly skilled orator like Winston Churchill undoubtedly worked very hard as prime minister during the Second World War. Still, the photos taken of him, even during the beginning of the war, exposed a man with a relaxed lifestyle amidst the hardships of his people. Many Britons took this as a sign of confidence: victory was within reach. You might argue that Churchill just tried to be his normal self, but in this book we are more interested in the actual effect of his appearance. Churchill's rhetorical strategy could have backfired. Cigars and whisky could have put decadence and a lavish lifestyle in the foreground and left the audience questioning his empathy. He could have ended up like the woman in fur. But Churchill is set apart from her by one important element, and that is his biography: the crucial point here is that the audience knew his life story.

We have now briefly highlighted three elements of communication theory, namely that there is a speaker, a message and a listener. A good orator is aware of the specific *place* of the listeners. When John F. Kennedy visited West Berlin in 1963, the communists of East Berlin were building the infamous wall. Kennedy repeatedly declared "*Ich bin ein Berliner*:" "I am a citizen of Berlin." By identifying himself with the city, he did not refer to a split within his personality. He was at one with the people fighting for freedom, against oppression, against those who wanted to split families and friends. In a masterly stroke, Kennedy paralleled their situation with that of the first Roman Empire, where safety was guaranteed to anyone who declared, "civis romanus sum"—I am a citizen of Rome.

> Two thousand years ago, the proudest boast was "*civis romanus sum.*" Today, in the world of freedom, the proudest boast is "*Ich bin ein Berliner.*"

Napoleon ended the second Roman Empire. Hitler wanted to create the third empire but failed. What Kennedy did in his speech was to apply one of the noblest attributes of the first empire—freedom—to his listeners' present *struggles*. These struggles were not mere hardships but were grafted into a greater moral history that stretches back to the cradle of civilization itself. Kennedy also introduced a more forward-leaning move in his speech to ignite hope among his listeners: He invited the Berliners to look forward to the day "when all are free." Kennedy did not keep silent about the suffering of 1963 Berlin. He joined in the suffering with a story that made the listeners take pride in their past and gave them hope for their future.

The Speech—A Story of Life

On a cold Saturday in May 2013, Sir Alex Ferguson, manager of the English Premier League football club, Manchester United bid farewell. The home stadium, Old Trafford, was packed with more than 75,000 people. Ferguson, a man coming from the Scottish working class, who normally wore suit and tie on match day was dressed in a modest coat and fleece. Together with his players he was celebrating the record-breaking twentieth Premier League title. After 27 years as

manager, Sir Alex was stepping down, giving his farewell speech, with no notes.

The speech was a short tribute to the club. Ferguson looked back on what he achieved and experienced in his time as a leader. In a few words he told the story of his life *and* the life of the club, but the speech was *not merely* about looking back on the life of the leader:

> My retirement doesn't mean the end of my life with the club. I'll be able to now enjoy watching them rather than suffer with them. But, if you think about it, those last-minute goals, the comebacks, even the defeats, are all part of this great football club of ours.

For Ferguson the main issue was to pass on the shared *legacy* of the club. Legacy is here understood broadly, encompassing the core values and core practices of a company or organization. In the speech, Ferguson refers to a symbol that defines the *name* of the club, namely the jersey:

> I wish the players every success in the future. You know how good you are, you know the jersey you're wearing, you know what it means to everyone here and don't ever let yourself down. The expectation is always there.

By interpreting what this jersey stands for—those last-minute goals, the comebacks, even the defeats—Ferguson gave name to the meaning of the Manchester United legacy by the use of examples. Ferguson's speech was directed to a particular audience. It was not a mere thank you-speech, but it sought to bring to life what it means to *be part of* a particular club or company, in this case Manchester United. In doing so, Ferguson drew on the myth of the collective, and more particularly, collective strength.

Ferguson's speech was in many ways typical of a leader who is saying farewell. At the crossroad of departure, the leader's story of life and the company's legacy are both in the spotlight. As Ferguson was not forced to leave, he was able to 'orchestrate' his own departure. However, he was still faced with the difficult task of passing on the legacy of the company—both to his successor and to the audience. Later we will look at how Ferguson tried to do this, and some of the problems he faced.

The departure of a leader may also mark the end to the life of the company. On May 25, 2011, the American television host Oprah Winfrey held her farewell speech in front of millions of

viewers worldwide who had followed her for more than 25 years. Unlike Ferguson, Winfrey did not pass on her ‘company’ to a successor. Her task was easier. She was simply saying farewell to her audience, but this intensifies the fact that a farewell speech puts the connection between the leader’s story of life and the legacy of the company at the centre of attention. Similar to Ferguson’s speech, Oprah’s farewell speech portrayed her long life and career as a leader in the era of television. She started by looking back to her childhood years, growing up in rural Mississippi. For Oprah it was unthinkable that a black girl could end up as a TV host. She then went on to echo the myth of the American dream, passionately directed to the audience:

> It is no coincidence that I grew up to feel the genuine kindness, affection, trust and validation from millions of you all over the world. From you whose names I will never know, I learned what love is. You and this show have been the great love of my life.

Like Ferguson’s farewell speech, Oprah’s farewell speech was not primarily about *looking back* on the life of Oprah Winfrey. It was about looking forward. It was about passing on the legacy, the meaning of the *Oprah Show*, “the world’s biggest classroom.” Although the show was inevitably coming to an end, Oprah tried to pass on her legacy to the future, the ideas and values she had fostered through the show. Oprah ended by claiming:

> This last hour is really about me saying thank you. It is my love letter to you. I wanna leave you with all the lessons that have been the anchor of my life, and the ones that I hold most precious. (…) And I thank you for being as much of a sweet inspiration for me as I’ve tried to be for you. I won’t say goodbye: I’ll just say, until we meet again.

What did Oprah try do here? There is a strong connection between the life of a leader and the life of the company. Every speech displays this connection. In Oprah’s case this connection was particularly intimate: She *was* the company. There was no one to pass her show on to. She did not have a successor to care about, but she still tried to pass on the legacy of the company, the show. She did something a leader of a regular company cannot do. Where Ferguson appealed to a collective legacy intimately bound to the story of the club, Oprah tried to make a name

for herself. She *was* the embodiment of her own legacy. In this way, the story of her life may serve as a legacy for a new career—say presidential candidate?—embodying the American dream of the self-made (wo)man.

A farewell speech is one of the most important speeches a leader gives. Both Ferguson and Winfrey tried to fuse the story of their life with the legacy of the company they had been spearheading. They did this in a way that spoke not just *about* the life of the leader and the company, but *to* the audience. The speech is a story of life. It comes alive as the life of the leader and the legacy of the company meet, and the lives of the listeners are drawn into that reality.

Therefore, the speech of a leader does not just *mirror* life. It is not just *about* life. There is a constructive movement in every speech. The speech puts a story of life on display. What do we mean by that? It is obvious that both Sir Alex and Oprah took on leadership *roles*, one as a football manager and the other as a TV host. But as they appeared in their roles, the life of Sir Alex and Oprah were on display. The speech should bring together the life of the leader and the legacy of the company in order to draw the audience into a shared story of life.

Every speech a leader gives puts a story of life on display. As a leader you cannot escape that. You just have to *live* with it. This book aims to give a leader the courage to speak truly and boldly, knowing that her life is on display. The interaction between life and speech is fundamental to rhetorical leadership. It initiates a self-reflective and constructive dialogue for the leader who leads by speaking.

Life as Suffering—Some Perspectives on Leadership

In many books on leadership we are taught that it is possible to make life into a success story. Given the right training, the right fine tuning of your followers' motivation, you can move yourself and your company from good to great, away from suffering, or at least to a place where suffering is minimized. The American version of the TV series *House of Cards* portrays the life of Congressman Frank Underwood, who tries to make his way to the summit of political power in Washington. In the beginning of the first episode Underwood finds a dog run over by a car. Realizing that the dog is not going to survive, he looks into the camera and proclaims:

> There are two kinds of pain. The sort of pain that makes you strong, or useless pain.
>
> The sort of pain, that's only suffering. I have no patience for useless things.
>
> [Underwood then ends the life of the dog, by breaking its neck]. Moments like this require someone who will act, who will do the unpleasant thing… There, no more pain.

Suffering is an inevitable part of life. Not just the life of dogs, but it is a fundamental part of the human condition. For humans, change is inevitable, and change implies pain. As human beings we are forced to adjust to shifting times and conditions. We have to relate to the suffering of change.

The TV character congressman Underwood suggests that it is possible to eradicate useless pain and suffering. Only useful pain is helpful to pave the way for success. We argue that this is a failed concept of both life and leadership. Obviously, companies and leaders strive towards success, some more than others. Companies need to make money and meet budget. TV hosts like Oprah need people to watch their shows. Someone must pay for the commercials. Managers need their teams to win football matches, but Sir Alex Ferguson was aware of the importance of suffering: He told the story of how *even the defeats* were part of the legacy of the club.

The point is this: When the leader leads by speaking, it may be counterproductive to try to frame the speech by telling a story of life that highlights only success and growth. This is chiefly, because the audience will have a hard time believing you. The audience does not want the leader to be sulky, but if you leave suffering out you will lack credibility. John Kotter, author of the classic *Leading Change*, emphasizes that a leader who attempts to create major change with simple, linear stories of growth will almost always fail.

Telling a credible story that includes suffering is not so much about learning from failure, in order to become more successful. The importance of adaptive and disruptive leadership, which values the complexity of learning from failure and building a culture where failing is part of the company culture, is crucial. The focus on adaptive and disruptive leadership has become an enduring theme in much of leadership literature since Ron Heifetz' classic book *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. However, the interest in disruptive leadership points to a permanent

feature of the human condition: the life of the leader as well as the life of the company is something fragile. Success is not a given. It is only a possible and temporary outcome. Leadership is directed to the future, and the future is never secured, but fundamentally open-ended. There is always the possibility of the improbable and terrifying, a *Black Swan* maybe lurking in the waters somewhere, as Nassim Nicholas Taleb has pointed out in his 2007 classic *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*. You cannot guarantee or copy-paste success. Success belongs to the perilous future. The task of leadership is to envision a preferred future. As a leader you seek to align people with that vision. More than that, you continue to speak persuasively of this vision through all the problems, the insecurity and suffering you know you will face.

If leadership is directed to the future and involves change, we claim that the leader needs to address suffering. The meaning of suffering can be interpreted in many ways, both as punishment, trial, purification, and sacrifice. In this book, we are mainly concerned with how suffering reveals the difference between the ideal world and the real world, between what humans wish for and the experienced world. Addressing suffering acknowledges that there is a breach in reality, which characterizes the human condition. It cannot be overcome, by simply wishing upon a star, or examining the inner depths of your heart for a dream to come true. The life of humans is inscribed in the reality of insecurity and suffering—from birth to death. Suffering is even an essential ingredient in making great things come alive, in anything from sports to love. This is why inspirational sport's speeches always motivate the players to suffer for the team.

Similarly, the ancient Greeks regarded our earthly condition as marked by change, suffering and ultimately death. The end of human life was marked by tragedy. A central concept in their understanding was *pathos* or passion: feelings—passions—are as transitory as human beings, and they are contrasted with the ideal world, the *apathic* nature of the gods. All good speeches have to address this breach in reality that human beings experience. We are not Greek gods who can avoid the reality of suffering. Organizations and companies have to deal with suffering. No one will believe a funeral address that does not relate to suffering, and not just any suffering: the address has to articulate the grief of the bereaved in that particular moment. In his farewell address Sir Alex Ferguson addressed the reality of suffering by describing his calling as a manager as a way of *suffering with* his players. This is another kind of

suffering. It is not grief, but *compassion*. One might of course question how much suffering is really involved in the life of football players making millions of dollars a week.

The task of the speaking leader is not to transcend suffering and become *apathic*, but to enter into the reality of suffering. The speaking leader has to take the feelings of the audience seriously. By moulding these feelings, the leader seizes the word. When leaders speak, addressing suffering in an apt manner is key in appearing authentic. It is possible for a speaker to influence the feelings of the audience, but this has to be done in a credible manner. A speaking leader exercises leadership by giving meaning to the suffering people experience. This is particularly acute when a leader has to console the audience and show compassion when a tragedy has struck or when a worker has passed away. In a perhaps more challenging way, the leader also has to give meaning to a rationale of suffering when a company has to cut budgets and let people go, or even when the leader has to fire an employee.

When you speak to address suffering you put yourself on display. The poetic task of the leader is to articulate why suffering for the legacy and vision of the organization is not something to fear, but rather something to enter into, something worth sacrificing time, energy and talent for, a yoke worth taking on. The leader doing an inaugural address has to find a way to re-articulate Jesus's words in Matthew 11:29–30:

> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me (…) For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

The opening speech has to invite its audience to participate in the (re) making of a legacy, a legacy that aims to define the future.

Every leader is a speaker and has to address suffering and sacrifice. By acknowledging the suffering experienced by the audience, the leader may also articulate how she *suffers with* the audience. This is how a speaking leader seizes authority to make the vision of the organization credible. A leader, who fails to address this by either silence or inept hesitation or exaggeration, will leave the audience with a paralyzing uncertainty. Such a leader lacks credibility.

For Frank Underwood in *House of Cards* suffering is valued in a more instrumental manner. He finds that only suffering that can make you stronger can be of *use*. In this take on leadership, what really counts is the leader's position, or struggle for position, and possibly the outcome

of the work of the leader. The leader's person, which is what the speech displays, is valued merely as an instrument for position and outcome. This approach to leadership—and suffering—resembles what Niccolò Machiavelli wrote about in the book *The Prince.* Machiavelli, writing in sixteenth Century Italy, regarded leadership as a mere technique. He was concerned with how a ruler may keep his power to secure the peace of a city-state. To reach this end, the ruler is principally free to use all means available. The leader may even lie or kill when doing so is necessary for the survival of the state. This approach to leadership and rhetoric would be highly problematic for the Greek tradition, as being evil in the service of good destroys the leader's character, the *ethos.*

Bottom line: we claim that life is inscribed in the reality of suffering. A credible address to the audience is dependent on how the leader partakes in this world of change, transition and suffering. The point here is not to glorify suffering, but to acknowledge the depths of the human condition and how this knowledge may shape the art of speaking well.

The Art of Speaking Well

This book wants to promote *bene dicendi*—the art of speaking well. Rhetoric of this sort works with the presupposition that the one who speaks well, thinks well. If you do not speak well, you do not think well. Speaking well is more than just speaking correctly (*recte dicendi*), following the prescribed grammatical rules. It is also more than just presenting a subject matter or "truth." Speaking well means speaking aptly, fitting with time, place and audience in any given situation. In the rhetorical tradition, *aptum* refers to the result when a speaker commands the different parts of a speech into a harmonious whole.

We often hear the disclaimer that "this is mere rhetoric." This stems from an ancient, ethical conflict. The Sophists, a group of philosophers in ancient Greece, claimed that rhetoric was like money, a mere instrument for the speaker to achieve his own defined goal. From this perspective rhetoric is a technical tool, only about efficiency. Plato and Aristotle on the other hand found this to be highly problematic. They emphasized, that rhetoric, as all other arts, is also about moral. It should serve a higher goal: truth, goodness, beauty, and above all, justice.

Back in ancient Rome, the search for the appropriate Roman governor came to a climax as the candidates had to speak to the Senate. If the candidate was a good speaker, he was a good leader. This was the

ideal of *vir bonus*, the good or virtuous leader. This ideal contained two aspects: the good leader had to be both *moral* and *efficient*. This holds true for contemporary leaders as well, but in addition the modern leader has to express his character in a way that appears *desirable* to the public. The leader who invites dedication and suffering has to persuade his listeners that he holds the moral qualities necessary to do the job and that he will do his utmost to make the right things happen. In other words, the leader has to appear both moral and efficient in a way that is appealing to the audience. If the leader does this, he may create an appetite for dedication and suffering among the audience.

Only a leader who is perceived as credible and authentic can persuade with authority. When a leader is perceived as credible, she appears to speak the *truth*. But what does it mean to speak the truth? The truth is both historical and situational. The rhetorical take on truth here differs from the philosophical take on truth: As a speaker you must and should adapt to your followers' situation, but only to a certain point, if you want to remain true. To persuade the audience the speaking leader has to take three fundamental elements into account, which we briefly pointed out in the previous section: First, the speaker has to reflect on how his or her character, his *ethos*, appears to the audience. Secondly, the leader has to use the message, the *logos*, as a means of persuasion. Finally, the speaking leader has to appeal to the feelings of the audience, the *pathos*, to speak persuasively.

According to rhetorical theory, every speech also has a threefold purpose—to inform *(docere)*, to entertain (*delectare*) and to move *(movere)*. This book will help you as a leader to balance these three purposes of your speech by analysing actual speeches and offering creative advice on how to speak well. At the end of the book you will find a rhetorical dictionary for leaders, which will help you prepare your speeches, analyse your speeches, or reflect on your life as a speaking leader.

With the typology of four speeches, we understand the career of a leader within the frame of a life span, starting with the *opening speech* and ending with the *farewell speech*. Every life has a beginning and an end. As a leader tries to lead by speaking well, she has to understand the task of rhetorical leadership through that lens: as a leader you are a speaker. Your leadership is a story of life, with a beginning and an end. When you speak, that life is on display, a life that is inscribed in suffering.

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CHAPTER 2

The Opening Speech: Envisioning the Future

Abstract This chapter presents and analyses opening speeches from a wide variety of speakers such as Sir Winston Churchill, Barack Obama, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Angela Merkel, Sheryl Sandberg, Elon Musk, Steve Jobs and Brenè Brown. We argue that the *opening speech* addresses suffering by calling the audience to invest time, energy, and talents in the preferred future the leader envisions. An efficient speaker will draw the listeners into this vision, which may include suffering and sacrifice. The leader will learn to present himself to the audience, "name" reality, create and appeal to a greater "we," draw out a compelling vision of the future worth suffering for, and learn how to constantly repeat his opening speech.

Keywords Leadership rhetoric · Rhetorical persuasion · Suffering · Credibility · Vision

On January 20, 2009 Barack Obama was inaugurated as the forty-fourth President of the United States. The incoming First Lady, Michelle Obama, held a Bible as her husband swore the presidential oath. As Obama tried to repeat the words of the presidential oath read to him by the chief justice, he fumbled. Obama did not stutter like King Edward in the movie *The King's Speech*, but he was obviously nervous. In a short moment of silence, it seemed like Obama's words would fail him, but he soon resumed the power of speech. Usually, in rhetorical theory,

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fumbling is taken as a sign of weakness, but on this occasion the short moment of silence served as an amplifier: It signalled a sense of awe and respect: for the moment, for the audience, and for the office.

Other than this moment of not speaking, what does Obama do in his first inaugural address to make it compelling to its audience? Obama's inaugural address is surrounded by pomp and circumstance, but in many respects, it is like any other *opening speech*. In *the opening speech* the leader appeals to her audience to invest their time, hope, and talents in the future the leader envisions. A successful opening speech draws the listener into this vision, although the vision may include suffering and sacrifice. The opening speech of a good leader should *persuade* the audience that the envisioned future the leader imagines is something worth fighting for. Perhaps this vision is even a pursuit worth inviting others to join. To accomplish such a conviction among the audience, the speaking leader has to present an attractive *grand* narrative that is powerful enough for the audience to be persuaded. It is not sufficient to merely give an account of your personal story. The story should be directed to the future. It has to be large enough to become the story of us, the audience.

In his opening speech Obama crafts such story-telling by practicing the art of *naming*. Naming here points to how the speaker creatively and constructively tries to offer a narrative account that appears persuasive to the audience. In the biblical account of creation (Genesis 2) man is mandated by God to *name* the animals and other living creatures. When you name something in a credible and persuasive way, you speak with authority and power. As we will see throughout the book, the rhetorical strategy of naming is an effective and well-used strategy for leaders. In the book we present four modes of naming—naming *yourself*, naming *reality*, naming *who we are*, and naming *the cause*.

Naming Yourself

If we look at Obama's inaugural address, the first act of *naming* happened at the very beginning. Before Obama even started to speak, he was introduced as the forty-fourth president of the United States. Almost every speech starts with this sort of naming: *Your name* as a speaker is normally given to you or announced to the audience. Every press conference at the White House repeats this naming. Before the President enters the room, he is introduced as the President to the audience.

If your name is not given to you, you have to introduce yourself. This means that you have to *make a name for yourself*. After all, the audience would always like to know: Who is this guy talking to us? Why should we listen to him? The listeners want to know who you are before they will accept to be led by you. The art of naming yourself at the beginning of the opening speech is therefore essential to gain the necessary trust of the audience.

In 2004 Illinois State Senator, Barack Obama, was chosen to deliver the keynote address to the Democratic National Convention gathered in Boston, Massachusetts. Largely unknown to a broader audience, Obama made a name for himself by telling how his biography was interwoven with the great American narrative, that of the American dream. Obama starts by giving an account of his parents: His father came to the US—"a beacon of freedom," as Obama put it—as a foreign student, from a small village in Kenya. His mother grew up in Kansas. She was the daughter of a man who worked on "oil rigs and farms through most of the Depression" and finally signed up for military duty the day after Pearl Harbor. In just a few sentences Obama had related his biography to fundamental symbols and defining historical events in what makes the American dream. He described this as "a common dream born of two continents." By the use of his personal story, Obama had established a sense of confidence in him as a leader. Naming yourself means telling the story of how your life story is interwoven with the world of the listeners. Arguably, Obama persuades the audience that he is capable of leading them to an envisioned future. Obama concluded the opening section of his keynote address by connecting his name to the meaning of America and the American dream:

> My parents shared not only an improbable love; they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation. They would give me an African name, Barack, or "blessed," believing that in a tolerant America, your name is no barrier to success. They imagined me going to the best schools in the land, even though they weren't rich, because in a generous America you don't have to be rich to achieve your potential. (…) I stand here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.

The art of naming yourself seems to be fundamentally linked to your authority as a speaker. We will distinguish between two types of authority, *potestas* and *auctoritas*. If the speaker possesses the legal power to *force* his subjects to act, this authority is described in the rhetorical tradition as *potestas*. As a corporate leader of a firm, you have the power to command your employees to act, by the power of the office given to you. This sort of authority is rooted in a potentially *coercive* relationship. On the other hand, the leader can exercise authority by the power of the reputation he has earned—as brave, wise or smart. The leader can use this reputation to appeal to the audience to freely give themselves to a cause. In this case, the authority—the *auctoritas*—of the speaker becomes legitimate as the audience responds to the leader's vision with enthusiasm and commitment. As the president of the United States, Barack Obama had a certain power to command his 'audience' to act (*potestas*), but his influence would increase considerably if the audience would agree to commit themselves to his vision of a preferred future: In other words, Obama needed to develop his *auctoritas*, in order to be a persuasive speaking leader.

The art of naming yourself does not merely lie in the words you speak. Your appearance as a speaker is a substantial part of naming yourself—how you use your hands, move your eyebrows, and the way you dress etc. To position yourself as a speaker is also fundamental to your appearance: Where do you stand when you speak? Do you stand on a pedestal? Do you lean forward, or do you cross your arms and lean backwards? In order to be effective, the leader has to reflect on how his appearance strengthens or weakens the position his name represents. This is not merely a question of what is appropriate or not, it also displays the leader's creative ability to stage himself. The challenge for the leader is to learn how to both respond to and challenge the expectations of the audience.

Naming yourself by the use of body language plays out differently for different speeches. If you hold a consolation speech, you may have to step back and slow your movements to avoid dramatic and aggressive use of the body. For someone doing an opening speech, it is still important to avoid overly aggressive body moves, but it is crucial to use your appearance to signal the direction of the speech. You can lean forward to communicate that the speech is directed to the future. This gesture invites people to participate in the making of a new future, rooted in the legacy that the leader envisions. With your first appearance and opening

words you have to justify why *you* are the one to deliver the opening speech. To persuade your audience, you have to make credible that you are capable of leading the company into the future.

If you are unknown to the audience, you have to present yourself right at the beginning of the speech. Intentionally or unintentionally, you will have to make a name for yourself. An energetic and rather hilarious example of this sort of naming is found in the speech given by Internet celebrity Phil Davison, who ran for office as Treasurer of Stark County in Minerva, Ohio, in September 2010. In his nomination speech, which is an opening speech, Davison started by addressing the audience in a rather typical manner:

> Ladies and gentlemen of the Stark County Republican Party, Executive Committee, good evening. And thank you, not only for your attendance, but for allowing me the opportunity to speak.

He then went on to eagerly present his name to the audience:

> My name is Phil Davison and I'm seeking our party's nomination for the position of Stark County Treasurer on November tenth, November of 2010, excuse me.

So far, almost all was well, but Davison then went on to express to the audience why his name should be considered for the position he was seeking nomination for. This was where the speech really started to take off in a comic direction:

> In terms of my background, I am from the village of Minerva, where I'm serving my thirteenth year, as the elected service as a Minerva Council Member. In terms of education, I have a bachelor's degree in Sociology, a bachelor's degree in History, a master's degree in Public Administration, [Davison pauses dramatically…] and a master's degree in Communication.

Here Davison made another dramatic pause, started yelling, and finally nailed why his name should be on the ballot:

> In terms of elections across Stark County I have represented our party twice on the county ballot, in both the primary, in the general elections. When I ran for Stark County Clerk of Court in 1996, and Stark County

> Commissioner in 2000, and I will not apologize for my tone tonight. I have been a Republican "in times good" and I've been a Republican "in times bad." {Here Davison screams from the top of his lungs}

Using an expression from the ritual of matrimony—"in times good" and "in times bad"—Davison expressed his longstanding loyalty to the Republican Party. At this stage of the speech Davison gradually raised his voice and was then screaming. To raise your voice from a lower to a higher level is a well-known feature in music as it is in rhetoric, known as *crescendo*. Davison's problem was that he used this rhetorical effect in an inept manner. Because of the aggressive and exaggerated way of speaking, Davison's opening speech turned into a parody. Exaggeration—or *hyperbole*—can sometimes be a useful rhetorical tool, but in Davison's case there was just too much of everything. Davison did indeed make a name for himself, as he was later invited to speak at several TV shows, but for all the wrong reasons. He was not elected.

Davison's story reminds us that the art of naming, and particularly that of *naming yourself*, is difficult to master. Phil Davison did not miss the point. He missed the genre. Even if the audience expects an energetic opening speech, the energy still has to be controlled. The speech must be *apt*, conform to what the situation demands. Therefore, the speaker has to give his energy the right form. Davison's speech resembled an angry locker room speech or the speech of a military general urging his troops to fight. For the voters Davison's character appeared incompatible with the office he was running for.

As a speaker, you have to examine the context of the audience and the nature of the legacy you are addressing. You have to take the implicit *expectations* of the audience into account in order to ignite the audience's desire to suffer for a particular cause. These expectations include the values and grand narratives of the given culture and how these values and expectations are transposed to the speaker and among the audience. You can appeal to these expectations by using the apt *decorum* for the speech by the way you dress, and by the use of formal and informal gestures. To be an effective speaker, you have to develop a habit of discerning the nature of each particular context. To foster this habit, you have to learn how to experiment with different rhetorical effects.

As a speaker you have to relate to the expectations your name and office carry among the audience in the particular context. In other words, if you are introduced as the president, the audience expects a

presidential address, not that of a stand-up comedian in a bar. If you are introduced as the new HR manager, people will expect an opening speech appropriate to the expectations of that role. What makes Davison's speech so funny, and at the same time inept, is that the tone and genre that Davison develops throughout the speech is something that resembles more of an aggressive executioner speech of a military leader, than someone who is seeking party nomination as county treasurer.

Is it possible to spend too much time naming yourself, appealing to the audience to love you? Over the last couple of decades TED Talks have become highly popular. TED Talks are talks where the speaker is challenged to give the speech of her life within just 18 minutes. TED stands for Technology, Entertainment and Design. In the typology of this book, a typical TED Talk is an opening speech, sharing the legacy of a speaker's life story or life project and trying to make it appealing to the audience. One of the most viewed TED Talks is the talk given by researcher and author Brenè Brown on "The Power of Vulnerability." To introduce herself as a speaker, she told a story of how she was called by an event planner who was struggling to present Brown on the flyer made for an upcoming event. The event planner was afraid that if she called Brown a 'researcher,' people were going to think she was boring. So, the event planner suggested to call Brown a storyteller. Brown was sceptical of this idea. In her TED Talk, Brown took a second to reframe the concept of storyteller, finding that a qualitative researcher actually does collect stories. She turned to the event planner again and suggested that she could call Brown a "researcher-storyteller," whereupon the planner responded "Ha, Ha. There's no such thing."

After this rather extensive attempt to make a name for herself, Brown tried to wrap it up for the audience and bridge the naming of herself as a speaker while hinting at the topic of her speech:

> So, I'm a researcher-storyteller, and I'm going to talk to you today – we're talking about expanding perception – and so I want to talk to you and tell some stories about a piece of my research that fundamentally expanded my perception and really actually changed the way that I live and love and work and parent.

There is a fine line here. By spending too much time on the personal narrative as part of naming yourself as a speaker, you might draw too

much attention to yourself, or the wrong kind of attention. By reflecting on her own vulnerability and insecurity, Brown actually displays the topic of her talk. The audience is invited to join in her own (self-) reflection on the question "Who is she really?" Extensive introductions focusing on the speaker might end up being boring or squeeze the pace out of the speech, but in Brown's case these reflections displayed the topic of her talk—the power of vulnerability. In other words, by spending so much time on the quest of naming herself, trying to entertain the audience with who she is, she also paved the way for the next stage of naming, *naming reality*, which we will soon turn to. This is where Phil Davison failed in his nomination speech. He also spent a lot of time on his personal merits and narratives, but soon seemed to hit the moment where the audience started questioning: Does this guy really have anything to say other than just trying to make a name for himself?

In the rhetorical process of naming, the first stage, *naming yourself*, marks the birth of a new leader. The leader is given a name he has to live up to. It is a rhetorical rite of initiation, but this name is finite. The legitimacy of the name is something given, which at some point comes to an end. In a certain sense, the leader is set on path toward death. For the leader it is paramount to argue why others should follow on this path. With the opening speech the leader opens the future to the audience. He invites them to take part in a common journey. This simultaneously sets the stage for the farewell speech. Whereas the opening speech seeks to create a desire among the audience to sacrifice time and energy for the envisioned future, the farewell speech has to justify that this legacy is still worth fighting for. It is therefore important that the images used in the opening speech relate to the metaphorical imagery of the farewell speech, which we will return to later. The media and the audience will be eager to judge you as the leader by the chief metaphor that comes along with the introduction of your name.

By putting his name "out there" at the beginning of the opening speech, the speaker practices a version of the ancient *ars moriendi*—the art of dying (well). The speaker implicitly faces the fact that he is mortal. However, he also creates a rationale for suffering. He invites the audience to suffer alongside with him for the cause he initiates. The speaker extends a call to other mortals: Life is short, come join me in fighting for something worthwhile giving your very best to.

Naming yourself as a leader responds to the audience's first and most fundamental question to the leader: *who are you?* The leader's name does

not merely embody the expectations associated with the name of an office or position. It also has to do with the leader's self-reflection. How do you understand yourself as someone carrying this particular office, and how is this self-understanding reflected rhetorically? We will return to these challenges later.

Naming Reality

If the first question of the audience to the speaker is "who are you," the second question is "what now?" In other words, what are we facing next? Is this a time of crisis or victory? Should we look for action or retreat? Are we living in a time of war or peace? Put simply, this has to do with telling the audience what time it is. We call this *naming reality*. By naming reality, the speaker paves the way for the *political* question: "what kind of action should be taken?"

This includes the poetic and creative art of convincingly describing what the world looks like and envisioning a reality that requires a certain response. It is the narrative art of addressing three fundamental questions for all human beings: where do we come from, where are we, and where are we going? The first question marks the legacy of an organization, the second question rephrases that legacy in the presence, and the third question tries to convert this legacy into a hope for the future.

The inauguration speech of the newly elected President is traditionally a State of the Union speech, where the President is expected to describe and define the current state of things before proceeding to envision the politics of the near future. Describing and defining reality in this poetic and creative manner means *naming reality* in a way that is supposed to appear persuasive to the audience. This is what Obama did in his first inauguration speech. After thanking his predecessor President Bush, Obama left no doubt for the audience, when he proceeded to tell them what reality they were facing, as he described the state of the nation:

> Our nation is at war, against a far-reaching network of violence and hatred. Our economy is badly weakened…(…) Our health care is too costly; our schools fail too many.

There was no doubt that Obama was naming a crisis. The Greek word for crisis—*krisis*—implies the imminent need for change and to make a choice in a way that excludes other alternatives. What Obama tried to

do here was to create a rhetorical rationale for political change. He even explicitly claimed "we are in the midst of crisis."

This moment in the opening speech is always crucial. As a leader you have to sharply and precisely define the challenges the company is facing. You have to convincingly frame reality as it is in relation to the envisioned future. The rhetorically skilled listener will of course know that describing the world "as it is" refers to a projected truth. But by letting the audience partake in your vision, they may find it credible. This sort of *naming reality* might give your listeners confidence that you are the right person to lead at this time in history.

What kind of rhetorical strategies did Obama use to connect the two first stages in the naming process, naming yourself and naming reality? Before naming reality as a state of crisis, Obama looked back at the past, referring to how the presidential oath has been sworn both in times of prosperity and peace, and in times of "gathering clouds and raging storms." Metaphors from the realm of nature are usually very powerful. By naming the raging storms, Obama sought to present himself as a leader who was not scared to face reality. Quite the opposite: He was ready, he was prepared, come what storms may. The metaphor of the storm was picked up again towards the end of the speech. By naming the storm Obama positions himself as the brave leader with sufficient courage to lead the people through the difficulties ahead:

> With hope and virtue, let us brave and once more the icy currents, and endure what storms may come. Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter, and with the eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations.

Employing powerful metaphors such as a storm, earthquake, journey or horizon, is demanding. The metaphor may strike back. As a leader you will be measured by the chief metaphors you use in your opening speech. In the case of Obama, using "storm," a metaphor from the realm of nature, to describe the political situation, may seem like a perfect choice. But what if the metaphor strikes back? What if the "storm" is the climate crisis?

Obama's naming of reality resembles the opening speeches of many state leaders who appeal to the audience to be convinced by their naming

of reality. British Prime Minister Churchill, in his speech to the House of Commons on May 13, 1940, spoke about "the extreme urgency and rigour of events." In his famous speech from June 18 again to the House of Commons, which may very well be interpreted as a prolonged version of the first opening speech, he started by naming what he called "the colossal military disaster" in France. With this dramatic start of the speech, he left the audience with no doubt as to what time it was.

Former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, in her rather improvised opening speech outside Downing Street 10 of May 4th of 1979, also tried to name reality. She sought to do it in a more poetic manner, as she quoted parts of St. Francis' prayer:

> Where there is discord, may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. And where there is despair, may we bring hope.

Thatcher's woe may be read as a response to her election as Prime Minister, and how this caused large tensions and division among the British people. She then appealed to a unified British nation—"a greater we":

> And to all the British people – howsoever they voted – may I say this. Now that the Election is over, may we get together and strive and strengthen the country of which we're so proud to be a part [of, Thatcher is interrupted].

Thatcher's rhetorical strategy here balances on a thin line. It is porous. Once again, the metaphor may strike back. What if Thatcher's political decisions did not turn despair into hope? What if closing the mines in Northern England did not bring faith where there was doubt? What if her politics did not bring people together to strengthen the country?

It may easily sound patronizing when the victor appeals to bring truth, and almost takes on a Messianic mode. Using St. Francis' Prayer as the framework for naming reality is risky business. Setting such high ideals creates expectations that are almost out of reach, and Thatcher's future political decisions will always be evaluated in the light of the great vision she appealed to, and St. Francis can be hard to live up to. In Thatcher's case it is questionable whether her *intention* had intended rhetorical *effect*. An appeal to the common "we" may be jeopardized if the leader aims to high.

What kind of approach should a leader take in an opening speech if she is faced with a sceptical audience? The Federal Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, addressed the British Parliament on February 27, 2014. She knew that a large portion of her audience was critical to her message—making appeals for Britain to stay in the European Union. After the Brexit-referendum in June 2016 we might find her attempt to be a failure, but her strategy of persuasion is worth further inquiry. Merkel could have jumped straight to a description of reality, naming the challenges Europe is facing. She chose a different path. Merkel tried to connect her name with the naming of reality, outlining the challenges Europe was facing. This rhetorical strategy is particularly important if you are unknown to the audience, or if your position or role makes you an outsider to the audience. In the beginning of her speech, which Merkel delivered in English, she acknowledged the honour of being only the third representative of the Federation of Germany to address the British Parliament. Then she offered a personal twist, looking back at her visit to London in 1990 with her husband. This was just after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and a few months before Germany's reunification, a visit the chancellor claimed she will never forget:

> We walked through Hyde Park looking for Speakers' Corner, which – especially for us as East Germans – was legendary, the very symbol of free speech. I hope that is not an insult to you, the members of the British Parliament.

Having bonded with her audience by relating herself to a key symbol of a Free Britain, she went on to address the main topic of her speech: the future of Europe. Look at what she did: By using her personal narrative, coming from communist East Germany, she pinpointed Britain as the symbolic centre of Europe, the beacon of freedom. In her vision for Europe, in her naming of reality, the legacy of Britain played a central role. She then went on to address what she believed were the possible expectations among the audience. She had heard that some expected her speech to propose a fundamental reform of what she called "the European architecture," in a way that would satisfy "all kinds of alleged or actual British wishes." On the other hand, she had also heard that some expected her message to be, that the rest of Europe "is not prepared to pay almost any price to keep Britain in the European Union." She made it clear that she intended to disappoint both expectations.

If you want to deliver an effective opening speech, you can learn from Merkel here. An opening speech that does not connect naming yourself with naming reality is a weaker opening speech. You have to make evident why your name—your reputation and personal narrative—taps into the challenges you point to in naming reality. The audience wants to know why *you* are the right leader to address the challenges you are naming. They must be given confidence that you are a leader capable of leading. Machiavelli claimed that a speaker can either appeal to the audience to love him or fear him. For Machiavelli love is good, but fear is better. The problem with the love of the audience is that it is volatile. Therefore, the speaking leader has to signal that he is capable of using power, and sufficient power, to deal with the challenges ahead.

If you appeal to the audience to love you, how should you try to connect naming yourself and naming reality? In 2010, Facebook CEO Sheryl Sandberg held a TED Talk. Similar to Merkel, she used her personal story to name reality. In front of an auditorium full of women leaders, Sandberg addressed the following challenge: how should the number of women leaders in business increase? Being well-known to the audience, she started by combing the two first steps of naming, naming yourself and reality:

> So, for any of us in this room today, let's start out by admitting we're lucky. We don't live in the world our mothers lived in, our grandmothers lived in, where career choices for women were so limited. And if you're in this room today, most of us grew up in a world where we have basic civil rights, and amazingly, we still live in a world where some women don't have them. But all that aside, we still have a problem, and it's a real problem. And the problem is this: Women are not making it to the top of any profession anywhere in the world.

Sandberg's final conclusion might be questioned but look at what she did: She named reality by naming herself and the audience at the same time. She answered two questions in one: Who am I as a leader, and what time is it? In an opening speech, naming reality has to do with defining the problem the audience is facing. What is the challenge? For an opening speech to be successful, the speaker cannot postpone this question to a later stage in the speech. Naming reality has to be done swiftly and poignantly after the speaker has been named or has been naming

herself. Sandberg combined the two arts of naming. This combination gave the speech energy and pace from the beginning.

One challenge for Sandberg is that she was not speaking to *a* particular company. She did not tell Facebook workers how Facebook should grow. She is speaking to a diverse group, naming a challenge that leads to a more ideological cause: To work for more women leaders in businesses. Sandberg had no *potestas*, no legal power, to instruct the audience to act. She had to appeal to the audience to love the cause and the legacy she advocated, using her *auctoritas*. The audience had to voluntarily subscribe to the challenge Sandberg named.

How should the speaker name and define reality in the opening speech in order to make the audience give their dedication and suffering and work for the vision? Should you appeal to love or fear? Or both? Both Sandberg and Merkel started by calling on the audience to love the legacy they promoted. For Merkel it was the British, and European, legacy of free speech, which was at stake. For Sandberg it was the legacy of increased female leadership. But although they both started by appealing to love the legacy with pride, this potentially also led the audience to fear the consequences. What if Britain decided to isolate itself from the rest of Europe? Would it lead to war? What would then happen to free speech? Sandberg reminded her audience of the following: if they did not act to support female leadership, who would then act? Would this mean a return to a patriarchal society?

When you name reality, you appeal to both love and fear, but what happens when you increase the fear factor in your opening speech? Does this necessarily lead to the intended change in the audience? Many studies emphasize that the link between the threat and the change in behaviour must affect the audience personally. In other words, fear does not produce new action and behaviour in itself. Imagine the CEO of an IT company who tries to motivate his employees to work harder, or even lower their salaries to combat stiffer competition. The leader has to make credible that taking on suffering now is beneficial, because suffering *now* will reduce or even eliminate greater suffering *later*. This is one of the major challenges for speeches addressing the climate crisis, where speeches naturally appeal to fear as they try to name and define reality, but these speeches have a hard time convincing the audience that they have to act *now* to combat a future threat.

Consider Merkel and Sandberg's rhetoric here: none of them appeal to fear in the first place. They start by speaking to the heart.

They challenge the audience to love the legacy they hold with pride. They do not threaten the audience but encourage them to unite in love. As old military generals they focus on the strength of their members, not the magnitude of the threat. The only threat is unarticulated. It is the opposite of the appeal to unite in love and passion: *What if we do not act on this appeal?* What both Merkel and Sandberg aim at, is trying to connect the *naming of yourself* with the *naming of reality* in a potent manner. And herein lies a powerful rhetorical strategy: by connecting naming yourself with naming reality, they empower the audience to meet the threat with hope. The threat Merkel addressed was closely knit together with the suffering of her personal life story. Having grown up on the other side of the Berlin Wall, Merkel knew that Europe could collapse, which might lead to war. She was living proof of that. She even held the office that once created that divide. The fear Sandberg addressed is a bit different: If she and other female leaders did not act, there would be no more female leaders in business. With this rhetorical strategy, Merkel and Sandberg meet the threat with hope and love.

Naming Who We Are

Sheryl Sandberg did more than just combine the two first steps of naming—naming yourself and naming reality. She tried to give an answer to another fundamental question of the audience: *who are we?* We call this the third step in the naming process, *naming who we are*. This art of naming makes a contract between the audience and the speaker. It tries to give a name to the "we" who are convened together at this very moment. Sandberg does this by starting her speech in the following manner, "so for any of us in this room *today*, let's start out by admitting we're lucky." By pointing to the audience and herself as a speaker simultaneously, Sandberg avoids drawing too much attention to herself as a speaker. At the same time this is a risky strategy: If the audience does not buy into the "we" that Sandberg tries to establish, she is in trouble. She would lose the confidence of the audience. Building a credible "we" that actually connects the speaker and the audience is a fine art.

In his inaugural address from 2009 Obama did *not* try to combine these different steps of naming in the same way. He did something very similar to Chancellor Merkel when she addressed the British Parliament. When his new title or name—the President of the United States of America—is given to him, Obama first *named reality* in a very dramatic

manner, even stating that "America's fear is inevitable, and that the next generation must lower it sights." Confronting the audience with this reality, he then went on to name the audience, including himself, *naming who we are*:

> Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious, and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America – they will be met. On this day, *we* gather because *we* have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord.

What happened when Obama addresses the audience as "America"? Why did he choose this name over others? He could have appealed to "this country" or "the United States." Instead he used an imperative, "know this, America." But how is it possible for America to "know" something? To claim that a nation state should "know something" implies that this is a body with a *memory*. It implies that America is a "company" with a history. It has collective stories and places of significance. Obama addressed the nation state as a person with a cultural memory. Originally the term "America" referred to the Florentine explorer and navigator Amerigo Vespucci (d. 1512), who first demonstrated that Brazil and the West Indies did not represent Asia's Eastern outskirts, as Columbus thought. It was not first and foremost this separate geographic landmass—*Americus*, the Latin version of Vespucci's first name—that Obama appealed to. He appealed to "America" as a nation with a particular history. This name holds a creative momentum. It is a place where everything is possible, as he pointed out in his 2004 keynote address to the Democratic National Convention. Obama articulated the legacy of America as the new world, the land of opportunities.

The use of this ambitious metaphor—"America"—has obvious strengths. It seems fitting for a political opening speech that aims to transcend the conflicts and divisions created by the previous administration. The audience is summoned to subscribe to something bigger than the conflicts and divisions, something worth suffering for. For a leader holding an opening speech it is pivotal *how* you name the thing you are set to lead, because this act of naming impersonates why it might be worthwhile to suffer for that particular *thing*—the company, the nation state, or the organization. Obama does a similar thing at the beginning of his next inaugural address from January 21, 2013, where he repeats "together" three times to emphasize the importance

of the "impersonated" *we*—America. Later in the speech he initiated an even broader *we*, by the appeal "let both sides." This is similar to what many presidents have done before him, like Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy, when they extended an appeal to "fellow countrymen," "fellow citizens" or "fellow Americans."

It is this ambitious metaphor that Donald Trump picked up in his presidential campaign with the slogan "Make America great again!" Trump's use of the metaphor tells us how important metaphors are in opening speeches. Obama used the collective metaphor America as an appeal to unity. Trump drew on the same grand metaphor but appealed to a greatness that has been lost. Leaders use metaphors in order to legitimize ideology through the creation of myth. The most frequent type of metaphors in a political speech, are journey metaphors. "America" is a strong collective metaphor, with deep journey connotations. The problem with this metaphor, as any other metaphor, is that repeated use of it may erode the status of the metaphor. To persuade the audience, the opposing political leader may use the metaphor of his opponent. Donald Trump makes the listener aware of the notable difference between Obama's use of the metaphor America and Trump's use of the metaphor.

In an opening speech it is vital to appeal to a greater we—a credible *thing*, a collective memory, which is great enough to be worth suffering for. The speaker may use this appeal to bond with her audience. If she appeals to the audience to give themselves to a cause on voluntary grounds, the speaker has to convince the audience that they are all in the same boat. How should this be done? Consider a newly appointed manager of the sales department of a car company. How should she appeal to her workers to do their very best? What is a suitable metaphor for *the thing* that this car company represents? How could she motivate her work staff? What is the best answer to the question "who are we?" One undisputable aim for the middle manager is to motivate her sales agents to sell more cars. In her speech the middle manager could focus on a very tangible aim for the near future, say a 5% increase in the coming three months. The manager could also appeal to a greater we, something that would give the sales agents a sense of belonging to a greater story, a cultural memory of importance. She could tell the story of how each sales agent offers people *the freedom to move by themselves.* This story does not just tap into the original meaning of *automobile*, moving by yourself. It is even a part of the American dream, namely to fulfil the pursuit of happiness with the help of personal liberty. In an opening speech

the middle manager could expand this metaphor by claiming that this particular car company gives the customers the opportunity not only to move freely, but to *express themselves*.

A well-known story is that of the two bricklayers who were once asked what they were doing. The first simply stated "I lay bricks." The other said "I am building a cathedral." Tapping into a greater story and a larger cultural memory may offer encouragement and pride. In times of difficulty, the power of such a reservoir of memory may become a beacon of hope. After all, who would suffer for a pile of bricks rather than giving your very best in building a masterpiece cathedral? Later in this chapter we will look at how naming a task or a *cause* is closely connected to *naming who we are*.

The challenge of utilizing powerful metaphors in naming who we are is that the metaphor might strike back. Activating the legacy of a great metaphor also means creating great expectations, and if the divide between the metaphor and the perceived reality becomes too obvious, the speaker may run into problems. This could occur within the opening speech itself if the metaphor used is too ambitious. As the opening speech is a political speech directed to the future, a too ambitious and unfitting metaphor might be a stumbling block for the leader's future work. When Obama appeals to the great metaphor "America," with its inherent cultural memory, he also has to meet great expectations. The audience might ask: Is it credible that *we* are this "America" that he appeals to? People could also question whether his leadership and politics of "a change that we can believe in" *really will* bring forth all that this "America" stands for? And following the actual speech, he might even be charged with accusations of *not* living up to the expectations of the metaphor. Therefore, both Obama's poetic use of the metaphor "America" and the middle manager's optimistic claim that "we give people the freedom to move by themselves" might turn out to be a rhetorical drawback if more concrete expectations are not met: Car sales may not increase, America may not be united and transformed.

This is not to say that the leader in an opening speech should avoid big metaphors and stick to ordinary language. What is at stake is naming a credible "we"—a greater we—that ignites enthusiasm. The problem is when the audience finds the metaphor used unfitting or to be presented in a too pretentious manner. If the pastor in a wedding sermon speaks about love and the new *we* emerging from the ceremony—the union of matrimony—in a too grandiose way, the audience might be doubtful.

Naming this thing—marriage—probably has to include an element of "for better and for worse" to be credible. This is what Winston Churchill aims at when he pronounces "I promise you nothing but blood, sweat and tears." A business leader who presents the thing he is set to lead with unfitting metaphors is not likely to be fired, but he would have a hard time convincing the audience that this is a thing worth suffering for.

In her book *The End of Leadership*, Barbara Kellerman describes a paradigm shift in how leadership is understood. Previously, leadership was perceived in a hierarchical manner, where the leader was seen to control and command his followers. Now, chief executives talk about being servant leaders and team players. They are expected to cooperate and collaborate with their followers. This turn challenges the leader giving an opening speech. The leader has not disappeared, but he cannot rise above the people as king or as a member of an aristocratic nobility or league of experts. He has to use metaphors that may tap into the egalitarian ideals of leadership. He cannot address the audience as copycats. If the middle manager had presented herself as one of the few experts on the art of "making people move by themselves," she would have created a two-class system, a *thing* that the followers would be less likely to give themselves to. In the era of democracy, the leader has to speak as the first among equals. There is less room for the leader's aristocratic arrogance. The leader is one of us.

When you deliver your opening speech, you have to tell the audience *who we are*. This is what we have called *naming who we are*. But this is not done once and for all. Every time a CEO of a company gives a speech to ignite and inspire the company, he repeats the opening speech. In this sense, naming who we are is a constant endeavour for the speaking leader. Addressing an audience, usually implies having a particular core group in mind. On May 4, 2015 the CEO of General Motors (GM), Mary Barra, spoke to a group of customers, employees, and dealers at Fairfax, Kansas. GM celebrated that they had built more than 500 million vehicles globally since 1908, being the first car company to reach this milestone. The presentation was branded as "500 million thanks," directed at the GM customers. In her speech, Barra emphasized that this was much more than a number to her. It represented 500 million stories, 500 million rides.

This way of personalizing numbers to retell the story of who you are can be an effective way of *naming who we are*. GM *is* 500 million thanks, and 500 million stories. In naming GM in this way, Barra tried to make

it into something more than just a car company that has sold 500 million vehicles. The celebration of the milestone offered an opportunity to create a greater story of GM, a story that could be easily shared and retold by customers, employees and dealers. The question remains: Did the audience make the words of the speaker their own?

Where Barra seemed to have the ordinary Mr. Smith in mind, leaders of other car companies target their audience in a different manner. When Elon Musk, CEO and product architect of the car company Tesla Motors, spoke at the Tesla shareholders meeting in June 2015, he used a totally different strategy to *name who we are*. Whereas Barra's speech was relatively short, Musk went straight to the details of his product and the details of the company stock numbers. Having promised the audience a 50% average growth rate for the Tesla Company in the years to come, he went on to explain *the parts* that make a Tesla unique. He started with a lengthy explanation on how the dual-motor all-wheel drive worked and continued to explain the autopilot system on a Tesla, followed by more product details, ending with an extensive Q&A-session: The speech lasted for more than an hour. Musk was well informed about every detail of the product, but not always very articulate. He fumbled with words. Still, he gave the audience exactly what they wanted to hear—the latest details on the product development of Tesla Motors. Actually, the fumbling seemed to be part of what made him authentic.

Musk, being a business magnate, engineer, inventor and investor, presented a nerdy attention to details. He told this group who they are by giving them engineering details and a fresh update on the product, not flashy commercial slogans. The audience was offered a no-nonsense speech, which kept telling them who they are: People who are genuinely interested in the richness of the product. People who want to know how this product stands out in comparison with others.

Elon Musk's rhetorical strategy in some part resembles that of Steve Jobs, when he did his product presentation speeches with Apple. However, Jobs used more metaphors and symbolic language to name "who we are." Unlike Musk, Jobs did not get into every technical detail. Rather Jobs did more of what Barra does. He personalized numbers. These two strategies are available to any speaking leader: You can focus on a particular detail to say something about the greater whole, like Musk. This is known as synecdoche or *pars pro toto* in Latin. Or you can do like Barra: You can *abstract a meta-story*—500 million thanks—to present a credible image of the company.

Here is the secret to the difference in strategy: If you want to name *who we are*, you have to know your core group. You have to listen to the beating heart of your audience. You have to pay attention to how their thoughts and feelings can be moved. Naming who we are means telling people how they might stand out in comparison to other groups. It means paving the way for a commitment to a shared legacy. By appealing to a common "we" the audience is prepared the audience to suffer for the cause that the leader envisions.

Naming who we are in an opening speech holds an even greater potential: If the speaker names a *new thing* greater than the mere limits of the core group, he may give words to an even greater we. It is not enough to merely state that this thing is worth giving yourself to. If a grand narrative is introduced, it invites collaborative participation and collective memory. When Barra tried to address Mr. Smith, who wants to be part of something big and proud, it was not just to entertain him and his group. Rather, she named a who we are in a way that was great enough to attract others.

When Elon Musk tried to entertain those who hoped to be part of engineering history, he also tried to tell the story of an entity that is greater than the immediate group of followers. The same goes for Steve Jobs. Although he started out speaking to hipsters, he also addressed all the people who wanted to be just as cool as the hipsters. In the era of democracy and mass communication, remember this: There are always more people listening in, so the opportunity of the opening speech is not merely to confirm the identity of the core group you are addressing, but to *name a greater we*.

A classic example of what it means to use your opening speech to name a greater we, is found in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's speech to the National Democratic Convention on July 2, 1932. In this speech he introduced *the New Deal*, which he spoke about in several speeches in the years to come. The New Deal was a political program to put more people into work. In the midst of great political conflict FDR tried to appeal to a greater we, even what he calls "nominal Republicans," by extending the following call:

> That is why we are going to make the voters understand this year that this Nation is not merely a Nation of independence, but it is, if we are to survive, bound to be a Nation of interdependence – town and city, and North and South, East and West. That is our goal, and that goal will be understood by the people of this country no matter where they live.

This rhetorical strategy, with the use of the metaphor "the New Deal," was an attempt to overcome polar structures. FDR introduced *a fusion*. This is much like a high school comedy movie telling the story of two groups who start out being separated and end up being united. Or think of the plot and story line of *a romantic comedy*. The key word in FDR's plot is *interdependence*.

Another example of what it means to use the opening speech to name a greater we in the midst of conflict and disorder is found in Nelson Mandela's inaugural address on May 10, 1994. This speech was delivered as he was installed as President of the Republic of South Africa at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Mandela knew that his opening speech had to address people beyond his core group. He even had to speak with his previous enemies in mind. Mandela wanted to create a new and united South Africa. It is therefore no surprise that he spent a lot of effort on *naming who we are*, as the big question for the audience really was "who are we?"

After having extended customary greetings, Mandela went on to a threefold act of naming—naming reality, naming who we are, and therefore implicitly naming the cause:

> Today, all of us do, by our presence here, and by our celebrations in other parts of our country and the world, confer glory and hope to newborn liberty. Out of the experience of an extraordinary human disaster that lasted too long, must be born a society of which all humanity will be proud. Our daily deeds as ordinary South Africans must produce an actual South African reality that will reinforce humanity's belief in justice, strengthen its confidence in the nobility of the human soul and sustain all our hopes for a glorious life for all.

Mandela stated that the "we" he tried to name—"an actual South African reality"—had to be produced. It could not be recollected, by simply commemorating the past. Rather, it required political action by all groups that were previously divided. Mandela argued that this new "we"—the united South Africa—could be achieved. This was a bold claim, but what rhetorical strategy did he use to make this unity credible? Mandela goes on to speak about "the soil of this beautiful country," "the jacaranda trees of Pretoria," and the "mimosa trees of the bushveld."

Jonathan Charteris-Black in *Politicians and Rhetoric* finds that landscape metaphors are particularly helpful when a speaker wants

to contribute to a feeling of common reassurance. By using landscape metaphors that even his former enemies may feel at home with, Mandela tried to tell a story of South Africa with the help of common metaphorical roots. These strong metaphors were placed in the realm of nature and symbolize continuity and depth. Mandela utilized these metaphors to transcend divisions and conflicts. Mandela expanded this motif by emphasizing that all South Africans were tied to the same soil: They were a nation of *interdependence*:

> Each time one of us touches the soil of this land, we feel a sense of personal renewal. The national mood changes as the seasons change.

In Mandela's speech nature did not just refer to a shared landscape. The landscape was intimately connected to the hearts and minds of the people, the national mood.

Delivering an opening speech is a continuous endeavour. As we will see in the following section, the opening speech is directed to the future, and leadership informed by the opening speech always continues into the future. Therefore, Mandela's art of naming who we are, telling the story of the new and united South Africa, did not stop with his inaugural address in 1994. Rather, he continued his opening speech in the years to come, through speeches and actions and symbolic gestures. A particularly evident example of how Mandela continued to repeat his opening speech took place during the 1995 Rugby World Cup, held in South Africa. The story was later captured in the film *Invictus*, starring Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela. Rugby had been the sport of the white minority in South Africa, and the jersey of the national rugby team, the Springboks, was the symbol of privilege and separateness. When South Africa, quite surprisingly, beat the New Zealand All-Blacks in the final at Ellis Park, Mandela entered the podium wearing the Springbok jersey and cap. Mandela wore jersey #6, the same as that of captain Francois Pienaar, the blond symbol of this Afrikaaner sport.

Mandela used the art of dressing up as a rhetorical tool. Mandela could have seen the jersey merely as an ornament of white supremacy, but he seized the legacy of the white minority and made it the legacy of the whole new nation. He *renamed who we are* by appealing to a greater we. Mandela symbolic act is a vivid example of what it means to use and extend your "rhetorical wardrobe." A jersey is a strong symbol, as we saw in Alex Ferguson's farewell address when he left his job as a manager

at Manchester United. The jersey, or other symbolic items, represents the legacy of an organization. By putting on the jersey, Mandela did not just make himself one with his people, but even with his former oppressor. With this rhetorical act he made the legacy of South Africa a shared legacy. A legacy directed to the future.

Naming the Cause

Naming yourself means giving the audience an answer to their first question: *who is this guy talking to us*? Naming reality is telling people *what time it is*: Is this a time for celebration or hard work, are we approaching a crisis or are we in the midst of great success? The third step in the rhetorical process of naming has to do with naming who we are. This means *telling people who they are*, creating a bond between the speaker and the audience by naming a greater we. All these three steps of naming prepare the scope of the speech, the final part of the naming process, *naming the cause*. This is where the speaker gives an answer to the following question: *What should we do now?*

The first art of naming, naming yourself, is concerned with the speaker's *ethos*. The third step of naming, naming the thing, focuses on the connection between the speaker and the audience, the bond between *ethos* and *pathos*. Both these strategies run the risk of becoming too self-referential, lacking the appeal to address anyone beyond the speaker and her immediate audience. The second stage in the naming process, naming reality, offers some help in moving beyond this, by its focus on external reality, but still the focus is on the present. Naming reality does not necessarily invite the audience to imagine a different future, a scope beyond the speaker and her audience, or a change in direction. It describes the conditions for future action, but it does not proclaim how this should be approached.

The opening speech is a political speech, directed toward the future. The speech should inspire the audience and direct their actions towards a common goal. The opening speech does not merely recollect memories of the past, or simply describe the present situation to uphold status quo. The heart of an opening speech is therefore the fourth part of the naming process, *naming the cause*. This is what directs the speech to the future. Here the speaker proclaims: This is what needs to be done! This is where we have to sail! This is what we need to change! This mode of the speech is the *logos* of the speech, where the speaker

presents the message. *Naming the cause* means giving the speech a particular direction. This is usually the main element of an opening speech.

In his inaugural address from 2009 Barack Obama started by naming reality and used that to name a greater "we." He then went on to *name the cause*. In Obama's speech, as in most opening speeches, the three acts of naming are closely related. They build on each other: Obama connected the *naming of reality* (the crisis) with *naming who we are* (America—We the People) in a way which creates a rationale for the *naming of the cause*, that We the People "have chosen hope over fear, unity of purpose over conflict and discord." In this process of naming, Obama also implicitly re-ignited the motto from his election campaign—"Yes, we can."

Based on this rhetorical strategy of naming reality and weaving together his name with that of the audience to a common thing, Obama appealed to his political cause with rhetorical power:

> For everywhere we look, there is work to be done. The state of the economy calls for action, bold and swift, and we will act – not only to create new jobs, but to lay a new foundation for growth.

The growth Obama imagined was then outlined in terms of more concrete, and typical political strategies. He told his audience what needed to be done, where things had to change, what the future should look like:

> We will build the roads and bridges, the electric grids and digital lines that feed our commerce and bind us together. We will restore science to its rightful place and wield technology's wonders to raise health care's quality and lower its cost. We will harness the sun and the winds and the soil to fuel our cars and run our factories. And we will transform our schools and colleges and universities to meet the demands of a new age. All this we can do. And all this we will do.

From one perspective the *logos* of an opening speech is well known: The opening speech of an American president has to envision politics for the future. A new sales manager of a car company has to motivate her workforce. Persuading by the help of *ethos* means appealing to lasting values, such as character and moral. This is what the speaker does when she names herself in the beginning and continues doing when she

is naming who we are, creating a greater *we* by drawing a bond between the speaker and her audience. Persuading by the help of *pathos*, means appealing to the emotive side of the audience, speaking to their feelings, so to say.

For both means of persuasion the speaker's appearance plays an important role. How you dress and the way you use your gestures and symbolic actions appeal to the audience's values and feelings. As a speaker you present a character. You use your "rhetorical wardrobe": You can be the bold and courageous captain setting a new direction for the company. Or you can act as the mourning and compassionate stateswoman addressing a nation in grief. Sometimes it is required to step up and be the efficient and future-oriented business CEO, with your sleeves rolled up, telling the workforce why cuts have to be made. Maybe you can even be the smart and charming middle manager of a car company. This art of staging always leans on the speaker's use of *ethos* and *pathos*.

When the speaker names the cause, the main mean of persuasion is *logos*, the message. The focus is on content. Here you have to bring to the fore your best and most convincing rational arguments to name what should be done in the future. You have to construct a cause (*logos*) that appears credible to the audience. Different speakers use different metaphors to construct a persuasive cause. Obama, like Mandela, used nature metaphors, to create a feeling of common bond among the audience: Despite our differences, we are tied to the same destiny. We cannot escape the cause that the speaker has put before us. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the American president during the Great Depression, used naval metaphors and war metaphors when he introduced his political program—*the New Deal*. He spoke about himself and other leaders as "captains," and he invited the audience to "enter into a new battle."

Are there other ways to persuade the audience than using suitable metaphors to accompany the arguments? Persuading the audience by the help of *logos* means using the argument to persuade, to let the argument speak for itself. Naming the cause aims at more than just outlining the rational arguments for a certain conclusion. A political speech has to offer arguments for action that in a sense is open to negotiation. Should this business invest in China? Why should there be a new health reform? How comprehensive should the new health reform be? Why should the business model of this company be renewed, and how should it be done? What should we do to sell more cars in upper Wisconsin or attract more tourists to Scandinavia?

By *naming the cause*, the speaker can use different types of arguments to persuade the audience. One option is to use what Aristotle labelled *inductive arguments*, or *epagoge* in Greek. Such arguments proceed from the particular to the universal. An inductive argument in rhetoric is the *example*. The point for a speaker here is to proceed from one particular to another particular, given that both particulars fall under the same *genus* or category.

An example of such an inductive argument is found in Mother Teresa's Nobel acceptance speech on December 11, 1979. The speech was delivered the day after she received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway. Her speech began like a sermon, inviting the audience to join her in praying St. Francis Prayer of Peace. This came as no surprise, as Mother Teresa was a Christian spiritual leader. However, towards the end of the speech, she started *naming the cause* to the audience in a more political manner: This is how she summed up the main message of her speech:

> And this is what I bring before you, to love one another until it hurts, but don't forget that there are many children, many children, many men and women who haven't got what you have. And remember to love them until it hurts.

To underpin the importance of her main argument she told a story, an experience she had when meeting a Hindu family with eight children in her own neighbourhood in Calcutta.

> One evening a gentleman came to our house and said, Mother Teresa, there is a Hindu family and the eight children have not eaten for a long time. Do something for them. And I took rice and I went immediately, and there was this mother, those little one's faces, shining eyes from sheer hunger. She took the rice from my hand, she divided into two and she went out. When she came back, I asked her, where did you go? What did you do? And one answer she gave me: They are hungry also. She knew that the next door neighbor, a Muslim family, was hungry. What surprised me most, not that she gave the rice, but what surprised me most, that in her suffering, in her hunger, she knew that somebody else was hungry, and she had the courage to share, share the love. And this is what I mean, I want you to love the poor, and never turn your back to the poor, for in turning your back to the poor, you are turning it to Christ.

Throughout her speech Mother Teresa used several such narratives—*examples*—to prove her point. She used the example to persuade the audience of her cause. Using an inductive argument means leading by example. It is usually a very powerful rhetorical tool when you want to challenge, strengthen or transform an audience's fundamental convictions.

Many speakers use heroic figures as examples to make their case. They tell the story of a person, and how that person's legacy should inspire the audience to direct their lives—and maybe even suffer—in a similar way. There are several examples of this rhetorical strategy. One emerged in the 2008 McCain/Palin American presidential campaign, which used *Joe the Plumber* as an ideal type or metaphor for the hard-working middle class American. Joe the Plumber, or Samuel Joseph Wurzelbacher, was in fact a member of the Republican Party, who at a videotaped campaign meeting in Ohio asked Barack Obama, a then Democratic nominee, about Obama's small business tax policy. Wurzelbacher claimed that he considered purchasing a small plumbing business. This way of naming your cause with the use of an example implies combing the use of all the three means of persuasion: You use the *ethos* or character of a person, often through a narrative, to appeal to the audience's *pathos* (feelings) to promote your message (*logos*). The challenge is of course, that most people are complex, and the use of examples always may fall short when it is revealed that the example is less representative than previously assumed.

Another option is to use what Aristotle labelled deductive arguments, *enthymeme* in Greek, to persuade the audience of your cause. By using a deductive argument, you make use of an argument that you assume is generally accepted, and you extract how your own argument corresponds to this argument. This is what is called a *syllogism* in dialectic theory. An example of such an argument would be a business CEO addressing the board of the company arguing that the company should invest (more) time on research and development, R&D. The CEO could then typically make the deductive argument: Research shows that businesses that do not invest in R&D do not thrive or grow in the long run. The wish to grow and thrive in the long run is generally accepted. The particular follows from the proposition. The logic deduction goes as follows:

#If a firm wants to grow in the long run, it has to invest in R&D.
#Our firm wants to grow in the long run.
#We should invest in R&D.

Consider FDR's speech on the New Deal from July 1932: He argued for the importance of a new policy on how to put people to work, and he quite extensively used arguments of this syllogistic character. FDR utilized the pros and cons of economic theory to argue for his own cause. He set up different deductive arguments as alternatives to present the audience with a choice. He appealed to the audience's rationality by lining up a number of arguments and counter arguments to present the audience with "a genuine choice this year."

In the following part of his speech he combined the inductive argument with the deductive argument. He first recollected the history—the narrative—of what led to the Great Depression, and particularly how the Republican party failed to serve the people. This is the example. FDR then used tax dollars as a negative example to build a line of argument for his positive example.

> By our example at Washington itself, we shall have the opportunity of pointing the way of economy to local government, for let us remember well that out of every tax dollar in the average State in this Nation, 40 cents enter the treasury in Washington, D. C., 10 or 12 cents only go to the State capitals, and 48 cents are consumed by the costs of local government in counties and cities and towns. I propose to you, my friends, and through you, that Government of all kinds, big and little, be made solvent and that the example be set by the President of the United States and his Cabinet.

Following this example, he used a more deductive line of argument in the following. He appealed to the audience as "common sense citizens," and even addressed them by saying "let us use common sense and business sense," as he argued for new politics in agriculture and for the unemployed. At the end of the speech FDR finally introduced and coined the key term, the New Deal:

> I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a New Deal for the American people. Let us all here assembled constitute ourselves as prophets of a new order of competence and of courage. This is more than a political campaign; it is a call to arms. Give me your help, not to win votes alone, but to win in this crusade to restore America to its own people.

FDR's deductive argument goes as follows:

#In a time of crisis, you need drastic measures.
#We are in a time of crisis.
#We need drastic measures.

FDR, Mandela, and Obama had to relate to the fact that a large part of their audience were resistant or even hostile to the cause they were naming. Although they all spent some time confronting their opposition, the main focus was on creating *a greater we* as a tool to name their cause. What if *the majority* of the crowd is resistant? What if the cause of your opening speech clearly attracts a minority of the immediate audience? On September 28, 2015, Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the United Nations. Putin's speech to the UN was sort of an opening speech, as he framed it as a political speech directed to the future. His main target was to address the Middle East crisis evolving after the ISIS terror and the aftermath of the war in Ukraine. He could assume that many in the audience were critical to Russia's policy both in the Middle East and in Ukraine, but Putin does not make too much of an effort to create a greater we. Unlike Mandela, Obama and FDR, Putin did not strive to include his enemies in joining the cause. Rather, Putin deliberately accused part of his audience for being responsible for problems with ISIS in the Middle East and the problems in the Ukraine. He employed a well-known rhetorical strategy. The Russian President spent more time than usual on naming reality, as he knew that there was great controversy as to what sort of reality the audience was really facing. Basically, he argued that the US wars in Iraq and the bombing in Libya were responsible for the rise of ISIS:

> The so-called Islamic State has tens of thousands of militants fighting for it, including former Iraqi soldiers who were left on the street after the 2003 invasion. Many recruits come from Libya whose statehood was destroyed as a result of a gross violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1973. And now radical groups are joined by members of the so-called «moderate» Syrian opposition backed by the West. They get weapons and training, and then they defect and join the so-called Islamic State.

When Putin named reality, he used this to argue for an alternative cause. He did not try to win the American public or the rest of Western world for that matter. He had a much more particular audience in mind.

His immediate constituency, it seems, consisted of his political allies and the Russian people. So, when he named reality, he defined a reality that this target group could relate to:

> It seems, however, that instead of learning from other people's mistakes, some prefer to repeat them and continue to export revolutions, only now these are "democratic" revolutions. Just look at the situation in the Middle East and Northern Africa already mentioned by the previous speaker. Of course, political and social problems have been piling up for a long time in this region, and people there wanted change. But what was the actual outcome? Instead of bringing about reforms, aggressive intervention rashly destroyed government institutions and the local way of life. Instead of democracy and progress, there is now violence, poverty, social disasters and total disregard for human rights, including even the right to life. I'm urged to ask those who created this situation: do you at least realize now what you've done? But I'm afraid that this question will remain unanswered, because they have never abandoned their policy, which is based on arrogance, exceptionalism and impunity (…)

Putin envisioned a different reality, an alternative to the one created by the US government as an argument for its war on terror. The Russian President presented a competing grand narrative to explain the rise of ISIS:

> In fact, the Islamic State itself did not come out of nowhere. It was initially developed as a weapon against undesirable secular regimes. Having established control over parts of Syria and Iraq, Islamic State now aggressively expands into other regions. It seeks dominance in the Muslim world and beyond. Their plans go further.
>
> The situation is extremely dangerous. In these circumstances, it is hypocritical and irresponsible to make declarations about the threat of terrorism and at the same time turn a blind eye to the channels used to finance and support terrorists, including revenues from drug trafficking, the illegal oil trade and the arms trade.

Putin probably did not expect that his naming of reality would be accepted by all of his audience. His aim was not to unite polar structures. He needed to define reality rather extensively to prepare the ground for naming the cause, Russia's political and military engagement in Syria and Ukraine. In naming the cause, Putin used a deductive argument:

> Now that those thugs have tasted blood, we can't allow them to return home and continue with their criminal activities. Nobody wants that, right?

Putin was facing a critical audience. It is fair to assume that the majority of his UN audience was sceptical about the cause he was promoting. He was in a state of competition. In such a competitive rhetorical climate, the big question is: Who is most compellingly seizing the word? In a competitive state, the main point for a leader is to bring the organization to a position where it is possible to dictate the conditions. With an opening speech, the leader takes command, with the aim to dictate, or name reality (what time it is and why things are like they are), name who we are, and name the cause (what we should do).

It is important to keep in mind that the cause of a speech is always open to discussion, as the future is open. Therefore, the *logos* of an opening speech is not just about telling people what to do. You even have to tell them how to do it. When you give an opening speech, you cannot merely give the audience rational arguments for future action, you have to convince them as to how things should be done. An opening speech aims at directing people's actions, behaviour and attitude. The *pathos* element of the speech calls the audience to give their hearts and minds to a cause that they do not necessarily embrace by themselves. Moving people to action makes the opening speech into a real political speech, a deliberative speech directed to the future.

What the speaker does is make suffering rational. By suffering we mean the workforce or the nation's time, power, and energy. This is an evident rhetorical strategy in Churchill's three opening speeches at the break of World War II. Through his speeches he created a rationale for suffering—to offer "blood, toil, sweat, and tears" as Churchill put it as the end of his speech on May 13, 1940. Although the reality is usually not as fierce as it was in May 1940 in Europe, this is the challenge facing every leader holding an opening speech: How can you convince the audience to believe that this is a cause worth suffering for?

The answer is both simple and difficult. The speaker, who credibly and compellingly describes the encounter with suffering, becomes a leader. A true leader convinces the audience *why* it is worthwhile to sacrifice time, energy, maybe even your life. Naming reality in a speech means knowing and discerning the power of the moment. A good speaker seizes the moment (*kairos*) and uses the situation as an opportunity. During the late 1980s the Baltic countries where struggling to

break free from the Soviet Union. In the small country of Estonia the struggle centred around big song festivals, gathering up to 40,000 singers in a mass choir and almost half a million spectators. At one of these gatherings, one of the leaders of the mass movement, Heinz Valk, gave a short speech, which ended with the slogan: "One day we shall win, one way or another." The slogan soon became a powerful banner for the whole movement.

A true opening speech has to give confidence to the audience, confidence that victory and progress is possible, despite the suffering that awaits. Even though the final victory may lay in a more distant future, no leader survives if he invites people to join the losing team. After all: who wants to sacrifice themselves for the losing team? This is what happens when a manager of a sports team "loses the dressing room."

Naming the cause is the element of the naming process where the use of symbolic figures is most wanted and craved for. In times of despair, people need something to hang their suffering on. They need fitting analogies, powerful metaphors, and effective symbols to name the cause in a compelling way in times of loss, recession, and even war. If the speaker aims to change the way people act, he has to appeal with the use of metaphors or symbols. This is what Churchill does when he names the cause with the metaphors "blood, toil, sweat and tears."

The use of metaphors can be effective and motivate your followers to action, but the metaphors have to fit the occasion. A CEO presenting a slight change in the company mailing system should probably not use all-encompassing metaphors, and definitely not say that "I promise you nothing but blood, toil, sweat and tears." Quintilian warned fiercely against hyperbolic speech and superfluous metaphors. In other words, in critical times sustainable metaphors are required. These metaphors often evolve around journeys or nature. When there's less at stake, try to find a fitting, and less dramatic metaphor.

To persuade an audience is an intimate endeavour. As a speaker you have to make yourself desired by the audience. This is the "erotic" element of the speech. You have to make the audience want both you, and the thing and cause you name. If not, you force yourself on the audience in a way they have not asked for. Therefore, the careful process of naming is so important. The first three modes of naming—naming yourself, naming reality, and naming who we are—are all key in building a relationship between the speaker and the audience. Only with this relationship in place, can the speaker and her cause be desired and wanted.

And more importantly, only when the cause appears desirable to the audience—even if it is the lesser among evils—can the audience give themselves to suffer for this cause.

Naming the cause is an art of deliberative rhetoric. Here the speaker tries to use the power of rational analysis and logical arguments to persuade the audience to give themselves to something that is not immediately self-evident. Leading by this art of persuasion means leaning on what you have made *credible* by naming yourself, naming reality and naming who we are, to argue for the *logical* and necessary steps of action following your speech.

Seven Keys to a Successful Opening Speech

1. Tell the audience who you are.
2. Tell the audience what time it is by naming reality.
3. Tell the audience who we are.
4. Draw out a compelling vision of the future worth suffering for.
5. Find your metaphor!
6. Make people remember your last words.
7. Constantly repeat your opening speech!

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CHAPTER 3

The Executioner Speech: Communicating Tough Decisions

Abstract In the executioner speech, the leader brings suffering to his audience by executing a verdict, like announcing budget cuts or letting people go. The leader has to offer a rationale for the suffering he executes, some sort of defense of the verdict. This chapter recommends that the leader should do this by appealing to the legacy of the company. The leader will learn to name the legacy of the company in a way that justifies the execution, stick to his story, execute the suffering short and swiftly, be as precise as possible, and possibly offer comfort and care by appealing to the unified "we" that continues to live beyond the execution.

Keywords Leadership rhetoric · Rhetorical persuasion · Institutional decision-making · Legacy · Legitimacy · Emotional appeal

As a good and effective leader, you will have to do some dirty work. At some point, most leaders have to fire employees, change suppliers, or disappoint customers. Perhaps you will have to enforce large budget cuts and radical changes. Being a CEO or principal does not only imply being a chief officer at the top of a hierarchy. As an *executive*, you are entrusted with the power to perform action. In English, to *execute*, literally means to kill. In its Latin root, the word has the same ambivalence. On the one hand, it means pursuing something to its logical conclusion. On the other hand, it means to pursue it with punishment, even by inflicting death.

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To be credible, the leader has to give birth to ideas and plans and make sure that they come into life. On the other hand, the leader also has to lead by cutting staff. The office of the leader has an almost divine aspect to it. It entails both giving birth and killing, which are privileges commonly ascribed to the gods. But the call to execute—both life and suffering—is an inescapable part of leadership. The good leader knows that by escaping the call to execute the entire existence of the company may be jeopardized. This dual challenge of leadership is at hand already in the opening speech. The promise of a future entails suffering. In the executioner speech, the task is to *act* in accordance with that promise. So, how should a leader speak when drastic measures are necessary, which may have hurtful consequences?

As you consider this question, you have to remember that it is the opening speech that forms the narrative basis for your leadership. This is particularly true when you hold an executioner speech. The executioner speech has to be rooted in the narrative logic of the opening speech. This really gives you two alternatives. In your first alternative you draw on the visions and ideas of your opening speech to justify budget cuts or drastic changes. This means prolonging the grand narrative of the opening speech to fulfil the purposes of the organization you lead. In your second alternative you can use the opening speech to revise the grand narrative of the company, in order to carve out a new space in which to act.

In any case, the leader's job is not merely to justify the executioner speech in the light of the opening speech, but also to make a political statement about the future of the company. "We have to do these cuts or changes to *become* who we really are or should be." In justifying the necessary cuts or changes the executioner speech is a *forensic* speech. It both exercises and defends a verdict. Following executive proclamations like "you're fired!" or "you have to cut budget by 40%," the leader has to argue why these cuts are necessary. This argument has to be rooted in the narrative of the opening speech. At the same time, the leader enters into more creative terrain. This is the clear *deliberative* move of the executioner speech. It has a political aim, as it points out and envisions the new future of an organization. A strategic leader will seek to discover and release the energy that lies latent in a hurtful change, as this potential is neither necessarily evident in the opening speech nor in the course taken. It requires a certain imaginative ability to extract that future potential of depressing downsizing and cuts.

Naming Yourself

Consider this layoff email, sent to the employees of Yahoo in April 2012. The new CEO at that time, Scott Thompson, had to let 2000 people go, 14% of the company's employees. Notice how he presented the philosophy of the company, in a manner similar to an opening speech. Thompson also used the executioner speech to justify the downsizing and envision a new future for Yahoo:

> Today we are restructuring Yahoo! to give ourselves the opportunity to compete and win in our core business. The changes we're announcing today will put our customers first, allow us to move fast, and to get stuff done. The outcome of these changes will be a smaller, nimbler, more profitable Yahoo! better equipped to innovate as fast as our customers and our industry require.

As the CEO of Yahoo, Scott Thompson had the power to execute the changes he proclaimed, which included firing 2000 people. But where did this power come from? Interestingly, the email was signed with the CEO's first name, just "Scott." Is the power to execute the downsizing hidden in the personal qualities concealed in that particular name? Is the power to fire people an inherent part of this leader's individual character or *ethos*? Hardly. The name that gives Mr. Thompson the right and power to fire people is "the name" or title given to him by Yahoo's Board of Directors. He is Chief Executive Officer. His title, the name of his office and the expected *ethos* linked to this office, gives him the privilege and duty to perform such actions—giving life to new ideas and letting people go. When he speaks, he implicitly proclaims that "I say all this, by the power given to the office that I hold."

Why would the CEO of a major company want to sign such an executioner speech with just his first name? Is this some sort of red herring? Let us have a second look at how Scott Thompson announced the details of the downsizing:

> Unfortunately, reaching that goal requires the tough decision to eliminate jobs, which means losing colleagues and parting with friends. Today, we will begin the process of informing employees about these changes. As part of that effort, approximately 2,000 people will be notified of job elimination or a phased transition.

The key phrase here is "losing colleagues and parting with friends." To make this statement acceptable, Scott Thompson had to reduce or downplay the asymmetric relationship between him and his audience. If this downsizing announcement meant parting with friends, the CEO's rhetorical attempt to achieve a state of symmetry made it plausible that Scott, just Scott, signed the press release. This corresponded with how Mr. Thompson later spoke about how "we will treat all of our people with dignity and respect."

The problem for CEO Thompson is that the metaphor of friendship presupposes a mutual and symmetric relationship. The root of the word "friend," implies freedom or love. Historically, the place of friendship was the tribe, formed by blood bonds and a strong sense of fellowship. In the friendship of the tribe you could expect faithfulness and resistance against your enemies.

Why is it so uncomfortable for the leader to hold an executioner speech? It is because he runs the risk of losing the very core of the organization, the legacy or vision that the opening speech made it credible to suffer for. Furthermore, the executioner speech puts the leaders in god's place with the power to take life and give life. At the same time the leader has to persuade his listeners that the company is a tribe of friendship. This is a troublesome place to be for a leader. Being a vindictive god and faithful friend at the same time is hard. It is not a lasting position—or *name*—to hold on to. It is immensely difficult for a leader to embrace the asymmetric logic of an executioner speech. This is particularly true in a democratic society founded on egalitarian ideals. The leader, like the executioner at a real execution, would therefore often want to guard himself or wear a mask. In this case, the press release serves as the "mask." Like a real execution, the executioner speech should be swift and short.

There is no point in dwelling on the act of execution. The purpose of the executioner speech is to reassure your immediate audience—those staying with Yahoo, not those leaving—that "I am a leader who can bring you back to the *cause* of the opening speech." The leader has to reignite the following question among his audience: *Why should I give myself to this particular company*? So, when you "name yourself" in an executioner speech, you name yourself as a leader who is willing to act and take hurtful measures when necessary. The point is to make it credible that you are executing measures and changes that prepare a way forward for the company.

Naming Reality

What was the external reality that forced Yahoo to make the drastic changes that CEO Thompson carried out? The Yahoo CEO spoke about how the company needed to be better equipped to "innovate as fast as our customers and our industry require." But even more important: in the very first sentence he described a fundamentally competitive environment. The announced change was meant to give Yahoo the "opportunity to compete and win in our core business." In other words, he described a rather harsh reality. Scott Thompson also hinted that the company had not really been able to understand its 700 million users. Rather, Yahoo had to change to "win their engagement and trust." So *what time was it*? According to Scott Thompson, it was a time of competition. The CEO placed Yahoo on the battlefield. He later spoke about how the company should move aggressively to achieve their revised goals. The metaphors used are metaphors belonging to the realm of war and battle.

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer named a similar reality in his downsizing speech of January 2009. In a statement, with the headline "realigning resources and reducing costs," Ballmer described the downsizing program as a response "to the realities of a deteriorating economy." He then used the 2008 second quarter revenue of Microsoft, which showed an increase of just 2% compared with the second quarter of last year, to argue why even Microsoft is not immune to the recession that has hit the economy. Approximately 1400 people lost their jobs that day, and 5000 positions were later "eliminated."

The problem was that this was just the first phase of downsizing at Microsoft, so Ballmer had to do another executioner speech four months later. On May 5, 2009, Ballmer sent out a memo to the Microsoft workforce, which started in the following way:

> In January, in response to the global economic downturn, I announced our plan to adjust the company's cost structure through spending reductions and job eliminations. Today, we are implementing the second phase of this plan. This is difficult news to share.

This is indeed "difficult news to share." But why is that so? Here Niccolò Machiavelli in *The Prince* offers a possible explanation. He gave advise to the ruler who aimed to hold power over a city. Machiavelli strongly encouraged the leader to examine closely which injuries it was necessary for him to inflict, and then to do them *all at one stroke*.

The point here, with regard to layoff speeches, is that the executioner should not be regarded as the one always "keeping the knife in his hand." According to Machiavelli, this assumption will arise if the leader executes downsizing repeatedly. Machiavelli claimed that such a leader cannot rely on his subjects, nor can they attach themselves to him. Therefore, Machiavelli found that injuries ought to be done all at one time. In this way, they offend less. Benefits, on the other hand, should be given little by little, so that the flavour of them may last longer. In terms of "rhetorical wardrobe" and the executioner speech, the leader should not put on "the garments of execution"—words, metaphors and gestures associated with execution—at all times.

Machiavelli spoke to the ruler who wanted to remain in power and admonished him to act swiftly, when injures had to be made. As a leader holding an executioner speech you face a similar challenge. You have to make it credible to the remaining workforce that this company is still an attractive place to work. You even have to speak in a way that may attract new workers. After all, you still want the company and your vision for the company to retain a magnetic power of some sort.

There is much at stake when you give an executioner speech. As a leader you have to name reality in such a way that the suffering you inflict appears to be a necessary measure, given the circumstances. How should you appear as you announce or name such a reality? What should you pick out of your "rhetorical wardrobe" for this occasion? In his book *The Executive's Lifetime Library of Model Speeches for Every Situation*, Roger Shelby outlines what should be said and done when doing an executioner speech. In "Model Speech 006 Downsizing" Shelby suggests that the leader should face reality and avoid corporate euphemisms.

This is easier said than done. The hardest reality to face—for the executioner—is that he is someone inflicting pain and suffering. Here is what the leader has to take note of: suffering is a fundamental part of the human condition. It belongs to life itself. The executioner speech, as with the consolation speech in the following chapter, therefore addresses fundamental human experiences—suffering the loss of your job or your loved one. A leader who is not able to recognize and name the reality of suffering will not appear credible. The leader who inflicts pain by announcing the new reality of suffering cannot go too far in playing the comforting friend. As a leader delivering an executioner speech you have to acknowledge and name the reality of suffering. However, you cannot shift too quickly between performing the execution and offering

caregiving. Balancing this duality makes it imminently important for the leader to avoid excessive use of symmetric metaphors—like “I am a friend”—or comforting words. Depending on the context, a more withdrawn and humble approach might be helpful in order for the leader to appear as a co-sufferer with those who are faced with the harsh reality of losing their jobs: not speaking and keeping silent or offering a short thank-you.

Naming Who We Are

In which sense is it possible to name *who we are* in an executioner speech? After all, the executioner speech often tells one or more people that you are *not* one of us. You are fired. We expel you! Once again, it is important to remember who the immediate audience is. Even when you fire someone in your office, the immediate audience is not the one being fired, but those staying on to work at the company. The executioner speech sends a message to them. It renames you as a leader. It names the external reality that makes the executioner speech necessary, and it renames who we are, the greater we of the organization. This is what Scott Thompson tried to do at the beginning of his speech by starting with “Yahoos”. At the end of his downsizing speech he appealed to the Yahoo! values. He tried to re-name the greater we:

> Change is never easy. But the time has come to move Yahoo! forward aggressively with increased focus and accountability. Our values have always been about treating all Yahoos with dignity and respect, and today is a day to embrace those values. This is an amazing company with exceptionally talented people and I know we will all do our best to encourage each other through this difficult period of transition.
>
> Scott

Mr. Thompson tried to confirm and appeal to the core values of Yahoo in his downsizing speech. Consider how the greater we of Yahoo is both challenged and altered: when the leader executes, the life of the organization is always at stake, and it is a fine balance between operating as a vindictive god that creates nothing but fear and acting as a faithful chief defending the tribe of friendship that the company represents. Maybe this is why both Mr. Thompson at Yahoo and Mr. Ballmer at Microsoft signed with their first names, Scott and Steve. Possibly this is also an

example of what is called *sermo humilis*—an attempt to speak humbly. The problem is that misplaced compassion may come to be counterproductive in an executioner speech. You really have to weigh your mode of speaking and rhetorical measures.

One of the problems with many executioner speeches, like the Yahoo downsizing speech, is that they often come in the form of an email or press release. Leaders use emails all the time, but do they understand the impact of the medium? Is it an appropriate form to present a message of dismissal? If we evaluate the choice of media from a rhetorical viewpoint, we can see both strengths and weaknesses. Emails are easy to distribute, and you can reach everyone at the same time. As with the fine art of letter writing in the Middle Ages, the *ars dictaminis*, you can prepare the argument in silence, probing the different possibilities of persuasion. Still, a major drawback is the lack of control. You are not able to take into account how the audience reacts. Subsequently, the absence of the leader might itself enforce the negative aspects of the message. The email is a fixed bunk of information, liable to problematic interpretations. Angry employees could spread it around without an attempt to understand it in light of the context in which it was written.

If we look at the original meaning of the word *presentation*, it meant exactly the opposite of absence, namely making things present. A civilized person in the Middle Ages would immediately think of *praesentatio* as calling a man to take on an office in the church. However, the branch of rhetoric called presentation rhetoric underlines that the *audience* is the measure for how we evaluate a presentation. Does the audience want the leader to be present? There are reasons to think so. However, Scott Thompson had to deal with the scale of his multinational company. His employees were spread all over the world. If Scott Thompson had chosen to be present in Yahoo's headquarters in California, he would still be absent in Japan. There is no easy solution to Scott's lack of presence, but in the filmed events of, say, Apple's or Tesla's product presentations, we get a feeling of how human presence can be transmitted through the screen. For the virtual community, the filmed crowd "represents" us, the viewers. They display the emotions of the whole audience—the response to the *pathos*-element of the speech.

The leader who appears in front of his employees, even when he presents tough decisions, signals courage and self-confidence. Roger Shelby finds that the executioner speech could be a live-performance, where the leader should open up for questions from the audience. However, most

leaders would know that moving from the monological to the dialogical is always risky business. The advantage is that the leader might gain sympathy (*pathos*), because he is not hiding. It is also an opportunity to show compassion with the ones who are leaving.

To shed some light over this issue, we will consider two central books in our cultural heritage, *The Prince*, written in 1513 by political advisor Niccolò Machiavelli in Firenze, and *The Nicomachean Ethics*, written by Aristotle around 350 BCE in Athens. They are usually portrayed as two opposites: Machiavelli is the sly, dark, poker-player who advised the political leaders to be ruthless in their attempt to gain—and keep—power. His name has even become an adjective. "Machiavellian" means "astute, controlling, and intriguing," as an English dictionary has it. This is due to Machiavelli's idea of politics as a technical, rather than moral endeavour. Aristotle, on the other hand, has a radically different legacy. His name is connected to the tireless advocacy for character and virtue, always pointing towards the common good.

To understand Machiavelli two issues are important: the political environment of his day and the genre of leadership. First, his political environment in Renaissance Italy was chaotic. A number of rapidly changing wars and peace agreements between different small city-states and great kingdoms made the political situation unstable. Machiavelli was a political advisor to the leaders in the Republic of Florence. In 1512, however, Florence came under the leadership of the Medici family and an effective principality replaced the republican government. Secondly, the genre of political leadership consisted of a description of the ideal ruler and his virtues, In the medieval world, self-inspection was used to foster humility. Humility and obedience was fundamental to the understanding of man, because it taught the leader to bow under the authority of God and his law. Machiavelli wrote in the same genre but had a different understanding of how to cope with the problem of pride, as he had only scorn left for humility. His republican values influenced his belief in God, a God who loved justice and created man with the capacity of founding good political orders. On the one hand, God created man as an upright, proud creature, with large intellectual capabilities. On the other hand, experience showed a different and tragic history. There is evil in the world, and there are undermining and corrupting governments. Man is indeed a dark figure, too, more inclined to evil than good. A good leader takes both sides of the human nature into consideration: man is capable of great, divine work, but also dark, satanic deeds.

We should think of corruption in Machiavelli's sense as a very common feature, affecting all institutions. At a certain time, people will become lazy or indifferent. On the level of a nation, people could lose the ability to defend themselves, because they could start to think that "peace in our time" is an inevitable, perpetual situation. Leaders of great companies might consider their products to be unbeatable, to the extent that research and development becomes superfluous. Employees in successful enterprises might become so expensive that the enterprise cannot stand the competition. Machiavelli had some advice for the good leader in the state of corruption. He sometimes used biblical figures to prove his points, and one of his favourite heroes was Moses.

In the Bible, Moses was the man who led his people out of slavery, out of Egypt, but there was constant rebellion from the people. Instead of entering the Promised Land, they roamed the desert for 40 years. At one point, Moses went up a mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God. What happened during Moses' mountain trip? The Israelis started to worship a golden calf. Machiavelli dwelt on that story, because Moses did not only break the tablets, he commanded the Levites to slaughter those who had partaken in the corrupted worship. Machiavelli thought it was an act of cruelty, due to the indiscriminate use of violence. Moses was even referring to "Thus saith the Lord of Israel," Machiavelli noted, although there is no trace of such a command in his encounter with God. Still, Machiavelli praised Moses for using cruelty constructively and with a clear purpose. Such an instrumental understanding of morality, where the end justifies the means, might sound offensive to modern sensibilities.

When people do marvellous deeds, such as Moses, they resemble God, Machiavelli found. In a sense, they are acting in the name of God, resembling him, because "he is glorious in holiness, fearful in praise, doing wonders," as Machiavelli stated in citing Exodus 15. It is the notion of being *fearful* that is important here. When the leader acts in a terrible manner, there is a certain awe surrounding him. Therefore, the leader should seek praise; he should work for glory. This divine glory is different from fame, according to Machiavelli. Leaders such as Caesar, Pompey, and the other Roman generals might have been elevated to fame, but they lacked the goodness, which is an essential part of glory. Leaders and heads of religion are among the most glorious, but founders and reformers of republics and kingdoms come close, Machiavelli claimed.

Why did Machiavelli value the impression of having divine qualities so much? In *The Prince*, he made an interesting comment about *fear*: It is better for a leader to be feared, than loved, because fear lasts longer. Machiavelli expressed his famous critique of the council genre and its preoccupation of instructing leaders solely to goodness. In dreaming up the ideal state of affairs, how things *should* be, the leader might forget how things actually *are*. This is problematic for action as well, as the leader is preoccupied with what *ought* to be done, rather than what *has* to be done. In a world of evil, a one-eyed focus on doing good deeds might even lead the prince to ruin. The logical—and perhaps shocking—solution of Machiavelli was the following: To learn not to be good is necessary for the leader.

Aristotle, on the other hand, compared the qualities of governments to the qualities of individuals, as the end that inspires them, determines both. To him, the development of character and virtue was crucial in developing sound political judgment. It was more important for the leader to be courageous than to be effective. The leader should strive towards moral excellence to act justly. How can a leader learn from both Machiavelli and Aristotle as he ponders how to appear when making tough decisions, like in an executioner speech? Should he rely on his own virtuous character and just deeds, or should he focus more on what ought to be done? How should he act in order to be both effective and appear credible?

There is another element to consider in an executioner speech: How much attention should be given to those leaving the company as the result of an executioner speech? Roger Shelby suggests first saluting the workers for their great and long-lasting contribution to the company. He then formulates the following phrases as a final send-off to those being fired:

> Leave here knowing that you are leaving a company with a future. And, let me assure you, *that* is a valuable thing for *you*. Making the transition to another position elsewhere is much easier if you are going from a going concern rather than to one that is going, or has gone, belly up. All of us – including those of you who are moving on –have a stake in this company's future.

Shelby's model speech tries to soften the pain for those leaving. The problem with this approach is that this way of speaking undercuts the fact that the leader's decision to downsize *does* inflict pain and suffering.

Earlier in the Same Model Speech Shelby Suggests that the Leader Should Blame the Downsizing on the Market Place:

> Now, it's nothing we've done wrong. The shrinkage is a function of the market place, not us. It's not our fault. But it is our problem.

This way of speaking is equally problematic. Never underestimate your audience. People are not stupid. No one will believe a leader who claims that "it's nothing we've done wrong." It is neither credible, nor probable. Claiming simply that it is not our fault is not a plausible explanation; no matter how tempting such an explanation might seem for the executioner. Furthermore, it names a minor we, subject to possible extinction in the future. Even more problematic: if you deny having inflicted pain and suffering in the presence by executing the downsizing, how should people trust you in the future? The bottom line is that this company, under this leader, is not a thing that people would want to suffer for in the future.

Naming the Cause

In his downsizing speech of 2012, Yahoo CEO Scott Thompson moved quickly from naming reality to renaming the cause of the Yahoo legacy. He tried to appeal to the core of the company. The core businesses of Yahoo should be Core Media and Communications, Platforms and Data, Thompsons argued. Naming the cause meant moving from self-justification to a more visionary mode. Naming the cause is not about justifying what the leader has done in the past, by appealing to the leader's character or *ethos.* Naming the cause, even in an executioner speech, means moving from the past to the future. The aim is to invigorate people to give themselves—suffer—for a future vision. It means boosting *the logos*—the message—of the opening speech. It means raising the fundamental question once again—what should we do now?

The first and primary mode of an executioner speech is a forensic mode of self-justification directed to the past. This is where the leader *names reality*, announces the execution, and outlines why the execution is justified. The second mode is directed to the present and implies *naming who we are*. This is where the leader may offer care and consolation, primarily to those left to work at the company. This second mode is tricky: the problem for the executing leader appears when the

mask of execution is off—and the face is exposed. At this point the leader may sense a need for acknowledgement and support from the followers, but the executioner speech should not transfer into a consolation speech in disguise. If the leader is to offer care and comfort, it is pointing those who are not immediately affected by the execution to the future by appealing to a unified we, and a possible cause for action. Following these two modes, there is a third mode, which is more forward leaning and involves *naming the cause*. This is where the leader uses the announced execution as a point of departure for envisioning action. This third mode is deliberative and directed to the future. Whereas the first mode of self-justification naturally focuses on whether the execution is *just* or unjust, the deliberative mode of naming the cause focuses on whether something is *useful* or not. Naming the cause means outlining what can be achieved, now that budget cuts and lay-offs have been announced.

Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* emphasized that the speaker must either admonish his listeners to take certain actions or warn against certain actions. This is what happens when the leader is *naming the cause*. Naming the cause is in a way simple. The pursuit of leadership is directed to the future. It entails presenting a vision of a preferred future that the audience or followers are invited to give themselves to. Envisioning the future is the key mode of speaking in the opening speech. The challenge in the executioner speech is to make a credible move from the forensic mode of justifying budget cuts or layoffs to envisioning an attractive cause for the future. This is only possible by appealing to the legacy that is portrayed in the opening speech. This legacy forms the rationale both to justify the necessary execution and to present a revised cause for action directed to the future.

For the execution to appear legitimate and for the inflicted suffering to appear appropriate, the leader has to appeal to a common legacy and name a revised cause for the future. This is the challenge President Trump faced when he decided to fire FBI Director James Comey. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein first explained the firing of Comey in a memo on May 9, 2017. Rosenstein emphasized that the dismissal was necessary to restore public confidence in the FBI. Rosenstein started his memo by appealing to the legacy of the FBI, claiming that "the Federal Bureau of Investigation has long been regarded as our nation's premier federal investigative agency." Moving on to list a number of alleged mistakes by Comey, he concluded:

> The way the Director handled the conclusion of the email investigation [of Secretary Clinton] was wrong. As a result, the FBI is unlikely to regain public and congressional trust until it has a Director who understands the gravity of the mistakes and pledges never to repeat them.

This memo by Rosenstein is in many ways a typical executioner speech. It is a forensic speech, which takes time to unfold the past to offer a rationale for the verdict. The emphasis is on *naming and claiming the reality of the past*. There is little room for *naming the cause*. This is usually the case in most executioner speeches: If the leader *names the cause* for the future it has to be done aptly and swiftly. Rosenstein merely mentioned in passing that we should return to the tradition of FBI's non-partisan history.

Rosenstein's memo, which basically stated that President Trump fired Comey based on recommendations, was not the end of this execution story. This is where things get complicated from the perspective of rhetorical leadership. In an NBC interview two days after the release of the memo, President Trump said he was going to fire Comey "regardless of recommendation." In the full transcript of the interview, the President said he thought about "this Russia thing with Trump and Russia" when he decided to fire Comey.

The suffering that the leader inflicts by firing people or cutting budget has to maintain a coherent line of argument. The story of this execution, where a senior leader fires a junior leader, reveals the acute problem of maintaining credibility when the narrative or rationale for the verdict changes. What happens, is that the audience loses confidence in the leader's naming of reality. They may start questioning whether the forensic mode of *naming reality* was really a cover-up for an implicit future cause—like getting rid of a troublesome worker or cutting a company department that has offered some sort of pushback to the leader. This confusion may de-legitimize the execution, and even jeopardize the authenticity and authority of the leader.

An executioner speech invokes immediate change. This change usually comes in the form of internal suffering. The change takes place as the leader speaks. It is *performative*.

In an executioner speech it is therefore key for the leader to *name reality* in a credible way and stick to that narrative. This is the *logos* of the executioner speech. If the leader considers moving on to *name the cause*, this has to be done by appealing to the legacy outlined in the opening

speech and in accordance with the narrative, which forms the argument for the forensic judgment.

The executioner speech represents the necessary negation of the opening speech. For the visionary *yes* of the opening speech to appear credible, it sometimes has to be followed by a short and sharp *no*. A legacy or a covenant is much like a contract; if the core principles are broken, a response is demanded. Without an appropriate response, the legacy will easily be corrupted, and its power eroded over time. The core of the executioner speech is to point to what is necessary. It goes beyond a mere working contract between a company and a worker. The executioner speech has to retell the grand narratives of identity and passion, recollecting all the things that make it worth suffering for a vision or a company. These fundamental things or archaic features are the source to both *suffering as loss* (the executioner speech) and *suffering as passion* (the opening speech). These narrative elements compose the extended understanding of the contract of a corporate body, like a nation, a company or an organization. They are the building bits of a corporate body, what makes a society. The leader has to appeal to these lasting values—both in the opening speech and the executioner speech.

Seven Keys to a Successful Executioner Speech

1. Name the reality of the past that justifies the execution
2. Stick to your story
3. Don't be left standing "with the knife in your hand." Execute the suffering short and swiftly
4. Be as precise as possible, when it comes to offering the verdict
5. Offer comfort and care by appealing to a greater we that continues to live beyond the execution
6. Utilize the legacy of the opening speech to make the executioner speech credible
7. If possible, name a revised cause for the future, but make it short and poignant

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CHAPTER 4

The Consolation Speech: The Leader as Comforter

Abstract In the *consolation speech* the leader addresses immediate suffering experienced in an organization in times of hardship, when workers pass away or when a large-scale tragedy strikes. This could be in the form of a funeral address or a speech at a memorial gathering. The leader will learn to name the reality of suffering in a credible way, show compassion in an appropriate manner and measure, position himself with the mourners, take his mandate from those in grief, consider how the consolation speech could be a way to retell the legacy of the organization, and how to appeal to the feelings of the audience.

Keywords Leadership rhetoric · Compassion · Reality of suffering · Organizational rhetoric · Memorial address · Emotional appeal

Naming Yourself

In the beginning of the famous oratorio *Messiah* by George Friedrick Handel, you hear the words of Isaiah 40:1 where the prophet promises comfort to the people. These words of future liberation and consolation, by the prophet, were originally spoken to the people of Israel, captive in Babylon. In the midst of tragedy and suffering the leader is often expected to offer comfort and consolation, but this can be hard to articulate. How should a leader console and offer comfort when suffering and tragedy strikes? Should he speak like the prophet spoke to Israel?

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On the night of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush Jr. responded to the terror attacks of that morning in a nationwide address from the Oval Office:

> Good evening. Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts.

Interestingly, President Bush positioned himself not as the executive leader of the nation, but as a "fellow citizen." Faced by the cruelty of this event, the President presented himself as one with the American people. He created a *we*. By this use of the term "fellow citizen" and the appeal to a common "we," Bush drew on a long-standing rhetorical tradition going back to the ancient Greeks: the premise for true consolation is based on a relationship of friendship.

At the same time, Bush was not one of victims of the terror. He was not injured, nor did he lose any close relatives. So, how should the leader who wants to mourn with those suffering position himself in a consolation speech? In other words, how do your *name yourself* as a leader when you aim to console? Notice how President Bush continued his 9/11 speech. He presented himself by *pointing away* from himself: "The victims were in airplanes or in their offices: secretaries, businessmen and women, military and federal workers, moms and dads, friends and neighbors." Bush placed himself in a position where he described the victims in terms of symmetric relationships. He presented himself as a fellow citizen; he was a friend who had come to console the American people, although he was not one of the victims or a close relative of any of the victims. At the same time, he exposed his own fragility: As a fellow citizen he *could* have been one of the victims.

Naming Reality

The ancient art of consolation is part of the genre *eulogy*, praise. Faced with bereavement such as illness or death, the speaker's intention was to free the mourners from their grief, or at least comfort them in their loss. In Homer's drama *The Iliad* there is a long and moving oration on Olympus by the goddess Dione. She is comforting her daughter Aphrodite after Aeneas passed away. Dione says "Bear it, my child, and make the best of it. […] Are had to suffer […] Hera suffered […]." By claiming that the suffering is not unique to the Olympian divinities,

Dione's intention is to soothe the daughter's experience. The address places the loss within a larger scheme of a perceived normality. Pain is something that even the gods have to suffer. Central to the poetical composition of Homer is *sympathy*. Dione conveys that she suffers together with Aphrodite. At the same time, Dione's speech has a clear intention of freeing Aphrodite from pain.

A slightly different attitude to the mourners and their feelings was represented by the Stoa, an influential philosophical school among the Greeks. To them, *apathy* was the perfect state. The ideal was to keep calm, the origin of the word *stoic*. For the Stoics, any emotion hinders a rational and correct attitude to life. They considered all feelings evil. When the Stoa consoled, they tried to convince their listeners that their feelings were false. For them, it was not the event itself—say, the death of a friend or illness—that was the problem. Rather, the problem was the perception of the mourner. The stoic consolatory aimed to change the mourners' perception of suffering. For the Stoics, it was important to portray death as one of life's necessary components. By portraying loss, decay and death as inevitable, the consolatory speech would also serve as a preparation for suffering in the future.

A competing philosophical tradition, represented by the Epicureans, rejected the stoic ideal of apathy. They wanted to feel *happiness*, but grief got in the way as they suffered. As medicine they tried to distract the bad thoughts and replace them by contemplating past and future pleasures. An important element in the consolation offered by the Epicureans was to underline that the more intense the pain, the shorter the period of pain.

For the modern leader, these differing views on suffering could help reflect on what it means to *name reality* in the face of suffering. In the consolation speech, the speaking leader tries to offer comfort in the midst of suffering. What rhetorical tools does the leader have to address suffering in a credible way? One important rhetorical strategy is simply to try to *name* the suffering. Describing and defining suffering in a credible way is key to appear trustworthy. If the leader does so, he may speak with authority. In his 9/11 speech from the Oval Office, George W. Bush tried to describe the events of that September morning, which many Americans probably thought was the end of the world as they knew it:

> Thousands of lives were suddenly ended by evil, despicable acts of terror. The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings, fires burning, huge – huge

> structures collapsing have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger. These acts of mass murder were intended to frighten our nation into chaos and retreat. But they have failed. Our country is strong.

To name the reality of suffering persuasively, Bush chose to describe the terror attacks in great detail.

What story did Bush want to tell his audience, the American people, as they were faced with such immense suffering? On one hand, suffering is a fundamental part of the human condition, and one alternative would be to merely *accept that the world is full of suffering*. Immediately, President Bush did not subscribe to a calm, stoic approach to suffering. He did not claim that comfort lies in merely accepting and surrendering to fate. Rather, Bush responded to the fear—the intention to frighten—that this great suffering was intended to create. He tried to diminish the apocalyptic flavour of the attack: this is not the end of the world. Here Bush appealed to an epicurean understanding of suffering. What we experience now is temporary. The reality is that this country is strong, Bush emphasized with passion.

Bush's response to suffering was a narrative that proclaimed that mourning yields strength, but fear feeds weakness and retreat. When a leader speaks to console a mourning audience, he may appeal, like Bush, to a shared, past legacy that may serve as a future promise. An exemplary version of such a consolation speech is found in Psalm 126:5–6, amplified by Johannes Brahms in the first movement of *A German Requiem* (*Ein Deutsches Requiem*). The Psalm, using a nature metaphor, claims that those who now sow with tears, will at one point go to reap with songs of joy.

In his consolation speech, George Bush responds to a national tragedy, but how should the leader console when someone dies on duty, working for the company you lead? In January 2013 the Norwegian oil company Statoil (now Equinor) lost five workers in a terror attack on the gas facility at In Amenas, Algeria. On February 4, 2013 Statoil CEO Helge Lund delivered a memorial speech commemorating the five workers of Statoil who died in the attack. They are described as "innocent victims of brutal terrorism." Lund named the uncertainty, the loss, the mourning, and the feeling of meaninglessness. He went on to describe the mourning in greater detail by appealing to a sense of fellowship in the midst of

suffering: "The sorrow is a heavy, but shared burden. (…) Facing death is the greatest trial human beings ever face," said Lund.

However, the major part of the speech was spent describing the character of the five workers. They were described in noble terms, with an *ethos* corresponding to commonly shared Norwegian values, such as a good sense of humour and impeccable work ethics. According to Lund, they treated everyone with equal dignity and respect. Notice how Lund positioned himself as a listening leader: As a leader, he placed himself alongside his employees. Lund is a leader who appears to be alert to what people feel and think about each other. Naming reality by describing the virtues of the five workers presented the audience with a hope for the future: That Statoil will work to honour the legacy of those who passed away. The five workers were, in Lund's words in another memorial speech a year later, "the best we had." This description echoes Sir Winston Churchill's use of "their finest hour" as an appeal to suffer for a certain legacy.

In a consolation speech the leader usually describes his employees in other ways than he would do if he were to write a working contract with them. You hire an employee, but you mourn a hero. This potential disconnect is not necessarily problematic. The crucial thing for the leader is to describe things and people in a way that appears credible in the given situation. What is appropriate (*aptum*) in a consolation speech necessarily differs from the opening speech or the executioner speech. It comes down to the fine art of giving a persuasive and truthful account of reality that applies to the context.

Lund ended his speech by stating that the five "lost their lives on duty for Statoil." Naming reality in this way may seem natural and honourable in a memorial speech. At the same time, it is a risky strategy. This consolation speech commemorated workers who died on "foreign ground," far away in the Algerian desert. It did not happen in the North Sea, where Statoil has its core business. This brings us to what Lund carefully left untold: the speech did not address why Statoil was in Algeria in the first place. If he were to do that, he would have to tell a more complex story about Statoil. This would be a story about all those who have sacrificed themselves for extracting oil, for example the deep-sea divers of the North Sea pioneer period. He could have said that all these were pioneers for the Statoil legacy in difficult terrain. Why did he leave it out? Perhaps he considered it to be a too complex story to tell, particularly

within the framework of a consolation speech? Lund stuck to the rule that *less is more*.

Bereavement and grief are part of everyday life, and most tragedies are not terror attacks. When a worker is mourning the loss of a parent, struggling with financial problems, or going through a tough divorce, the leader may be in a position to offer concern and consolation. The speaking leader can console and comfort her workforce not just by giving memorial speeches. The question is whether it is appropriate and desirable for the leader to pursue such a role. Some workers would probably prefer if their leader would not be too involved in matters of a more private character.

If the leader chooses to be involved in the suffering of her workers, she has to remember that the consolation speech is a *eulogy*. Offering a eulogy means to recognize and describe the feelings of the audience—in this case the individual suffering employee that the leaders encounters—with words of confirmation or appraisal. Such an encounter usually requires a dialogue. *Naming reality* in a dialogical consolation speech by the water cooler or over a cup of coffee challenges the leader to bring a listening attitude, letting the suffering worker describe and define reality by himself. In such a dialogical consolation speech the role of the leader could be to ask non-interrogative and open-ended questions to show her interest and offer comfort. The leader should also reflect on how to make contact with those in grief. Should she choose the more passive approach and send flowers as a symbolic gesture of compassion, or should she invite the suffering worker to a more formal conversation in her office? Or should the leader make herself available in the open space, where workers see each other throughout the day?

How should the leader let herself be involved in the tragedy and suffering of her workforce? The Greek solution would be for the leader to take a rational and apathetic stance toward death and suffering. Death is either redemption from the hardship of life or transition to the soul's eternal life. The Stoics used this understanding of death as a tool to approach suffering in a rational manner. The Epicureans utilized this view on death to develop consolation. When they consoled, they appealed to the benefits of the past and the potential benefits of the future. A leader who chooses to take this path, handles suffering from a distance. Arguably, this is what President Bush did in his address from the Oval Office on September 11, as he described America in the following way:

> Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shatter steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve.

This phrasing of metaphors in the face of suffering corresponds with a more stoic approach to suffering and death, pledging to the audience that this suffering will be subdued and pass: The un-shattered steel of American resolve forms a hope for the future.

The Christian view on death and suffering admonishes the leader to enter into the reality of suffering in order to strengthen faith and hope. The ideal is *com*-passion, suffering with those who suffer. Faced with grief and suffering, the leader may show compassion. This implies that the leader must sometimes find words and clothe the suffering that comes with no words. Sometimes the only thing the leader can do is to join in the cry of those who are suffering, asking: *How did this happen?* In the Christian tradition reactions such as suffering and lament are legitimate and even encouraged. The key for the leader is to develop imagination and compassion, but never to suggest that the audience can be easily relieved from suffering.

The archetypical consolation speech in this tradition is the memorial speech. Toward the end of his speech from the Oval Office, George W. Bush drew heavily on this tradition as he turned to the American people and asked them to pray for those whose suffer:

> Tonight, I ask for your prayers for all those who grieve, for the children whose worlds have been shattered, for all whose sense of safety and security has been threatened.

All in all, the leader's approach to suffering, even in more personal consolation speeches, may contribute to the reputation he holds in the company. Is this leader really someone we can trust? Does the way he *names reality* come forth as faithful? Does he speak and listen with credibility, even in matters of more private character?

Naming Who We Are

Former First Lady Michelle Obama gave a eulogy at the memorial service for Dr. Maya Angelou on June 7, 2014. Obama praised the African-American poet, memoirist and civil rights activist for celebrating "black

women's beauty like no one had ever dared to before. Our curves, our stride, our strength, our grace." Michelle Obama found that Dr. Angelou "spoke to the essence of black women, but she also graced us with an anthem for all women – a call for all of us to embrace our God-given beauty."

Michelle Obama's extensive use of the first-person plural throughout the speech—*we*, *us*, *our*—demonstrated that *naming who we are* is an important aspect in a consolation speech. When President Bush addressed the American people in his 9/11 speech, he proclaimed that "a great people has been moved to defend a great nation." He went on to emphasize that *our* military is powerful, *our* emergency teams are working, that the functions of *our* government continue without interruption and that *our* financial institutions remain strong.

This shows that *naming who we are* in the midst of suffering and tragedy is a key part of a consolation speech. However, there is a more challenging side to this: how does each member of the audience know that they are really included in the circle of mourners? This challenge has a very practical part: How do you know that it is appropriate to come to a funeral or memorial service—or change your Facebook profile in support of those suffering from a terror attack in another country? Who gives you the mandate to mourn and grieve, when you are not one of the bereaved?

When a tragedy of obvious national or international proportions strikes, like the terror attacks on September 11 or the Chernobyl power plant accident in Ukraine in the former Soviet Union in 1986, this problem of mandate does usually not come into question. The tragedy is in a way meta-personal in all its magnitude. However, when the scale of the tragedy is harder to determine, the speaking leader may choose an inclusive strategy in her consolation speech in order to make sure that everyone in the audience feel included. This is what Statoil's Helge Lund aimed at in his memorial speech following the terror attacks at In Amenas. In the beginning of his speech he addressed the following groups—parents, spouses, children, partners, family, friends and colleagues: "Today we stand united to commemorate Alf, Hans, Tomas, Tore and Victor with our deepest respect." Lund went on to include even the bereaved from other countries and those who had returned home, marked by this incident.

Helge Lund *named the thing* by presenting the *we* of this particular consolation speech as a set of ripples on water. In the inner circle you

find the closest family, then other family members, friends, colleagues, and even other people in other countries inflicted by the incident. In doing so, Lund used a "together-rhetoric." The implicit *we* of this "together" is, however, somewhat ambiguous. This rhetoric refers both to the corporate company, Statoil, the actual workers affected by the terror attacks, and the family members and friends mourning them. In a way, such a consolation speech from a CEO moves between the bereaved and the legacy of the organization. His primary focus was on grief, simultaneously emphasizing that the workers died "on duty, while working for Statoil." Still the role of the company legacy in the death of the five was carefully omitted.

It was easier for President Bush to *name who we are*. At the end of his consolation speech on 9/11 he proclaimed that "this is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace." Bush had something Lund and most CEOs of private corporations do not have—a great, mythic *we* to appeal to—in this case *America*. Therefore, as a consequence, Bush ended his speech with a prayer, drawing on the founding myth of American civic religion to further describe and define *cultural memory*:

> And I pray they will be comforted by a Power greater than any of us, spoken through the ages in Psalm 23: *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for you are with me*.

There is another striking difference between Lund's consolation speech and the consolation speech of George W. Bush. Both speeches came as a response to terror attacks, but whereas Lund remained in the compassionate mode throughout the speech, Bush made a drastic change of tone toward the end of his speech:

> The search is underway for those who were behind these evil acts. I have directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.

In other words, in *naming who we are* President Bush identified someone who was *not* part of the greater *we*. These people represent the enemy. They are *not us*. This even brought new energy to the greater *we* of the

consolation speech, America. The feeling of grief is transformed to a zeal for justice. The suffering we was an angry we, looking for justice to be restored.

This rhetorical strategy is similar to what former Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev did in his television address of May 14, 1986, following the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Having offered words of comfort to those mourning the loss of their loved ones, and thanked those who offered their help, even some American scientists, Mr. Gorbachev went on to *name who we are* by negation: He named those who were *not* part of the thing, the greater we. They were NATO-countries, and particularly the U.S.A., which, according to Gorbachev, used this accident to launch "an unrestrained anti-Soviet campaign" by spreading what the party secretary described as a "veritable mountain of lies." Using a consolation speech to name the enemy in the manner that Bush and Gorbachev did, is unfitting for most corporate business leaders. If the corporate body were not the bearer of a mythos of great dimensions, naming the enemy would come forth as inappropriate and not credible. The more appropriate way to name the enemy would perhaps be to name death as the enemy.

So, how should a speaking leader *name the thing* in a consolation speech? In memorial speeches responding to a more peaceful death, naming the thing implies naming the legacy that the departed leaves behind. Michelle Obama appealed to Dr. Angelou's legacy to value the God-given beauty of women, and black women in particular. This appeal to a heroic legacy seems to be the focus even in the consolation speech following a more sudden death, like that of the five Statoil workers dying in the In Amenas terror attacks. Even this naming has to appear proportionate and fair to come forth as credible, and it has to be done in an appropriate and fitting manner. The leader should consider the nature of the incident along with the leader's relationship to the deceased and the bereaved as he picks "the garments" out of his "rhetorical wardrobe:" What are the fitting words, metaphors, symbols and gestures to *name this particular thing* in an appropriate manner?

What if your mandate to give the consolation speech is questionable? What if you fear that your expressed compassion will appear misplaced? This may be the case if the audience feels that the leader is *responsible* for the death or suffering inflicted, or if he is just a stranger to the group of mourners. This implies that the speaker is not given the legitimate authority to *name who we are*, to speak on behalf of the *we* who are in

grief. A striking example of how this challenge may play out is found in the television series *House of Cards*. Congressman Frank Underwood is back in his home district in North Carolina. He is accused of being responsible for a young woman's death in a car accident.

Underwood gives an improvised consolation speech in his home church, with the grieving parents sitting in the front row. Knowing that he is not really given the mandate to *name who we are* and speak on behalf of the group of mourners, Underwood chooses a daring rhetorical strategy. He tries to redirect the scepticism of the audience. He speaks about hate, and how this tragedy makes it legitimate to express one's hate towards God:

> You know what no one wants to talk about. Hate. I know all about hate.
>
> It starts in your gut, deep down here, where it stirs and churns. And then it rises.
>
> Hate rises fast and volcanic. It erupts hot on the breath. Your eyes go wide with fire.
>
> You clench your teeth so hard you think they'll shatter.
>
> I hate you, God. I hate you! Oh, don't tell me you haven't said those words before.
>
> I know you have. We all have, if you've ever felt so crushing a loss.
>
> There are two parents with us today who know that pain, the most terrible hurt of all– Losing a child before her time. If Dean and Leanne were to stand up right now and scream those awful words of hate, could we blame them? I couldn't. At least their hatred I can understand.

Cynical as it may be, Underwood nevertheless places himself alongside the group of mourners and complains to God, who becomes the external enemy, the one to blame. Underwood appears quickly on the scene, and he names reality in a way, where he places himself in a position alongside the bereaved, in order to include himself in *the greater we of mourners*.

It is key for the speaking leader to know how to position herself in a consolation speech. The leader's credibility and integrity are usually mandated and legitimized by those most directly affected by the suffering at hand. The leader has to listen to their stories and place herself accordingly to be able to *name who we are*. In a consolation speech the leader takes her cue from the mourners.

Naming the Cause

You cannot be too cautious when *naming the cause* in a consolation speech. The consolation speech could easily appear instrumental if the leader is too eager to name the cause. Towards the end of his consolation speech President Bush reintroduced *the foundation myth of America* to explain *why* the United States was targeted in the 9/11 attack:

> America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world.

By *naming reality*, Bush paved the way for the more political part of his address, where he *named the cause*. In his speech he claimed that it was the foundational *legacy* of America that came under siege on 9/11. It was the *pursuit of happiness* based on equal freedom and opportunity for all that was challenged by the terror. This legacy is stronger than the evil it was faced by, Bush found: "No one will keep that light from shining," he proclaimed. In a central passage of the speech the President stated:

> Today, our nation saw evil – the very worst of human nature – and we responded with the best of America.

A few paragraphs later in the speech this appeal to the legacy of America became more operational. President Bush named a more practical cause. He declared "war against terrorism:"

> America and our friends and allies join with all those who want peace and security in the world, and we stand together to win the war against terrorism.

What if President Bush had started his speech by simply declaring a war on terrorism? What if he omitted his description of America as "the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world?" It would be much harder to give meaning to the sacrifice and suffering of those who were to give their time, energy and life to this "war against terrorism."

Helge Lund chose a different approach from George W. Bush. He was cautious *not* to name the cause of Statoil at any length. He did not declare war on terrorism. As we have seen, the only thing he did that

implicitly *named the cause* was the declaration that the five "died on duty while working for Statoil." Why did Lund avoid bringing in the legacy of Statoil to try to give meaning to the suffering of the five and the grief of the bereaved? In fact, he seemed to do quite the opposite. He claimed that their death appeared meaningless. In other words, there were no rational arguments for their deaths. They did not die for a better cause. They died in the dry land, in the desert.

In Statoil's corporate social responsibility document of 2009, the core values of the company were outlined: Being brave, being open, being up close and effective, and being caring. Helge Lund could have drawn on the first core value—being brave—to give meaning to the deaths of the five. He could have told a story of the legacy of Statoil as a story of bravery and entrepreneurial spirit, and how this incident reminds us of Statoil as a beacon for bravery and opportunity in the world. He could have told the story of the brave deep-sea divers in the North Sea, or other Statoil workers showing bravery while working for the company. He did not do that. Helge Lund had the same problem as nearly every CEO of a private corporation: They are not leading a thing that is big enough to die for. Statoil is not a big enough thing to die for. The legacy does not seem to provide metaphors that could justify martyrdom in the name of the company. This is probably why he was so cautious when naming the cause in this consolation speech. Martyrdom and working at an oil company do not go well together.

The other alternative for Lund would be to acknowledge that the world with all its suffering is part of human life as transition. This implies that human life is a constant witness to the fact that all things must pass, or that "the times they are a-changing." Comfort then comes in the form of a prophetic speech with an appeal to take part in the change that is taking place. In this case there is almost no difference between human expectation and the future reality, but comfort may also be expressed as anticipation. Viewing suffering from this perspective, portrays the one suffering as a *martyr* with an implicit promise that the expectations of the sufferer will be met. In the extreme case this is the "comfort" offered to soldiers sacrificing themselves for apocalyptic political visions, like ISIS. Once again, appealing to a martyr narrative would probably be a failed strategy for CEO Lund. He would appear distant and out of touch with the sort of compassion that the situation requires. Suffering in this case is best portrayed as an external enemy that requires deep grief, and that should not be interpreted as martyrdom.

Let us stop for a while to reflect more profoundly on this problem. Could Helge Lund have told a story of Statoil that would give meaning even to future sacrifice and suffering for Statoil? What if a school principal were to give a consolation speech commemorating a teacher who had died on duty, being killed at school? Or what if the General Secretary of the Red Cross delivered a memorial speech after the death of Red Cross doctors who were killed in a war? Or what if you were the leader of a bank, commemorating the death of a cashier who had been killed during a robbery? What would happen if you related the death of the workers to the legacy—the cause—of your organization? In which way could naming and defining the cause give meaning to suffering—both in the past and in the future?

As a leader giving a consolation speech, you have to reflect on what metaphors related to the legacy of the company which are available for a consolation speech. You have to know the "rhetorical wardrobe" of the company legacy. You would have to ask yourself how this particular company or organization contributes to the society at large. Is suffering and sacrifice in the name of this company a credible claim? When the going gets tough, what narratives and metaphors are still useful? What stories can you tell when things get rough? What metaphors are strong enough to stand through the storm? You have to ask yourself: in the history of this firm, who are the exemplary workers—the saints, if you like—that you as a leader could point to in a consolation speech?

How could *naming the cause* give meaning to past and future suffering? Helge Lund probably feared that naming the cause and legacy of Statoil could backfire, and he chose to leave that story untold. However, the consolation speech of the leader is a potential place to re-articulate the cause or legacy of the company. The leader could name the virtuous character of the deceased as an ideal for the audience to strive for. Usually these narrative characters are constructed by describing their personality, often in wide and rough terms to make sure that the audience cannot easily question this description. This can be done in two ways, by the use of narratives or by ascribing more abstract values to these people.

The characteristics ascribed to the virtuous deceased serve as corporate virtues that the leader can use to guide action toward to a preferred future. The deceased may therefore become character-protagonists in the grand narrative that the leader tries to tell. This is the rhetorical strategy Lund chose. It is the same strategy Michelle Obama used in her memorial speech commemorating Dr. Maya Angelou by pointing to a legacy of

women's pride. President Bush's consolation speech employed the legacy of America to give meaning to future sacrifice and suffering. He used a grand narrative to give meaning to the suffering and sacrifice of many. The other strategy is to tell particular stories about particular people who are examples due to their virtuous character and good deeds. Lund merely pointed to the virtues of the five workers as examples for others to follow. On the metaphoric level, Lund remained on the level of *sympathy*. He did not portray the company with its meta-narrative as a source of comfort. Helge Lund was left with himself. It was he, as an individual, who had to bring consolation.

The drama of suffering and sacrifice that underlies a consolation speech may put the whole meaning of the company in question. What is this company really here for? What purpose does it serve? Does the company make a difference in the world, and in which way? Does the company make the world a better place? Does it serve the neighbour or the common good? *Naming* and *re-naming the cause* in times of hardship, like in a consolation speech, is an effective test to prove the value of the company. Defining the cause in this way may strengthen the story telling the audience what this company or nation is there for. Naming the cause in an appropriate manner may implicitly or explicitly point to the heroic legacy of a corporate body.

However, *naming the cause* in a consolation speech not only challenges the leader to articulate the legacy and meaning of the organization in the face of sacrifice, and ultimately death. The trial and suffering that forms the context of the consolation speech may even question the personal motivation of the leader. Why should you as a leader be passionate about the cause and legacy of this company when a tragedy strikes? On what grounds?

Steve Jobs emphasized that the first question any leader should ask herself when she speaks, is: "What makes your heart sing?" The leader has to find out what he is passionate about in order to reach an audience. This sounds like a great approach in an inspirational TED Talk, but the tougher question to ask yourself is: "when the going gets tough, what *still* makes your heart sing?" Is this thing that you are passionate about an inherent part of the legacy of the firm, and is it a cause that might be worth suffering for? What in the company legacy resonates with your passion? This challenge is an underlying theme in all four speeches, but it comes particularly to the fore in the consolation speech, where suffering is usually so eminently present. How does the consolation speech give

meaning to those in the audience who are willing to sacrifice their time and energy for this company?

The consolation speech is directed to the present, to the immediate suffering. It is a eulogy. In the rhetorical tradition it is called an *epideictic* speech. At the same time, the consolation speech points beyond the present moment. The consolation speech retells past stories—often in a heroic way—to direct the audience to envision a preferred future through the stories of those who have passed away. Something similar happens in a farewell speech. Many of the consolation speeches we have looked at try to address extreme suffering—as in terror attacks or natural disasters. However, in principle the same thing happens when a CEO delivers a consolation speech after a suicide, or a sudden death. The point is that the audience is not just the bereaved, but the whole company or the whole nation state, all who relate to this grief. The grief is hard to address at a distance. Therefore, it is not advisable to send your communication advisor to address the suffering. The call to the leader is to appear in the midst of suffering—centre stage, so to speak. Only the present leader can deliver the following consolation: "Comfort ye," as the prophet Isaiah once spoke.

The purpose of the consolation speech is to address immediate suffering in a credible way. The consolation speech is therefore *pathos*-oriented. The speaker has to appeal to the feelings of the audience in an appropriate and authentic manner. This makes describing and defining reality—*naming reality*—key in a consolation speech. If the leader names the suffering in a way that appears authentic, she is mandated to *name who we are*, the *we* of mourners. If this is achieved, the consolation speech may also serve as a way to build or rebuild a company or nation by telling a persuasive story of the values which this corporate body holds dear, and that are worth suffering or even dying for. By *naming the cause* through one or more exemplary stories of life, the consolation speech portrays the virtues and legacy that are fundamental for a particular company or corporation.

If the speaker has learnt how to deliver a consolation speech, she is also well equipped to give speeches at celebrations, when someone or something is being praised. Leaders often have to speak when an employee's 50th anniversary is celebrated, when the company has brought home a new contract, or when the team has won the national championship. Like consolation speeches, celebration speeches of this

sort are *eulogies.* The speaker's task is to praise someone or something in a manner that appears attractive to the audience.

Like the consolation speech, celebration speeches are *epideictic* speeches directed to the present. The speeches may commemorate great things or great deeds of the past, but the aim is to entertain the listeners by celebrating the moment. The speaker should not draw too much attention to herself. The goal is to *name someone else* or *something else* by putting "the item of praise" in the spotlight. Positioning yourself in a celebration speech implies placing yourself in a recognizable and credible place. If you are a close friend, speak as a close friend. If you are an employer celebrating and employee, speak as an employer. If you are the best man, speak as the best man.

Naming reality in a celebration speech simply means telling people that this is a time for joy and celebration. A celebration speech therefore puts the emphasis on the *pathos*-element. The point is to move (*movere*) the audience by describing values or virtues that are desirable and praiseworthy. In ancient rhetoric the praise may circle around a whole range of values or virtues. If the leader is to express admiration for a worker turning 50 years, she could start by appealing to more external goods—describing the employer's geographical background, family or personality. The speaking leader could also appeal to bodily goods that she finds that the worker holds, like beauty, health, strength, or sensitivity. Finally, the leader could focus on desirable virtues that could be ascribed to the employer, like wisdom, modesty, bravery, and fairness. As a very last move, the leader could also tell the audience how these virtues have produced good deeds. The point is to create a sort of *crescendo*, starting with the obvious or less noteworthy attributes and ending by saluting the most praiseworthy.

In a celebration speech it is key for the speaker to move beyond the language of everyday life. The celebration speech appeals to the epic and heroic. Originally, an epideictic speech was given to praise the virtues of the gods. The speaker should therefore not be ashamed to be artistic and pull out words, stories, metaphors and symbols from her "rhetorical wardrobe" that are grandiose and extraordinary. After all, the celebration speech is a time for pomp and circumstance.

Praising someone means amplifying desirable values and virtues, but once again, less is often more. The temptation in a celebration speech is to try to list *all* desirable values and virtues that the "item of praise" may hold. The speaker should amplify *particular* values and virtues that are

worthy of praise at this particular moment and in this particular setting. Sometimes even the use of understatement, rather than hyperbolic language, may be more in place to achieve the intended amplification.

By amplifying the particular virtues of a particular person, the speaker may *name* a greater we that is being brought to light by the celebration of a particular person. The characteristics given to the worker being congratulated may be exemplary values for the whole company. The virtues of the mother, may be virtues attributed to the whole family. The celebration speech therefore holds a *centripetal power*, gathering the audience around certain values and virtues that are commonly held to be important.

In a celebration speech the first cause is no other cause, but to celebrate. The speaker should assemble the audience to celebrate the moment and the woman or man of moment. Other than that, celebration speech may *name a further cause*: moving the audience to commit to a heroic legacy that is worthy of their suffering and dedication.

Seven Keys to a Successful Consolation Speech

1. Name the reality of suffering in a credible way
2. Show compassion, but in an appropriate manner and measure
3. Position yourself with the mourners
4. Take your mandate from those in grief
5. Listen to whether the consolation speech could be a way to retell the legacy of the organization
6. Appeal to the feelings of the audience, but in a subtle manner
7. Speak slowly, but firmly

Speeches in Order of Appearance

George W. Bush Jr: Address to the nation on the evening of September 11, 2001, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-nation-the-terrorist-attacks

Dione comforting her daughter Aphrodite after Aeneas passed away, cf. Homer: *The Illiad and the Oddysey*. New York: Sterling Publishing, 2014.

CEO Helge Lund: Memorial Speech Stavanger Cathedral, February 4, 2013, https://www.abcnyheter.no/nyheter/2014/01/16/191314/mintes-ofrene-for-terroren-i-in-amenas (weblink includes video of the speech)

Michelle Obama: Eulogy for Dr. Maya Angelou, June 7, 2014, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/07/remarks-first-lady-memorial-service-dr-maya-angelou

Mikhail S. Gorbachev: Memorial address (TV speech) on May 14, 1986, following the Chernobyl accident, https://www.nytimes.com/1986/05/15/world/excerpts-from-gorbachev-s-speech-on-chernobyl-accident.html

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CHAPTER 5

The Farewell Speech: Leaving a Legacy Worth Suffering For

Abstract A farewell speech addresses the leader's future absence, but more importantly: it articulates anew the legacy of the organization as something still worth suffering for. The reader will learn to say goodbye with style, look back to his opening speech, share what made his heart sing, show gratitude and don't be bitter, tell people why all the suffering was worth it, point to the future by utilizing the legacy, and find a way to make people remember his last words.

Keywords Leadership rhetoric · Legacy · Farewell address · Suffering

Naming Yourself

It was a misty Saturday afternoon in May 2013. Sir Alex Ferguson walked on to Old Trafford, the home ground of the English football club Manchester United. He came to say goodbye after 26 years as a manager. He started his farewell speech in the following manner:

> I've got absolutely no script in my mind, I'm just going to ramble on and hope I get to the core of what this football club has meant to me. First of all, it's a thank you to Manchester United. Not just the directors, not just the medical staff, not just the coaching staff, the players or the supporters, it's all of you. You have been the most fantastic experience of my life. Thank you!

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Why was it so important for Ferguson to say, “thank you?” What would have happened if he did not express gratitude? It could be argued that it is the club that should be thankful to the successful manager and his self-sacrifice over so many years. So, why does Sir Alex express his thanks repeatedly? When the leader holds a farewell speech, the audience expects the leader to be grateful and humble. Gratitude is the preferred virtue of the farewell speech. As the consolation speech, the farewell speech is an *epideictic speech*—a speech of praise; like praising the beauty of the bride or the hospitality of the host. How should the leader who bids farewell express his gratitude?

At the very beginning of his farewell speech, Ferguson explicitly proclaimed that he was speaking without a script. Why was it important to present his farewell as something unfiltered? It left the audience with the impression that this farewell speech poured out the inner thoughts of the manager. The gesture of speaking with no script—*memoria*—sought to establish a social contract marked by spontaneity and intimacy between the leader and his audience. This farewell speech was not the well-designed product of the PR-department of the club. It was not a carefully orchestrated press release. When Ferguson left the script behind, he amplified the importance of the moment.

What would it have looked like if Ferguson came on to the pitch with an iPad in his hand, scrolling down the screen with his right index finger to keep track of the manuscript? There are very few actors who would bring their iPads on stage to perform a great monologue. The purpose of the farewell speech is to point to the lasting impact and legacy of the company in a credible way. In his farewell speech Ferguson used himself as a character witness to prove his point. He aimed to get to the core of what the club “has meant to me.” At the very end of his speech he even included his family in this endeavour:

> I’m going home, well, I’m going inside for a while, and I want to say thank you again from all the Ferguson family. They’re all up there, 11 grandchildren – thank you.

By doing this, he put himself in a position where the club became the active agent, the author of the legacy. The leader was passive, someone who served the company legacy. Ferguson explicitly described his leadership as *suffering with them*, probably pointing to the players on the pitch. He envisioned himself as a general, suffering alongside his soldiers.

Although he spoke with "no script in mind," he himself was a living script. He was a living testimony to the power of the club's legacy.

Why did Sir Alex Ferguson choose to perform his farewell speech in this manner? What if Ferguson had taken the opportunity to highlight detailed match statistics to explain how the club had been successful under his leadership or elaborated on the financial bottom line? Calibrating the speech to fit the occasion is key. The speaking leader has to find the appropriate level of style, the fitting genre, and the persuasive metaphors for each particular occasion in order to appear credible. The CEO of a local bus company giving an opening speech should not appeal to blood, toil, sweat and tears, like Churchill did.

Ferguson, a knighted football manager coming out of the Scottish working class, used his farewell speech to explore the loftier parts of his rhetorical register, rather than chattering on about midrange details, like the number of successful passes or financial net profit. In order to make the farewell speech credible, he had to draw on the legacy of both the club and his own leadership. The farewell speech had to relate to his many opening speeches—his locker room speeches and pre- and post-match interviews, in order to be appropriate and for Ferguson to appear credible. As a leader you have to know and make use of what we have referred to as the leader's rhetorical wardrobe: You have to be aware of the rhetorical garments at your disposal and reflect on what you pick out of your rhetorical wardrobe. Picking the right rhetorical clothing out of your wardrobe is particularly acute when you give a farewell speech, as this speech displays the character of the leader. In the farewell speech the leader has to appear true to her legacy as a leader, in order to be worthy of the audience's devoted attention.

Naming yourself in the farewell speech means passing on the legacy of the company. Sir Alex Ferguson reminded the audience that "when we had bad times here, the club stood by me, all my staff stood by me, the players stood by me. Your job now is to stand by our new manager." What did Ferguson aim to achieve with the fourfold repetitive use of the metaphor "stand by me?" It was not merely an attempt to look back on his own leadership. It represented a more future-oriented direction. Ferguson appealed to the legacy of the club in his message, his call to action: "Stand by your new manager."

The departing manager also described how the club had created his name and reputation as a leader. From this perspective, he had not made a name for himself. Rather, the name was something that had been

handed to him, as the whole club stood by him in times good and bad. Ferguson did not present himself as a self-made man; he was the bearer of a legacy. He was the passive recipient of a legacy. His name as a manager was a *given* name. It is this name, this legacy that Ferguson then passed on to his successor in the farewell speech: "Your job is now to stand by your new manager." More than that, Ferguson reminded the club about the core of the legacy by proclaiming: "You know the jersey you're wearing, and you know what it means to everyone here."

Naming Reality

When the leader leaves office and bids farewell, he becomes *impotent*. Formally, he does no longer hold the executive power once given to him. He cannot make decisions on long-term policies or fire employees. What kind of power does the departing leader have at his disposal, when he gives his last speech? Is he completely powerless, a rhetorically mute figurehead merely celebrating the transition of power?

The power of the farewell speech lies in its ability to *name* and reiterate the legacy of the past in order to assess what is at stake at the moment of transition. The farewell speech is like a *eulogy*—an epideictic speech. As such, the speech is directed to the present moment. It is not a forensic speech directed to the past or a deliberative speech directed to the future. Still, by recapitulating the memory of the past, the leader may reinvigorate the power of the legacy.

What is at stake during the transition of power in a farewell speech? It might be helpful to look at the farewell speech as a sort of *inheritance dispute*. When the founder of a family-owned company passes on the company to the next generation, this is particularly evident. The farewell speech of the departing leader of a dynasty presents the *will* of the founder and proclaims how he passes on the actual heritage of the company. In such a farewell speech the speaking leader is not *impotent*. However, most companies and organizations are not dynasties, and when the leader leaves office, he also leaves power. The dispute is then not so much an inheritance dispute, but a *heritage dispute*. The only power the departing leader has lies in her ability to appeal to the continued devotion and desire of her followers to fulfil the pursuit of the legacy.

How should the departing leader persuade the listeners to give themselves to his interpretation of the heritage? By *re-naming the legacy*. In his farewell speech in Chicago on January 10, 2017 President Obama

began by reviewing the heritage of his own vocation. He started his path of leadership in a neighbourhood in Chicago, in "the shadows of closed steel mills." This was where he learned that "change only happens when ordinary people get involved." He then went on remind his listeners of what he believed to be "the beating heart of our American idea:"

> It's the conviction that we are all created equal, endowed by our creator with certain unalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It's the insistence that these rights, while self-evident, have never been self-executing; that We, the People, through the instrument of our democracy, can form a more perfect union.

When Obama quoted the U.S. Constitution, he used it to retell the achievements of his own presidential term. He even presented this legacy as a shared legacy. Notice how Obama introduced a metaphor from the realm of marriage when he spoke of "a more perfect union." He is giving an *apology*, a speech in self-defence. Speaking in this manner, he confronted the opponents of his disputed politics.

Obama relativizes the power of the presidential office and optimizes the power and importance of the Constitution. The Constitution represents the epitome of the shared legacy. Unlike Ferguson, who boldly exhorted the audience to simply be loyal and "stand by your new manager," Obama appealed to the audience to be true to the ideals of the legacy, which obviously entailed an implicit critique of his successor. Obama did not campaign for the next President, Donald Trump. This presented the audience with a conflict: what represents the shared legacy of America—the legacy of Obama's presidential period or president Trumps' call to "make America great again?"

This understanding of the Constitution—or the legacy, if you like—is really a Protestant hermeneutic principle. In the Protestant tradition, there is no formal office that holds the authoritative power to interpret Scripture—the heritage. In other words, the power to interpret is up for grabs. This works much the same way with the legacy of a company or the American Constitution. There is no Apple Pope, or no McDonald's St. Peter.

The lack of formal power to define an authoritative interpretation of the company legacy, leads to an ongoing dispute or struggle about the legacy of nearly every company, club or organization. Looking at the years following Ferguson's departure at Manchester United,

with swift managerial changes, displays this conflict in an interesting manner. Who really represents the true legacy of the club—a Scottish manager (David Moyes), a home-grown product (Ryan Giggs and later Ole Gunnar Solskjær), a Dutch gaffer prioritizing young players (Louis van Gaal) or a manager known to prioritize winning at almost any cost (Jose Mourinho)? Such an ongoing dispute over legacy is no surprise. Every transition, every farewell speech, brings to the fore the following question: What part of our tradition will now be passed on?

It is interesting to look at what sort of rhetoric Obama used to persuade his audience in the ongoing heritage dispute over the American idea. In his farewell speech, former President Ronald Reagan pointed out that "there is a great tradition of warnings in Presidential farewells." It is exactly such warnings Obama used to appeal to his listeners. He reactivated what may be labelled *constructive fear*. He named the reality that can be lost, if the American people fail to be true to their shared legacy.

Obama named four threats to the heritage of the American Constitution: the loss of economic solidarity, the failure to combat discrimination, the negligence of a common baseline of facts, and the temptation to take democracy for granted. By naming these four threats Obama effectively admonished his listeners to fear the impact of these threats in the future. If the audience does not continue to work and suffer for his interpretation of the legacy, the core values springing from the Constitution may be lost:

> Our Constitution is a remarkable, beautiful gift. But it's really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power – with our participation, and the choices we make. Whether or not we stand up for our freedoms. Whether or not we respect and enforce the rule of law. America is no fragile thing. But the gains of our long journey to freedom are not assured.

When you say farewell, you mark that your life as a leader is coming to an end. The farewell speech concludes your leadership. What does it mean to *conclude*? In every speech the speaking leader is naming reality by telling the audience what time it is. In the farewell speech the leader does this by pointing to the present moment as a decisive moment, a moment of choice: *I* am leaving my office. Will *you* follow the legacy you have committed yourself to? Will you continue to fear and respect the heritage of the memory that I have now restated for you?

Before entering the Promised Land, Moses, who had been leading the Israelites for forty years through the desert, gave a farewell speech. He was not able to join them in this new era. Passing on leadership to his successor Joshua, he exhorted his fellow Israelites to fear the threats the future holds and therefore choose life, not death. The promise and blessings of the future, according to Moses, lies in staying true to the moral legacy sworn to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Deuteronomy 30:19–20).

In the farewell speech, the leader names the continuous impact of the legacy and calls the audience to commit themselves to this legacy. The leader does this by reiterating memory (*the past*), reinvigorating the feelings of the audience (*the present*) and reigniting the vision that the legacy holds (*the future*). The key here is that the leader appeals to intentionality, not fate or luck in order to appear persuasive. Ultimately, the farewell speech presents the audience with a moral choice: How will you honour the legacy we have committed ourselves to so far?

Naming Who We Are

In his farewell speech President Obama claimed:

> For now, whether you're young or young at heart, I do have one final ask of you as your President – the same thing I asked when you took a chance on me eight years ago. I am asking you to believe. Not in my ability to bring about change – but in yours.

In the farewell speech the leader is pointing to his own "death" as a leader. He is proclaiming the *separation* between him and his followers. He is leaving the scene; he is leaving his office of leadership. It is time to say *adieu*. Sir Alex Ferguson ended his farewell speech by even more explicitly announcing his departure: "I'm going home, well, I'm going inside for a while, and I want to say thank you."

The inevitable separation that the farewell speech entails brings the audience back to the social contract that was created through the opening speech. The opening speech unfolds the *aspiration* of leadership as the leader invites "you" and "me" to join forces to create a greater "we." This greater "we" is born through suffering, as the leader and her followers come together to give themselves to a legacy.

What happens to this "greater we" when the leader departs? Does it disappear? Here we are at a point that needs rhetorical attention. The aim for the leader in the farewell speech is to persuade the audience that this "we" still lives on, it is not dependent on the leader's presence. The "we" that was once embraced formed a common legacy, which goes beyond the leadership of this one leader. It is probably with this in mind that the final words of Obama's farewell speech are: "Yes, we can. Yes, we did. Yes, we can." It is crucial in the farewell speech to reinvoke the memory of the great "we." In a sense this "we" that the leader now looks back on has to appear greater than the "we" once imagined in the opening speech. How should a leader use the words that concludes his leadership to ensure that this greater we will live on? On one level, this is out of the leader's reach. She can only encourage the audience to commit themselves to this we. This is a constructive element of a farewell speech. The identification of what constitutes the "we" is not obvious. Therefore, it is up for grabs.

What is the best way to remind the audience of their commitment and inspire them to continue to suffer for this shared legacy? If we look at Obama, he quite extensively reminded the audience of the achievements of his own presidential term. He branded it as something "we" have done. In his farewell speech Ferguson only briefly hinted at how "those last-minute goals, the comebacks, even the defeats, are all part of this great football club of ours." Ferguson's short and poignant strategy was similar to what Ronald Reagan did in his farewell address in 1989. Reagan just briefly paraphrased the achievements of his presidency by claiming that

> The fact is, from Grenada to the Washington and Moscow summits, from the recession of 81 to 82, to the expansion that began in late 82 and continues to this day, we've made a difference.

Although he was president, it is *the greater we* who made the difference. How did Reagan invoke such a "we" to remind the audience of their shared legacy? There are probably lots of political wins he could bring to the fore, but he chose to concentrate on a few. He tried to give a pointed account of two of the cornerstone achievements of his political era – security politics and economic politics.

It might be helpful at this point to look at the whole life of the leader as a speech. From this perspective, the farewell speech serves as

the epilogue of the leader's life. The purpose of such an epilogue is to give the listeners something short and noteworthy that will stick to their memory, something concrete that they can take home with them and that reminds them of the ongoing legacy.

What if you are not a President leaving office or a legendary manager saying goodbye to the fans? Let us imagine David, who over the last seven years has been leading the traditional and mediocre printing company DB Printing. For the last few years the company has been struggling to survive. There have been few memorable moments during the time of his leadership, mostly business as usual. What stories or elements should David draw on in his farewell speech? He could obviously mention that the company has provided people with jobs. It would be tempting to simply describe what he has enjoyed and admired about the workplace and his co-workers. He could even express his appreciation for their skills and qualities. The critical question, however, remains: Does this story create a greater "we"—a legacy—which is worth suffering for, giving your energy and talent to?

All companies, organizations or clubs, which are not constituted by mere coercion, have the persuasive potential to be described as *a greater we*. When the leader speaks, she places the company on the marketplace. Her task is to "clothe" the legacy of the company in such a way that it appears attractive. The leader has to make it credible that *who we are* is something beautiful, something worthy of your passion and energy. The leader has to reflect on what to take out of her rhetorical wardrobe to dress up the company in order for it to appear desirable. What are the metaphors, archetypes, symbols, gestures, clothes, and stories that the leader may use to make it credible that this particular company, this club, this nation stands out as something to be proud of, something to even suffer for? This is not an appeal to a cynical selection of sly and slick rhetorical instruments. Rather, it is an appeal to the leader to know the legacy of the company in order to make the company into something that craves attention. The leader has to articulate the seductive elements of the company's legacy.

The reminder to articulate the particular elements of a company's legacy highlights another element to consider in every speech: to what extent is it important to stress the exclusiveness and originality of a particular legacy to make it attractive? How should the leader construct the uniqueness of the firm in such a manner that it appears plausible to the audience? Once again, the key here is that the story the leader tells

has to come across as credible. If you are the leader of a world-leading company in your business area or President of the most powerful country in the world, the use of grand narratives is almost unavoidable. They are expected. If you are David from DB Printing you need to stress the originality of the company in an appropriate manner. Maybe you could tell the story of DB Printing by describing its huge impact on the neighbourhood, and how the story of DB Printing belongs to a greater narrative, the myth of self-made men and women?

Although the farewell speech serves to re-invoke *a greater we* that will continue to live on after the departure of the leader, it also aims to secure the personal legacy of the leader. However, appealing to “a greater we” is often best done by the leader pointing to those who really suffered for the collective legacy, not by promoting her own personal achievements. This is what Sir Alex Ferguson did in his farewell speech. In his farewell speech he gave particular attention to one of the players, the loyal “solider” and world-class player, Paul Scholes, who also retired from professional football along with Ferguson the same day. Scholes embodied the virtues Ferguson fought to instil. General Petraeus, whom we looked at in the opening chapter of this book, did something similar in his farewell speech. He pointed to the ordinary soldiers who gave their lives on the battlefield. This strategy serves as a way to secure your personal legacy, indirectly saying: “These great things done by these heroic people happened on my watch! It has been a pleasure to serve you.” The bottom line is that you cannot secure your personal legacy without making it credible for the audience that the company—*the thing*—that you no longer lead, still holds a great future: that this nation is still worth dying for. By doing so, the leader also amplifies the importance and authority of the corporate body.

In many farewell speeches the leader brings greetings from his family. This is what Sir Alex Ferguson did in his farewell speech, and it is what Obama did in his farewell address at the lighting of the national Christmas tree in December 2016. Obama even included grandma and the pets. When a leader brings the family onstage in a farewell scene, it serves as a way to mandate or sanction the legacy of the organization. The family functioned as character witnesses, telling the audience two things. First, we vouch for the integrity and credibility of this leader. Secondly, the presence of the family proclaims that the legacy of this company was really worth the sacrifice. The indirect heroic narrative here resembles the story of families giving one of their children to serve as

a priest or a monk or nun. It is not really the leader who has sacrificed himself, but the family who has sacrificed him for the great cause or legacy of this proud nation or company. Bringing your family onstage even sends a message to those who are left to suffer for the legacy of the corporate body in question: giving your very best to this cause is worth the suffering.

An effective farewell speech aims to reach beyond the mere praise of an epideictic speech and regrets of the past. It serves a more political and future-oriented purpose. It has to re-ignite the legacy of the organization. As a leader you should consider your whole life as a leader as a continuous preparation for a credible farewell speech. How should you lead to make it credible at the end of your leadership that this cause is still worth suffering for? This way of leading is *futuristic leadership*. This implies leading in the light of a preferred future. In this respect, your future farewell speech is an important tool for exercising leadership in the present.

Naming the Cause

The farewell speech is the leader's attempt to take control of her own departure. How is it possible for a leader to stage her "death" in a credible way? When is the right time to leave? Is it possible to find that special moment—the *kairos*? How might *naming the cause* help in persuading the audience that *this moment* is the right moment to leave? Where the opening speech looks to the future, the farewell speech marks the coming moment of separation by looking back on the past. This holds true for the beginning of the farewell speech. It is both customary and necessary to memorize the things of the past. After all, the legacy of this particular company and the history of this particular leader is the reason for the actual farewell speech. However, when *naming the cause* in the farewell speech, the speaking leader looks to the future. By naming the cause, she tries to give the audience a persuasive answer to the fundamental question: *where are we going?*

People tend to remember the end better than anything else, and we tend to interpret what precedes the end in the light of that particular ending. This implies that the image the farewell speech leaves casts light on the whole career of the leader. Such an insight could tempt the leader to become self-centred and try to highlight almost every single achievement of her career. For the departing leader it is key to keep in mind that the

end always represents a new beginning. Naming the cause in a farewell speech therefore holds a forward-leaning momentum. Where the consolation speech addresses the *transition*-element of all human life, the farewell speech deals with the *tradition*-element. It passes on the legacy, which makes it desirable to give yourself to the cause. The farewell is the leader's way of saying *adieu*—"to God." It weaves the audience into a larger narrative, a narrative that moves toward the borders of human existence. If the opening speech mainly emphasizes the cause (*logos*), the farewell speech is primarily about the leader's virtues and character, the *ethos*. The consolation speech emphasizes the heroic virtues of the departed and deceased, but its main aim is to address *pathos*—the immediate suffering.

The farewell speech may be interpreted as a sort of *ars moriendi*. In ancient times, "a good death" implied, dying slowly. The farewell speech is like a memorial speech after a peaceful death. This leaves room for naming the cause, which means passing on the legacy. The leader leaves a vacant post. What makes this post desirable to take on? The main purpose of General Petraeus' farewell speech was not to say thank you a million times. Rather, it marked the leader's last chance to envision that *this thing*, the military, had a cause that is still worth fighting for: To defend the country and American values. Petraeus left his post with this implied legacy in mind.

Naming the cause in a farewell speech lets the leader tell his followers where to go when he is leaving. This is what Moses did in his farewell speech to the Israelites, describing the two paths—one leading to life, the other one to death. This part of the farewell speech, *naming the cause*, is future-oriented. It serves to stir up hope and expectations. It proclaims the joy of what is to come. It tells the audience to embrace the future and the future of a particular legacy.

The call to embrace the future is in many ways the implicit slogan for the type of speech referred to as the commencement speech. When Steve Jobs gave a commencement speech at Stanford University in 2005, he quoted the back cover of the final edition of the magazine *The Whole Earth Catalogue*: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." Jobs uses the slogan to name the cause to the graduate students at Stanford University:

> It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay hungry. Stay foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.
>
> Stay hungry. Stay foolish.
>
> Thank you all very much.

Ex-Yahoo CEO Carol Bartz gave another famous commencement speech, articulating the importance of foolishness when facing the future. In 2012 she spoke to the graduates of University of Wisconsin at Madison. Her message was "embrace failure!" The call to embrace insecurity and risk-taking seem to be key in naming the cause in a farewell speech.

The typical commencement speech is not really a farewell speech, although it takes place at a ceremony, which marks the end of education. It has elements of an opening speech, as the speaker is invited from the outside world to encourage the students to meet the future. It is a vicarious farewell speech, where the speaker bids farewell on behalf of the hosting institution. The emphasis is on naming the cause, and this part of the speech resembles many farewell speeches. The speaker names a viable cause capable of guiding the audience on a path into the world. This cause articulates both the legacy of the institution and the values and ideas that the speaker represents. Although the commencement speech is personal, it is first and foremost a political speech, directed to the future.

Usually, the farewell speech has a strong conciliatory tone in order to ensure continuity. In his farewell address Ronald Reagan tried to achieve this by being personal, reaching out his presidential hand to the nation:

> You're always somewhat apart. You spent a lot of time going by too fast in a car someone else is driving and seeing the people through tinted glass – the parents holding up a child, and the wave you saw too late and couldn't return. And so many times I wanted to stop and reach out from behind the glass and connect. Well, maybe I can do a little of that tonight.

This journey metaphor plays with the image of the president as a real person who wants to reach out to his people and touch them, but who has been hindered by the restrictions of the office. Introducing this metaphor in his farewell address may have been a way for Reagan to brand his presidential legacy by implicitly saying: "Look, I am a real person just like you." With this rhetorical use of the metaphor he crafted his *ethos.* Even at the dawn of his presidency, he wants to be someone who is turned to his people in order to touch them: indirectly naming himself and naming the cause of his presidency.

How should a leader say farewell when the departure is forced upon her? Perhaps she has been fired or told to leave. This sort of farewell speech is usually not a regular farewell speech, but an apology.

The challenge with such an apology is that the leader may be tempted to appear self-centred and sentimental in a way that does not appeal to the audience. This happens when the departing leader shows signs of bitterness and spends most of her energy proving that she is right. Remember, the farewell speech is mainly about portraying character and displaying a preferred *ethos*. The audience will not love a self-indulgent leader, and they will most probably be repulsed. The dilemma for the leader who has been forced to leave is the need to speak in self-defence. If you are not sacked in a way that makes you into an archetypical victim, it is a risky strategy to launch your farewell speech as an aggressive apology to defend yourselves.

There is another problem with this sort of farewell speech, namely the problem of *genre*. A farewell speech where the departing leader tries to defend himself is in form an *apology*. Most farewell speeches are epideictic speeches directed to the present, possibly invoking more future-oriented moves to ensure that the legacy is still worth fighting for. The apology, on the other hand, is a forensic speech directed to the past. It sets the scene of a court, rather than a farewell party. Such an apology invites the audience to offer a verdict. The apology challenges listeners to evaluate the leader as a victim or as an offender. It leaves little room to promote a corporate legacy. The heritage dispute has become personal as the departing leader is fighting to restore her personal legacy. This personal legacy can no longer be fully included in the corporate legacy. As the corporation is actually forcing the leader to leave, saying, "*You* are not *us*."

Although this sort of farewell speech is an apology, the departing leader is probably best helped by not going into the accusations against her in any detail. An even riskier and more aggressive approach is to launch a credibility fight over the corporate legacy. This implies that the leader uses the apology to claim that he—along with his character witnesses—actually represents the *true* version of the legacy. In this case, the leader ignites a war over the corporate legacy. There is a problem here, depending on the nature of the legacy your claim to represent. If you appear aggressive in your claim to be the true bearer of the legacy of a peacekeeping NGO, such an apology might be counterproductive.

What happens if the leader in the apology takes the blame? What if the farewell speech is a confession? What if the leader appears as the penitent? A public confession puts the audience in the chair of the office-holding priest who holds the power to absolve and offer

forgiveness. When the farewell address turns into an apology of this sort, it is both an act of self-execution and self-defence. Through the apology the leader seeks to rename himself, rename reality, rename who we are, and finally rename the cause.

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton gave his famous apology on August 17, 1998, following the Monica Lewinsky scandal. This is a classic example of such an apology. Clinton's apology was a confession. He knew that his political career depended on whether the audience—the American people—would give him the necessary forgiveness to restore his dignity. This was crucial because it affected the legacy he held, even the presidency. Clinton did not ask the American people to forgive him. Rather, he placed the power to forgive in the hands of two character witnesses—his daughter and his wife:

> Now, this matter is between me, the two people I love most – my wife and our daughter – and our God. I must put it right, and I am prepared to do whatever it takes to do so.
>
> Nothing is more important to me personally. But it is private, and I intend to reclaim my family life for my family. It's nobody's business but ours.
>
> Even presidents have private lives. It is time to stop the pursuit of personal destruction and the prying into private lives and get on with our national life.

Then he went on to rename the cause of his presidency by looking to the future:

> Our country has been distracted by this matter for too long, and I take my responsibility for my part in all of this. That is all I can do.
>
> Now it is time – in fact, it is past time to move on.
>
> We have important work to do – real opportunities to seize, real problems to solve, real security matters to face.
>
> And so tonight, I ask you to turn away from the spectacle of the past seven months, to repair the fabric of our national discourse, and to return our attention to all the challenges and all the promise of the next American century.

With this apology Bill Clinton appealed to the American people: He had to appear as penitent in a credible way to secure the necessary integrity to continue as president.

What if it is beneficial for the leader to leave office? The farewell speech may also be an attempt to cover-up, trying to conceal the actual reason for the leader's departure. This may be the case when one or more parties have reason(s) to silence the real story of the leader's departure. Such a farewell speech may be framed to save all parties from greater trouble. It is very challenging for such a farewell address to appear credible to the public.

Whatever the circumstances, the key question always remains: Does the speaking leader appear credible? Although the farewell speech is directed to the present, the leader has to speak credibly about the past—and the future. The farewell speech presents the leader with the recurring challenge to appear credible, one last time.

Seven Keys to a Successful Farewell Speech

1. Look back to your opening speech
2. Share what made your heart sing!
3. Show gratitude, don't be bitter.
4. Tell people why all the suffering was worth it
5. Point to the future by utilizing the legacy
6. Say goodbye with style
7. Find a way to make people remember your last words. They may define your personal legacy!

Speeches in Order of Appearance

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Epilogue

Your Rhetorical Wardrobe

This book has dealt with the fine art of persuasion—*rhetoric*—and how a leader should speak in order to appear credible to an audience. We have argued that there are three fundamental claims that define the art of speaking for a leader:

- Every leader is a speaker.
- Life as suffering.
- Every speech is a story of life.

Based on these three claims, we find that there are four speeches every leader has to know—the *opening speech*, the *executioner speech*, the *consolation speech*, and the *farewell speech*. In all four speeches the leader has to address suffering in a credible way to appear trustworthy.

Throughout the book we have emphasized the importance of checking your rhetorical wardrobe for every speech. What do we mean by this? The "garments" available for a particular speaker at a particular occasion are the leader's rhetorical wardrobe—words, gestures, metaphors, stories, symbols, examples, deductive arguments, etc.: How may the words the leader puts on help the leader to be trusted, and make the cause of the speech appear both plausible, probable, and worth suffering for?

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What gestures and words should the leader "put on" in order to speak about suffering in a credible way?

For a leader it is key to reflect on which "jersey" to pick out of the closet. Not every "jersey" is available to every leader on every occasion. If you have never used journey metaphors in your speeches, maybe the farewell speech is not a good time to start doing so. It is usually not very convincing when a leader combines hard and soft metaphors in an executioner speech. The consolation speech is usually not a great place to speak at length about company product details. At the same time, every speaker may work to expand his rhetorical wardrobe—crafting new metaphors, reflecting on gestures, and the use of examples. In any case, it is key that the rhetorical "clothes" you put on are perceived to be your own, even if you have borrowed them. This requires familiarizing yourself with your rhetorical wardrobe before speaking, even knowing how to combine the different garments to perform "verbal power dressing" that comes forth as trustworthy to the audience. After all, many speeches or speaking opportunities are not a clean-cut opening speech or a formal farewell speech. One way to tackle this challenge is by combining different speaking strategies and using elements from different speeches—picking out what appears to be useful from your rhetorical wardrobe, so to speak.

When President Mandela put on the jersey of the Springboks during the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa, he radically expanded his rhetorical wardrobe in a very real sense. Putting on this jersey, which previously served as a symbol of the opposition, worked only because it corresponded with his previous actions and message about reconciliation. Putting on the jersey captured the legacy he aimed to pass on through his presidency. His character (*ethos*) corresponded with the message (*logos*) and aroused the intended feelings among the audience (*pathos*).

This book emphasizes that there is an intimate relationship between the speaker and the audience. To create and strengthen that bond the speaker has to make himself desired by the audience in order to appear credible. To awaken that desire, he has to dress appropriately by choosing the right garments from his rhetorical wardrobe.

The art of speaking and the craft of making music are similar in many ways. A speaking leader who arouses the desire of an audience may become like a musician who makes a crowd dance. Public speakers, like musicians, can learn how to use different rhetorical strategies to arouse feelings and thoughts that move people to action. One such strategy is to

pause, or even stop to be silent, in order to make people listen—not just to the words you use or the notes you play, but to the space that emerges between the words and notes.

This book has been written to help leaders reflect on what it means to connect with an audience by speaking persuasively and credibly about suffering with the help of the appropriate rhetorical "clothes." We hope reflecting on the four speeches every leader has to know will be beneficial for your leadership and the legacy you lead. So, good luck on expanding your rhetorical wardrobe and making people dance!

Glossary

Rhetorical Dictionary for Leaders

Apt [*aptum*] is the virtue of putting the selected parts of the speech into a harmonious whole. It has a decent appearance (*decorum*). If the speech is apt, it is effective and reaches its intended purpose. Usually, the rhetoric tradition applies a twofold perspective on *aptum*: one can either take an internal or an external standpoint. If you take an internal view, you ask whether the different parts are successfully integrated. Are the words fitting to the subject matter? Is the disposition well-rounded, etc. The external viewpoint takes the social circumstances into account. Do you pose correctly? Are the audience's expectations taken into account? A rule that applies to both perspectives: "Avoid exaggerations"

Argument [*argumentatio*] An argument is normally constructed by showing or proving from the subject matter itself, often with the help of a logical conclusion. Hence, it has a deductive nature, as when the judge states: "The evidence is overwhelming. The man is guilty" (*logos*). As a speaker, you can also establish an argument by appealing to your own knowledge: "I know this man. He is evil" (*ethos*). Finally, you may appeal to the audience: "Do you want such a man walking around in your neighbourhoods?" (*pathos*). Quintilian distinguished arguments from examples, because they were inferred from facts and stories outside the given case

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Clarity [*perspicuitas*] was, in addition to correct grammar, aptitude and embellishment, one of the classic qualities of style. Usually, it is considered as the most important, due to the closeness to logic. If a speaker is clear, he exudes not only elegance and effectiveness, but above all intelligence and capability for reason and thought. Clarity was also a highly desired quality of style in modern times, with the general culture's emphasis on dispassion, objectivity and simplicity. How can a speaker attain clarity? The tradition advises to use different elements, pertaining to language, subject matter and effectiveness: Use unambiguous words, construct a well-ordered arrangement, give sufficient attention to detail, strive for purity, make it brilliant and understandable

Commonplace [*locus communis*] can mean slightly different things for the classical authors. Aristotle saw that some formal argumentative structures—*topoi*—were common for all the different sciences, such as the principle of "more and less". Quintilian, however, considered Aristotle's word *topoi* to refer to a commonplace where the speaker could find concrete arguments in, say, a forensic speech. If a lawyer should defend a client in court, he could consult the place "past life of the accused" and find arguments for his case. Cicero on his part, considered "place" as a recurring subitem in many speeches

Comparison [*comparatio*] with a smaller case is useful in order to amplify your own case. By comparing the present situation with a less important historical circumstance, the present will appear more meaningful. As an example, Cicero once said: "If the ancestors could not accept any limitation to the citizens' freedom, how could we not respond to the killing and torture of a Roman citizen?"

Delivery [*actio*] The fifth of the rhetorical canons and final step in the preparation, after the arguments are invented, arranged, dressed and memorized. By the ancients, it concerns the voice, the bodily posture and gestures. Aristotle claims that delivery is most important for the rhetorical effect. "The voice must be ready to use its whole register in order to convey the correct affects", he says, and singles out volume, inflection and rhythm as the most important tools. The Romans warned against being too pathetic. They were influenced by Stoic ideals and emphasised control: Cicero wants the speaker to appear philosophically sound and refined. Quintilian allows more freedom of the body, though, the speaker deliver while he walks

Disposition [*dispositio*] After the speaker has invented his arguments; they must be organised or arranged. The strict rules from ancient oratory seems a little outdated, but the ideas of arrangement could be broken down to two principles: Tension and completeness. Tension is often constructed around two contrasting or antithetical parts. Completeness is typically arranged as a three-part speech with beginning, middle and end

Ethos means “character”. In addition to *logos* and *pathos*, the speaker can appeal to *ethos* to appear credible. For Aristotle, it demanded practical wisdom, virtue and goodwill from the speaker. Cicero thought that character was established at the beginning of a speech, preparing the audience for conciliar advice, or to be entertained. This is particularly important if the speaker is unknown or if a bad reputation is hunting him. *Ethos* can also be used to describe the “mood” of the speech. It is a milder and more durative emotional state than the high, affective mood of *pathos*

Eulogy [*genus demonstrativus*] or epideictic oratory is one of the three main genres in rhetoric. Unlike the deliberative speech that is directed to the future and the forensic speech that is directed to the past, the eulogy is directed to the present. These speeches are mainly consisting of either praise or blame. Funeral orations are important examples of eulogy

Evidence [*evidentia*] means obvious, apparent or visible. The speaker utilizes the power of evidence if she gives a *lively* presentation, creating the impression that the audience is a witness to the event, experiencing it alive. There are linguistic techniques that are mentioned, for example the use of verbs in the present tense (historical present). It happened “here” and “now”, instead of “there” and “then”. Evidence appeals not so much to the intellect as to the affective side of human consciousness

Example [*exemplum*] is a method of “proving” a case, by using an element that is foreign to the subject matter. According to Quintilian, it has persuasive power if the speaker can show the relation between the example and the case itself. Using examples from history usually has the greatest effect, but fictional stories can also be utilized. Aristotle pointed out that it may be easier to find real parallels in fiction, and Quintilian added that it is particularly effective on simple and untrained people

Forensic speech [*genus iudiciale*] Together with the political speech and praise, it is one of the three branches of Rhetoric. It is directed to the past, either as an accusation or a defence. Its primary use was at court, when processes were publicly conducted. Did he commit the crime? Was it an accident? Was the crime provoked? The latter question was important for Roman foreign affairs, because it provided the rationale for action: Invasion was caused by aggression from the neighbouring countries. Aristotle claims that the appeal to equity is as important as the law's wording. If you have acted against the law, you can rely on an immutable 'common law', which is in accordance with nature

Hyperbole [*amplificatio*] is an exaggeration so strong that it cannot be understood literally, often used to create intensity and pathos. If the surplus was less than expected, a leader can burst out that "the expenses rose to the skies" and make job cuts plausible. If the opponent "has a heart of stone", your own leader might be preferred. A related expression is the understatement [*diminutio*]. It minimizes the subject matter far more than what is realistic. Cicero recommended it as a feature of modesty, and thereby gaining the audience's favour. For example, one of the survivors of Titanic's sinking said: "It was rather a serious evening, you know"

Interrogation [*interrogatio*], the rhetorical question, can be utilized particularly to raise the intensity and force of the argument, according to Quintilian. He was particularly impressed by Cicero's use of questions as accusations, and how it put the communication on fire: "How long will you abuse our patience, Catiline?" Quintilian compared Cicero's questions to mere statements such as "You have abused our patience!" and pointed out how dull statements seemed in comparison with questions

Invention [*inventio*] is the first of the five canons of Rhetoric, namely the finding of plausible arguments. It answers *what* you should say, not *how* you should say it. Unlike the modern idea of brainstorming, Greeks and Romans had lists of places where you could find the arguments, so-called *topoi* or *loci*. Why not refer directly to the subject matter? Because the arguments are not merely discovered, they are rather constructed. If a speaker knows which arguments that are fitting for the occasion, he is in command of sound judgement (*iudicium*). Quintilian elevates that ability to discern what is evident. 7

questions are often used as guides to the finding: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? By what means?

Irony [*ironia*] means speaking with the opposite meaning than what the speaker means. It means that the audience is misled by irony, unless they can recognize signals of irony. Such signals may be a particular way of speaking or funny gestures. Aristotle mentioned the juxtaposition of anything disgraceful with an honorable term as such a signal to the audience. For the intended effect to occur, it is vital to make sure that the signals of irony are recognized

Kairos [*occasio*] is the opportune occasion for speech where the speaker considers the contingencies of the speech's time and place. The term is intertwined with the Sophists' relativism and the recognition that persuasion is not bound to an objective and static "truth," but is dependent on the occasion. It is often contrasted with another term for temporality, *chronos*, which refers to the time that can be measured in minutes and hours. The *kairos*-attentive speaker should not look to his calendar or watch for discernment of what time it is, but rather pick his rhetorical tools according to the situation. Calendar signals a chronometric time, conceived in a mathematical world above human experience. *Kairos* is a more relative concept, dependent on the audience and their experiences

Logos Greek 'word', 'subject matter', 'reason'. The most basic persuasive appeal, namely to the subject matter or reason itself. These proofs are pointing away from the speaker's character and the audience's feelings. The implied low style and mood verges on boredom, intended to inform (*docere*). When *logos* as reason is opposed to myth (*mythos*), it refers to our Western culture's "progress" from fairy tales. It plays a major part in Christian rhetoric, since the Gospel of John portrays Jesus—and not merely the message—as *logos*

Memory [*memoria*] When the arguments have been invented, arranged and given a style, the speech must be learned or memorized by the speaker. The ancients had a rather non-theoretical approach to it, offering different mnemonic techniques to master. It points to a profound issue: If the speaker reads a written speech, it could be a sign that he cannot think. Some people are born to remember, their abilities are natural. The art can be mastered, however, and the advice is to imagine in spatial categories. Your speech is a house, a public building, a city etc. A hint from the ancients is to adorn your imaginary

space with shock effects, the terrible, comical etc. Modern rhetorical handbooks stress the importance of making the argument your own

Metaphor [*translatio*] means carry over, when a word is put instead of another. Quintilian referred to it as a squeezed *simile*: We can squeeze the simile "he was *as* a lion" to "he was a lion". The audience will understand that man had not become an animal, but showed features common to lions. Aristotle explained the effect as a kind of borrowing from one sphere to another, hence the "carrying over"

Narration [*narratio*] is the "story" of the case argued for. In rhetorical theory, a proposition gives the audience a short presentation about the case. Then follows the narration, a more elaborate account of what the speaker wants to say. The narration provides the backbone of the evidence, see above 'argument'

Obscurity [*obscuritas*] is one of the most serious flaws of the rhetorical rules, because it breaks with the much desired ideal of clarity. Quintilian had a long list of words that could create an obscure talk, such as old or technical words, but also words or accent from dialects. Paraphrases, long sentences and ambiguous words are also to be avoided. A perfect quantity is important for the overall composition, also: A speech that is too poor in words might darken the minds, but so would a wordily one

Ornate [*ornatus*] is the embellishment of the speech. To appear stylish and desirable to the listener, the speaker can think of the speech as a cake. It needs decoration, but not too much. If the use of ornaments is exaggerated, the speech will appear "affected", as it were. Some of the classical authors regarded ornaments as voluntary "applications" one could add to spice the speech up, others regarded ornament as necessary parts of the spoken word, an aspect of its expression

Partition [*partitio*] means to announce the main parts of the speech, preferably at the beginning. Many classical authors recommended the speaker to include it in the speech's structure, particularly if the story is long and intricate, and the arguments are confusing. In the tradition, there is a tendency to prefer three parts: "First…thereafter… finally…" One can repeat these parts when the speech concludes

Pathos [*affectus*] Greek 'feeling', 'affect'. Pathos is first and foremost the speaker's appeal to the strong and momentous emotions in the audience. Its intention is to move (*movere*). Pathos can mean many things: What persons actually experience of change, sensibility, lust or pain. Sometimes it refers to pain of body or soul, the

stuff of tragedies. When Aristotle describes the pathetic aspects of tragedy-plays, he mentions presentations of murder and great pain. Mourning and prayers are also aspects of *pathos.* Pathos can be utilized in speech. Contrast is key here, as the feelings are often strongly contrasted as pain-lust, fear-confidence, love-hate etc. Ideally, Cicero would have the moving part of the speech located at the conclusion

Praise [*laudatio*] or epideictic speech is one of the three branches of oratory. As a eulogy or laudation, it brings praise or blame and is directed to the present. A typical situation is the *laudatio funebris*, the praise of a deceased. Praise can be used in court, making accusations unlikely, but also future-oriented, praising the virtues of a particular deceased politician. Aristotle distinguishes between improper and proper praise, where the first is used to display the abilities of the speaker. For Cicero, praise is one of the most important tools of the city-state, due to its ability to display virtues and vices

Political speech [*genus deliberativum*] or deliberative speech forms together with law speech and praise the branches of classical oratory. It is directed to the future, and answers the question: What shall we do? The classical situation is the political advisor in front of the people's assembly advising whether one should go to war or not. Aristotle stressed that the criteria for the action is whether the alternatives are useful or damaging

Reasoning [*rationcinatio*] shall lead to a conclusion. There are two ways to get there, said Aristotle, the *deductive* and the *inductive* procedure. The latter is to attain knowledge by inferring from examples, but it is the former that is interesting. A deductive reasoning proceeds from self-evident premises in dialect. Unlike dialectic, however, rhetoric is not only about arguments and proof, but about credibility and emotional attitudes. Therefore, rhetorical reasoning builds on probability and likelihood. The speaker must know what the audience considers self-evident, because he draws on those presumptions. Usually, the enthymeme is given the form of a rhetorical question. Quintilian gave an example with the enthymeme as a truncated syllogism: "Can money be any good when you can misuse it?" If we examine the logical structure, we can discover it. Everybody (in Rome) agrees on the main premise "Everything that can be misused is bad". The minor premise "Money can be misused" is expressed. The conclusion: "Ergo: Money is bad", is left with the hearer to draw

Style [*elocutio*] After the arguments have been invented and arranged, the question of style is raised: How should you present them? Cicero singled out three levels of style: (1) Plain or low style. Dry and clear information. The intention is to teach (*docere*). (2) Middle style with a few rhetorical ornaments. The intention is to please (*delectare*). (3) Grand or high style, packed with passion. The intention is to move (*movere*). A fruitful approach is to view style as ornament: How can you dress up your arguments? Mere correct appearance does not create applause, Quintilian remarks, and Cicero claims that the speech must cause a certain admiration in order to lead to decision. A dull speaker is not credible, because it is ineffective. With figures of language, you can "dress" your simple "body" of arguments

Virtue [*virtus*]. For the Romans, a man [*vir*] would display his virtue or manliness through speaking. If you could speak well [*bene dicendi*], you could think well. If not, you were not meant for office in the Roman empire. There were four virtues of speech, according to the pupil of Aristotle, Theophrast. (1) Correct language, (2) Clarity, (3) Aptness, (4) Ornament. The Stoics added a fifth virtue, namely (5) Brevity

Winning of goodwill [*captatio benevolentiae*] It has always been important to 'capture the good will' of the audience at the beginning of the speech, making the listeners "benevolent, attentive and responsive". In the tradition, an advice for gaining sympathy has been to appear humble. Quintilian claimed that speakers who seemed helpless would gain more goodwill than sly, self-confident orators. Quintilian's point was particularly relevant for the court, as he underlined that the conscientious judge would listen to the lawyer who did not threaten justice. Whether helplessness is an effective tool for a modern audience can be debated. Still, a humble presentation was part and parcel of the rhetorical tradition for many hundred years, particularly in the art of writing letters during the Middle Ages

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