UNSPoken: Enthyemematic Argument in the Presidential Rhetoric of George W. Bush and Barack Obama

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ABSTRACT

In the context of this analysis, enthymeme is analyzed in the speeches of President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama with the intention of demonstrating how each president constructs enthymemes based upon assumptions that he has about the American people in order to create arguments tailored for specific target audiences. Additionally, each president’s speech is analyzed to demonstrate how the various syllogisms lead to one overarching conclusion within the speech, despite the target audience. Enthymemes are drawn from speeches regarding Bush’s plan to reform Social Security and Obama’s plan to reform health care.

All of these factors lead to the final conclusion that despite the fact that each president is arguing for a different legislative change to unique audiences who have different concerns about the proposed legislation. Ultimately, both presidents construct enthymemes according to audience demographics and their assumptions regarding the American people as a whole.

In the field of presidential rhetoric, this analysis provides a unique perspective regarding how arguments can be analyzed through the identification and application of enthymeme. It adds to the existing scholarship as enthymeme has yet to be applied to presidential speeches with the same level of specificity that it is used in this analysis. Additionally, this analysis examines the rhetoric of presidents who have not yet been studied at great length in terms of their use of specific rhetorical devices.
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INTRODUCTION

In politics, rhetoric has come to mean everything from what a political figure actually says to the interpretation, both negative and positive, of what was said. Regardless of the definition that anyone assigns to the general term “rhetoric” in the field of politics, one thing remains constant: the rhetoric of politicians has a basis in argument and persuasion in one fashion or another.

Part of rhetorical argument includes enthymeme. Enthymeme has been defined and redefined by rhetoricians, political scientists, philosophers, and individuals in a number of various fields. Several scholars have constructed definitions based upon their own interpretations of Aristotle’s Rhetoric, and, to a lesser extent, Prior Analytics. Many of these definitions address similar aspects that are commonly associated with enthymeme, such as the combination of the explicit with the implicit. However, each definition contains slight differences which tend to build on prior interpretations on the basis that the preceding was somehow deficient. The evolution of the definition, therefore, can be seen as a combination of the analysis of prior scholarly works and individual interpretations of various philosophical texts.

In addition to enthymeme being a topic for reinterpretation as a theoretical concept, enthymeme has been applied to a variety of topics, situations, and works in order to gain more insight into the persuasive nature of the subject matter. It has also been applied to gain a better understanding as to the way in which enthymeme functions in various contexts.

Although enthymeme has been applied to numerous subjects and works, it has yet to be investigated in great depth with regard to political rhetoric. More specifically, it has yet to be applied to specific presidential speeches with regard to their proposed legislation. In this analysis, I seek to demonstrate how enthymeme functions within presidential speeches in similar
ways, regardless of the topic that the president is addressing. In order to demonstrate this, I have chosen two presidents with two dissimilar legislative agendas and who are stylistically distinct in terms of their rhetorical strategies. I will apply the concept of enthymeme to a sampling of their speeches regarding their respective legislation. Specifically, I will investigate the rhetoric of President George W. Bush regarding his plan to reform Social Security and the rhetoric of Barack Obama regarding his plan to overhaul health care.

My primary argument is that each president constructs enthymemes according to the demographics of their target audience. I seek to demonstrate that each enthymeme is formed based upon the desire to reach a particular demographic rather than the general populace; and, that the analysis of those enthymemes helps us to understand the speaker’s construction of their audience. Within each speech, the speaker uses language which suggests that he is attempting to persuade a particular group of people. This separation is evident in his minor premises both when he specifically addresses the target audience and when he uses a word or idea that suggests that he is trying to persuade a particular group. I am also contending that each president’s speech can be broken down into numerous major and minor premises that lead to one overarching conclusion in each speech that those premises support.

First, I provide the context in which each speech was delivered to establish the basis for the speaker’s argument. Next, each speech is analyzed in order to identify various minor premises as they relate to the target audience. These minor premises are then individually linked to the conclusion through the implied connection of a major premise that demonstrates the speaker’s beliefs regarding his target audience. For all of the speeches, enthymemes will be indentified for each argument presented to a given target audience. The enthymeme analyzed
will clearly indicate the minor premise, major premise, and conclusion. This will be followed by an analysis of the given enthymeme.

THE CONCEPT OF ENTHYMENE

Aristotle’s Enthymeme

According to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, an enthymeme is an argument that is based upon an assumption as opposed to a topic or idea that has scientific support or is based on indisputable fact. A complete syllogism is often represented by the example: “All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.” These statements do not require any inference from the audience, nor does it rely upon any assumptions. All parts of the syllogism are stated and can be proven to be true.

An enthymeme, while a type of syllogism, does not contain the same indisputable logical truths as the formal syllogism. It is a rhetorical syllogism, or informally stated syllogism, which contains same three elements as a complete syllogism: a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. However, in an enthymeme, one of the elements goes unstated, as it is generally assumed to already be common knowledge or a belief held by the audience. An enthymeme is an incomplete argument, incomplete in the sense that not all parts of the argument are explicitly stated. It relies upon an assumption that the audience has either prior knowledge or beliefs regarding the subject and the speaker relies upon these presuppositions to build their argument.

In his article “The Body of Persuasion: A Theory of the Enthymeme,” Jeffery Walker asserts that:

The generally prevailing concept of the enthymeme, or the one most frequent in the world of rhetoric and composition studies, tends to define it either as a kind of elliptical, informal syllogism based on probable rather than certain premises and
on tacit assumptions shared by audience and rhetor, or as a kind of "Toulmin argument," or as a general mode of intuitive reasoning representable in syllogistic or Toulminian terms, or, most simply, as the juxtaposition of any idea with another that is offered as a reason for believing it. (46)

This quote points out just a few of the ideas that have been set forth regarding the definition of enthymeme.

The Aristotelian definition of enthymeme is open to interpretation. I use the word definition with a bit of caution as enthymeme is not explicitly defined by Aristotle in the dictionary sense, but rather he defines it by connecting it to other elements of persuasive argumentation, such as dialectic, rhetoric, and syllogism.

Dialectic is “the art of logical argument on general issues of a political or ethical nature” (Kennedy 314). Aristotle addresses dialectic in association to rhetoric in the opening of *Rhetoric* when he states:

Rhetoric is an *antistrophos* to dialectic; for both are concerned with such things as are, to a certain extent, within the knowledge of all people and belong to no separately defined science. A result is that all people, in some way, share in both; for all, up to a point, try both to test and uphold an argument [as in dialectic] and to defend themselves and attack [others, as in rhetoric]. (30)

Aristotle further connects dialectic to rhetoric in book 1, chapter 2 of *Rhetoric*. He states:

In the case of persuasion through proving or seeming to prove something, just as in dialectic there is on the one hand induction [epagoge] and on the other the syllogism and the apparent syllogism, so the situation is similar in rhetoric; for the paradeigma [“example”] is an induction, the enthymeme a syllogism. I call a
rhetorical syllogism an enthymeme, a rhetorical induction a paradigm. And all [speakers] produce logical persuasion by means of paradigms or enthymemes and by nothing other than these. (40)

Here, he creates the distinction between rhetoric and dialectic, while providing an element which connects the two: specifically, induction and syllogism. Additionally, he is introducing the idea of enthymeme as it relates to syllogism. He creates a connection between enthymeme, rhetoric, and persuasion, which moves one closer toward a potential definition of enthymeme.

When Aristotle broaches the topic of enthymeme in *Rhetoric*, he states: “That the enthymeme is a kind of syllogism has been said earlier and how it is a syllogism and in what it differs from those in dialectic; for [in rhetoric] the conclusion should not be drawn from far back, nor is it necessary to include everything” (169). The idea that one need not include everything is what seemingly differentiates the enthymeme from the complete syllogism. Where in the complete syllogism, all parts must be present in order to establish the coherent flow of logic, Aristotle seems to be basing his rhetoric theory on the notion that the audience will already have beliefs and knowledge surrounding the topic at hand; therefore, if one included all elements of their argument they risk being redundant. This is supported by Aristotle when he says: “…the latter [is] tiresome because of stating what is obvious” (169). He also states that the conclusions should not be “drawn from far back.” Kennedy clarifies this point when he states: “In rhetoric, the conclusion should not be drawn from a series of premises with supporting reasons, which a popular audience will find difficult to follow…” (169). Aristotle then goes on to state: “Thus, one should not speak on the basis of all opinions, but of those held by a defined group” (169). In stating this, he is clarifying that when one is formulating enthymemes they need to take their audience’s background and beliefs into consideration rather than come from a position of
generality as the speaker is not attempting to convince all people of something, but instead a particular sect of individuals. Having said all of this, Aristotle has clarified one aspect that is vital to a successful enthymeme: the way in which the speaker approaches the topic is based upon the target audience.

Although Aristotle does not explicitly define enthymeme, he gives elements that should be present in order to execute a successful enthymeme, such as basing one’s assumptions on a defined group rather than a general populace. He also makes it clear that one should not, or need not, state all parts of their argument to avoid redundancy in their argument. These two elements make up the basic formula for an enthymeme: an incomplete or truncated rhetorical syllogism in which one of the elements goes unstated.

Debating the Definition of Enthymeme

As mentioned above, the topic of enthymeme as it relates to Aristotle has been widely discussed, debated, and defined by numerous scholars for centuries. Scholars have been trying to define and redefine enthymeme through various philosophical and literary readings of Aristotle’s texts. Each definition contains similar elements, but none of them are exactly alike. Due to the fact that there are numerous definitions and analyses related to enthymeme, I discuss some of the most commonly cited scholars and their definitions. Each of the scholars discussed demonstrates a similar understanding of enthymeme as it relates to Aristotle; however, each definition differs just enough to reveal a gradual change in the understanding of Aristotle’s work. This analysis of the progression and interpretation of enthymeme is presented starting with the older definitions and moving gradually into more recent interpretations. This allows for the observation of the gradual shift in understanding and the building of the enthymeme that happens as the scholarship progresses.
One early scholar, E.M. Cope, presented a definition in his work *An Introduction to Aristotle’s Rhetoric* written in 1867. Cope’s definition has been the basis for several other scholars’ discussions of enthymeme. Some of these scholars include Lloyd Bitzer, R.C. Seaton and Carol Poster. In the article “The Aristotelian Enthymeme” by R.C. Seaton, Cope’s definition is addressed at some length. Seaton points out that Cope bases his initial definition on another one set forth by Sir William Hamilton, and later “reverses his own decision in a note with the remark that the view given in the text ‘was adopted mainly in deference to the decided opinion expressed by Sir William Hamilton’” (Seaton 114). Cope initially defines enthymeme by stating: “It appears…that the only essential difference between the two [syllogisms and enthymemes] is that the one leads to a necessary and universal, the other only to a probable conclusion” (qtd. in Bitzer 180). However, Cope refutes this definition in the above mentioned note where he states:

I am now however, convinced that he [Hamilton] is wrong, and return to the opinion which I had myself previously formed upon the question. If the only difference between the rhetorical enthymeme and the syllogism lay in the probability of the one and the certainty of the other, it would leave no distinction remaining between the dialectical syllogism and the rhetorical enthymeme: besides which the position is not true of the dialectical syllogism, whose materials and conclusions are all probable and nothing more. Plainly the difference between the two latter is one of form. The syllogism is complete in all its parts; the enthymeme incomplete; one of the premisses (sic) or the conclusion is invariably wanting. (qtd. in Bitzer 186)

After this lengthy note, Cope refers to enthymemes as “imperfect syllogisms” throughout the rest of his text (Bitzer 186).
In refuting his initial definition, Cope recognizes the association between dialectic, syllogism, and rhetoric. These relationships can alter the way in which enthymemes are interpreted. As he realized, for one to say that the whole of any given thing or idea leads to a singular conclusion is inaccurate because there are always exceptions that can be found. This reading of Aristotle’s text with recognition of some of the less obvious connections marks a starting point for several scholars in their attempts to define enthymeme. Cope’s definition is a primary example of an occasion where an individual had intended to utilize an established definition, namely that of Sir William Hamilton (Seaton 114), and ended up synthesizing their own observations which led to the construction of a unique understanding of Aristotle’s text.

Another scholar who defines enthymeme in a way similar to Cope was Thomas De Quincey. In his work “Rhetoric,” De Quincey maintained that:

An enthymeme differs from a syllogism, not in the accident of suppressing one of its propositions; either may do this, or neither; the difference is essential, and in the nature of the matter: that of the syllogism proper being certain and apodeictic; that of the enthymeme simply probable, and drawn from the province of opinion.

(90)

Bitzer points out that both De Quincey and Cope base their definitions upon the notion that: “the enthymeme always must be probable, whereas the syllogism always must be certain and necessary” (Bitzer 181). Based upon these two definitions, Bitzer recognized that the basis for both De Quincey and Cope’s definitions was that the proposition for an enthymeme is probable, and nothing more. Bitzer points out that Aristotle refutes this claim when he states: “It is evident, therefore, that the propositions forming the basis of enthymemes, though some of them may be ‘necessary,’ will most of them only usually be true” (qtd. in Bitzer 181). Bitzer clarifies such as
assertion by stating: “From these arguments, it seems clear that there is no sharp distinction between syllogism and enthymeme on the basis of probability since the propositions of enthymemes may be certain and necessary” (181). Despite the apparently flawed nature of the definitions of both Cope and De Quincey, at least according to Bitzer, both provide insight into different ways in which Aristotle could be interpreted. However, both seemingly provide comparative definitions which hold up enthymeme against scientific syllogism. Bitzer points out that many notable early definitions have their basis in three concepts: “(1) its basis in probability, (2) its concreteness, and (3) its usual formal deficiency” (Bitzer 181).

One point that Bitzer seems to fail to recognize is that although the two previous scholars, Cope and De Quincey, base their definitions on the notion that the outcome of an enthymeme will only lead to probabilities, while the outcome of a syllogism is necessary. Cope does refute this point to a degree in the footnote provided. He notes that the “outcome of a dialectical syllogism is probable, and nothing more” (qtd. in Bitzer 186). This recognition is, however, ignored by De Quincey in his analysis of enthymeme and syllogism. In essence though, just as Bitzer states, the major components of the definitions are the formal deficiency, concreteness, and basis in probability (181), with only minor attention paid to other aspects of syllogistic form, such as dialectic.

Another scholar who attempts to define enthymeme outside the realm of syllogism and who attempts to reach a definition which takes into account the presence of probabilities, as stipulated by Aristotle, as well as the significance of dialectic as it relates to enthymeme is James H. McBurney. McBurney defines enthymeme as:

syllogism, drawn from probable causes, signs (certain and fallible) and examples.

As a syllogism drawn from these materials…the enthymeme starts from these
materials...the enthymeme starts from probable premises (probable in a *material sense*) and lacks *formal validity* in certain of the types explained. (qtd. in Bitzer 180)

Bitzer points out that as McBurney’s definition is expanded he “emphasizes two other important features of enthymemes—the basis of the premises in probability and the lack of formal validity in many enthymematic types” (Bitzer 180):

Both dialectic and rhetoric are differentiated from scientific demonstration in the fact that they deal with probabilities and do not attempt apodeictic proof in the sense that it appears in scientific demonstration.

Perhaps no other passages in Aristotle bring out more forcibly the point that several forms of the enthymeme are formally deficient than these explanations dealing with the refutation of enthymemes. This is an exceedingly important point, that is almost universally overlooked. Many rhetorical arguments which are perfectly legitimate in reasoned discourse and which may establish high degrees of probability, are formally deficient; i.e., they cannot be thrown into a formally valid syllogism. Many enthymemes which are wholly acceptable from the standpoint of a cogent speech are formally deficient from the point of view of the apodeictic syllogism. (qtd. in Bitzer 180-181)

This lengthy excerpt demonstrates how, in some cases, an enthymeme can *appear* as though it is completely true and valid, when in reality it is not. This is particularly apparent when an enthymeme is introduced into a system or field which expects an argument to be infallible, such as in the sciences. This demonstrates one of the defining features which separates enthymemes
from formal syllogisms: the presence of premises that are not founded on a scientific basis, but rather the basis of the contingent or probable. As is pointed out by Bitzer, McBurney connects rhetoric and dialectic to “probabilities, with the contingent” (182). Here, Bitzer points out that McBurney has made the correct, according to Bitzer, observation that both rhetoric and dialectic are associated with probabilities and are both dependent upon specific conditions which determine the validity of the argument.

McBurney’s definition shows an appreciation and understanding of the other definitions while developing a new idea regarding the interpretation of enthymeme. He recognizes similar elements that exist in Cope and De Quincey, such as the probabilistic element in enthymeme. However, McBurney expands his definition beyond pointing out three basic elements and goes on to further explain what it is exactly that differentiates syllogism from scientific demonstration, something that is not done by Cope or De Quincey at length. McBurney states: “Both dialectic and rhetoric are differentiated from scientific demonstration in the fact that they deal with probabilities…” (qtd. in Bitzer 182). The second distinction that McBurney makes regarding syllogism differentiates formal syllogism from enthymeme: “many enthymemes are formally invalid, but that they still constitute rhetorical proof” (Bitzer 182). McBurney is arguing, then, that while enthymemes may not be complete, they still contain a certain amount of proof. McBurney also recognizes that there are different types of enthymemes and syllogisms, namely formal and informal, and that the type which is employed can have an impact upon the validity of an argument, something Cope and De Quincey also neglect to acknowledge in their respective definitions.

When Bitzer creates his definition of enthymeme, he combines what he finds to be common elements in the other definitions that are in accordance with Aristotle’s Rhetoric and
Prior Analytics, his own analysis of Aristotle’s philosophy, and the other definitions that he analyzes. He states:

Accordingly, I offer the following as a tentative and exploratory definition. The enthymeme is a syllogism based on probabilities, signs, and examples, whose function is rhetorical persuasion. Its successful construction is accomplished through the joint efforts of the speaker and audience, and this is its essential character. (Bitzer 189)

The definition set forth by Bitzer encompasses many aspects of enthymeme as addressed by Aristotle. He also takes bits from each of the definitions which he analyzes throughout his essay. Prior to succinctly stating his definition, Bitzer points out that he analyzed “three common interpretations of the enthymeme” (188). He also states that each of the prior definitions was “rejected” because “each failed to separate the enthymeme from other kinds of syllogism” (188).

It would seem as though one of the key points to a successful definition of enthymeme then would have to include a differentiation between syllogistic types as well as the other defining characteristics, such as missing premises. Just as McBurney built upon the previous definitions, Bitzer uses the information already available and then determines what is missing based upon his interpretation of Aristotle’s texts. He then adds the missing elements to create a more succinct definition than his predecessors.

Bitzer offers a detailed definition to the reader, as well as a specific analysis as to why each of the presented definitions is not precise enough to fully encompass the complex concept of enthymeme. Similarly, Carol Poster presents a breakdown of the various definitions of enthymeme and the evolution of the various definitions in her article “A Historicist Recontextualization of the Enthymeme.” However, Poster offers the reader the following
definition at the beginning of her discussion: “In most contemporary rhetorical discussions, the enthymeme is usually described as either a syllogism with one part unstated or as a syllogism the premises of which are probable rather than certain statements, or some variant of these two” (Poster 1). This contrasts with Bitzer in that Poster does not present a definition based upon the analysis of several previous scholars. Rather than attempt to specifically disprove other definitions which culminates in a new definition, she presents the various definitions for the reader’s consideration from a historical viewpoint.

Poster refers to more recent definitions than Bitzer in her article, as Bitzer’s article was published in 1959. However, she still makes reference to scholars such as Cope, Bitzer, and McBurney. The reference to these authors provides a basis for the examination of how the definition is altered in relation to philosophical texts and previous definitions by various scholars. She expands her analysis to cover more contemporary scholars as well as some who are not covered by Bitzer but were writing at or before the time he published his article. Some of the notable individuals to whom she makes reference are Charles Mudd and Richard Lanigan.

Charles Mudd’s article regarding enthymeme appeared in the same issue of the same journal as Lloyd Bitzer’s in 1959 (Poster 5). Mudd’s definition appears more simplistic than Bitzer’s upon first examination; but, once analyzed more deeply, it is apparent that Mudd states a similar view in a different way. Mudd interprets enthymeme to mean “a logically valid syllogistic form based on universal premises rather than being absolutely true” (414). This interpretation, unlike Bitzer’s, does not appear to take into account the topic of probabilities, signs, and examples. This seems to be where much of the contention lies between scholars: a lack of specificity or support for the definition of enthymeme being presented. This could be attributed to the analyst’s interpretation of the text rather than a true lack of information. Mudd
follows this brief definition with the following: “If what I say is true, then we are faced with the question of where to get the required universals. The answer, again, is to be found in the Rhetoric. We create them, we find them, we invent them on the basis of what we know about the nature of our audiences as groups of individual men” (414). Based on this statement, it is clear that Mudd does have an understanding as to what the signs, examples and probabilities are, even if he is not using those exact terms. Rather than state each item, he groups them into a single category of universals. He achieves clarity regarding the connection between the audience and the speaker when he states where the universals are synthesized. If it is to be understood that successful enthymemes are based upon a speaker’s understanding and connection with the audience, then according to Mudd’s definition, the universals are derived from one’s observations of the audience. This then would ideally lead to a greater understanding of the audience and subsequently a successfully persuasive argument. So, while Mudd presents a definition with unique wording and observations, he is still building off of previously identified characteristics of enthymeme.

Richard Lanigan presents his definition by first with recognizing the conflict that exists among the current definitions (Poster 6). In his article, Lanigan states:

Two traditional hypotheses are customarily advanced to explain what the Aristotelian enthymeme is. On one side, the enthymeme is posited as a syllogism of formal validity, yet material deficiency in the use of signs or probabilities. Contrarily, others contend that the enthymeme is a syllogism of material certainty (as certain men can be) that is formally deficient with unexpressed propositions.

(207-8)
After this there is a lengthy footnote which summarizes the various current definitions (1974) to demonstrate what it is that he means when he states that there are “two hypotheses” surrounding enthymeme. He then goes on to propose that the latter of the two hypotheses are correct based upon Aristotle’s texts and finally provides his own definition:

Yet, this bifurcation of formal and material causes is not an Aristotelian practice. Aristotle’s ideas of material and formal causes are to be considered a unity of conceptualization. In this unity, the definitive concept of the enthymeme emerges: an incomplete syllogistic form embodying the matter of "signs and probabilities."

(209)

This is followed by a detailed account justifying his definition compared to others.

Lanigan’s observations build off of the prior ideas surrounding enthymeme. He goes even further in his analysis to include a hypothesis regarding the conflict. The definition provided by Lanigan presents already-recognized elements of the enthymeme: the presence of signs and probabilities and the incomplete nature of theenthymeme. Lanigan takes several of Aristotle’s texts into consideration while formulating and supporting his definition of enthymeme. He refers to Prior Analytics and Poetics as well as Rhetoric. While other authors bring in other texts by Aristotle, Lanigan makes it his point to use these various texts to support his initial claim regarding enthymeme. Additionally, he breaks down each element which he identifies within his definition and explains it in great detail. While other scholars prior to Lanigan identified basic traits associated with enthymeme and then used other definitions and Aristotle’s Rhetoric to create their definition, Lanigan builds his ideas surrounding the topic using more than just one text. He provides more than a definition based on the inadequacies of other definitions. He manages to use the prior definitions to support his thesis, and then uses Aristotle’s texts in detail.
to make his point, which is a step forward from only using *Rhetoric* to build a definition, as it incorporates more of Aristotle’s ideas.

Another, more recent, definition is by Jeffery Walker in his article “The Body of Persuasion: A Theory of the Enthymeme.” Walker opens by stating several variations on the definition of enthymeme and concludes by stating that: “All such thinking starts from Aristotle’s famous dicta that the enthymeme is a ‘kind of syllogism’ or ‘rhetorical syllogism,’ and that rhetoric is a ‘counterpart’ of dialectic” (46). Here, Walker has already made the common assertion that enthymeme and syllogisms are linked. Walker’s definition includes not only Aristotelian philosophy, but ideas from Stephen Toulmin’s method of analysis:

The view of enthymemes that we have taken in this essay is not, in fact, incompatible with what has been the conventional view. Effective argumentation that is ethically and intellectually responsible is indeed a matter of dialogic reasoning that seeks to incorporate the audience's knowledge and beliefs as well as the rhetor's, and an enthymeme is still a figure—any figure—that connects an idea with reasons for believing it and that relies on its audience's inferential powers. But that is not all it is and does. The enthymeme is also, and distinctively, a stylistically striking, kairotically opportunistic, argumentative turn that not only presents a claim but also foregrounds an inferential and attitudinal complex, a stance; that invokes not only a premise (or warrant) as justification but a "chord" of value-charged, emotively significant ideas to motivate a passional adherence or identification with its stance; and that is not only a form of passional reasoning but also an architectonic principle for both the invention and structuring of suasive discourse. (62-63)
Walker’s definition provides the reader with what I interpret as a fairly complete picture as to what an enthymeme is and why it is significant. He makes it clear that the effectiveness of any argument is dependent upon both the audience and the speaker. Additionally, he builds on that idea by bringing the audience more into the definition than the other definitions. He goes beyond audience knowledge, as he also takes into consideration the audience’s ability to read into the message once it has been delivered. While many other scholars speak about the audience, inferential ability was not mentioned explicitly. In stating that the enthymeme is an “architectonic principle for both the invention and structuring of suasive discourse,” Walker has also made the assertion that without enthymeme the very structure of discourse would be incomplete. When one compares Walker’s initial statement regarding the various definitions given for enthymeme with his own interpretation of various texts, methods of argument analysis and other scholarly works, one can see a further progression toward a more complete definition of enthymeme.

Given all these various definitions, it is fairly clear that one thing can be said: there is no single definition of enthymeme that can be universally applied. As can be seen by the examples given, the definition of enthymeme can vary from a single phrase to incredibly detailed descriptions of each element. While many aspects of the enthymeme are common in most definitions, such as the lack of one element of the syllogism, the interpretation and application varies greatly from person to person. By setting forth a somewhat vague notion of enthymeme, Aristotle left it open for interpretation on many levels. However, one thing that can be inferred as universal among all scholars is that enthymeme plays a vital role in the way that we interpret and produce various texts and situations, whether they are literary works or cultural phenomena, enthymeme has a place in all disciplines.
The Toulmin Model

Another model for argument analysis has been developed by Stephen Toulmin. While Toulmin does not directly address enthymeme by name, he does make mention of Aristotle and the syllogistic structure in his text *The Uses of Argument*. Toulmin writes: “Ever since Aristotle it has been customary, when analyzing the micro-structure of arguments, to set them out in a very simple manner: they have been presented three propositions at a time, ‘minor premiss (sic); major premiss (sic); so conclusion’” (96). Toulmin argues that these three elements are simply too few to adequately analyze an argument. Although he recognizes an important element of argumentation, Toulmin points out that a more “complex” model should be used to fully analyze arguments under certain circumstances. He uses the example of jurisprudence (96). Toulmin writes:

Statements of claim, evidence of identification, testimony about events in dispute, interpretations of a statute of discussions of its validity, claims of exemption from the application of law, pleas in extenuation, verdicts, sentences: all these different classes of proposition have their parts to play in the legal process, and the differences between them are in practice far from trifling. (96)

While this statement holds a lot of truth, and an argument should be analyzed to determine its logical validity as a whole, in certain circumstances it does make sense to use a more complex model of analysis than one which simply identifies two premises and conclusion. In the context of Toulmin’s argument, he is conceding that in order to arrive at a complete analysis, and therefore prove the logical validity of a given argument, it is necessary to look at all aspects of the argument and not limit the analysis. This seems to suggest that using any method other than one which takes every aspect of the argument into account is insufficient for providing a
complete analysis. He states that all arguments require the same degree of analysis as that made in the courts. However, it could also be disputed that not all arguments require the same type of analysis, and therefore do not require all aspects of the given argument to be analyzed to prove validity. Some arguments can be analyzed using other methods less complex than Toulmin’s and still be proven logically valid. The method of analysis should be dependent upon the type of argument being made, not a particular system of analysis, as has been conceded by other scholars (Walker 46-65; Aune 307-19).

Toulmin’s method can be made simpler and has been used in the analysis of enthymeme. One prime example can be found in the work by Roger Aden entitled "The Enthymeme as a Postmodern Argument Form: Condensed, Mediated Argument Then and Now." In his article, he discusses an interview with former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke from the Donahue show in 1989. He begins his discussion with a discussion of the progression of enthymematic argument from a postmodern perspective. He incorporates a variety of definitions, including those advanced by Aristotle, Bitzer and McBurney (55). He then moves his discussion into an analysis of David Duke’s enthymemes. When he breaks down various enthymemes found in David Duke’s statements, he identifies first the enthymeme, then uses Toulmin’s method to break it down into three parts: observation (or major premise), generalization (or minor premise), and finally makes an inference (or conclusion). All three elements are contained within the Toulmin model; however, they can be applied in the same way as Aristotle’s. Aden has simply taken a portion of Toulmin’s method and applied it to his analysis. Even though he does not use Toulmin’s methods to completely dissect each argument, he does effectively use a portion of the method to analyze enthymeme.
ENTHYMENE AS A METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The scholarly study of enthymeme includes the analysis a specific work, situation, or idea. For example, a scholar may apply a specific definition, or combination of definitions, to a particular novel. It also includes scholars who use enthymeme in a theoretical context. By theoretical context, that is to say that enthymeme is analyzed and then applied to formulate a new theory surrounding its usage. This analysis of the various applications of enthymeme is pertinent to this study of enthymeme as it provides information regarding the scope of applications. This further demonstrates the complexity and universality of enthymeme.

Enthymeme and Literary Works

Enthymeme has been applied to specific works to demonstrate how it can be used to gain a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the text in terms of character interactions, literary structure and elements, and historical connections and meanings. This type of analysis provides the reader with a sense of how enthymematic argumentation can be utilized to demonstrate not only the way in which a text is constructed, but how enthymeme works within the text itself. This application of enthymeme has been used to analyze poetry (Fagan and Seltzer 48-50) and government documents (Danisch 219-35). One of the arguments in these types of analyses is that although the major premise of the text is unstated, it is implied through various channels. These include observations made regarding character interaction and observations made concerning character surroundings. This is exemplified in an analysis of enthymeme as it functions within the novels of M. Scott Momaday (Scenters-Zapico 499-514).

One of the findings of these types of analyses is that through the application of enthymeme to a text, a reader may better understand elements such as character conflict, character relations to one another, and how characters interact with their environment. An
example of literary exploration through the use of enthymeme can be found in the Scenters-Zapico article:

Using [the] epistemological view of enthymeme I will examine how mediation between and within cultures entails enthymematic processes that are involved when connecting broad historical experiences with particular experiences. Through Abel from *House Made of Dawn* and Set from *The Ancient Child*, Momaday employs oral and written texts to create enthymemes. Because of the enthymeme’s elliptical characteristics, the two characters depend upon the shared knowledge coming from assumptions produced by stories, legends, etc. to fill in missing information and make meaning. (500)

The internal character conflicts of Abel and Set in their respective novels are converted into enthymemes, with the missing elements being the character’s own assumptions that are constructed on the legends and stories they are told. Additionally, a reader could potentially understand the author’s intent better. Moreover, it has been concluded that through the use of enthymeme, scholars are able to construct meaningful and memorable arguments (Danisch 219-35).

**Enthymeme and Visual Argumentation**

Enthymematic analysis also appears in the analysis of visual argumentation. In this type of analysis, the concept of enthymeme is applied to the concept of visual argumentation in terms of the validity of the argument, the persuasiveness of the argument, and the problems regarding visual argumentation.

It has been concluded that visual argumentation can be analyzed in terms of the enthymematic form in accordance with Aristotle’s philosophy (V. Smith 123). However, it has
been argued that while visual argumentation is a valid form of argumentation, due to new
technologies it has become less reliable, and, therefore, the enthymeme that is connected to the
visual argument is much more difficult to formulate (Finnegan 133-49). One example regarding
the concept of visual argumentation as it relates to enthymeme can be found in Cara Finnegan’s
article “The Naturalistic Enthymeme and Visual Argument: Photographic Representation in the
'Skull Controversy’”:

Because we perceive photographs as fundamentally “realistic,” we make
assumptions about their argumentative potential. I call this process the
“naturalistic enthymeme”: we assume photographs to be “true” or “real” until we
are given reason to doubt them. (135-136)

Enthymeme relies upon the messenger/audience relationship; its validity is contingent upon the
proper interpretation of the preconceived ideas of the audience. If visual argumentation works on
the assumption that people already believe that a visual representation is true until they are given
a reason to believe otherwise, then the audience must be willing to drop their preconceived
notions, and in turn take the visual argument as being inherently true based on the concept that
seeing is believing for the visual enthymeme to be effective.

Enthymeme in Mixed Contexts

Another approach to the analysis of enthymeme is to break down several instances where
enthymeme can be identified and demonstrate how it functions in multiple contexts, such as the
analysis of statements found in cookbooks, scholarly articles, and politically-driven letters
(Walton 93-112; Walker 46-65). In these types of analyses, each element in the given example is
identified as either a premise or as the conclusion. This breakdown then leads to a complete
enthymemetic analysis of the specified argument in terms of the type of argument being
presented, for example, an advertisement or a quote from a specific text. What differentiates this method of analysis versus the aforementioned analysis regarding specific works is that there are numerous examples of enthymematic argument analyzed in a single scholarly work.

This type of analysis seeks to compile multiple analyses regarding enthymeme into a scholarly work to demonstrate the way in which enthymeme can be applied to a number of topics or works in a similar manner. One of the conclusions to this type of analysis is that there must be a specific system that is employed in order to accurately analyze a given argument so that the various elements are not confused. In regard to this idea, Walton states: “What is most important is to use some kind of notation and argument reconstruction to distinguish between the original argument as stated in the text and the nonexplicit assumptions that have been added to complete the argument” (110). This system of notation keeps the parts of the argument from being confused, namely the premises and the conclusion, which lessens the chance that a particular portion of the argument will get misidentified, thus reducing the possibility of a flawed analysis.

A further way the context of an analysis can be mixed is through the combination of concept analysis and application of the concept to a single example. In this framework, the analysis is situated around a theory regarding the interpretation of enthymeme, and then the given interpretation is applied to a specific example. This method is similar to the process mentioned above, however, these types of analysis address a theory, or many theories, about the definition or defining qualities of enthymeme, and then the author focuses on a specific work, rather than a large scope of works, to demonstrate how the theory functions. This system of analysis includes theories regarding the definition of enthymeme as it applies to responses in opinion polls (Brigidou 413-30), enthymeme as a rhetorical concept applied to the study of talk, and more specifically, the application of enthymeme to narrative storytelling by individuals
about situations or events in their lives (Knight and Sweeny 226-33), the effect and construction of enthymemes based on audiences living in a post-modern society (Aden 54-63), and the importance of philosophical interpretation of enthymeme when using it as a method for analysis (Holloway 329-43; Walker 46-65; Aune 299-320).

The conclusions of these studies vary. It has been suggested that enthymeme must become clearer and more carefully constructed when utilized by public figures in order for the argument to gain more strength with an audience that is more informed through multiple outlets of information that were not previously available, such as computers, cable television, and digital recording (Aden 54-63). The argument has been made by Mathieu Bugidou that: “…ordinary citizens, in their justification process, use the same type of rhetorical device that politicians do” (415). In stating this, he is referring to the response process that people go through when they are offered public opinion polls or other open-ended questions and the resulting enthymemes that individuals create in their responses (Brugidou 413-30).

These analyses also come to the conclusion that scholars should not limit their analysis to a singular definition of enthymeme when conducting an enthymematic study, for it, in turn, limits the scope of the analysis, as is demonstrated in the works by Holloway and Aune. Jeffrey Walker comes to a conclusion in regard to applying enthymeme in terms of context at the end of his article. He states:

…enthymemes or enthymematic procedure may be different in different kinds of discourse such as, for example, fiction or poetry, or the belletristic essay, or the various kinds of scholarly, scientific, technical, and administrative prose. We need to consider what enthymemes are like, and how they work, in these discursive realms and at different points in history. (61)
Moreover, these analyses conclude that enthymeme should be analyzed on the basis of the construction of ideas in an argument. This is exemplified in the article by Jeffrey Walker when he states:

…argumentative or suasory procedure is very much what it was for Anaximenes and Isocrates, that is, a matter of setting up and turning enthymemes—or, in a large and complex argument, a progression from enthymeme to enthymeme to enthymeme, building up an accumulated fund of value-laden, emotively significant ideas (oppositions, liaisons, etc.) that are variously brought to bear, forcefully and memorably, in the rhetor’s final enthymematic turns. (61)

Despite the notion that Aristotle’s work may be the primary text to use for enthymematic analysis, it is not the only text, or necessarily the best text, for analysis (Walker 46-65; Holloway 329-43). It is pointed out by these scholars that in order to most effectively analyze enthymeme, a definition or method ought to be applied in terms of the context of what is being analyzed rather than utilizing a generic method for all types of works (Walker 46-65).

PRESIDENTIAL ENTHYMEMES

Despite the numerous ways in which enthymeme has been applied to texts and situations, enthymeme as it relates to presidential rhetoric has yet to be addressed in depth. Although presidential rhetoric has been a topic for analysis and has been addressed in various forms, a concise analysis and comparison of the workings of enthymeme in specific presidential speeches has yet to be completed. This is not to say that enthymeme has not been applied to phrases, speeches, or sound bites given by presidents. Presidential quotes have been the topic of discussion in some works regarding presidential rhetoric, which includes some enthymematic analysis (C. Smith 114-23). However, in my research of the various analyses of enthymeme, I
was unable to locate a work which offered a detailed comparison of presidential speeches, given by more than one president, and the way in which enthymeme functions in those works.

There is distinct difference between the study of presidential rhetoric and rhetorical presidencies. I will demonstrate some of the aspects of presidential rhetoric that differentiates it from the study of rhetorical presidency, then I will include a brief discussion regarding the topics that have been addressed by scholars of presidential rhetoric. This will lead to my analysis of how presidential rhetoric has been addressed with regard to enthymeme. I will then outline how my analysis fits into the category of presidential rhetoric as opposed to the study of rhetorical presidency. Finally, I will address my specific method of analysis and the process I will use to conduct my analysis.

Rhetorical Presidency versus Presidential Rhetoric

One of the most notable presidential rhetoricians, Martin J. Medhurst, has written and edited numerous essays and several books on the topic of both the presidential rhetoric and rhetorical presidencies of various leaders. A definition that differentiates the study of presidential rhetoric from that of rhetorical presidencies can be found in the introduction to the book Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency. Medhurst separates the study of rhetorical presidency versus presidential rhetoric based upon specific characteristics associated with each. Medhurst indicates that the study of rhetorical presidency is: “narrow and theory-dependent, rooted in the discipline of political science, and grounded normatively in the U.S. Constitution” (“Introduction” XI). Conversely, He specifies that presidential rhetoric is: “broad and practice dependent, most at home in speech communication, grounded, if at all, in the constantly changing dynamics of human persuasion” (“Introduction” XI).
The study of the rhetorical presidency of a given leader is concerned with the way in which a president is driven by the rhetorical constructs found within the U.S. Constitution. In regard to the study rhetorical presidency, Medhurst states:

…the primary focus and basic concern of those working within the construct of the rhetorical presidency is largely, if not entirely, institutional. They are most concerned with the nature, scope, and function of the presidency as a constitutional office. It is to the U.S. Constitution and its expressed and implied executive powers that these authors turn for normative guidance. (“Introduction” XIII)

Regarding presidential rhetoric, he writes:

Under this construct the presidency is the particular arena within which one can study the principles and practices of rhetoric, understood as the human capacity to see what is most likely to be persuasive to a given audience on a given occasion. If rhetoric is the principle subject of investigation, then one might well be concerned with the principles of the art and how those principles function to allow the speaker or writer—who might happen to be a U.S. president—to achieve his or her ends by symbolic means. (“Introduction” XIV)

Based on these two quotes, presidential rhetoric can be understood to be the application and workings of specific rhetorical concepts and theories, such as enthymeme, ethos, logos, pathos, and logoi, amongst others, within the rhetoric of a single president or multiple presidents. Presidential rhetoric is based upon the “president’s power to persuade” (Windt 102). However, the study of rhetorical presidency is a more defined, and confined, field of study which is concerned with the study of how a president uses the legal and political powers granted to him
by the Constitution and the law to exert influence over the workings of the government (Windt 102). This aspect of rhetorical study in relation to the president has little to do with how the president interacts with the public. Due to the fact that my analysis addresses how the presidents attempt to persuade the public through specific rhetorical concepts, as opposed to using their legislative powers to influence change, my study falls under the category of presidential rhetoric.

There are numerous works on rhetorical presidencies as well as works that address a variety of elements as they connect to presidential rhetoric. One approach to presidential rhetoric has been to take one subject, such as same-sex marriage, and apply a variety of rhetorical concepts to that topic in regard to what a specific president said as it relates to that topic (Medhurst, “George W. Bush” 209-37). Another approach has been to analyze presidential rhetoric in the context of a given situation, such as international conflicts, and subsequently analyze how one president is influenced by another when in a similar situation (Winkler 182-208). A final approach has been to take a specific president and analyze one particularly pertinent conversation and highlight the various rhetorical strategies that were employed during the conversation (Hart and Kendall 77-103). Each of these examples demonstrates how a president used, or attempted to use, rhetorical concepts or theories in order to directly influence the public. Additionally, all of these exhibit how each president goes outside the boundaries of Constitutional and legal limitations to exert influence, and uses their own rhetorical strategies to handle the given situations. They also show how a president’s own beliefs affect how they build their arguments.

Enthymeme in Presidential Rhetoric

As evident in the previous section, presidential rhetoric includes multiple aspects relating to politics, rhetoric, and the various rhetorical elements and strategies that are utilized by
presidents when addressing the public. Despite the analyses that have been conducted on presidential rhetoric, the concept of enthymeme has yet to be explored with much depth as it relates directly to presidential rhetoric.

Thus far only Craig Smith examines enthymeme as it relates to presidential rhetoric; however, the focus of his work is not on the specific identification of enthymematic elements within presidential speeches or other works. Rather, he presents enthymeme in general terms to demonstrate how a president misused rhetoric to create an enthymeme to gain the support of his audience and ultimately lead them into a war with the wrong country.

Smith’s argument centers on audience assumptions regarding their safety after the 9/11 attacks and how enthymeme is used to alter those perceptions (32-45). Smith’s article addresses a political situation that was influenced by rhetoric and enthymeme: “This article reexamines President George W. Bush’s rhetoric during the month following the 9/11 attacks to better understand how his rhetorical responses created an enthymeme of evil and presented it in the form of a presidential jeremiad” (33). Additionally, Smith states:

As the president and so many others have said, “9/11 changed everything”—this article explores how it did so through presidential rhetoric, closing belief systems in a way that enabled Bush’s supporters to resist factual information that might otherwise have led them to consider Senator Kerry’s arguments. (33)

Smith applies the concept of enthymeme to Bush’s rhetoric by pointing out how Bush used rhetoric against the public to gain their trust and support under false pretense. As Smith puts it:

Immediately after the attacks, the president moved rhetorically to provide reassurance and to delegate policy direction. But President Bush’s rhetorical transformation of a faceless coward’s attack on our country into evil’s attack on
everything good and proper in the world prepared us to respond against enemies beyond those responsible for these attacks even as his top advisors warned against doing so. (43)

Bush’s assumptions can be deduced from his response regarding his delegation of responsibility after the attacks and the information he provided the American public regarding the attacks. Bush assumed that Americans felt threatened, so he used this to create an argument against terrorism. The minor premises of Bush’s arguments can be found in the numerous claims regarding the danger that terrorism presented to Americans. Smith identifies Bush’s conclusion that America needed to attack somebody after 9/11 in order to protect all that is good and right. Smith concludes that Bush’s enthymeme is flawed based on multiple sources and factors, including responses from Bush’s advisors, speeches, information regarding the 9/11 attacks, and statistical data.

Rather than identifying enthymemes as syllogistic arguments, Bush’s argument is analyzed by Smith in terms of the multiple factors that led up to Bush’s war on Iraq. Smith furthers his analysis by presenting exactly how Bush’s enthymeme, or argument, was flawed based on both the misinterpretation and misrepresentation of data regarding the attacks.

What Smith does not do is break down the enthymemes according to the philosophies and definitions regarding enthymeme. While there are identifiable elements of enthymeme, Smith does not explicitly identify any elements such as of premise, conclusion, probability, or other philosophical concepts associated with enthymemes. The way in which Smith interprets Bush’s arguments as enthymematic is somewhat unclear. Smith does connect his argument to presidential rhetoric with a great deal of detail, but the enthymematic element of his analysis is not specifically unpacked.
My intention is to address how presidential rhetoric and enthymeme are directly related by first identifying the theories and philosophies connected to enthymeme and then connecting those theories to the arguments of George W. Bush and Barack Obama. I will clearly state each syllogistic element and then bring these elements together to demonstrate how a given argument can be interpreted as enthymematic.

Method of Current Analysis

The type of analysis that I am doing fits into the category of presidential rhetoric due to the fact that I am analyzing a specific rhetorical element that is used by George W. Bush and Barack Obama, namely enthymeme as it relates to presidential rhetoric. My method stems from the history of utilizing enthymeme as a tool for analysis as well as the desire to expand the scholarship available regarding the analysis of specific elements found in presidential rhetoric. This, in turn, creates a further distinction between presidential rhetoric and rhetorical presidency.

The focus of my analysis here is on a specific rhetorical strategy employed by two presidents. Specifically, I am analyzing how each president constructs enthymemes based on their beliefs about the American people and the target audiences that come about due to these beliefs. This leads to an analysis of the assumptions that the presidents have regarding these constructed audiences. Finally, I address the resulting arguments, or enthymemes, that come about based on each president’s assumptions.

One of the connections between the study of presidential rhetoric and rhetorical presidencies is the use of Aristotle’s philosophies. In the study of presidential rhetoric, the focal text is Aristotle’s Rhetoric, in contrast, in the study of the rhetorical presidency the focal text is Aristotle’s Politics (Medhurst, XII). Bearing this in mind, I will be following the guidance of Aristotle’s Rhetoric in how I envision enthymeme and develop my method of analysis. Even
though *Rhetoric* will be the primary text referenced in this analysis, other scholarly works regarding definition, theory, and analysis will also be consulted.

Due to the fact that several studies have concluded that formulaic methods and the use of confined definitions resulted in limited or flawed analyses (Walker 46-65, Holloway 329-43, Aune 299-320), several concepts will be employed as a theoretical lens for my analysis. I will consult the scholarly works constructed by other authors for two primary reasons. First, I want to keep a broad scope in terms of the theories that have already been developed. Second, I want to consult the works regarding what should not be done or what has been done incorrectly when analyzing enthymemes, so as to avoid my own misinterpretations. Thus, I will consult the theories set forth by McBurney and Walker, in addition to the aforementioned scholars.

McBurney’s theory regarding enthymeme will be consulted as he addresses multiple aspects of Aristotle’s philosophy regarding enthymeme, including the idea that although an enthymeme may be an incomplete argument, it can still constitute a rhetorical proof. Additionally, McBurney’s definition supports the idea that the probabilistic aspect of an enthymeme is dependent upon specific conditions. Since my analysis is situated within a certain set of political conditions, it would follow that the probabilities would be dependent upon the political aspects of the given arguments. Walker addressed the concept of enthymeme by pulling theories from multiple sources. His analysis specifically demonstrates why it is important not to limit an analysis to a single theory or definition. His analysis acts not only as an example of how to produce a more complete analysis through the use and consideration of multiple sources, but his own theories regarding enthymeme are built from numerous sources. This makes his theory a valuable resource in terms of the scope of scholars from which he derives his ideas.
Based on the theories presented in the previous paragraph, I am constructing a definition for the purpose of my argument. This definition will incorporate the aspects of each theory that fit most appropriately within the context of my argument. However, the constructed definition will avoid the omission of vital philosophical elements associated with enthymeme. I am also creating a specific method that I will use to break down each enthymeme and subsequently analyze the specific parts of those enthymemes.

For my study, I will analyze the speeches of George W. Bush regarding his plans to reform Social Security and the speeches of Barack Obama regarding his intentions to reform health care. I will analyze Bush’s “Remarks in a Discussion on Social Security Reform” from January 11, 2005, his 2005 State of the Union Address, and “Social Security: Giving a Better Deal to Younger Workers” from May 1, 2005. For my study of Obama’s speeches, I will analyze “Remarks by the President to a Joint Session of Congress on Health Care” from September 9, 2009, and his 2010 State of the Union Address from January 27, 2010.

The format of my analysis will be structured similarly to the analysis done by Roger Aden (54-63). In my analysis I intend to identify the specific elements of each enthymeme. Those elements are the major premise, minor premise, and the conclusion. The first element that will be identified and discussed is the conclusion of each speech because these conclusions are overarching and supported by the various premises. Each discussion of the conclusions will be followed by a series of enthymemes in syllogistic format organized to exemplify how each president addresses the target audiences through the use of enthymeme.

After each speech has been separated into their respective audience groupings, I will identify specific quotes from each. These quotes act as the minor premises of each presented argument. The explicitly stated elements of each argument will be coded within the work
according to the target audience. After each quote is extracted and matched to the proper audience, I will combine the quoted minor premise with the overarching conclusion of the work. These two elements are then going to be used to determine deductively the major premise of each argument. I will identify each element in a syllogistic format with the major premise italicized to indicate that it is added material to avoid confusing it with explicitly stated material. These major premises will also be broken down in terms of target audience. Each enthymeme will then be analyzed on an individual basis to demonstrate how it addresses a particular demographic and what the major premise reveals about the speaker’s assumptions about their target audience.

**PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE CHANGES**

Before discussing the rhetoric of Bush and Obama, I will provide a brief overview as to the legislative changes proposed by each president and the reasoning behind the selection of these two particular topics. The purpose here is to provide information regarding what each president is arguing for and to justify my choice regarding these particular legislative proposals.

In this analysis, George W. Bush’s plans for Social Security reform and Barack Obama’s plans for health care reform will be analyzed through speeches that address these proposals. In the context of my argument, these legislative-driven works provide valuable sources that demonstrate how enthymeme is audience-driven. This comparison provides an analysis of two presidents who utilize two distinct speaking methods and have completely different styles, yet they both use enthymeme to attempt to gain audience favor. Again, while the two intended changes in legislation are completely different, both presidents have grand intentions for reform that include multifaceted plans which affect different populations in our society in unique ways.
Therefore, both direct their arguments at carefully selected audiences in order to gain the most support from each.

George W. Bush and the Partial Privatization of Social Security

George W. Bush intended for the partial privatization of Social Security to be one of the crowning achievements of his presidency. Simply put, the plan to partially privatize Social Security was intended to help offset the depleting funds in the program in order to avoid a deficit and give people more control of their money and a higher rate of return on their retirement funds. Several plans were drafted by various committees. Each plan contained the same basic elements with subtle differences in terms of execution and other details. The details of his plan can be found in the speeches that are analyzed as well as in the article "Perspectives from the President's Commission on Social Security Reform" by John Cogan and Olivia Mitchell. Overall, the plans had the same intentions: more money when one retires and increased options in saving before retirement.

One of the major proposals made by Bush was the creation of a personal savings account into which the funds that would normally go to pay into the Social Security system would be diverted so they could gain more capital. This account would be inaccessible by the individual until they reached retirement, but it would be guaranteed funds that have ideally had the chance to mature and gain in value as they accrued interest.

Another element of partial privatization under Bush’s plan was to “reduce the tax burden imposed on future generations while maintaining adequate benefit levels…” (Cogan 150). The idea behind this is that because there are more future retirees and fewer people paying into the system due to population fluctuation, the current system will not be self-sustaining and will eventually run into a deficit. In order to avoid this impending deficit, Bush suggests in his
speeches that a possible tax increase may be a necessity, as Social Security is a system supported by payroll taxes. However, he indicates that with reform, these tax increases may be avoidable. These potential tax increases and how they can be avoided address one of his largest target audiences: the young. While a tax burden is something nobody wants, an increased tax burden would be more of an issue to those who are not retiring any time soon.

Bush’s plan consisted of three major components. First, it called for an alteration of the current Social Security system to prevent it from driving itself into a deficit and potentially leading to retirees with fewer benefits and future workers with higher payroll taxes. Second, it would have included a voluntary personal savings account program that would divert a portion of the individual’s payroll taxes into a personal retirement account. Third, it included a provision for allowing access and transference of funds that the current system does not provide. One of the most significant features of this portion of the reform would be the ability to transfer benefits to a surviving spouse on the occasion of the other’s death, which cannot be done under the current system (Bush, "Social Security" 420). All of these elements point to Bush’s general argument: we want more money because money is good, and this is a way to get money. This particular legislation is significant because it affects multiple facets of society in different ways, so Bush’s arguments are crafted such that each audience is presented with something tailored and specifically aimed at persuading them into believing all of this reform is in their best interest.

Barack Obama and Health Care Reform

Similar to George W. Bush’s big plans for Social Security reform, President Obama has made it one of his top priorities to completely overhaul health care. The details of Obama’s plan are outlined on the White House web site as well as in the speeches presented in this analysis. The speeches associated with this particular legislation are worthy of analysis as they are
regimented in a way similar to Bush’s. Just as with Bush’s speeches, each of Obama’s speeches is crafted according to audience.

The proposed legislation by Obama is comprehensive. It includes several aspects of health care including insurance reforms, medical practices, administrative reforms and accessibility. Although the proposal covers multiple aspects of health care coverage, it can be broken down into subcategories in terms of what the overhaul will do for specific groups. The groups that are addressed in this analysis are the uninsured and the insured. This separation of individuals into various groups provides the basis for the analysis of how Obama forms enthymemes based upon his target audiences.

For those who have health insurance, Obama’s plan would prevent discrimination based on age, gender, and pre-existing conditions. Insurance companies would not be able to deny coverage or alter premiums based upon these factors. His legislation would have a provision that prevents insurance companies from dropping an individual’s coverage in the event that an individual gets sick. Next, the bill would put a cap on out-of-pocket expenses. The legislation would eliminate any extra cost for preventative care, such as flu shots and mammograms, which is intended to lower health costs in the long run. The plan would also protect Medicare for the elderly as well. Finally, the legislation would close the gap in prescription drug coverage that currently allows insurance companies to limit the amount that is paid out for prescription drugs (Obama, “Health Care” par.1-7). These elements create the outline for his argument aimed at those who have insurance. This portion of his plan not only functions to persuade a particular group to believe that this overhaul would benefit them in both the short- and long-term, but also seeks to offer a sense of reassurance to people who may have fears regarding changes in the
current system, particularly if those people being addressed do not have any issues with their insurance.

For those who do not currently have insurance, Obama’s intentions are to create the “exchange,” which is an insurance marketplace where individuals can shop for insurance at competitive rates. Obama plans to offer tax credits to assist people in purchasing health care. One of the most contentious aspects of Obama’s plan is the inclusion of a public option that would cover those who may ordinarily not be able to afford coverage. Another aspect of Obama’s proposal includes a provision to provide “high risk” individuals with preexisting conditions immediate coverage to protect them from financial hardship (Obama, “Health Care” par.8-12). This section is similar in purpose and value as the portion directed to the insured. However, beyond attempting to persuade these individuals that he has a plan in mind that would impact them in a positive way, he is also seeking to calm any anxieties that the uninsured have regarding their future options upon the passing of any health care legislation. He also takes a position that this legislation will make life easier for this audience. This demonstrates his preconceived, and generally unstated, beliefs that he holds regarding the uninsured, which, in turn, drive his arguments.

THE RHETORIC OF GEORGE W. BUSH

George W. Bush pushed for Social Security reform, specifically partial privatization of Social Security, over the duration of his presidency. This legislation never came to fruition; however, his arguments in favor of this legislative change never ceased.

The way in which Bush categorizes his audience can be deduced through an analysis of his arguments. This is evident through the connections that can be made between the premises and the conclusions that he sets forth in each speech. In the presented speeches from Bush, it can
be inferred that he is attempting to achieve specific goals. First, he attempts to find common
ground between individuals from varying generations. This is apparent through his primary
target audiences: those who are young workers and those who are either retired or nearing
retirement. It would seem that he believes if he can bridge the generation gap, then he will have a
united faction that will rally for his proposed changes from dual perspectives. Such unification
could potentially make his argument stronger as it would appear that more people, who have
different motivations due to their different demographics, support the same cause. Additionally,
he is attempting to convince people that the flaw in the system is not inherent, but
demographically-driven. This may lead more people to take ownership of the issue. As a result,
they may believe it is their responsibility to fix the problem, rather than feeling as though the
government should step in and take care of the issue.

In terms of style, Bush’s arguments are highly repetitive and, generally speaking, non-
specific. He rarely gives any concrete data to back up his arguments, but rather gives
hypothetical situations. Bush often rewords and simply repeats the same points of argumentation
verbatim in each speech rather than presenting new information for his intended plan.

In regard to Bush’s speeches, I assert that within each speech, Bush creates multiple
enthymemes that have one overarching conclusion that is supported by numerous minor and
major premises.

Remarks in a Discussion on Social Security Reform, January 11, 2005

This speech occurred shortly before the State of the Union Address. It is from a formal
discussion that took place in the White House with a small group of individuals from various
demographics. In this discussion, Bush’s arguments are drawn from the short speech he gives
prior to the discussion, remarks he made during the discussion, and a short speech that followed
the discussion. At the time, he was attempting to reach multiple audiences in order to get Social Security reform passed. One of the biggest elements of the proposed reform was the addition of an optional personal savings account. This was meant to supplement Social Security benefits while simultaneously taking some of the financial burden off of Social Security.

Arguments to Young Workers

Conclusion: The need is to strengthen and reform Social Security (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).

Minor Premise: “[Because] you’re either going to have to raise the taxes of people or reduce benefits” (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 39).

Major Premise: Young Americans do not want their taxes raised or their benefits lowered.

This enthymeme connects the minor premise to younger Americans by working on the assumption that younger Americans dislike paying higher taxes, hence the major premise. These two elements lead back to the conclusion as it would follow that if people do not want to pay higher taxes or lose benefits, and without reform these are two possible outcomes, the system needs to be reformed to avoid the undesired outcomes. This assumption is directed at a younger audience as they will have more paychecks; therefore, they will face the greatest loss if taxes are raised. The premises can also be connected to younger Americans as they have yet to draw anything from the Social Security system, and they do not want to pay more money into something from which they have yet to receive any benefits. Bush structures his argument around the identified major premise; however, a deeper assumption that Bush draws from to appeal to this particular audience is that young Americans do not want to spend more money in order to save their benefits.
Conclusion: The need is to strengthen and reform Social Security (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).

Minor Premise: “[Because] owning your own personal savings account…allows you to pass on your savings to whoever (sic) you choose. You can’t do that in Social Security today” (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 41).

Major Premise: Americans do not want their redistributed; they want to pass it on to their heirs.

This argument is based on the assumption that passing on an inheritance is an intrinsic desire and that personal funds should not be redistributed into the general public; the assumption connects to the minor premise that indicates the target audience. The minor premise leads to the conclusion through the connection between the inability of an individual to pass on money after death under the current system, the assumed desire that people want this option, and the reality that this option can only come to fruition if reform is passed. When Bush states that passing on retirement benefits is not something that can be done in the current system, and he is seeking to reform Social Security for future generations, he is not speaking to those who are already drawing money from the system. Retirees are no longer seeking to secure a retirement income; therefore, this particular proposal would not impact them. Bush draws from a different underlying assumption when appealing to his audience with this argument. It could be suggested that he is drawing from the assumption that Americans want ownership of their assets. Furthermore, is could be deduced that Bush is drawing from the idea that young Americans believe their money belongs to them and that it should not be put into a general account that anyone can use. This is evident when Bush states:
The Social Security system is not a personal savings account. The Social Security system is not an account where money is earned. The Social Security system is an account where money comes out to pay for retirees and is put in the system by people who are working. ("Remarks on Social Security" 39)

This statement reiterates the point that with the current system all the money that people pay into the system is being taken away from them and there is a chance that they may never see it again. By reiterating the way that Social Security takes money, he is drawing on the assumption that young people do not want this money taken from them. If their money is taken away and put into this big account that may not be able to offer any security when they retire, then it poses a threat to their livelihood as a retiree. Based on all of this, and the idea that young workers are concerned with maintaining control over their assets, it can be deduced that he is trying to appeal to the interests of young workers in this argument.

**Conclusion:** The need is to strengthen and reform Social Security (Bush, "Remarks on Social Security" 40).

**Minor Premise:** “[Because] there will be a safe way to invest, to be able to realize the compounding rate of interest” (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).

**Major Premise:** *Young Americans want to make investments that will make more money for retirement.*

This argument is formed based on the assumption that people who are not retired would like to have the option to invest and make more money with those investments when they reach retirement. The major premise connects the minor premise and the conclusion through the logic that in order for a young worker to invest in a government savings program and get all this retirement money, the program must first exist. Bush draws out his argument in terms of how
personal retirement savings plans have already started to benefit people by addressing 401(k) plans. Bush states:

The first change in retirement in America was the movement toward defined contribution plans, like 401(k)s, which really has promoted an ownership society, hasn’t it? I mean, people wake up, and they look at their account and say, “I’m so sure this person’s policies are beneficial to my being able to earn a better rate of return.” People pay attention because it’s their own money. That’s kind of one of the benefits of a personal account in Social Security. (“Remarks on Social Security” 42)

While Bush never explicitly states that the individual is better suited at managing their money, it is suggested through the language that Bush uses. He refers to earning a better rate of return. The idea that could be drawn from this is that what the individual does regarding their retirement is better than the current system. That suggests that the current system is inefficient when it comes to planning for the financial needs of the individual when they retire. Additionally, he brings up the idea of ownership again. When Bush states that “People pay attention because it’s their own money” he seems to be suggesting that when people have control over their investments, they are more likely to make better choices because they can see the results of their investment decisions. Because of this, the individual is more likely to make better investment choices because they want to see their money grow, and if they do not see the growth they desire, they have the freedom to move the money someplace else where it will get a better rate of return. They cannot do this under the current system. So, if the government steps out of the picture, hands control of retirement investing over to the individual, then the money that gets invested is going to grow at a better rate than if the government keeps it. Additionally, and perhaps more significantly, there
will be more money when a person is ready to retire if they are able to utilize their own judgments when investing. The only way that this can happen is if reform is passed. The connection between young people and this argument can be drawn from the idea that the people that Bush is speaking to will be a part of a future system, and that they are concerned with securing their own future rather than worrying about other people; other people can take care of themselves because it is up to the individual to be responsible for their own future.

Arguments to Retirees

Conclusion: The need is to strengthen and reform Social Security (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).

Minor Premise: “[Because] more and more retirees have taken out money relative to the number of people putting money in” (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 39).

Major Premise: Retired Americans have the obligation to fix problems they are responsible for creating.

This argument is based on the assumption that retirees hold a sense of obligation to future retirees. The enthymeme flows just as the others do. This argument assumes that his audience believes it is their responsibility to take care of the issue since they are the generation that is causing it. This assumption is built on a general belief that it is the later generation’s responsibility to improve existing government run programs for the next generation, or at least leave the existing systems in a stable condition. While certain retirees may not initially believe that they have this responsibility to the next generation, Bush attempts to build an argument on this idea. In doing this, he may persuade those who do not believe it is their responsibility by explaining the impact that they are having on the system, therefore creating a sense of
responsibility. He makes an argument in his minor premise that indicates that there are too many retirees and not enough money. This then leads to the conclusion. If his target audience believes that there is an issue and they are responsible for taking care of it, and the argument is that the solution is in reform, this logically leads to the conclusion that reform must be passed. The audience can be deduced from the minor premise. Bush argues that there is more money going out than coming in, and he makes a direct reference to retirees in this premise. This may suggest the notion that since young workers are not drawing from the system, this imbalance is not a result of their actions; therefore, the responsibility to fix Social Security falls on those who are drawing from the system according to this argument.

One notable point about this argument is that it points to retirees, not the government, as the cause for the problem. Bush’s argument then absolves much of the blame that could be laid upon the government and transfers it to his audience, thus giving them ownership of the issue. This creates a sense of personal responsibility. That could potentially lead to greater support for reform, as the issue is now thrust into the hands of the American people while they are simultaneously being offered ideas regarding how they can help to fix their problem. Many arguments that are aimed at retirees work off the assumption that retirees want to maintain a stable Social Security system for their children/grandchildren. This differs from the assumptions aimed at young workers in that Bush is assuming that his retired audience is looking into the future in terms of other people, specifically their loved ones; and, his young working audience is looking into the future in terms of their own wellbeing. It’s a matter of generational differences that account for different needs and desires.

Conclusion: The need is to strengthen and reform Social Security (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).
Minor Premise: “[Because] by the time today’s workers who are in their mid-twenties begin to retire, the system will be bankrupt” (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).

Major Premise: All retired Americans are entitled to benefit from Social Security.

This argument works on the idea that the Social Security system was originally instated to act as a reliable supplement to an individual’s retirement income. Bush demonstrates this by evoking the historical roots of Social Security when he states: “Franklin Roosevelt, in thinking boldly, envisioned a Social Security system where Social Security would help seniors with their retirement” (“Remarks on Social Security” 39). He furthers his faith in the system to include the success that it has had: “…it’s been an incredible achievement, if you think about a piece of legislation being relevant for nearly 70 years” (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 39). If this indispensable and relevant system is in danger of losing its ability to sustain itself, and Americans lose their Social Security benefits, then it is a threat to an individual’s livelihood after they retire. So, in stating that the system is going to be bankrupt, Bush is suggesting that the livelihood of future retirees is in danger. Ultimately, this means that the promise of the Social Security system will be broken and that, ultimately, the older generation of retirees has failed their children/grandchildren. This leads to the conclusion. Bush offers a solution to avoid sending Social Security into bankruptcy: we must reform the system.

In terms of the target audience, Bush refers to the impending bankruptcy in terms of how it will impact younger workers, not current retirees. He makes it abundantly clear that current retirees are in no danger of losing their benefits when he says: “There is plenty of money in the system today to take care of those who have retired or near retirement” (“Remarks on Social Security” 40). Based on this statement, Bush has taken the issue and put it into perspective in
terms of Social Security reform being a generational issue. Those who are already getting benefits are getting back what they paid in. Since they are benefiting from the system, according to Bush’s assumption, it is to be understood that future generations deserve the same benefits. Based on the idea presented before that it is the older generation’s responsibility to ensure the stability of benefits programs, it could be inferred that he is trying to appeal to an audience that may feel more obligated to take ownership over the issue. Essentially, he seems to be working many angles, including who is to blame for the problem, who will feel the brunt of the impact if the system is not reformed, and what needs to occur in order to avoid any major catastrophes with Social Security. Again Bush taps the aforementioned assumption that retirees are highly driven by a desire to maintain the Social Security system out of concern for their families.

Conclusion: The need is to strengthen and reform Social Security (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).

Minor Premise: “[Because] the issue really is for younger folks” (Bush, “Remarks on Social Security” 40).

Major Premise: Americans do not want their children/grandchildren to be disadvantaged when they retire.

Based on the assumption that retired Americans do not want their children/grandchildren to suffer financial disadvantages when they retire, Bush is able to lead his audience to the conclusion that reform must be passed. Bush offers the solution of reform as a way for people to avoid placing their children/grandchildren at a disadvantage. So, if the issue primarily concerns younger Americans, and older or retired Americans want to avoid putting their children/grandchildren at a disadvantage, the logical conclusion is that reform needs to be passed. This final enthymeme from the January 11th discussion seems the most direct in terms of
the target audience. Bush is making it clear that there is trouble ahead for young workers if reform is not passed. In stating this argument, Bush has created a situation that involves people who his target audience has a personal interest in, namely, their children and grandchildren. Bush has now turned the matter into a more personal issue for current retirees. If this is interpreted by retirees as an issue that will impact their loved ones, then it could be assumed that Bush is trying to persuade them that they need to take responsibility for fixing the issue. This argument regarding who is responsible for fixing the issue goes back to the idea that the Social Security system is a promise between generations. If this is believed to be true by retirees, and they are worried about the future retirement income of their children/grandchildren, then it would follow that they have a responsibility to their own families when it comes to fixing Social Security. If the system crumbles, and their children/grandchildren are left with no financial security when they retire, then, according to this argument, there is nobody that can be held accountable but the retirees who did nothing when they had the chance to fix the system. If Bush introduces reform as a means of countering the issues that Social Security faces then the audience may be swayed based on their concerns for their family. This argument, like the other two, functions on the same assumption identified in the first argument. Retirees are driven by a desire to secure the system for their own children/grandchildren.

2005 State of the Union Address, February 2, 2005

Although the State of the Union does not solely address Social Security reform, Bush spends thirteen paragraphs out of a fifty-five paragraph speech addressing reform, second only to the topic of national security. Again, this speech is repetitive in terms of the arguments that he presents, perhaps a little less so than the previous speech, as this speech was prepared where as the other was not. Many of the same arguments appear in the State of the Union as in the January
11th discussion. His focus at this point is still the same, and this is apparent through the lack of change in his arguments. He still puts the idea of personal savings accounts at the center of his argument for reform.

Arguments to Young Workers

Conclusion: “… we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16).

Minor Premise: “[Because] the only [other] solution would be dramatically higher taxes, massive new borrowing, or sudden and severe cuts in Social Security benefits or other government programs” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 19).

Major Premise: Young Americans do not want to risk losing any money.

This syllogism presents the same argument as that in the January 11th speech, with the exception that the threat is increased. Rather than simply presenting higher taxes and benefits cuts as potential threats if reform is not passed, he adds on borrowing and other government programs. The flow of the argument is basically the same as the other argument regarding taxes: Americans do not want to pay higher taxes or face budget cuts. If reform isn’t passed, Americans will face new expenses; therefore, we must pass reform. Bush cites additional points that could be construed as attempts to strengthen his argument. If he presents more problems, then it would logically follow that people will be even more inclined to want reform as the consequences of not reforming have now increased, they are now faced with losing money because of multiple issues and not just because of higher taxes. He also uses more severe language. This could be interpreted as another scare tactic aimed at gaining more support. It is no longer just higher taxes; it is “dramatically” higher taxes. Benefits are not simply going be reduced, people are now
faced with “sudden” and “severe” cuts and “massive” borrowing. All of these key words are
aimed at evoking pathos, specifically, fear. If people are afraid of something, then it would
follow that people will do whatever is necessary to avoid the impending situation that they view
as potentially threatening. The assumptions that Bush used to persuade his young audience here
is based on the same idea introduced in the January 11th speech: young Americans do not want to
spend their money on taxes to save mediocre benefits. This demonstrates the difference between
the assumption that is often associated with the retired generation in that this involves the
individual’s concern for their own future and wellbeing rather that someone else’s.

Conclusion: “… so we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security”
(Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16).

Minor Premise: “[Because] best of all, the money in the account is yours, and the
government can never take it away” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par.25).

Major Premise: Americans are better suited to manage their retirement
investments.

The argument is based on Bush’s assumption that the individual is better suited to manage their
retirement income than the government. This assumption can be drawn from statements that
Bush makes elsewhere in his speech. In Bush’s reform package, he is offering an opportunity to
young workers to invest their money so that it will be safe. Bush proposes a plan that will ensure
the safety of these new investments in this speech when he states: “The goal here is greater
security in retirement, so we will set careful guidelines for personal accounts” (Bush, “2005 State
of the Union” par. 26). The need for safety could be drawn from the fact that Bush points out,
numerous times, that the Social Security program is failing. If he is pointing to an inherent flaw
in the system, it would seem that he is also suggesting that the government is not fiscally
responsible, or at least not as fiscally responsible, as the individual. He continues his attempt to sell this new program by presenting specific details regarding the personal savings account. This type of specificity does not appear in his other speeches. Bush explicitly states:

We will make sure the money can only go into a conservative mix of bonds and stock funds. We will make sure that your earnings are not eaten up by hidden Wall Street fees. We will make sure there are good options to protect your investments from sudden market swings on the eve of your retirement. We will make sure a personal account can’t be emptied out all at once, but rather paid out over time, as an addition to traditional Social Security benefits. And we will make sure this plan is fiscally responsible, by starting personal accounts gradually, and raising the yearly limits on contributions over time, eventually permitting all workers to set aside four percentage points of their payroll taxes in their accounts. (“2005 State of the Union” par. 26)

This proposal seems to serve as a promise of sorts. Bush is arguing that the personal accounts are good because they will keep the investor’s money safe. Here, he backs that assertion with details that demonstrate how that will be achieved. This links to the assumption that Americans want their money to be safe once they have invested it. It also connects to the ideology that Americans should make prudent decisions when saving for their retirement. If they hear exactly how their investments will be protected from the government, Wall Street, and the individual themselves to a certain degree, they have been given some reassurance regarding their potential investment. As a result, they are more likely to buy into the new program because they feel safer. This leads the audience to the conclusion that reform needs to be passed so they can take advantage of this new program. The demographic separation is apparent in this argument as Bush is directly addressing
the young workers who are the potential investors in the proposed savings accounts. As mentioned before, this argument aims to persuade on the basis that the plan will benefit the individual rather than the whole group.

Conclusion: “… we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16).

Minor Premise: “[Because] your money will grow, over time, at a greater rate than anything the current system can deliver” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 25).

Major Premise: Young Americans want a better system that offers more retirement money.

Bush makes the assumption that future retirees want more money than the current system pays out. This assumption can be deduced through an analysis of the minor premise. Bush argues that, with the reform package, benefits would exceed those of the current system. This argument connects to a point that Bush makes regarding a personal saving plan that federal employees have the option to participate in. Bush states: “Personal retirement accounts should be familiar to federal employees, because you already have something similar, called the Thrift Savings Plan, which lets workers deposit a portion of their paychecks into any of five different broadly based investment funds” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 27). By pointing out that this personal savings account is already an option for federal employees, he could be insinuating that this account is functioning well for them, so it is going to work well for all future retirees. He goes on to say: “It is time to extend the same security, and choice, and ownership to young Americans” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 27). If people are limited to the Social Security system in its current state, they do not have any savings options which would allow them to safely invest
and watch their money grow. They are bound to the benefit schedule set by the government.

What Bush is doing is criticizing the current system by pointing out the existing flaws, while at the same time avoiding the complete dismissal of it as a valuable part of a new system. He is arguing that the hybrid system that he is proposing would offer more money than the current system alone; he is not signifying that the current system should be done away with completely. Additionally, he is pointing out that there is a savings plan that is already in place for federal employees that has been tested and has been successful. Therefore, a similar program could be a valuable addition to the current system. This is why what he was proposing was not classified as the complete privatization of Social Security, but only partial privatization; because government contributions would not be entirely removed in a new structure. So, if his assumption about young workers is true, and they are seeking a better deal than the current system can offer, then his audience would logically believe that reform is necessary. This can be deduced as a restructured system would allow them to participate in a new program that is designed to make them more money. Bush is attempting to persuade his audience by working off the assumption that young workers are seeing more money so that they will be able to improve their own situation when they retire. This also goes back to the idea that investing should be left up to the individual as they are better suited at making their own financial decisions because they will be able to make more money for themselves than the government ever will. All of this is, as mentioned before, connected to a common assumption that seems to work beneath Bush’s arguments to his younger audience regarding their concerns for their own lives, not others.

Arguments to Retirees

Conclusion: “… we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security”

(Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16).
Minor Premise: “[Because] we also have the responsibility to make the system a better deal for younger workers” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 24).

Major Premise: Retired Americans feel obligated to future generations of retirees.

In this argument, one can deduce that Bush is trying to appeal to retirees, in part, because he states his minor premise in terms of “we.” By stating that “we” need to make the system better for younger workers, he is excluding himself from the demographic of younger workers and including himself in the same category as retirees or those nearing retirement. By excluding himself from young workers, he is implying that there is an obligation that members of his demographic have to younger workers.

His argument is based on the assumption that retirees feel an obligation to future generations. This can be deduced from his minor premise. He clearly states “we have a responsibility.” This argument goes back to the quote “One of America’s most important institutions—a symbol of the trust between generations—is also in need of wise and effective reform. Social Security was a great moral success of the 20th century, and we must honor its great purpose in this new century” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16). He is pointing out a generational link that is present in the institution of Social Security. His argument that we—the older generation—have a responsibility to improve the system is supported by his belief that the institution itself represents an integral link between the generations. Due to this link, and his argument that Social Security is in peril, it would follow that it is the older generation that must ensure that this system remains intact for future generations in order to maintain the trust between generations. If retirees allow Social Security to fall apart through inaction, it will violate this trust.
He goes on to say that the older generation must honor the purpose of Social Security. If the purpose of Social Security is to provide a portion of an individual’s income when they retire, and Social Security is going bankrupt, then it means that something needs to be done to honor the purpose. In saying this, he is further asserting the point that there is an obligation that older generations have to future generations to maintain a system of Social Security. If this is true, then in order to make the system better for future retirees and maintain the trust which he argues exists between generations in relation to the maintenance of Social Security, he concludes that reform must be passed. If retirees believe that this trust truly exists, then it would follow that reform is the answer to “honoring the purpose” of Social Security for future generations and maintaining the generational symbol of trust. Bush is working on the assumption similar to those found in previous arguments that retirees are seeking to better the future for someone else, most likely their children or grandchildren, rather than bettering a situation for themselves.

Conclusion: “… we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16).

Minor Premise: “[Because] for younger workers, the Social Security system has serious problems that will grow worse with time” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 18).

Major Premise: American retirees believe in the advantages of private investment.

This argument follows Bush’s logic that American retirees believe in the advantages of private investment. His contention is that if reform is not passed, the problems with Social Security will only grow worse. His assumption that Americans believe in the benefits of investing in stocks and bonds in supported when he presents some of the details of the private retirement accounts:
“We will make sure the money can only go into a conservative mix of bonds and stock funds” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 26). If Americans believe that stocks and bonds will generate more money than a government program alone then it makes sense to invest in something that will grow stronger. Bush addresses the various points of his plans for the private accounts to further illustrate that the new program would be much stronger than program is in its current state. He has made it evident that government programs are prone to weaknesses, specifically, bankruptcy. According to Bush, if the current program is left as-is, due to its weaknesses, it will eventually fall apart. If the money is left in the current program, it will simply stagnate and, eventually, run out. Apparently, the same cannot be said for the proposed plan that has safeguards built into it that will ensure that an individual’s money is not only safe and but it will grow. This particular argument could be construed as being directed at an older audience due to the fact that he is speaking about younger workers, not to them. This argument could potentially be interpreted as a plea to retirees to support reform based upon the assumption that they have an understanding of the benefits of private investments. Additionally, it could be argued that this assumption works off the idea that younger workers may not have realized the benefits of private retirement investment yet, and in order for them to fully appreciate these benefits without risking their retirement income, reform must be passed. Here Bush is, again, working off the deeper assumption that his audience is seeking to improve the lives of those they love as opposed to supporting reform for purely self-serving reasons.

Conclusion: “… we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16).
Minor Premise: “[Because] Social Security will be paying out more than it takes in....by the year 2042, the entire system would be exhausted and bankrupt.”

(Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 19).

Major Premise: Americans want to maintain a Social Security program.

This argument is based on Bush’s assumption that Americans want to maintain some form of Social Security program. This can be derived from his minor premise that asserts that the system, if allowed to continue on its current path, is bound to be bankrupt by the year 2024. If Americans want to maintain some sort of Social Security program, we need to reform Social Security. The major premise here links to two ideas that Bush presents in his speech. First, he presents the idea that Social Security is a program with great purpose. This suggests that it is a necessary program (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16). This leads to another argument where Bush backs up his claim that the Social Security system is going to be unable to sustain itself eventually when he presents the following:

…instead of 16 workers paying in for every beneficiary, right now it's only about three workers — and over the next few decades, that number will fall to just two workers per beneficiary. With each passing year, fewer workers are paying ever-higher benefits to an ever-larger number of retirees. So here is the result: Thirteen years from now, in 2018, Social Security will be paying out more than it takes in. And every year afterward will bring a new shortfall, bigger than the year before. For example, in the year 2027, the government will somehow have to come up with an extra 200 billion dollars to keep the system afloat — and by 2033, the annual shortfall would be more than 300 billion dollars. (“2005 State of the Union” par. 19)
Based upon the presented data, the claim that the system will be unable to support itself eventually seems fairly convincing. If the first argument regarding the value of Social Security is combined with the data presented in the above quote, then it would follow that in order to maintain a viable Social Security program, reform is necessary. If one analyzes this particular quote, the presented argument applies to those who are currently drawing from the system, specifically, retirees. They are the people who are sending Social Security into peril due to their growing numbers and increasing benefits. This is also alluded to in other presented arguments, specifically the statement regarding Social Security being a “symbol of trust between generations” (Bush, “2005 State of the Union” par. 16). Bush is using the underlying assumption that the target audience, namely retirees, are more concerned with investing most of their energy in ensuring the continuation of Social Security; therefore, Bush builds his arguments off this assumption in an attempt to persuade retirees that their benefits will remain safe, while at the same time they will have a hand in maintaining the Social Security system for future generations.

Social Security, Giving a Better Deal to Young Workers, May 1, 2005

This speech was much like the first with the exception that it was not delivered in discussion format. The style remains the same, the arguments are repetitive, but they remain aimed at particular demographic audiences. Additionally, this speech focuses heavily on what exactly constitutes a better deal for young workers. He gives slightly more information in this speech than in the previous speeches; however, his overall goal has not changed. He does not indicate any additions or omissions to the intended legislation and still pushes for the instatement of optional personal savings accounts.

One noteworthy aspect of this speech is that he gives more reasons explaining why the personal savings account would be a beneficial addition to the Social Security program than in
other speeches. In this speech he gets slightly more specific; this could have been a result of lack of enthusiasm on the part of the American people. It was starting to become more apparent that people did not like the idea of privatizing, or partially privatizing, Social Security. This can be deduced from the fact that several articles of various types, scholarly and otherwise, were published between January and April of 2005 that expressed doubts regarding various points regarding the privatization of Social Security.¹

Arguments to Young Workers

Conclusion: “…there are better options available than the current Social Security system, a better deal for younger workers. It’s all aimed at patching the hole in the safety net for young generations of Americans coming up” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 421).

Minor Premise: “[Because] a nest egg you call your own is a complement to your retirement” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 420).

Major Premise: Americans want ownership of their assets so they can make more money.

This argument is based on Bush’s assumption that Americans want ownership of their retirement benefits. This assumption can be drawn from the minor premise based upon the argument that he is making regarding “a nest egg you call your own.” Furthermore, Bush asserts his position regarding the benefits of ownership when he states: “…I like the idea of people owning something. We want people owning something in America. If you own something, you have a vital stake in the future of your country” (“Giving a Better Deal” 420). According to Bush’s ideology, ownership of assets leads to a vested interest in the country. This logic works on the

¹ For examples, see Barack 76-77; Jones and Brown 24-26; Munnell 7-22; Quittner 1-12; Stephen 19.
idea that if a person in contributing to a personal retirement plan they are investing in stocks and bonds; therefore, they are investing in the American economy. This then leads to economic growth and strengthening. That in turn means that stocks would rise, resulting in an increase in the value of the investments that the individual made. Therefore, ownership is good for both the country and the individual. Under the current system, there is no sense of ownership because the individual has no control over how much of their money is taken or how it is invested. Additionally, the benefits from Social Security are determined by an individual’s income. However, if Americans invest in the personal savings account, they will have ownership of their assets, and they will be able to control how those assets are invested. That means that with a personal savings account there is an opportunity to make more money for retirement, since the investments will be made based upon what will provide the best rate of return. So, in summation, if young Americans have ownership of their assets, and the assets they invest are combined with a reformed Social Security program that still pays out benefits, but also offers a personal savings plan, they will get both ownership and more money when they retire than they would under the current program. According to Bush’s assumption, Americans want ownership of their assets. According to his minor premise an investment that is “your own” will complement your retirement income. Therefore, in order to gain both ownership and more money for a nest egg, reform must be passed. In terms of Bush’s intended audience, it can be deduced that Bush is addressing young people because he directly addresses them in his minor premise. Beyond this, he is appealing to their self-serving purpose. Bush is assuming young workers are more concerned with their own futures; therefore, he structures arguments that make the program appealing to their needs and desires. Those needs and desires are mainly concerned with securing their own retirement income.
Conclusion: “…there are better options available than the current Social Security system, a better deal for younger workers. It’s all aimed at patching the hole in the safety net for young generations of Americans coming up” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 421).

Minor Premise: “[Because] younger Americans ought to be allowed to take some of their own payroll taxes, some of their own money, and invest it in a savings account, a personal savings account, an account they call their own” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 420).

Major Premise: Americans want all their retirement money for their own use.

This argument stems from the assumption that Americans want to keep all of the money they can for their personal use when they retire. Bush states that he believes that people should be able to take their money and put it into a savings account that is theirs and that cannot be used by the government at all. Under the current system, young workers do not have any options regarding where their tax money goes. At one point in this speech, Bush states:

You see, a lot of folks, I'm sure some right here in this audience, believe Social Security is a system where we take your payroll taxes and we hold it for you, and then when you retire, we give it back to you. That's not the way it goes. We take your payroll taxes; we pay out the benefits to the current retirees; and with the money leftover, we pay — pay for other programs. And there's nothing left but file cabinets with IOUs. And that's how it works. (“Giving a Better Deal” 419)

This statement supports the idea that Bush believes that people want to keep their money. Based on what he says, it would seem that he is threatening people with their money. It is as though he
is telling people that they better keep their money away from the government, because the
government will spend it. This could also be construed as the equivalent of telling Americans
that if they don’t use the personal savings accounts, they are going to just give away all their
money and they will never benefit from it. His answer to the pending danger of losing this
money is investing—hiding—the money in the personal accounts. That way nobody else can use
the money. It will be safe from other government programs and other retirees. If Americans
want more security of their retirement assets, and the way to get this security is through the
instatement of personal savings accounts, then the logical argument is that reform needs to be
passed. A notable aspect of this particular argument is the repetition of the idea of ownership in
relation to the personal savings accounts. This repetition further supports the idea that Bush is
trying to reinforce the ideas of ownership and security. The intended audience for this argument
can be deduced from the idea that these accounts are a pending benefit meant for young workers.
It could be conjectured that he is trying to sell this account to young people on the notion that the
personal account will protect their money from being used for something else or by someone
else. This argument is a particularly clear example of the self-serving nature that Bush seems to
assume that young workers have. He builds this argument based on the assumption that all that
young workers are concerned about is their own livelihood. Therefore, he builds arguments that
will persuade young workers on the basis that reform will fulfill their desire to secure a decent
retirement income.

Conclusion: “…there are better options available than the current Social Security
system, a better deal for younger workers. It’s all aimed at patching the hole in the
safety net for young generations of Americans coming up” (Bush, “Giving a
Better Deal” 421).
Minor Premise: “…a better deal would not be mandatory by the federal government. The better deal would say, if you chose, you can take—put aside some of your own money” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 421).

Major Premise: Americans want options, but do not want to be forced into using them.

Bush states that the retirement savings accounts would be optional, thus providing the minor premise for the argument. From this, it could be deduced that Bush is assuming that Americans want more retirement options without being forced into participation. This assumption is supported by the repetition of the idea of choice. First, he claims it would not be mandatory, which suggests choice. Then, he states “if you chose,” which directly states that there should be choice in the matter of participation. The assumption is also supported by the reassertion of the concept of the personal savings account. These two things create the major premise. This then leads to the conclusion that in order to get these options, reform needs to be passed. This argument can be interpreted as being directed as young workers as it is pointing out potential benefits of reform, while at the same time reassuring that audience they will not have to do anything they don’t want to do if reform is passed. Here Bush works on the assumption that young workers want to maintain control over their investment choices. This differs slightly from some of the other assumptions which were primarily based on the idea that young workers are solely concerned with making money and fulfilling their retirement needs. This argument takes the idea of control into consideration. This argument is still associated to the idea that young workers are not persuaded by the idea of doing something for the greater good, but for their individual good.
Arguments to Retirees

Conclusion: “…there are better options available than the current Social Security system, a better deal for younger workers. It’s all aimed at patching the hole in the safety net for young generations of Americans coming up” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 421).

Minor Premise: “[Because] they’re [younger Americans] going to have to pay for people like me who are living longer, who have been promised greater benefits” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 420).

Major Premise: Retired Americans do not want to take money away from their children or grandchildren.

This argument is built on the assumption that older Americans do not want to take money away from younger workers. That can be drawn from the minor premise that argues that it is younger Americans who are going to have to bear the financial burden of paying for all the current and upcoming retirees. The assumption is supported by another statement that Bush makes in the speech: “You see, once the grandparents understand they’re going to get their check and the system will fulfill its promise, the question I get from grandparents is, what are you going to do about my grand kids (sic)” (“Giving a Better Deal” 420). He’s addressed the idea here that the retirees are going to get all the benefits they are entitled to, but that there is still a concern regarding young workers amongst retirees due to their increasing numbers. If his assumption is correct, and older Americans do not want to take money away from younger generations of workers through inaction, the solution would have to be reform. The intended audience for this argument is fairly clear as he is making a case to older generations regarding the impact they are having upon the Social Security system, and ultimately, future generations of retirees. Bush is
working from a slightly different assumption when trying to persuade his audience with this argument. Rather than solely address the needs of future retirees, he adds the needs of retirees. This is different in that rather than appearing completely selfless, Bush is recognizing that retirees still have their own interests in mind, even if they are taking the future generation’s needs into account.

**Conclusion:** “…there are better options available than the current Social Security system, a better deal for younger workers. It’s all aimed at patching the hole in the safety net for young generations of Americans coming up” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 421).

**Minor Premise:** “[Because] if you think about that, somebody working all their life and they die early, their asset just goes away” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 420).

**Major Premise:** Americans have the right to pass their money on to their heirs.

This argument is based on the assumption that Americans deserve to pass assets to their heirs. This is similar to another argument from the January 11th speech; however, rather than stating the possibilities for transference of funds after a person dies, which speaks to the desires of a younger audience, Bush approaches the issue in terms of what can’t be done. He tries to emphasize one of the downfalls of the current system. His minor premise points out that everything that a person puts into the system is just lost when they die. It seems as if Bush points out the negative aspects of the current system to retirees and points out the benefits of a new system to younger workers. If he is able to sell his program to young workers based on the merits of the program, such as the newfound control and ownership young workers would have over their money with a personal savings account, then it seems more likely that they would support
his plan. This is particularly true if they believe that their money is going to get taken away from them and they are going to be left with little or no retirement security. On a somewhat similar note, if Bush is able to emphasize the impact that retirees are having on the system, and connect that impact to the audience’s children/grandchildren, then he can use the negativity to draw them in based on fear. So, while he is playing up the positive aspects of his program to younger workers, he seems to be attempting to scare retirees into supporting reform. Either way, he makes it into a persona issue for both audiences. Bush’s assumption links his minor premise that money should be able to be passed on once a person dies to his conclusion that reform is needed in order to achieve this goal. This argument is based on the assumption that retirees want to better the system for a future generation, which links to the previously discussed ideas that are associated with this, such as an interest in the wellbeing of others versus self-interest. This argument works on the idea that retirees want to improve the system for others, not just maintain their benefits. This is one of the key differences of arguments aimed at retirees: retirees are concerned with preserving and improving Social Security for others as well as maintaining stable benefits for themselves.

Conclusion: “…there are better options available than the current Social Security system, a better deal for younger workers. It’s all aimed at patching the hole in the safety net for young generations of Americans coming up” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 421).

Minor Premise: “So think about that: a lot of people living longer, retiring with better benefits and few people paying into the system” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 419).
Major Premise: Americans want to keep their benefits and preserve Social Security for their children/grandchildren.

This final example from Bush is based on the assumption that current retirees want to avoid hurting their retirement benefits while maintaining the system for their children/grandchildren. This can be deduced from the minor premise. If current retirees believe that they are pulling too much from the system, it would follow that they believe that they are potentially draining the system thereby creating a potential problem for their children/grandchildren. Bush supports this assumption by pointing out that more money is going out than coming in. The assumption regarding senior benefits is addressed in the following quote:

A lot of seniors are worried about this topic being discussed; I understand that. They've been told, you know, somebody is going to take away your check, when it comes to modernizing the system. That's been a part of the political rhetoric for way too long. The good news is, nobody has ever had a check taken away from them — yet— and nobody will.

If you've retired, if you were born prior to 1950, the system will take care of you. You don't have a thing to worry about. I don't care what the pamphlets say, or the radio ads say, or the scare tactics say, you're in good shape. And that's important for a lot of our seniors to hear because they're counting on that Social Security check. (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 419)

Here, Bush is reassuring retirees that their benefits are not in danger. Bush’s belief that retirees want to ensure that the system is still available for their children/grandchildren is backed by the statement: “the question I get from grandparents is, what are you going to do about my grand
kids (sic)” (Bush, “Giving a Better Deal” 420). If retirees are asking questions about their grandchildren’s retirement future it demonstrates that there is a concern that exists amongst retirees regarding the diminishing state of the system. If American retirees are depleting the system, as Bush claims, and they believe that in doing this, they are hurting their grandchildren/children, then it would lead to the logical conclusion that the system needs to be reformed. This argument is based on an assumption that is similar to the one identified in the previous argument in terms of how Bush is targeting this particular audience. First, he is using the underlying assumption that retirees have the interests of their children/grandchildren in mind when it comes to reform. Second, he is using the underlying assumption that retirees also have concerns about the benefits that they depend upon.

THE RHETORIC OF BARACK OBAMA

During the 2008 presidential campaign, one of Obama’s platform issues was health care reform. From the time he took office until reform was passed and subsequently signed into law on March 23, 2010, Obama appealed to the American people through numerous speeches and addresses. He is stylistically succinct and employs repetition only if it is meant to emphasize a particular point. It is clear what Obama is arguing for in each of his speeches and how he intends to achieve each goal.

Furthermore, within each speech, he separates Americans into various demographics based upon his assumptions regarding their beliefs and desires that, in turn, fuel his arguments. Subsequently, the enthymemes that are pulled from his speeches reflect this demographic differentiation. Within Obama’s speeches, it becomes apparent how his assumptions ultimately construct his intended audiences. The groups that he constructs based on his assumptions are the insured and the uninsured. The way in which Americans are divided is consistent throughout
both of the speeches presented. There is little question as to what Obama is trying to achieve through his speeches due to the detailed nature of his arguments.

Address to the Joint Session of Congress, September 9, 2009

Obama’s address to Congress was a comprehensive speech regarding his intentions for health care reform. It served to define exactly what health care reform meant and what it did not mean. He presented a detailed argument that outlines the various aspects of the intended legislation and explains what each element meant to various sectors of the population. The fact that he breaks down his argument based upon demographics provides proof that he holds different assumptions about different sectors of the American populace. These differentiations are made clear in the arguments he makes throughout the speech. He makes multiple arguments in favor of legislative change and supports his arguments with anecdote as well as data.

Arguments to Insured Americans

Conclusion: “We know we must reform this [the health care] system” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 12).

Minor Premise: “[Because] what this plan will do is make the insurance work better for you” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 21).

Major Premise: Americans are dissatisfied with their current insurance.

It would seem that the major premise of this argument can be deduced from the minor premise in that he is staking the claim that through the new plan, insurance will work better. Based upon this statement it would seem that he is assuming that those who have insurance are dissatisfied with their coverage. Obama makes a point regarding the deficiencies in the health care system when he states: “Those who do have health insurance have never had less security and stability than they do today” (“Remarks to Joint Session” par. 8). He has backed his assumption that
Americans want more from their insurance by pointing out that as it stands, insurance is unreliable. Obama goes even further when he states: “More and more Americans pay their premiums, only to discover that their insurance company has dropped their coverage when they get sick, or won’t pay the full cost of care” (“Remarks to Joint Session” par. 8). Here, he delves into specific issues that those who have insurance face in the current system which would lead them to be dissatisfied with their coverage. The specific shortcomings that he notes provide more support for his major premise. These elements combined lead to the conclusion that health care must be reformed, so that the insurance will work better. The intended audience seems fairly obvious as only those who have insurance would be concerned with having their coverage work better. The primary assumption that Obama builds his arguments on in order to persuade his audience is: Americans want more from their insurance because the coverage and service that they are receiving is inadequate. The arguments that he makes throughout his speech connect to this assumption about insured Americans.

Conclusion: “We know we must reform this [the health care] system” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 12).

Minor Premise: “[Because] as soon as I sign this bill, it will be against the law for insurance companies to drop your coverage when you get sick…” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 21).

Major Premise: Americans do not want to lose their insurance or face denial of coverage if they get sick.

This argument stems from the assumption that people with insurance do not want to lose their insurance if they get sick. This assumption can be drawn from the minor premise as Obama is claiming that under the new plan it would be illegal for companies to drop people when they get
sick. Obama cites two cases of individuals who lost their coverage when they got ill, one person died due to the negligent behavior of the insurance company (\textit{“Remarks to Joint Session”} par. 9). By bringing up these cases, Obama is using pathos to evoke a more profound reaction in his audience. If he uses examples of regular Americans who faced issues with their insurance companies because they became ill, then it increases the likelihood that his audience will be able to relate the situations to their own lives. Obama creates an environment where the situations that he brings up could happen to anyone. He uses cases such as these to back his argument that reform is necessary. His assumption that people do not want to lose their coverage due to illness relates to the aforementioned quote: \textit{“More and more Americans pay their premiums, only to discover that their insurance company has dropped their coverage when they get sick, or won’t pay the full cost of care”} (Obama, \textit{“Remarks to Joint Session”} par. 8). Again, this quote can be linked to the improvement of the health care system. All of these examples support the fact that insurance companies can do this if they please under the current laws. These elements lead to the conclusion that health care reform must be passed so insurance companies cannot drop people. Similar to the first argument, the audience is fairly apparent due to the basis of the argument. If someone does not have insurance, then this would not be as compelling an argument to them. While it may apply once they have insurance, to the uninsured it is irrelevant. The assumption used when appealing to this particular audience is that Americans believe they deserve fair treatment in matters concerning insurance. Obama builds his arguments on this assumption by using anecdotes and citing various examples of unfair practices used by the insurance companies on consumers.

\textbf{Conclusion:} \textit{“We know we must reform this [the health care] system”} (Obama, \textit{“Remarks to Joint Session”} par. 12).
Minor Premise: “[Because] we will place a limit on how much you can be charged for out-of-pocket expenses…” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 21).

Major Premise: *Americans deserve to have more of their costs covered by their insurance.*

This argument is based on the assumption that insured Americans deserve to have more of their costs covered by their insurance. This can be drawn from the minor premise as he is pointing out the limit on expenses. The mention of limiting expenses suggests that people are currently paying more for their health care costs than they may like or ought to be, if they are covered by insurance. On a basic level, he seems to be arguing that insurance companies need to cover more of an individual’s costs because the individual consistently pays the insurance companies. Since people are, in general, not always ill, it would follow that when they get sick, they should be able to benefit from the money that they have put into the insurance industry by way of their premium payments. It also suggests that people may be paying for things that should be covered by their insurance. This argument is supported in Obama’s speech when he makes the statement: “…insurance companies will be required to cover, with no extra charge, routine checkups, and preventative care, like mammograms and colonoscopies…” (“Remarks to Joint Session” par. 21). This statement demonstrates that President Obama understands that there are things that insurance companies are not covering that are adding to the expenses that people are paying when they visit the doctor. This then leads to the conclusion that health care must be reformed, so that these limitations can be instated and these expenses can be curbed. The audience which he is addressing can be drawn from the minor premise. If someone has health care coverage, then at least part of what they owe for health care is covered by insurance, presumably. Therefore, if a
limit is put in place, consumers can expect to spend less. However, if someone does not have coverage, then they have to pay all of their expenses out-of-pocket; therefore, no limit can be applied when there are no benefits to apply them to. This argument works on two underlying assumptions. First, people with insurance want to reduce their health care costs. Second, people with insurance want improvements in the coverage that they have.

Arguments to Uninsured Americans

Conclusion: “We know we must reform this [the health care] system” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 12).

Minor Premise: “[Because] under this plan, it will be against the law for insurance companies to deny you coverage because of a preexisting condition” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 21).

Major Premise: Americans believe it is unfair to deny insurance coverage on the basis of preexisting conditions.

This argument appears to be based upon the assumption that people who have a preexisting condition want equal access to health care. This assumption can be drawn from the minor premise as Obama asserts that those who have preexisting conditions will no longer face discrimination based on their preexisting conditions. Obama points out that this is a major issue in the health care system today. He states: “There are now 30 million American citizens who cannot get coverage” (“Remarks to Joint Session” par. 7). This statistic points to a major issue in terms of availability. He addresses the issue further when he states: “In the meantime, for those Americans who can’t get insurance today because they have preexisting medical conditions, we will immediately offer low-cost coverage that will protect you against financial ruin if you become seriously ill” (“Remarks to Joint Session” par. 24). Both of these statements work on the
assumption that people who have previously been denied coverage deserve insurance despite their preexisting conditions. This leads to the conclusion that health care must be reformed; otherwise, insurance companies will still maintain the power to deny coverage. The intended audience can be deduced from the minor premise as Obama is appealing to those who have been denied coverage.

The assumptions that Obama builds his arguments on are slightly different from those for the insured. Rather than appealing to the individual’s desire for security in existing coverage, Obama strives to persuade on the basis that first, anyone could find themselves in this situation if they become uninsured. This is not an issue that only affects those who do not currently have insurance; anyone who loses their coverage would be considered part of this audience and may face issues obtaining coverage. Second, he works off the assumption that people want access to health care at all times, regardless of their health status. The arguments that are aimed at the uninsured are more universal in purpose. That is to say, they have a larger audience in mind. Anyone can become uninsured, so while these arguments may not apply to an individual now, if they lose their coverage these arguments will be relevant to them. Obama even states: “In just a two-year period, one in every three Americans goes without health coverage at some point. And every day, 14,000 Americans lose their coverage. In other words, it can happen to anyone” (“Remarks to Joint Session” par. 7). This indicates that the ability to obtain and maintain coverage is an issue that is relevant to a more general audience.

Conclusion: “We know we must reform this [the health care] system” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 12).

Minor Premise: “[Because] it will provide insurance for those who don’t [have it]” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 19).
Major Premise: All Americans should have health insurance.

Obama appears to make this argument based on the assumption that people should have access to health insurance. This assumption is addressed again in the speech when Obama states:

Everyone understands the extraordinary hardships that are placed on the uninsured, who live every day just one accident or illness away from bankruptcy. These are not primarily people on welfare. These are middle-class Americans. Some can't get insurance on the job. Others are self-employed, and can't afford it, since buying insurance on your own costs you three times as much as the coverage you get from your employer. Many other Americans who are willing and able to pay are still denied insurance due to previous illnesses or conditions that insurance companies decide are too risky or too expensive to cover.

(“Remarks to Joint Session” par. 6)

This statement includes numerous reasons why individuals deserve access to health care. It addresses the consequences of not having health insurance, such as bankruptcy resulting from a serious illness. All of these arguments lead to the conclusion since insurance will not be available to all Americans until reform is passed, and these issues will continue to affect the lives of millions of Americans. The intended audience for this argument is fairly clear as he explicitly states who he is addressing in his minor premise: people who do not currently have insurance. However, like the previous discussion regarding arguments aimed at the uninsured, this one also addresses issues that a general audience can relate to, even if the topics themselves do not directly apply to their lives. This is one of the key differences between arguments made to the insured versus the uninsured. The arguments aimed at the insured are topic specific and deal with reform in terms of how it will affect people’s existing policies. Arguments to the uninsured are
more general and provide a sense of reassurance to those who have insurance, but may lose it. It provides a sense of hope to those who do not currently have insurance.

Conclusion: “We know we must reform this [the health care] system” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 12).

Minor Premise: “[Because], now, if you’re one of the tens of millions of Americans who don’t currently have health insurance, the second part of this plan will finally offer you quality, affordable choices” (Obama, “Remarks to Joint Session” par. 23).

Major Premise: Americans believe the current insurance plans are expensive and are lacking in quality.

This argument seems to be based upon the assumption that uninsured Americans would like more than just access to health insurance; they want it to be affordable and of decent quality. Obama extends the argument that insurance will be available to include two appealing aspects of the insurance that will become available. This leads to the conclusion as these new insurance options cannot be made available unless health care is reformed. As with the other arguments aimed at the uninsured, the audience Obama is attempting to reach is clear as he explicitly mentions them in his minor premise: tens of millions of Americans who don’t have insurance. The assumption which underlies this argument is a matter of availability and affordability which are two major issues that uninsured Americans face. Unlike the more general nature of the other arguments directed at uninsured audiences, this argument addresses two topics that are specific to uninsured Americans. This argument taps into the belief that it is not just a matter of getting insurance; it is also important that the insurance that people get is affordable and has decent benefits.
State of the Union Address, January 27, 2010

Obama’s State of the Union address covered numerous topics; however, when he addressed the topic of health care reform, his target audiences remained constant with those from his address to Congress. He maintained the division between the insured and the uninsured. He also maintained similar arguments to those presented in the September 9th address. This speech is not nearly as detailed as the first; however, the primary points still remain. This speech served as a reminder that although there were several other issues that needed attention, health care reform was still a priority.

Arguments to Insured Americans

Conclusion: “We need health insurance reform” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 54).


Major Premise: *Insurance companies are charging too much for coverage.*

In this argument, it would seem that the minor premise is supported by the assumption that Americans believe they are being charged too much for health care coverage. This can be drawn from the argument that is set forth that costs will be reduced. The premises lead to the conclusion in two ways. First, the whole idea surrounding this argument is that in order to reduce costs, health care must be reformed. Second, he makes reference to health reform in his minor premise explicitly. Obama seems to be building his arguments on the assumption that Americans dislike the way the insurance industry is being run. Due to the fact that there is practically no regulation regarding how insurance companies are required to conduct business, they are free to charge as much as they want for their plans and pay out as little as they want. They are also at liberty to
raise premiums and lower benefits whenever they please for whatever reason they may cite. Because of this, Americans are currently at the mercy of the insurance companies when it comes to what they pay for their insurance. Based on all of this, Obama constructs an argument that addresses the concerns that he assumes that insured Americans have regarding their health insurance costs. It can be deduced that he believes that Americans are unhappy because the insurance companies are taking advantage of their customers. Based on this assumption, Obama leads into his conclusion seeing as, if reform is passed, the insurance companies will face regulation and will no longer have the freedom to charge outrageous amounts for coverage. This then means that Americans will not have to worry about sky-rocketing premiums. The intended audience could be drawn from the fact that he is speaking about reducing premium costs. The argument makes reform look more attractive to those who currently have premiums that they pay, as it suggests that they would save money and the insurance companies will be regulated so people will not have to worry about sudden and drastic rises in their premium costs any more. Due to the fact that he combines costs and premiums, it seems likely that he is addressing the insured because they are the people who are taken advantage of in relation to premium costs.

Conclusion: “We need health insurance reform” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 54).

Minor Premise: “[Because] it would require every insurance plan to cover preventative care” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 56).

Major Premise: The current system does not adequately address prevention.

This argument comes from the assumption that Americans believe that the current system does not adequately address preventative care. This assumption can be drawn from the minor premise as Obama is addressing the issue of preventative care coverage in terms of who would hold the
responsibility for payment. The fact that Obama is arguing that preventative care would be have to be paid for by insurance suggests that Obama is assuming Americans do not want to have to pay for these services. This could be drawn from the assumption that Americans believe preventative care is not a luxury, but a necessity. Given this, it can be argued that a basic medical necessity should be covered by health insurance. Additionally, Obama builds an argument based on the idea that with preventative medicine, people will spend less time and money at the doctor’s office. So, this argument addresses two assumed desires that Americans have and ultimately reflects beliefs that Obama has regarding the American people. First, Americans want to have the care that they view as being necessary, not optional, covered by the insurance that they pay for. Second, Americans want to spend less money on their health costs. If Americans take care of their bodies before small issues have a chance to burgeon into large issues, it would follow that they will save money in the long run. These reflect Obama’s beliefs that Americans view preventative care as a necessity and that they want to save money on health care costs, both in the short- and long-term. Obama’s beliefs about Americans in relation to what should, or should not, get covered by insurance ultimately leads to the construction of his target audience: insured Americans. All of this connects to the conclusion because if people want this coverage to be mandatory, reform will have to be passed.

Conclusion: “We need health insurance reform” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 54).

Minor Premise: “[Because] the approach we’ve taken would protect every American from the worst practices of the insurance industry” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 56).

 Major Premise: Americans believe the insurance industry is corrupt.
This argument is based on the assumption that Americans believe the insurance industry is corrupt. This can be deduced from the minor premise that asserts that the new plan would protect Americans from unspecified abuses. If Americans are being abused or taken advantage of by the insurance company, then it would follow that the companies are not doing their job and are not providing the services they claim they will provide. Americans often face multiple issues with the health insurance industry. These issues include: dropping coverage in the face of a serious illness, watering down of benefits to the point that they are useless, and unexplained rate hikes. These factors suggest that these corporations are, therefore, corrupted. All of these issues combined could lead Obama to believe that Americans see these practices as unfair and driven by greed. All of these issues indicate more beliefs that Obama may have regarding Americans. First, Obama may believe that Americans feel that the unethical actions of the insurance companies are costing consumers more money and they are not any healthier. This leads to the idea that Americans want to save money on their health care. Second, Obama may believe that Americans view the corruption as a threat to their health and the health of their families. This could be deduced from the idea that insurance companies have the freedom to drop coverage at any time and/or water down benefits. If a person gets sick and their insurance drops them, or refuses to cover life-saving treatments, then the person may die due to lack of care, and ultimately, due to the negligence and greed of the insurance company. If Americans view insurance companies as unfair, greedy, and corrupt, and Obama is able to draw upon these feelings, then build arguments that address the concerns of the insured regarding insurance industry corruption, he can draw support for his legislative plans. All of this then leads to the conclusion that reform must be passed, for if it is not, then these abuses will continue.
Arguments to Uninsured Americans

Conclusion: “We need health insurance reform” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 54).

Minor Premise: “[Because] it [health insurance reform] would give uninsured Americans a chance to choose an affordable health care plan” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 56).

Major Premise: *Americans have a right to affordable health insurance.*

In this argument, Obama is basing his assertion on the assumption that Americans have a right to access affordable health care. This can be deduced from the minor premise where Obama is arguing that the new plan would offer affordable insurance options. A key word is affordable. It suggests that the insurance options that are available to Americans now are expensive, or completely unavailable. Americans do not, and sometimes cannot, afford the current health care plans that are available, it could be argued that they want to spend less so they are able to purchase insurance on their current budget. Obama seems to be building his argument on the belief that Americans want more than just access to insurance; they want to save money on their insurance as well. To go even further with this, it could be suggested that Obama is basing his argument on his belief that Americans do not want to live in fear of going broke if they become ill. Under the current system, if someone does not have insurance, and they are ineligible for Medicare or Medicaid, they have very few options in the event of a serious illness. Because of this, Obama draws on the idea that Americans should not have to fear getting sick. Having a life-threatening illness is enough to worry about without having the potential for financial ruin bearing down on a person. Since many Americans who have health insurance rely upon their employers for their coverage, they are granted insurance as a benefit. However, if they lose their
job they will face two significant issues in relation to their benefits. First, they could keep their coverage, but they will have to pay for their insurance through COBRA, which is an expensive option when it comes to health care. Second, they face the possibility of losing their coverage altogether if they cannot afford COBRA. This is another aspect of health care where Obama seems to be drawing his beliefs regarding accessibility. He believes that nobody should have to worry about these issues if they lose their job. Outside of the financial aspects of insurance accessibility, Obama builds his arguments on the belief that health care as a right and not a privilege. All of Obama’s beliefs about uninsured Americans construct his target audience for his arguments. The combination of these beliefs and arguments lead to the argument that regardless of employment status, preexisting conditions, or socioeconomic status, all Americans believe they should be able to access quality health insurance. This then connects to the conclusion due to the fact that insurance companies will continue to deny coverage, and charge outrageous premiums that the average family simply cannot afford unless reform is passed.

Conclusion: “We need health insurance reform” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 54).

Minor Premise: “[Because without reform] Patients will be denied care they need” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 60).

Major Premise: Americans are being abused by the insurance companies.

Obama builds this argument on the assumption that Americans do not want to continue to face the abuses perpetrated by the insurance industry. Obama states one of the main issues that people face with insurance companies is the denial of care. This is done through watering down benefits, canceling coverage, or denying coverage outright. Obama seems to build his argument on his belief that the American people feel that they deserve equal access to health services and
should not have to worry about being bankrupt due to an illness. Moreover, Obama could be construed as holding the belief that Americans think that their lives are at risk because of the actions, or perhaps inaction, of the insurance companies. This suggests that Americans feel unsafe with regard to current health insurance company practices and policies. Based on these beliefs, Obama creates assumptions that are based on the idea that Americans want a sense of safety and stability when it comes to their ability to access health care. Obama then builds his arguments according to these perceived needs and desires. Obama’s main assumption can be inferred from the minor premise as he states that without reform, people will be denied care. It follows that if people are denied care, they will get sick or die, or perhaps both. These two premises work in accordance with Obama’s belief that Americans do not trust the health care industry, and as a result, do not feel safe. All of this leads to the conclusion as health insurance reform needs to be passed in order to avoid people being denied care. The intended audience can be construed based on the notion that those who do not currently have insurance are unable to access it for one reason or another. Since they do not have the necessary coverage they need, they are being denied care indirectly; because, they cannot afford to pay for their medical expenses out-of-pocket.

Conclusion: “We need health insurance reform” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 54).

Minor Premise: “[Because] I’ve heard from Americans with preexisting conditions whose lives depend on getting coverage” (Obama, “2010 State of the Union” par. 55).

Major Premise: Americans believe health coverage can potentially save their lives.
Obama may be building this argument based on his belief that Americans do not want to die because of the negligent practices and greed-driven policies of a corporation. This argument may also be drawn from the belief that Americans are angry at the insurance industry for allowing profit to take precedence over human life. If Americans are being denied coverage that would pay for life-saving treatments that they will be unable to afford without insurance, then it would follow that uninsured Americans are frustrated and angry with the insurance companies for putting their life at risk in the name of higher profit margins. Based on the perceived beliefs that Obama holds regarding the needs, thoughts, and desires of the American people, he forms arguments that address their assumed concerns. The argument here is based upon Obama’s assumption that people see health care as a life saving necessity. This can be deduced from the minor premise as Obama asserts that some Americans who have preexisting conditions may die without reform. This leads to the conclusion that reform must be passed so these people can get the coverage they need. Obama is targeting the uninsured with this argument. This can be drawn from the minor premise where Obama refers to people whose lives depend on getting coverage, particularly those who have preexisting conditions. It could be inferred that he is trying to appeal to those who need coverage the most, specifically, those with life-threatening preexisting conditions who have been routinely denied coverage under the current system. If he can convince this particular group that reform will get them coverage, and potentially save their lives, it is possible that they will respond out of self-preservation and ultimately support his proposal.

CONCLUDING ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS

George W. Bush delivered several speeches regarding his plans to reform Social Security during the duration of his presidency. The same could be said of President Obama and health
care reform. Each of the president’s speeches sought to convince the public that the proposed reform was a crucial issue. Both presidents seemingly developed their assumptions on the basis of demographics. They each divided the population into two categories. Bush divided them according to those who are retired or soon-to-be retired and those who are not retired. Obama separated his audience based on who had insurance and who did not. This method of argumentation based on demographics is evident in the enthymemes that are drawn from their various speeches. Both Bush and Obama’s assumptions drive their minor premises, and each one is aimed at persuading a particular audience as exemplified in the analysis. It is also worth noting that all of the analyzed speeches come to similar conclusions regarding their proposed legislation. The major and minor premises within each analyzed work all lead back to the overarching conclusion of the respective speech.

Each president’s target audiences are built on assumptions regarding finances and the American public’s desire for security. This can be seen in the way that Bush argues for reform based on assumptions that are primarily concerned with stability in investing, ownership, and increasing retirement savings. Bush’s argument regarding stability in investing seems to be based on the belief that Americans view the government as irresponsible and inefficient when it comes to spending and saving. His assumption, then, would be that Americans do not want to lose their money because of this fiscal irresponsibility. This can be deduced from fact that Bush points out that the Social Security system is crumbling. If people see this crumbling system, then they may believe that the inefficiency is due to the government’s shortcomings. Bush’s belief regarding ownership and the American people is that, again, Americans should not trust the government with their retirement money. Bush indicates that the government does not keep an individual’s money safe when they put it into the current Social Security system. Instead, he indicates that the
money is spent on other people and other programs. This leads to his assumption that Americans want ownership so that their money is safe. If he is trying to appeal to those who would invest in this program, then the audience that his has constructed would be the young workers. Young workers are the people who are looking to invest in their futures; therefore, ownership seems as though it would be pertinent to them. With regard to increasing retirement savings, it may be deduced that Bush believes that Americans want more money when they retire. This could be broken into two assumptions. First, people want to get better benefits from Social Security. This addresses his retirees as they are in a position where they are currently getting benefits from the system; therefore, they would be the people who want more benefits from the existing system. Second, people want to increase their benefits by adding savings options, while still getting something from the existing system. The second assumption addresses young workers as they are in a position to contribute to a plan such as the one proposed by Bush because they are still earning an outside income. So, by supplementing the system while keeping some of the existing benefits, Bush is able to create arguments aimed at two different audiences. It also seems that when Bush is constructing his audiences, he is attempting to sell a program to young workers by pointing out the benefits of the program and stressing all the positive aspects to them. However, for retirees, he focuses on the negative repercussions that will come about if nothing is done to save Social Security. Bush seems to be attempting to scare retirees into supporting reform by presenting ideas that ultimately threaten the livelihood of their loved ones.

Obama’s attention to detail results in a clear indication of how Obama positions the American people regarding what he assumes to be their beliefs, desires, and needs. This affects how he constructs his arguments, or minor premises. Obama forms assumptions based on American’s desire to save money, have guaranteed access to health care, and have a secure
health care system. The assumptions regarding each audience change based upon his perceived needs and desires of that audience. Regarding the desire to save money, it could be deduced that Obama believes that Americans pay too much for something that does not work in their best interest. Ultimately, this indicates a belief that Americans want to get services that reflect what they pay for them. If Americans are paying premiums, and the insurance companies get to keep the money whether the person is sick or not, then when a person gets sick it should be understood that the insurance companies will cover that person’s medical costs out of fairness to the consumer. Additionally, Obama could be drawing the conclusion that Americans want their insurance to cover more of their medical expenses. This belief is reflected when Obama makes stipulates that insurance companies will be obligated to pay for preventative care. This argument reflects the belief that Americans do not want to pay for a health care cost that is viewed as a necessity. Furthermore, if preventative care is guaranteed, it will save the consumer money in the long run as potentially serious, and expensive, illnesses can be avoided, or at least caught before they get any worse. Either way, it leads to savings on two levels: consumers will not have to pay for a type of care that is not perceived as a luxury and they can increase the likelihood that they will be able to circumvent costs associated with preventable illnesses. This then leads to the construction of an audience, the insured, who is paying for something but they are not getting services when they need them or that are worth what they are paying for them. Regarding his assumption that all Americans deserve to have guaranteed access to health care, it could be deduced that Obama believes that Americans want to be healthy and want to remain healthy without worrying about going broke while trying to do so. Additionally, it could be said that Obama builds his argument based on his belief that Americans feel that in a country as wealthy as America there is no reason for anybody to go without proper medical care. Furthermore,
Obama may be building his arguments on the American’s belief that health care is not a privilege that should be reserved for the wealthy and healthy, but extended to everyone on the basis that being healthy is a basic human right. Regarding the desire to have a more secure health care system, Obama forms assumptions based on the fact that many Americans are facing premium hikes, or losing their coverage when they get sick, or their benefits are cut back and do not adequately cover the consumer’s health care needs. All of these factors indicate a system that lacks regulation. Some of the issues with stability tie to accessibility, such as the denial of coverage based on preexisting conditions. Obama seems to build his arguments based on the belief that Americans feel that the insurance companies are taking advantage of consumers. If this is true, then Obama’s arguments are tailored to address these abuses according to how each unfair practice affects a particular audience. With regard to the loss of coverage or other instabilities that insured Americans face, Obama constructs arguments that are meant to address the anxieties and ultimately provide a solution to the problems that they are experiencing. The same can be said of his uninsured audience and the denial of coverage. Obama constructs his arguments based on the beliefs that he has about the desires of those who are uninsured.

Despite these similarities in regard to enthymematic construction, Bush and Obama are different stylistically. Bush’s style utilizes repetitive language in his speeches. This leads to minor premises that overlap in single speeches. He uses the same key words and phrases in several of his minor premises that connect them to the inferred major premises. This often indicates that he is addressing a specific audience. Additionally, through the use of repetition Bush seems to seek to add emphasis to the point he is arguing. For example, his use of the word ownership generally signified an assumption regarding young workers. Bush seems to be attempting to sell partial privatization to young workers by promoting the personal savings
account on the basis that the account would protect their money from both the government and other people. If he repeatedly tells these young workers how this plan will benefit them, and gradually adds more detail to make the plan more attractive to his target audience, then he may gain more support for his intended legislation. This then leads to his assumption that young workers are primarily concerned with their own futures, and not the well-being of the general public.

Conversely, Obama is succinct when he addresses each point in his speeches. Each argument appears as though it is carefully thought out in terms of the target audience. Within a given speech, there are numerous minor premises that display little overlap. This could most likely be attributed to Obama’s more concise style. Obama is specific when he addresses health care reform and there is little repetition within his speeches, and if he does utilize repetition, it is evident that it is deliberate.

To conclude, I would like to reiterate my contention that despite completely dissimilar legislative goals and significant stylistic differences, upon close inspection, there are enthymemetic similarities between George W. Bush and Barack Obama. Enthymemes can be drawn from each president’s speech and applied to a particular demographic according to the minor premises, from which the major premises are drawn. Each president constructs his audiences based upon the beliefs that he has about the American people as a whole. Then, the public is divided according to specific assumptions formed by the president about each of their target audiences. These assumptions draw from their respective beliefs about the American people. The presidents then create arguments aimed at persuading their audiences based upon the assumed needs and desires of each one. All of these arguments lead to one overarching conclusion in each speech. Based upon Aristotle’s assertion that: “one should not speak on the
basis of all opinions but of those held by a defined group” (169; 2:22), the notion that these two presidents speak to defined groups is a both a logical and effective approach to building their respective arguments.
WORKS CITED


