THE USE OF CONSTITUTIVE INVENTION TO MITIGATE MARGINALIZATION AND ADVERSARIAL RELATIONS BY ISRAELI P.M. BENJAMIN NETANYAHU IN HIS SPEECH TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 27, 2012

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The Use of Constitutive Invention to Mitigate Marginalization and Adversarial
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“To the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:2-3).

“Blessing and glory and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen” (Rev 7:12).

And to the most amazing, and kind, and encouraging cheerleader, my Mom, Jacqui Scott.
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Use of Constitutive Invention to Mitigate Marginalization and Adversarial Relations by Israeli P.M. Benjamin Netanyahu in His Speech to the United Nations General Assembly Delivered September 27, 2012

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This paper will introduce two new concepts to constitutive rhetoric that expand on current theory as described by Maurice Charland, Michael Leff and Ebony A. Utley, Charles Goehring and George N. Dionisopoulos and others with special consideration of Kenneth Burke’s detailed depiction of “identification” as a primary element of persuasion. Observations of this novel usage of constitutive rhetoric emerge from the 2012 speech given by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the United Nations General Assembly. In this speech, Netanyahu’s purpose was to urge UN members to consider a failsafe plan for thwarting Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons. However, this effort was complicated by Israel’s marginalized position with the UN body, which required Netanyahu to rhetorically reposition Israel as an accepted member within the UN. His remedy was to construct a novel ideological identification and constitute both Netanyahu’s target audience and Israel into a shared identity, while simultaneously introducing a new antithetical identification to denote Iran with an oppositional ideology that UN members would reject as their own. Through this constitutive invention, Netanyahu invited his target audience to accept the identification that represented their shared values with Israel to engender consubstantiality between them, and position his audience to also share Israel’s perception of Iran’s intentions.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division. Identification is compensatory to division. If men were not apart from one another, there would be no need for the rhetorician to proclaim their unity.

--Kenneth Burke

On September 27, 2012, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered a speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations. His speech followed (on the previous day) Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s final address to the UN, in which he made several accusations, threats and vows concerning Israel, “the uncivilized Zionists” ("Israeli PM Sets 'Red Line'”). In spite of the UN’s ongoing attempts to manage Iranian nuclear pursuits, Israel’s influence within the UN was virtually incapacitated, which threatened to eclipse Netanyahu’s appeal. Throughout its history, Israel has been a frequent object of UN resolutions, and these “war weary world powers” ("Israeli PM Sets 'Red Line'") were reticent to advocate an offensive posture against Iran—particularly a posture that aligned with Israel in the sensitive political climate at the risk of offending other Middle Eastern countries. How, then, does the head of a politically marginalized democratic state appeal to the international community for their support of a preemptive strike on a rogue regime’s nuclear weapons facility?

This paper will explore the rhetorical strategy used by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu in his address to the UN General Assembly to petition the international community, America, and even Israel for support concerning the urgency of deterring Iran’s nuclear progress. A close analysis of this strategy reveals two new aspects of constitutive rhetoric that expand current theory as initially described by Maurice Charland and developed by others, with special consideration of Kenneth Burke’s detailed depiction of “identification” as a primary element of persuasion. While Charland and others have described the process of constitutive rhetoric, Leff and Utley have extended these observations to reveal the usefulness of positioning the rhetor as “constituted within” the identity of the constituted audience (“Israeli PM Sets 'Red Line'”). Thus, in constituting a
shared identity with the audience, a rhetor can discover and exploit foundational tropes to enact compensatory elements of Burkeian identification.

However, we find in Netanyahu’s speech a strategy that extends the usage described by Leff and Utley through an effort that can be called *constitutive invention*, which endeavors to reconstitute both Netanyahu’s target audience and Israel under a *newly constructed* identity that repositions Israel “within” the novel identity. Furthermore, he constructs a novel *oppositional* identity to represent Iran. Therefore, we see that in response to Israel’s marginalized position with the UN body, Netanyahu attempts to rhetorically reposition Israel as an accepted member *within* the UN by re-constituting Netanyahu’s target audience and Israel into a novel shared identity that translates *both*, while simultaneously introducing a new *antithetical* (Goehring and Dionisopoulos 376) identity within the constitutive discourse that UN members can accept as ideologically oppositional to denote Iran, and to reinforce the narrative of Netanyahu’s argument. Both of these strategies have yet to be described within current constitutive theory.
CHAPTER 2
A STRATEGIC RESPONSE TO RHETORICAL EXIGENCY

In this speech, Netanyahu’s purpose is to urge UN members to consider a failsafe plan for thwarting Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons. His petition will explain the rationality of drawing a line of action, or “red line,” on Iran’s nuclear enrichment process that will trigger an unspecified response (presumably an Israeli/American military strike against the regime’s suspected nuclear weapons facilities). Netanyahu faces several obstacles in persuading the august body to contemplate assuming a firm political posture. In addition to the UN’s reluctance to consider military action of any kind, the effort is further complicated by Netanyahu’s compromised ethos as the representative of marginalized Israel, which diminishes the customary diplomatic receptivity of his audience. Kenneth Burke famously invests the power of persuasion with the speaker’s ability to create a useful common identification between his or herself and the audience:

As for the relation between “identification” and “persuasion”; we might well keep in mind that a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker’s interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience. So there is no chance of our keeping apart the meanings of persuasion, identification (“consubstantiality”) and communication (the nature of rhetoric as “addressed”). (A Rhetoric of Motives 46)

Therefore, in order for Netanyahu to successfully engage the members of his audience in perceiving Israel’s interests as their own, he must create a sense of identification between them. However, Netanyahu confronts two obstacles in constructing a successful locus for identification with his audience since first, he represents a politically unpopular nation, and second, he is addressing the vastly diverse UN General Assembly for their support—divergent in religious, political, historical, and traditional perspectives and values. Since no one conventional ideology can unify them, his rhetorical strategy cannot rely on any ideological appeals located in the common tropes and symbols that represent a specific
ideology. Here, the rhetor must discover new topics through which he may insinuate his appeal. Aristotle observed that people value “what no common person does; for these deeds are more praiseworthy,” and that “each category of people [values as good] that to which their character is disposed,” and therefore “persuasive arguments . . . should be taken from these” topics (On Rhetoric 1.6.29-30). Netanyahu’s thematic trope should therefore be one that elevates the character of his audience.

Moreover, Aristotle advises that “one should speak of whatever is honorable among people as actually existing [in the subject praised]” (1.9.30), and that “one should not speak on the basis of all opinions but of those of a defined group” (2.22.3). An important topic of focus for Netanyahu would be to locate characteristics that the UN traditionally valorizes as his focal theme for persuasion. One such available topic is the “common principle of the just and unjust” (1.13.2), for “topics that are sources of enthymemes about good or evil, or honorable or shameful, or just and unjust . . . and topics concerned with characters and emotions and moral habits” can build Netanyahu’s ethos and reinforce his argument with his audience through appeals to their sense of virtue. However, Aristotle suggests another layer of appeal that can be found within these topics: “syllogisms are drawn from [premises about] them in discussions of debatable cases. [Thus it can be argued that] a thing is good if its opposite is bad, and if its opposite is advantageous to our enemies” (1.6.18-19). Creating such a syllogistic dichotomy can, therefore, also be useful in furthering Netanyahu’s narrative.

In his article "Friend or Foe?: Naming the Enemy," Jeremy Engels extrapolates the implication of both Aristotle’s and Burke’s concepts of identification as the locus of persuasion when he describes, “We enter the realm of rhetoric when the relationship between identification and division is unclear—or, perhaps even better, when the lines between the two blur completely and identification can become the means to division and vice versa.” He concludes that “Because humans are goaded by a spirit of hierarchy, our social reality is one of division—which means that the ability to create identification and the ability to persuade are two fundamental skills for social life” (38).

Netanyahu must then somehow discover a new ideological framework that can appeal to his heterogeneous audience with its competing socio-political exigencies, which can also be useful in delineating the argument he will make to them. Burke introduces the potential
kairos of such a situation in recognizing these divisions and capturing them under a new common identity:

Since identification implies division, we found rhetoric involving us in matters of socialization and faction. Here was a wavering line between peace and conflict. . . . And inasmuch as the ultimate of conflict is war or murder, we consider how such imagery can figure as a terminology of reidentification (“transformation” or “rebirth”). For in considering the wavering line between identification and division, we shall always be coming upon manifestations of logomachy, avowed as in invective, unavowed as in stylistic subterfuges for presenting real divisions in terms that deny division. *(A Rhetoric of Motives 45)*

Accordingly, as Burke suggests, rhetoric becomes the instrument of our purposes, wielded openly to create division, or performed artfully to “deny division.” A perspicacious rhetor recognizes the capacity for “transformation” along this “wavering line between peace and conflict,” and deploys the “terminology” that re-socializes and re-divides identity advantageously. If, therefore, Netanyahu can locate a common denominator among his target audience, imbued with laudable pathos that can unify and move them, he can create a new means of identification in terms “that deny division” and invite persuasion.

However, a successful invitation to an ideological identity must be qualified by the audience’s collective perceptions of reality. In his seminal essay on constitutive rhetoric, Maurice Charland concludes that the source of this collective identification must readily reside within the heart of the individual listener, and that “Persuasive discourse requires a subject-as-audience who is already constituted with an identity and within an ideology” (134). He describes the circumstances under which an audience accepts the terms of identification as “inherent to the subject position addressed by [the] rhetoric because of what we see as a series of narrative ideological effects” (134). Therefore, the speaker must create a narrative that assumes this identity already exists within the listener, and thereby addresses the listener, while artfully giving life to the characteristics and values of this identity: “Thus this rhetoric paradoxically must constitute the identity . . . as it simultaneously presumes it to be pregiven and natural, existing outside of the rhetoric and forming the basis of a rhetorical address” (137).

Charland further suggests that as a vital function, this constitutive identity should “offer new subject positions that resolve, or at least contain experienced contradictions . . . to overcome or define away the recalcitrance the world presents by providing the subject with new perspectives and motives” (142). We see, therefore, that in establishing “new
subject positions” that “resolve contradictions,” constitutive discourse is a strategic vehicle for redefining social and even institutional perspectives by inserting convenient symbolic terminologies with the potential to reform collective identities along the rhetor’s purposes.

However, while constitutive rhetoric is useful for resolving or containing “experienced contradictions” among the “addressed,” Netanyahu’s target audience (those who have the political volition and capacity to endorse his petition) is an eclectic assemblage of nations with disparate political and human rights perspectives and with diverging values and self-interests, each emerging from their own shadowed histories. He not only faces representatives of diverse nations that may not share an inherent identity or ideology, but also those nations who are subject to the pressure of their relationships with outlying nations as well. Netanyahu may be able to successfully locate general topics of interest common to his audience, but such appeals, if loosely constructed, would be most effective if the audience is already receptive toward the rhetor. However, the one perspective they do commonly hold is a reticence to come into accord with Israel, which challenges creating a common identity, Netanyahu’s essential rhetorical foundation for persuasion. Therefore, his task is more complex than merely locating common topics, or the unifying constitutive rhetoric considered by Charland. As the representative of a politically unpopular nation, Netanyahu occupies a de facto position of exclusion from his audience’s own sense of identification.
CHAPTER 3

FURTHERING CONSTITUTIVE THEORY

One possible remedy for Israel’s marginalized position is described in the article “Instrumental and Constitutive Rhetoric in Martin Luther King Jr.’s ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail,’” by Michael Leff and Ebony Utley. These scholars use Thomas W. Benton’s concepts of constitutive rhetoric to consider its “dual function,” which “helps constitute the identity of self, other and scene, while it also pulls these identities within the orbit of situated interests” (37). The impact of this suggestion is that, if appropriately constructed for this function, constitutive rhetoric can both “expand and complicate the conventional interest in ‘ethical proof,’ because the persona of the rhetor emerges not just as an instrument of persuasion but also as something constituted within the rhetorical medium” [emphasis added] (37).

Leff and Utley’s analysis of King’s letter reveals that King not only constitutes his stated audience as clergy (instilling them with the values and characteristics that he could exploit for his rhetorical purposes), but that this enables him to control his own ethos by constituting himself in the same identity. Thus he is able to create a “complex interrelationship between construction of self and instrumental appeals through character” which “harmonizes aspects of its author’s persona by blending and balancing the representation of the self in relation to what Benson calls ‘the exigencies, constraints, and others’ connected with the scene” (38). By doing this, “King shares the burden and opportunity of crossing between instrumental and constitutive concerns” (38). This enables him to create a text that “constructs the persona of an author who is critical of his white [moderate] audience but not alienated from it” (49). In occupying the same subject position as his audience, King “calls upon that audience to acknowledge and act in accordance with its own principles” (49).

By constituting himself and his addressed audience as clergy, King eliminates the problematic identities that could enhance their division, primarily as members of different races. King thus constructs a common identity that enhances the laudable character of both
his audience and himself, enabling him to call upon them to act according to their common values. Leff and Utley describe the analytical process that reveals this feature as a concentration on “(1) the rhetor’s construction of self (2) the rhetor’s construction of audience . . . and (3) the enactment within the text of the relationship between rhetor and audience” (40). However, Leff and Utley recognize that, as the writer, King already enjoyed the support of the moderate white clergy in principle, who had embraced the essential aims of the Civil Rights movement, but who were critical of, in this case, the method of the protest. King’s efforts to constitute both his audience and himself with the common identity of clergy was rhetorically intuitive, but nonetheless took advantage of the common ties that both had previously acknowledged, and of a relationship of professed united goals and values. King used his constituted position to both “criticize” and call upon their professed “principles” to act accordingly, and to reaffirm their support of his position as a leader in the movement they endorsed.

This paper proposes to expand on current theories of “identification” and constitutive rhetoric by suggesting that these prior theories describe vital rhetor-audience relationship tasks, which are: (1) creating ideological means of identification for the purposes of discovering and exploiting common topics as “available means of persuasion” (Aristotle 1.1.14); (2) redefining the subject-audience to both exploit and eliminate common lines of division; (3) controlling the terms and characteristics of the constituted identities for rhetorical purposes; (4) establishing author/speaker ethos as a member of the constituted identity; and (5) for effecting the purpose of moving the audience to attitude or action (Burke, A Rhetoric 41-42). However, what these theories do not consider is the usefulness of constitutive rhetoric as an available means to accomplish all of these functions, as well as two additional tasks.

The primary additional function is for the purpose of locating a new subject position that a marginalized rhetor (or group) can favorably occupy by constituting a novel ideological identity within the text, which is instilled with characteristics and values that can redefine both the audience and the rhetor, and reframe the exigent socio-political circumstances befitting the rhetorical purposes. The secondary function is to also construct a novel antithetical identity, extrinsic to the constituted body, as an ideological figure imbued with the converse characteristics of the “addressed” that becomes the motivational locus of a
broader ideological engagement. Let this rhetorical strategy be called constitutive invention, since it must invent both a novel ideological identity for the target audience and rhetor to occupy together, as well as an oppositional ideology that affirms and provides motive for the constituted audience as the subject of the argument’s narrative.

Charland’s theory of constitutive rhetoric specifies three ideological effects that the speaker must accomplish in order to succeed in the constitutive process: constituting a collective subject (139), positioned as a transhistorical subject (140), with the illusion of freedom (141). He also stipulates that in order for the constitutive rhetoric to have effect, it must first successfully call the audience to the subject position of the rhetoric, and second, the logic of the constitutive rhetoric must call for action in the material world (141), which is the purpose of the rhetoric.

If we therefore combine the elements of Charland’s initial theory of the operations of constitutive rhetoric with Leff and Utley’s assertion that constitutive rhetoric also instills the ethos and character of the rhetor with that of the audience, then we may discover the means by which Netanyahu invites his audience to share the new ideological identity constituted within his speech through the process of rejecting the characteristics associated with the oppositional constitutive invention representative of Iran. The intended result of this effort is to garner the UN’s consent in attitude, if not participation with, his proposed course of action, which Burke describes as the primacy of “persuasion ‘to attitude,’ rather than persuasion to out-and-out-action” (A Rhetoric of Movtives 50).

To compensate for the exigent disadvantages, Netanyahu introduces a new ideological framework to mitigate the contradicting perspectives of his audience as addressed, and to create and define a new subject position that both he (as Israel’s representative) and his target audience can occupy. However, the novel ideological identity cannot be attributable to any existing ideology, whether religious, political, or geographical, so that all members are free to accept and occupy the same subject position. Likewise, the ideological identity that Netanyahu offers as the oppositional ideology representative of Iran must also be nonsectarian, void of all religious, political, and geographical provocation, which would otherwise fail to redefine the boundaries of competing interests among the target audience.
Netanyahu chooses to accomplish these functions by constituting his target audience under a unifying socio-political identity that he calls the people of “modernity,” which is constructed on the characteristics and values described within the 1945 UN charter itself. The purpose of this attribution is to create a historically instantiated ideological subject position that the majority members in the UN and Israel can both occupy in a shared vision of the world. Theoretically, the UN members have already been inducted constitutively into the UN charter; however, since Netanyahu is a marginalized member of this widely disparate assembly, he must in actuality reconstitute his target audience into a new collective identity based on the language and values within the UN charter that are most advantageous for his purposes. James Jasinski describes this potential for “constitutive force through cultural circulation” (74), in that “the idioms of public life . . . and the specific concepts that organize, link and separate these idioms are continually reconstituted through quotidian interaction as well as more nuanced textual practices” (78). In borrowing the language and values already self-ascribed by his audience, Netanyahu therefore can reconstitute the language of the UN Charter in creating a more strategic ideological dichotomy. By establishing this new ideological framework, he offers his audience the unified vision to act against the opposing and novel ideological identity, which he also constructs within his speech as the dark “forces of medievalism.”

Netanyahu’s attempt to create this “new subject position” (Charland 134) for his audience induces two of Charland’s three ideological effects of constitutive rhetoric: constituting a collective subject (139), and a transhistorical subject (140). The process of creating a new shared identity for his audience as the people of, modernity, therefore comes through (1) ascribing it with generally appealing ideological qualities professed by the UN Charter; (2) addressing the audience as collectively included; and (3) creating a historical narrative of division between modernity and its nemesis medievalism, which is imbued with reactionary and oppressive characteristics that invite listeners to assume the subject position “us” under the threat of “them,” making use of Aristotle’s enthymemes about “good or evil,” and “just and unjust.”

However, since the collective identity that Netanyahu introduces does not rely on pre-existing, well-defined symbology, he must reinforce his constitutive invitation (modernity) by presenting a sinister opposing ideology (medievalism). In their article “Identification by
Antithesis: *The Turner Diaries* as Constitutive Rhetoric,” Charles Goehring and George N. Dionisopoulos describe this unique constitutive process, as grounded in Burke. They conclude that although their featured text refrains from offering “the elements that compose the collective identity of its target audience,” the author is still able to successfully constitute his target audience by offering negative characteristics as an oppositional identity. Goehring and Dionisopoulos suggest that the text’s “main strategy of juxtaposition functions constitutively by offering the target audience portrayals of the ‘other’ against which to unite” (374). Through the process of negative portrayal, an audience is conscripted into assuming the rival identity of the one depicted: “This juxtaposition strategy means that the only form of identification the text offers is identification by antithesis” (376). In essence, offering an objectionable identification as a scapegoat when the target identification is somewhat tenuous serves to reinforce a malleable constitutive identity that a rhetor invites his audience to assume.

In *A Grammar of Motives*, Kenneth Burke famously describes the purpose of a scapegoat, which he claims, “represents the principle of division in that its persecutors would alienate from themselves to it their own uncleanniness. . . . In representing their iniquities, it performs the role of vicarious atonement ... ” (406). While Iran itself is not presented as a scapegoat within the text, but as a genuine threat to international peace and safety, providing the concept of medievalism enables the moderate members of the UN to reflect on a pattern of history. Netanyahu sets up the ideological dichotomy by imbuing the modern nations with historically progressive characteristics, and the medieval forces as destructive to the laudable causes of progress. A synecdoche is thus offered in the constructed medieval ideology as it represents the target of “civilization’s” historical battle against all unbridled “fanatical” aggression (Netanyahu) that had twice destroyed the nations by the “scourge of war” (United Nations Charter, Preamble). By reframing throughout his speech all previous and current tyrannical aggression as signified in one term, Netanyahu rhetorically marshals history’s entire narrative as a singular ideological clash (both its errors and heroics). This historical perception places a shadow of the inevitable recurrence of these horrors on the like-minded Iranian Regime. By constructing the figure of a scapegoat ideology in medievalism, therefore, UN members are offered an opportunity for both division and redemption from
their corrupt associations and past sins through contemporary material actions toward (or the endorsement of) containing the self-sequestered fanatical regime.

Thus, Netanyahu attempts two unique operations within constitutive rhetoric by simultaneously inventing two novel, parallel, constitutive terms. In one, he creates a dark force of historical opposition by constructing the concept term *medievalism*. This appellation broadly embodies Iran as the subject of debate, other historic “fanatical regimes,” and characteristics contrary to the UN’s own mission, all of which Netanyahu expects his target audience to reject as the “antithesis” (Goehring and Dionisopoulos 376) of their own sense of identification. This dichotomy leaves the other ideological identification constituted within the speech of *modernity*, which embodies the UN’s self-described characteristics as the only acceptable option for audience identification. These characteristics, though not heretofore designated with such overarching terms, are reflective of the stated mission goals and values professed in the UN Charter, and therefore are intrinsic qualities for its members to affirm. In evoking these qualities, the “addressed” can assume the “subject-as-audience who is already constituted with an identity and within an ideology” (Charland 134). Furthermore, and most significantly, by constituting both his audience and Israel as such, Netanyahu is making the case (and must continue to affirm throughout the speech) for Israel to be “constituted within” (Leff and Utley 37) the UN’s self-identifying framework as a valid member of the very ideological identification of *modernity* that he constructs within his speech. Only after constructing these identities, and the narrative they convey, is Netanyahu prepared to lay open his argument for political deliberation.

In his essay on political discourse analysis, Cezar M. Ornatowski describes the work political rhetoric seeks to effect:

The political functions of discourse appear to fall into two broad categories: strategic and constitutive. Strategic functions are those that involve goal-oriented influence across relationships, while constitution refers to the dual fact that discourse to a significant extent “constitutes” both the terms in/of which it speaks ... as well as the audience it ostensibly addresses and mobilizes (16).

Earlier Ornatowski suggests that “politics . . . is something people do” and that “politics is fundamentally about accomplishing aims in a given socio-cultural, ideological, and/or institutional context.” He argues that “most actual politicking in parliaments is done in committee and in personal encounters, rather than in the chamber,” not through “‘grand’ political discourse” (14-15). Thus if the strength of “politicking” relies more on the
politician’s ethos within the body to which he is appealing than on the force of his argument, then Netanyahu must realistically assess his ability to move attitudes based on the clout of his relationships (built through past interactions, associations, and experiences) with the members of the UN body. Therefore the identity and terms he constitutes within his discourse must serve to re-conceptualize Israel’s compromised political relationships.

In extending Max Weber’s political formula, Kari Palonen proposes the aspects with which Weberian “power shares” can be described, two of which are as follows: “politicking means performative operations in the struggle for power with the already existing shares and their redistribution. Polity refers to those power shares that have already been politicized but have also created a kind of vested interest that tacitly excludes other kinds of shares...” (175). Since the most effective politicking members of the UN polity have primarily distributed the UN’s “power shares” to distinctly favor the appeals, actions, and ideologies of political parties that are both critical and exclusionary of Israel, there remain few, if any power shares within Israel’s political reach. However, if Netanyahu can successfully “create” a new power share, which “Disputes [on] the limits or demarcations of the historically and contingently formed polity,” he can “destabilize” “its margins” (179-180). Access to political “power shares,” then, relies on Netanyahu successfully politicking in the values of the ruling polity in order to redefine the exclusionary political margins through favorable discourse that constitutes “both the terms in/of which it speaks . . . as well as the audience it ostensibly addresses and mobilizes.”

Netanyahu, therefore, approaches the difficult task of persuading this disparate assembly through a complex process to gain these power shares that begins with inventing and constituting a new ideological subject position for his target audience to occupy as the people of modernity, whose historical opponents he conversely ascribes as the newly constructed “forces of medievalism.” By doing so, he creates the rhetorical effect that Charland describes by presenting a “new subject position[s] that resolve[s], or at least contain[s] experienced contradictions ... to overcome or define away the recalcitrance the world presents by providing the subject with new perspectives and motives” (142). This rhetorical strategy invites Netanyahu’s audience to suspend their disparateness and see themselves as a collective subject-people of history befitting his rhetorical purposes.
Next, Netanyahu utilizes this broadly inclusive ideology of *modernity* for his ultimate goal—to create a flexible identity that might induce and successfully *interpellate* (Charland 138) the largest possible number of respondents so that he can ultimately reinforce Israel as a valid member of the ideological federation to which they identify. In doing so, we see Leff and Utley’s process of enacting “(1) the rhetor’s construction of self (2) the rhetor’s construction of audience ... and (3) the enactment within the text of the relationship between rhetor and audience” (Leff and Utley 40). Finally, in establishing the rhetorical frameworks of the two warring ideologies, Netanyahu utilizes the heroic narrative he presents of the transhistorical “forces of modernity” to demonstrate that they must act, as they have before, against the oppressive “forces of medievalism,” and “draw a red line” against Iran’s nuclear progress in order to “defend these values so that we can defend our freedom and protect our common civilization.”

Constitutive rhetoric is the moment that at once both invites and signifies the transition from *not a people*, to “we the people.” It is the powerful creation of a new identity, and must be ascribed with values and characteristics at the time and within the text that it is invoked. It must enrobe itself with a personal narrative reflecting the history and inspiration of its ideology. Charland explains that “collective identities forming the basis of rhetorical appeals themselves depend upon rhetoric” and that new subject-identities “exist only through an ideological discourse that constitutes them” (139). Therefore, in order for Netanyahu to overcome the ideological differences among the members of his target audience, he opts to invent and constitute them under a new collective identity.

If he is successful in calling his audience to “recognize themselves as the subject in [the] text” (Charland 143), he can redefine both his audience and Israel in a shared ideological identity, and create a purchase for persuasion. Only then can Netanyahu presume to deliberate the strategic options with “his peers,” and gain permission to approach them with his proposed solution. Charland concludes that “What is significant about constitutional rhetoric is that it positions the [audience] towards political, social, and economic action in the material world and it is in this positioning that its ideological character becomes significant” (141). However, Israel’s long and difficult relationship with the UN complicates Netanyahu’s task of constituting his target audience under a new ideological subject-position.
CHAPTER 4

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE SPEECH

At the time of this speech, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was aware of the unpopular position that his country historically held with the United Nations. He was tasked with garnering the support of an international community that had grown tired of conflict in the Middle East, and worn by its repercussions felt around the world. Moreover, Israel was widely assumed to have nuclear weapons, (as numerous other Western powers), but stood against further proliferation in the volatile Middle East. His country had in fact previously ventured to do the very thing for which he was now asking support when decades earlier, in 1981, Israel launched an airstrike on the nuclear facility in Iraq for the very same reasons—intelligence concerning Iraqi efforts to create a nuclear weapon. Iraq—like Iran—had publically avowed Israel as their eternal enemy, and therefore Israel chose to act preemptively on intelligence reports and eliminate the threat of an Iraqi nuclear strike before the weapon was completed. The UN, though aware of the nuclear progress in Iraq both then, and later after the first Gulf War, condemned Israel in a UN resolution for instigating potential instability in the region and striking unprovoked. The UN renewed this same condemnation of the preemptive attack every year following the 1981 strike up until after the UN sanctioned the invasion of Iraq—2004 being the last reiteration of the same resolution (“Search Results”; Iraq and Nuclear).

Although the UN’s ongoing criticism of Israel’s 1981 airstrike has been well established, its continued disapproval of the nation’s policies throughout its history is evident in a record of unmatched official UN condemnations. The perception that Israel has been singled out for censure is recognized to a degree even within the organization itself, as demonstrated by departing UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s last address to the General Assembly: “On one side, supporters of Israel feel that it is harshly judged, by standards that are not applied to its enemies – and too often this is true, particularly in some UN bodies.” The UN’s persistent castigation has certainly been evident to the Israeli government; since its inception in 1948 until now, Israel has been the subject of 1,268 UN resolutions. Over its
sixty-five-year history, this is more than 19 resolutions per year. Of these, there have been only a handful related to positive topics—namely during the early years concerning the recognition of Israel as a State and its admission to the UN. The official relationship between the UN and Israel since has been one marked by predominantly negative interactions.

To put this record in perspective, all resolutions containing the USSR, the People’s Republic of China, North Korea, Rwanda, Cambodia, terrorism, and genocide as their subjects, over the entire course of the UN’s history (since 1945), combine to total 1,352 as of the time of the speech (“Search Results”). Of the 164 resolutions with the PLO as the subject, none were condemnations, but instead considerations for assistance. There had been only 193 resolutions with Iran as the subject since 1950. The most recent of these prior to Netanyahu’s speech was a UN Continuing Resolution in June, which determined through “credible, fact-based, independent assessments, analysis, and recommendations” concerning Iran’s Nuclear enrichment program “that proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as their means of delivery, continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security” (“UN Resolution 2049”). However, in spite of this assessment, the vast disparity between the UN’s condemnations of Israel in comparison to even the world’s worst and most persistent violators of human rights, demonstrates the profoundly unpopular perception of Israel that the Prime Minister must negotiate in his address.

In light of the UN’s persistent admonitions of Israel, Netanyahu undertakes to mollify detractors, and convert skeptics into supporters through his complex rhetorical invention. The purpose of constituting his target audience as the people of modernity is to create kairos through a rhetorical construct that would permit Israel to share in an ideology that the majority of the UN members identify with, while diminishing the lines of division between them. Under the heading “Identification and the ‘Autonomous,’” Burke describes “the principle of Rhetorical identification” as playing a role when “autonomous” agents may be unconcerned about particular elements of a wider context of a “specialized activity.” In other words, even within “specialized activities” shared by a group, individual motives vary, and rhetorical “identification” can persuade the individuals to move in a unified direction. Moreover, Burke concludes, “such concern with identities leads to the sheer ‘identities’ of Symbolic. That is, we are in pure Symbolic when we concentrate upon one particular integrated structure of motives” (*A Rhetoric of Motives* 27).
Therefore, the constitutive rhetoric in Netanyahu’s speech is symbolically multi-layered to accomplish first, the task of inventing a unifying ideological subject-identity in the people of modernity for the purpose of persuading to a material action, and second to constitute a historically oppositional ideological identity in “medieval forces” as the antithetical identification to represent Iran. The ultimate overall primary goal of constituting these novel ideological identities is to locate a new subject position for Israel to occupy within the constituted identity of his target audience, which is perceived as historically resistant to the medieval forces, so that Israel’s dangers, concerns, and motives become the dangers, concerns and motives of the people of modernity. If this construction is successful, Netanyahu will accord to himself, as the representative of Israel, a level of ethos in direct proportion to the degree in which his target audience perceives itself as the constituted addressed, and create the opportunity for persuasion that moves his audience to join in committed resistance to the aggressive designs of the Iranian Nuclear program.

**Making Room**

Speakers have often found themselves potentially outside of the primary boundaries of their audience and in need of creating a space rhetorically in which they may be included among the interested parties. Such an exigency might occasion heralding a shared identity within the text. As John M. Jones and Robert C. Rowland point out in their analysis of a speech delivered by Reagan to the Soviets, “emphasizing shared identity” establishes “the essential consubstantiality between the rhetor and audience... In essence, the rhetor says to the audience that underlying the conflict between our two systems [or two perceptions] is a shared identity so strong that it is more important than that conflict” (83). In addition to the example of King’s use of his clerical identity to create a space that he may occupy on equal standing with his audience, many other examples of attempted boundary erasure through shared identity come to mind.

One specific example is revealed in Paul Minifee’s research on jeremiadic rhetorical strategies, which highlights the use of shared identities in his article on the Rev. Jermain W. Loguen. In his 1851 plea that local whites disobey the new fugitive slave law and save him from recapture, Loguen transcend the color barrier by appealing to his audience’s common humanity, particularly as a fellow Christian and resident of Syracuse: "My neighbors! I have
lived with you many years, and you know me. My home is here, and my children were born here. I am bound to Syracuse by pecuniary interests, and social and family bonds. And do you think I can be taken away from you and my wife and children, and be a slave in Tennessee?” (qtd. in Minifee 37).

In this passage, Loguen appeals to the reputation of the city as an abolitionist stronghold and famous stop on the underground railroad by cajoling their pride in supposing that, had he thought they would be the kind of city that would stand by and permit one of their own to be taken back to bondage, “I could never come to live with you” (qtd. in Minifee 38). Loguen’s use of the city of Syracuse as their shared identity enables him to isolate himself within the boundary of the identity he shares with his audience, and exclude potential common bonds his audience may share with other whites, or even with law-abiding citizens who feel pressured to obey the new law, making Syracuse’s bond with Loguen paramount to their honor. Moreover, he rhetorically leverages this shared identity to pressure his respondents to view him as equal in personhood and therefore in rights, or risk adopting a hypocritical position. Minifee characterizes Loguen’s underlying appeal to his fellow residents as an opportunity to essentially “preach” to them about his right to common citizenship: “Loguen's references to the Constitution and Bible amplify his arguments that Syracuseans should remain ‘bound’ to him as a friend, neighbor, and oppressed child of God, as well as loyal to the American ideals of freedom and justice” (36).

The topos of citizenship as a shared identity is a common theme in the rhetoric of subjugated classes in America, since it poses an embedded rhetorical challenge to the political justification for any inequality in a nation that professes to value “Liberty.” The Women’s Suffrage movement frequently focused their appeal to American citizens as a shared identity by adopting Constitutional definitions, and through broadening these borders, made the denial of their right to vote as natural-born citizens a contradiction to the American identity, founding principles, and sense of liberty. The appeal to citizenship as a shared identity, as suggested in Loguen’s impassioned speech, was also repeatedly used by blacks as legal and moral grounds to both petition and prod whites in abolitionist movements.

The research of Jacqueline Bacon and Glen McClish into post-revolutionary appeals for abolition reveals the deployment of this shared identity by African Americans beginning from the early stages of the nation’s heritage of liberty. The authors conclude that by African
Americans “Deploying the ideology and the language of the Revolution and the nation's founding,” they rhetorically “affirm their status as Americans and propose that they, too, have the right to the citizenship that white men claimed for themselves . . . as a result of the successful struggle against Britain” (9). Like these, and all petitioners, rhetors who appeal for a move to action or attitude on their behalf must strike a delicate balance between invitation, consubstantiality, and shame in addressing the petitioned audience, which has the power to deny or consent. This concept is exemplified further in Bacon and McClish: “As they acknowledge the influence of . . . leaders and appropriate their language, they also condemn their practices that fail to live up to their own standards” (7).

Netanyahu, as a petitioner to the UN General Assembly, must make a similar appeal to a shared identity, imbued with rhetorically convenient values and characteristics taken from the body’s own charter, which will also ultimately challenge his audience to emulate its own ideologies of progress and liberty. However, despite this common strategy of rhetorically creating a space that both the rhetor and the audience can occupy in order to mitigate the divisions between them, such shared identities are generally pre-existing and readily deployable. The uniqueness of Netanyahu’s rhetorical invention is in creating never-before identities and assigning them historical values and characteristics which seek to “make room” for Israel to stand among its detractors as politically legitimate. This need “to make room” is a master narrative for the nation, reflected within the themes and narrative of Netanyahu’s speech. Israel’s effort to locate rest for itself among adversaries hails back to ancient times, when Isaac found a place of peace in Genesis 26:22 and called it the Hebrew term “Rehoboth,” saying “For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land” (King James Version). This idea of Rahab, to enlarge and to make room for, is fittingly what Netanyahu endeavors to do once again for Israel in his speech.

**OVERVIEW OF THE SPEECH**

The purpose of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s speech is primarily to avoid the type of official UN remonstrance that followed Israel’s 1981 strike on Iraq, and to persuade the main body of the UN to endorse the rationality of his red line proposal as a deterrent for the outright war that all people of modernity wish to avoid. Underlying the overt message is the evident concern that the world powers will inadvertently permit Iran to achieve nuclear status
by lacking the united vigilance and resolve necessary for its aversion. In beginning his speech, Netanyahu has one foothold: the strong reassurance President Obama offered in his speech to the General Assembly just two days prior, asserting “that the US will ‘do what we must’ to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon” ("Iran Accuses West"). Netanyahu’s greeting to the General Assembly, therefore, attempts to capitalizes on both the sour note struck by Ahmadinejad the previous day and President Obama’s recent vow by striking a confident, yet congenial tone toward the attending members to build his ethos with a gesture of good-will on equal footing with the assembly: “Thank you very much Mr. President. It's a pleasure to see the General Assembly presided by the Ambassador from Israel, and it's good to see all of you, distinguished delegates. Ladies and Gentlemen.”

Netanyahu’s address next proceeds to locate the situation to which he would speak by rehearsing specific details about Israel, its history and the attributes of its people. He notes that the previous day “was Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year.” This serves a double purpose rhetorically since there had been some controversy over the UN permitting Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to address the general assembly on the most holy Jewish day, an opportunity he had traditionally used to slander and threaten Israel for much of his speech—so much so that many nations generally refuse to attend or ambassadors conspicuously exit the floor in protest. According to Aljazeera news, in comments earlier in the week, “Ahmadinejad said that Israel would eventually be ‘eliminated’” ("Israeli PM Sets 'Red Line'").

Netanyahu does not need to directly refer to this Yom Kippur offense, as the members would immediately call to mind, if they are so inclined, the insult of Ahmadinejad’s calculated rhetorical pronouncements, and perhaps reflect on the composed manner in which the Israeli diplomat would respond. Since one of the primary missions stipulated in the UN charter is to promote “tolerance” (United Nations), the Iranian leader’s persistent and flagrant display of intolerance toward Israel strengthens Netanyahu’s ultimate claim about the regime’s dangerous “aggression.” Rather than press into Ahmadinejad’s breach of civility as an immediate opportunity to directly criticize Iran’s leadership, or to delineate its pattern of targeting Israel, Netanyahu defers for the moment, having already planted in the minds of the audience a subtle comparison of the two nations’ diplomatic approaches. With this
suggestion foregrounded, he continues on to describe Israel in terms of the traditions, as well as the history, that are evoked by Yom Kippur as an anchor perspective on Israel’s future.

The overall structure of Netanyahu’s speech unfolds in the following sequence. Netanyahu initially focuses on describing Israel in terms of their history, their present and their future. During this narrative, several of the themes that will later be categorized as *modernity* emerge. This section is interjected with a forecast of the battle between *modernity* and *medievalism*, which Netanyahu will continue to develop and expand on throughout his speech in the course of constituting his audience as the people of *modernity*. After additional passages describing the state of Israel, its people and its values, Netanyahu returns to the concept of *medievalism*, which has already been ascribed with certain thematic characteristics. Through this narrative, he weaves a tapestry that depicts the two ideologies in an ongoing conflict throughout history. Netanyahu ultimately shifts in focus from past “tyrannies” and “fanatics” to the current *medieval fanaticism* of the radical Islam of Iran’s regime.

After establishing Iran’s *medieval* characteristics, and its recent history of “aggression,” Netanyahu next discusses the dangers of a nuclear-capable Iran, and recent efforts to curb Iran’s nuclear aspirations. He then transitions to a description of the international community’s options, and introduces the concept of drawing a *red line* on Iran’s progress in their nuclear enrichment program. Netanyahu explains why a *red line* is necessary, what effect it will have, and where it should be placed. He then associates the wisdom of this plan with Obama’s firm commitment two days earlier as the sagacious course for thwarting a nuclear-armed Iran. Netanyahu then concludes his speech with a description of the future that the international community will enjoy, and the hope of including all people and faiths in that bright and peaceful prospect.
CHAPTER 5

THE SPEECH: CONSTITUTIVE TERMS THAT
“MAKE ROOM”

Having described the structure and themes of the speech, we can now look back through the text and locate specific clusters of terms and characteristics as ascribed in Netanyahu’s construction of each ideology. At the same time that Netanyahu is constituting “modernity” as a novel ideological identity for his audience to occupy, he is also seeking permission for Israel to be included in that identity with those who are being constituted. Therefore, he must continue to make the case throughout the speech that Israel, based on Netanyahu’s own characterization of modernity, is ideologically consubstantial with the nations who accept the characteristics of this identity as their own.

For example, during the initial narrative of Israel’s past, present and future, Netanyahu emphasizes certain Israeli values that are later associated with modernity. One primary parallel he creates hinges on recognizing Israel’s endurance through the Jewish people, which he suggests is evidence of providential approbation. In the first passage he describes elements of their 3,000 year history in the land since King David, in “our eternal capital, Jerusalem.” Here, he assigns “history” the personified role of a judge, which sifts through societies and ultimately determines the fate of both the just and unjust. Throughout history, Israel’s people have “overcome all tyrants who sought their destruction,” and have defied “the laws of history” to return to their homeland (16), while conversely the ideologies of its tyrants and tormentors ultimately “have been discarded by history.”

The opposing ideology of tyrants (soon to be medievalism) is characterized here, and throughout the speech, as belonging to those who “destroy,” “uproot,” “persecute,” “disperse,” and “exterminate.” In comparison, Israel, and thereby those like Israel, endure these “travails” and “overcome.” Key terms that extend this concept are “eternal,” “rooted,” “live on,” “live forever,” “restored,” “rebirth,” and “flourish.” These terms of survival are significant themes in comparing modernity with medievalism, and though some may not appreciate this litany of aphorisms as applied to Israel, Netanyahu captures these
characteristics and distributes them liberally throughout his speech between his country and all others of modernity. This concept enables Netanyahu to construct both his constituted audience and the ethos of Israel simultaneously, while extending the oppositional theme of his argument.

Moreover, the effectiveness of these parallels is heightened by the historical awareness that each nation’s representative brings to their interpretation of the speech. Many countries acknowledge Israel’s difficult history, and can draw various conclusions from the narrative offered. Additionally, several European countries remain sensitive concerning the Holocaust, each nation having its own painful history associated with it—some even remain remorseful for the roles their people played, which will also be a useful theme within the framework of the speech. Furthermore, many Eastern European nations are still recovering from their own national devastation under communism. Other countries remember their subjugation under colonial rule, which stunted their development as a free people for years. Any nation that has had to endure oppression at any time in its history, therefore, is likely to identify with the theme of survival, and view its own people as those who have received a sign of providential approbation. Enduring “history’s” crucible is a powerful, individualized reinforcement of Netanyahu’s oppositional theme.

Netanyahu extends the concept of history’s judgments when he conversely speaks of “medieval forces” to argue that “Ultimately they will fail. Ultimately light will penetrate darkness. We have seen that happen before.” In adopting “we,” Netanyahu includes the international community as a confirming witness to the past, and therefore constructs the relationship between this Israel of modernity (both here and throughout the speech) with those who have been constituted within his speech. In uniting his audience as addressed, he suggests that history ultimately rejects the medieval forces in favor of the forces of modernity, a rhetorical move that bestows history’s approval upon each of them as well as Israel, evinced in their common endurance beyond all oppressors.

This concept of endurance is also significant within the narrative of Israel’s anchor to the “ancient” past—a theme shared by many of its Arab neighbors in that cradle of civilization—while also serving to characterize an adaptable, always forward-looking modern people. In reinforcing Israel’s ties to the ancient past, Netanyahu is aligning with the ancient values of Israel’s neighbors, yet he privileges other rhetorical values that demonstrate
Israel is progressive like the West, not a land ensconced in ancient ways. Like the Renaissance that bridged the Dark Ages and the Enlightenment, Israel in effect embodies the bridge between the ancient and the future, qualifying its people as discerners of both mindsets.

Netanyahu next transitions from the preliminary themes and narrative as focused on Israel, to his introduction of the ideological dichotomy he will use as the framework throughout the speech: “In Israel, the past and the future find common ground. Unfortunately, that is not the case in many other countries. For today, a great battle is being waged between the modern and the medieval” (emphasis added). Within this passage, Netanyahu delineates the stark contrasts of the two ideologies, although he reserves the specific term “ideology” in describing only the medieval (three times) in order to emphasize the term’s characteristic connotation of oppressive fanaticism.

He also introduces the concept that this medieval mindset is at war with modernity by incorporating the terms battle/forces (six times), clash (three times), oppose, and conflict throughout the speech to illustrate the ongoing engagement between the two mindsets. The “medieval forces” are described throughout the speech as seeking to “Rule the earth” through aggression, conquest, subjugation, suppression, supremacy, intolerance, slaughter, killing, and terror: “The forces of medievalism seek a world in which women and minorities are subjugated, in which knowledge is suppressed, in which not life, but death is glorified.” In contrast, the modern forces “seek a bright future in which the rights of all are protected” and “every life is sacred.”

In delineating these two nonsectarian terms, Netanyahu invites the listening member to assume that ideological identification which most closely resembles the mission of the UN (represented in modernity), over the starkly antithetical characteristics that the UN was initially created to guard against, (described as medievalism). Moreover, even among countries that continue to have some of the undesirable elements described, few are likely to profess their intent to remain medieval in this age of global progress since progressivism is a quality specifically enlisted among the goals of the UN body: “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom” (United Nations). Netanyahu thereby poses a dilemma for the UN member (as well as for the listening world in general) that is predisposed to be unsympathetic toward Israel when he describes the values that the majority of the
civilized world would profess publicly, and identifies them with Israel: “Israel stands proudly with the forces of modernity. We protect the rights of all our citizens: men and women, Jews and Arabs, Muslims and Christians—all are equal before the law.”

From here Netanyahu offers a pedigree of Israeli humanitarian accomplishments and other modern qualities, which are extended throughout the speech to those constituted as the people of modernity. These modern qualities are aptly summarized at the end of the speech as the “timeless values” of those who endeavor “to treat all with dignity and compassion, to pursue justice and cherish life and to pray and strive for peace.” In line with these values, several terms are associated with modernity (itself used six times). Netanyahu invites the UN members, as well as the listening international community, to identify with these value terms as their own: progress/future, life/rebirth, compassion/dignity, peace/protect, freedom/liberty, justice/duty, light/enlightenment/bright, rational/reason, know-how/curiosity. Through this process of consubstantiation, Netanyahu constitutes himself (thereby Israel) and his target audience as the enlightened forces of progress, separate and distinguishable from the dark, brute forces of oppression.

These progressive themes stand in stark contrast to Netanyahu’s antithetical depiction of “medieval forces” (used five times). After offering his initial taxonomy of medievalism, Netanyahu deploys it to classify every “fanatic ideology” alluded to in his speech. He first applies this template to the Middle East after asserting, “Israel wants to see a Middle East of progress and peace. We want to see the three great religions that sprang forth from our region—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—coexist in peace and in mutual respect. Yet the medieval forces of radical Islam, whom you just saw storming the American embassies throughout the Middle East, they oppose this.” He describes them as having aspirations of “world conquest,” suggesting, “They want to destroy Israel, Europe, America. They want to extinguish freedom. They want to end the modern world.”

Netanyahu is careful to describe the global impact of this “unquestioning dogma,” asserting that it “is directed first at their fellow Muslims, and then to the Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, secular people, anyone who doesn’t submit to their unforgiving creed.” He then compares their eventual “failure” with that time when “cloistered Europe” came out of “a dark age” and when “ignorance gave way to enlightenment.” This comparison introduces the first of several notorious eras of fanatical oppression that Netanyahu will hail
throughout his speech. These allusions enable him to flesh-out the general characteristics of this transhistorical oppositional force, which he prudently distributes across several ages and socio-political associations. Here, and throughout the speech, he associates specific characteristic terms with these medieval forces: dark ages/darkness/lurking/ignorance, ideology, fanaticism, dogma (the term “holy” is used twice, only in connection with religious fanaticism), irrational, terrorism, death/hate, subjugation/suppression, intolerance, cloistered, tyrant/radical/militant, and aggression/conquest/destroy/extinguish.

As he transitions to the main appeal of his speech, Netanyahu heralds a warning and compares the current medieval force as embodied in Iran to the Nazis of World War II: “...another fanatic ideology bent on world conquest. It went down in flames. But not before it took millions of people with it. Those who opposed fanaticism waited too long to act. In the end they triumphed, but at a horrific cost. My friends, we cannot let that happen again.” Here he alludes to the notorious genocide of his people, the Jews, to draw parallels between that past, and the current threat, and to suggest that just as this litany of dark medieval characteristics applies equally to Iran as to the Nazis, so is the implicit threat the same. Later in the speech, Netanyahu takes advantage of this parallel to remind the General Assembly of some notorious statements: “Iran's rulers repeatedly deny the Holocaust and call for Israel's destruction almost on a daily basis, as they did again this week from the United Nations.” Netanyahu associates the Nazi’s historical terror, which entangled much of the world in its machinations of conquest, with the fanatical ideology of Iran to demonstrate its imminent threat, thus distinguishing between peacekeeping Western nuclear powers, and destructive Iranian aspirations.

In using this example, Netanyahu accomplishes two tasks: (1) he invokes Western guilt for waiting too long to stop what was evidently the Nazi’s fanatical determination to exterminate the Jews during their conquest of Europe; and (2) he suggests they are in danger of relinquishing their modern responsibility concerning Israel (and the world) in repeating the error. After WWII, the world’s horrific realization about these exterminations invoked great sympathy for the Jews after the West’s failure to act at the first Nazi invasion. This response invoked a tacit compensation to these refugees in the UN’s support of reestablishing the Jewish State in Israel. The implication is that if the creation of Israel was compensation for international failures, then the international community has a duty to ensure its survival.
By alluding to the first failure to act (under the watch of the League of Nations), Netanyahu implies that the United Nations is also in jeopardy of failing that duty for which it was expressly formed: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind . . . to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security . . . and ensure that . . . armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest ...” (UN Charter “Preamble”). Since the UN’s decision to permit Israel to reestablish a homeland was largely in response to that most recent horrific attempt at their extermination, Netanyahu is suggesting that its members have a responsibility to treat all similar threats with due regard, or risk that “scourge of war” and “untold sorrow” again.

Netanyahu next catalogs a long list of recent Iranian aggressions against diverse targets around the world, demonstrating the regime’s entrenched medieval mindset. He then suggests, “So I ask you, given this record of Iranian aggression without nuclear weapons, just imagine Iranian aggression with nuclear weapons... Who would be safe anywhere?” Netanyahu then introduces another medieval association in the figure of the Soviet Union, yet dismisses the former tactics that successfully held a Cold War in check: “Deterrence worked with the Soviets, because every time the Soviets faced a choice between their ideology and their survival, they chose their survival. But deterrence may not work with the Iranians once they get nuclear weapons.” He then reminds his audience that even the moderate Muslims recognize that the “brand of radical Islam” that Iran professes promotes self-sacrifice, and that “mutually assured destruction is not a deterrent, it's an inducement.” Netanyahu thus interprets the lessons of history to demonstrate the uniqueness, even within the medieval mindset, of this regime’s current threat to peace.

Having done the rhetorical work of constituting two ideological identities, and redefining Israel as consubstantiated with the new UN subject position of modernity, Netanyahu turns the thrust of this last comment into the central enthymeme of his argument. If Netanyahu has successfully constituted both Israel and his audience as the people of modernity, complete with a transhistorical ideology that characterizes the resisters of oppression, then they must accept the transhistorical responsibility to interfere with the oppositional ideology that again threatens to arise in like aggression. Aristotle’s description of common proofs argues that “... examples from history are more useful in deliberation; for future events will generally be like those of the past” (2.20.7). History’s lessons, with which
they are all familiar, require a united and unflinching response to the current threat: we remember the past, therefore we must act to prevent fanatical aggression before the opportunity expires. This enthymeme emerges as Netanyahu deploys his ideological groundwork to exhort his audience concerning the urgency of the time at hand:

I speak about it now because the hour is getting late, very late. I speak about it now because the Iranian nuclear calendar doesn't take time out for anyone or for anything. I speak about it now because when it comes to the survival of my country, it's not only my right to speak; it's my duty to speak. And I believe that this is the duty of every responsible leader who wants to preserve world peace.

In this last statement, Netanyahu attempts to translate Israel's motives into the motives of the forces of modernity, imbued with all the values and characteristics of the UN Charter, and move his audience to accept his rationale as their own. Kenneth Burke in *A Rhetoric of Motives* describes this appeal process:

Now the basic function of rhetoric, the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents, is certainly not “magical.” If you are in trouble, and call for help, you are no practitioner of primitive magic. You are using the primary resource of human speech in a thoroughly realistic way... A call for help is quite “prejudiced”; it is the most arrant kind of “wishful thinking”; it is not merely descriptive, it is hortatory. It is not just trying to tell how things are, in strictly “scenic” terms; it is trying to move people. A call for help might, of course, include purely scientific statements, or preparations for action, as a person in need might give information about particular dangers to guard against or advantages to exploit in bringing help. But the call, in itself, as such, is not scientific; it is rhetorical... rhetorical language is inducement to action (or to attitude, attitude being an incipient act) (41-42).

Burke’s description summarizes the natural rhetorical process of an appeal for help. However, Israel’s marginalized position among the UN members complicates the ordinary course of this appeal. Perhaps a nation viewed more sympathetically could elicit an audience through unadorned “hortatory” petition. In such a case, simply unpacking the details of the situation, the concerns, the evidence, the options as understood, “preparations for action,” “information,” and “dangers” or “advantages” would suffice in an ordinary rhetorical appeal. All these factors would be expected in a plea for help, and become part of the deliberations of the community petitioned. What is certainly understood by the petitioner, however, is that the community appealed would have an interest in assisting to resolve the crisis. We do not call an ambulance or the fire department preparing to convince these entities why indeed they should help us at all before being assured of their action on our part. We simply call,
assuming their interest, and explain the situation. The “inducement to action” in such situations generally involves deliberating about the desired course and the feasibility of action, not in meriting interest.

Since Netanyahu must first construct a complex ideological framework in order to occupy the same subject position as some of Israel’s detractors, and to redefine the conflict to eliminate intrinsic controversial socio-political or geographic loyalties, he must still translate this construction into both consubstantiality with Israel’s position and empathy with Israel’s plight in order to garner support. Moreover, this appeal for support is not one that specifically requests material or military obligations (“inducement to action”), but simply political assent to Israel’s proposed course of action (“inducement ... to attitude”). Although it is apparent that Israel would like to receive from the US both political and military support, the main appeal is to create within the community a conversation of sober deliberation. Therefore, Netanyahu’s constitutive invention is a necessary step in creating a receptive community to which Israel may appeal, even before the deliberative process over the course of action can begin. Having done so, he begins to build his case for action. Again, the first enthymeme is situated in the perception of exigent circumstances, as cast in the shadow of history.

The next enthymeme Netanyahu deploys stands in transition to the resolution he will ultimately propose for this “clash between modernity and medievalism.” Having established that the international community is obligated to prevent aggression, and that Iran’s actions and ideology are commensurate with the medieval mindset, he asserts that diplomatic measures (as historically evident) are insufficient: “... we must face the truth. Sanctions have not stopped Iran's nuclear program either.” Careful to cite uncontested evidence, Netanyahu quotes International Atomic Energy Agency figures that confirm Iran’s increased nuclear material production. With this arrangement, Netanyahu proposes the solution: “At this late hour, there is only one way to peacefully prevent Iran from getting atomic bombs. That's by placing a clear red line on Iran's nuclear weapons program.” However, in anticipation of his listeners’ skepticism and reticence to endorse an offensive posture, Netanyahu carefully marshals historical evidence in support of the next, cautionary enthymeme, which suggests that, as in the past, only a commitment to action is a deterrent, not a commitment to inaction: “Red lines don't lead to war; red lines prevent war.”
To support this enthymeme, Netanyahu once again draws upon the groundwork laid by his earlier narratives delineating the historical modern forces of progress, and the medieval forces of oppression. As evidence that red lines are peace-keeping measures, he enlists renowned red lines of recent history, contemplated (or not) at crucial moments in time, by respected leaders. These examples include NATO’s charter and red line that kept the peace in Europe for decades, Kennedy’s red line during the Cuban Missile Crisis, the delayed red line that could have confronted Nazi aggression at its first conquest, and the successful red line drawn by the Obama Administration over Iran’s threatened blockade of the Straights of Hormouz, in addition to the prior suggestion that the show of equal strength during the cold war was an implicit red line (of “mutually assured destruction”) that deterred Soviet aggression against the West.

These examples exploit the same dichotomy established by Netanyahu’s constitutive invention in representing transhistorical confrontations between the fanatics who would conquer and destroy, and the moderates who must neutralize their menace for the good of the world. They also enable his audience to focus on the red line, rather than an actual military strike. Aristotle defines the subjects of deliberative speech as “…whatever, by their nature, are within our power and of which the inception lies within us. [As judges] we limit our consideration to the point of discovering what is possible or impossible for us to do” (1.4.3). Familiar with the UN’s reticence to take military action to avert war, Netanyahu intuitively pleads for a symbolic action instead—let’s agree to draw a red line. In recognizing the nature of his audience, he only asks them to deliberate what they can conceive of, for them, as “possible … to do.” In marshaling support, Netanyahu elicits red lines that arguably averted (or could have averted) war, and preserved the peace, rather than those actually leading to military entanglement. These are widely viewed as resolute stands against tyrannical aggression—the implication being that Israel (and hopefully America) will back the threat, if the UN merely endorses the red line.

Netanyahu next describes and proposes a specific point in Iran’s nuclear enrichment process that would trigger a response (presumably military intervention), which he illustrates by drawing a red line on the diagram of a bomb, indicating the failsafe point in their progress. After this display, he initiates his concluding his remarks by describing a vision of hope in the successful elimination of Iran’s nuclear threat. He then reassures his audience of
the soundness of this plan, as alluded to in his other red line examples: “I believe that faced with a clear red line, Iran will back down. This will give more time for sanctions and diplomacy to convince Iran to dismantle its nuclear weapons program altogether.”

Netanyahu next reaffirms the heritage of peace through the “common goal” shared with the President of the United States and “important leaders throughout the world” “of stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program” and endeavoring that “we chart a path forward together.” He finally concludes his speech by reassuring his audience that Israel’s values of modernity need not clash with “tradition.” He is thus able to merge the values of modernity with the values of tradition and bring the speech full circle to the ancient heritage that Israel enjoys, which is commensurate with other Middle Eastern cultures who value the centuries of their geographical heritage and Muslim traditions. He then invites his constituted audience to join Israel in preserving the heritage of all: “Let us commit ourselves today to defend these values so that we can defend our freedom and protect our common civilization.”

Through this final exhortation, the Prime Minister accomplishes several tasks. First, he invites the called of his audience to unite in an attitude of “material action” in response to an express threat, not only from a rogue nation, but from a medieval force that threatens “our common civilization.” Second, he capitalizes on the dichotomy created throughout his speech of the transhistorical clash between modernity and medievalism within this final appeal to “defend ... civilization.” Third, he argues that Israel is consubstantial with the forces of modernity, in its inseparable self-inclusion: “Let us commit ourselves. ...” Therefore, a rejection of Israel as a member of the people of modernity at this juncture would effectively dissolve the existence of the entire constitutive invention. As Charland asserts, “… collective identities forming the basis of rhetorical appeals themselves depend upon rhetoric ... and ‘peoples’ in general, exist only through an ideological discourse that constitutes them” (139). And while Netanyahu’s audience may never adopt the specific term “modernity,” this novel ideological identification likely encapsulates the nonsectarian principles that most UN members profess to value. Any audience member who responds as the addressed of Netanyahu’s description will struggle to completely reject Israel as an intrinsic member since the very identity is a rhetorical construct of that nation’s own representative.
CHAPTER 6

RHETORICAL EFFECTS OF THE SPEECH

The final test of Netanyahu’s rhetorical innovation is in the perceived success and reception of his speech. Carole Blair, in her article “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality,” suggests that “we must ask not just what a text means but, more generally what it does” (23). Netanyahu’s complex set of tasks informed his rhetorical strategies concerning the structure and topics of his speech. If we begin with Netanyahu’s purpose, we recognize that it is a deliberative speech intending to move the listeners to an attitude of receptivity toward his proposed course of action. He does not propose in the speech that the nations join Israel in a preventive strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities, nor does he specify a particular measure to be taken. He simply proposes that the international community agree that a red line should be drawn that will, by implication, trigger a response (presumably Israeli/American supported). The major constraint to the success of his speech is Israel’s marginalized position among the world powers, and particularly among those UN members who would be his immediate audience. To solve this positioning, he invents a new ideological identification as a subject position that both he and his audience can occupy. He proceeds to constitute the people of modernity by “interpellating” them through a process of narration and character description that redefines their competing interests, while continuing to advance Israel as one of its members.

Netanyahu also incorporates his awareness of the socio-political context of his speech on the world stage, as well as the immediate climate set by the previous related speeches: President Obama’s speech two days before, in which he vowed to obstruct Iranian nuclear weapons development, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s provocative speech the following day, on Yom Kippur. Netanyahu exploits the kairos of this ideological dichotomy to instantiate the concepts of modernity and medieval, elevating Israel’s ethos by virtue of President Obama’s association. The most beneficial aspect available in Netanyahu’s rhetorical situation is the exigent circumstances of the UN’s most recent resolution expressing concern over Iran’s nuclear efforts. Ongoing discussions about how to restrain
Iran’s nuclear weapons development are favorable to Netanyahu’s argument in light of the UN’s earlier failed sanctioning policies toward North Korea in their development of nuclear weapons.

However, the central purpose of the Prime Minister’s speech is primarily to avoid the kind of consequences Israel suffered after its prior 1981 preemptive strike on Iraq’s suspected nuclear weapons production facilities. In both cases, the UN was aware of the progress and threat presented by the nation in question; however, in the first case, Israel failed to seek UN sanction before taking action on its own. By redefining the boundaries of his audience’s ideological identification, Netanyahu attempts to breach the point of stasis between the traditionally critical but moderate UN members and Israel (who is perceived as aggressive), and to re-characterize a red line of action as a defense of progress in the form of modernity. Simply the act of seeking UN approval, or assent, prior to an airstrike, removes the strongest objection maintained by the UN which earlier condemned Israel’s singular aggression. If the constitutive association is accepted in some measure, Netanyahu may further succeed in garnering a modicum of material support as well.

The speech embodies Israel’s diplomatic effort to include the UN in its decision-making process, and to prepare the international community for the possibility of a strike by creating a tangible concept in the familiar symbolism of a red line (or line in the sand), which has been commonly used by nations as a trigger point to stave off aggression and preserve sovereignty. Moreover, this concept receives legitimization by the Nobel Peace Prize winning President Obama, who had actually used the term “red line” in connection with Syria’s stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons more than a month prior to Prime Minister Netanyahu’s speech: “Mr. Obama said in response to questions at an impromptu news conference at the White House. ‘We have been very clear to the Assad regime but also to other players on the ground that a red line for us is, we start seeing a whole bunch of weapons moving around or being utilized’” (Landler). While the term raised some unexpected curiosity among political pundits, this may have also inspired confidence in Netanyahu’s use of the term as an opportunity to rely on Obama’s ethos within the community.

In the process of reframing the engagement as a clash between progressive modernism and fanatical medievalism, Netanyahu is offering the UN a plausible motive for
members to tacitly permit Israel to assume the responsibility, and if necessary, to take the military action the international community is reluctant to employ. Although it is evident from exigent circumstances that Israel is attempting to woo US support, Israel is willing to take the lead, and even more, to make sacrifices that Netanyahu argues will ultimately protect the modern world, which views confrontation as innately antithetical to the UN’s progressive character. The underlying argument is a suggestion that if the UN endorses the position, or at least refrains from meaningful condemnation of Israel, Israel will by proxy manage the menacing situation that the UN is at a loss to address beyond monetary measures. This offers members deniable culpability in exchange for a limited investment of faith in Israel’s actionable intelligence and an attitude of permissibility.

Furthermore, I posit that Israel is also offering itself as the true scapegoat, which “its persecutors would alienate from themselves to it their own uncleanness” (Burke, *A Grammar* 406). Aware of the UN’s reticence to act in the event the “red line” is crossed, Israel suggests through this petition and past actions that it is unwilling to accept its own destruction, and is prepared to act to prevent a nuclear Iran if all else fails. Even if they respond to the petition with indifference, UN members understand that they can silently benefit from Israel’s sense of self-preservation, and with little political risk, even evade the more difficult aspects of enforcing its own UN Charter “to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security” with the option to use military force for “the common interest” (United Nations). Unwilling to engage in another military entanglement, UN members may ultimately lay the distasteful option on the head of the marginalized nation of Israel, which is evidently willing to take the lone risk to preserve “the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law” (United Nations) that have been flouted by the ambitious Iranian regime at the peril and instability of surrounding nations.
CHAPTER 7

PERCEPTION AND PERSISTENCE OF THE RHETORICAL MESSAGE

While we may never be able to meaningfully assess the speech’s success, even when circumstances compel an enforcement of the described red line, we can reflect on the media’s immediate characterization of its impact. The overall public response to the speech was essentially tepid. Some criticized Netanyahu’s low-tech “bomb” visual aid, which he used for depicting where the red line should be drawn on Iran’s enrichment progress. However, neither criticism nor support for the speech was especially prevalent in subsequent days, and in the midst of continuing discussions about how to manage the situation, it was primarily a spark for debating the various options, indicating the seriousness with which the proposal was considered in the public forum.

Headlines and images in press reports about Netanyahu’s speech focused on the central “red line” motif and the unsophisticated depiction of a bomb. Newspapers, such as the New York Times, concentrated on this aspect of Netanyahu’s message:

When the prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, drew his red line on a cartoonish diagram of a bomb from the podium of the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday, he intended to illustrate in simple terms the point at which Iran’s uranium enrichment program must be stopped, at least in Israel’s view, to thwart a final sprint to a nuclear weapon. (Kershner and Gladstone)

This and similar responses reflect the public’s mixed assessment of Netanyahu’s speech. While it is evident that the diagram received derision, Netanyahu’s message concerning Iran’s effort to acquire a nuclear weapon was also being seriously deliberated, as is indicated by the acknowledgement that Iran’s enrichment program could culminate in a “sprint to a nuclear weapon,” which is not a phrase borrowed from the speech. Some other comments reveal the general conversation sparked by Netanyahu’s speech:

In a bravura performance at the UN's General Assembly on September 27th, aimed at winning international support for an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, he [Netanyahu] pulled out a picture of a cartoonish bomb intended to show how close the Islamic Republic is to being able to build the real thing. ("A Red Line")
Another article reported, “His frequent calls for the international community to draw a ‘red line’ on Iran's nuclear ambitions have bled into newspaper headlines around the world and come to influence a key debate in the U.S. presidential race,” even though the “cartoon-like bomb in his U.N. speech ... quickly became fodder for jokes” (Woodsome). These media responses seem to mirror the international community’s perception of Netanyahu as an easy political target, giving the momentary “red line” demonstration equal weight with the substance of his message. However, these same reports also generally advanced elements of his argument in recognition that the situation warranted consideration.

Many media reports also emphasized the recent tension between Netanyahu’s push for decisiveness and the Obama administration’s perception of the timeline. They describe Netanyahu’s timeline, based on the IAEA report offered within his speech, as little as several months, while the Obama administration doubts the Iranians would take less than a year beyond that (“A Red Line”). Confident in American intelligence, the administration diffused pre-speech chatter: “We’d almost certainly see it,’ one of Mr. Obama’s top advisers said two weeks ago,” after which “Mr. Netanyahu challenged that assessment in his speech, asserting that the actual assembly of a bomb could be done clandestinely anywhere in Iran” (Gladstone and Sanger). The authors include here a reinforcing quote from Netanyahu’s speech: “Do we want to risk the security of the world on the assumption that we would find in time a small workshop in a country half the size of Europe?” (Gladstone and Sanger). Another agency concluded, “Whether there is room for compromise between Mr. Obama's and Mr. Netanyahu's red lines is questionable” (“A Red Line”).

The media’s overall response suggested that a focal gesture in Netanyahu’s speech was perceived as an attempt to soften this public dispute with the Obama administration: “Mr. Netanyahu’s speech, in which he also thanked President Obama for his warnings to Iran, clearly helped smooth relations between the two leaders, who have differed over the most effective way to thwart what both see as an Iranian nuclear threat” (Kershner and Gladstone). However, the speech was also interpreted as an effort to petition the international community for their support as well, through which “he just urged his audience to do some math based on the public findings of inspectors” (Gladstone and Sanger).

Several articles offered quotes from the speech depicting its central “red line” argument, with characterizations such as “Netanyahu urged the international community to
send a clear signal to Iran, saying, ‘Red lines don't lead to war; red lines prevent war’” (“Netanyahu Draws ‘Red Line’”). It was also seen as an effective metaphor in the wake of ongoing political discussions. Language columnist Ben Zimmer is quoted as explaining, “‘Red line’ is a powerful expression because it resonates in both English and Hebrew...” (qtd. in Woodsome). In this same article, Jonathan Schnell from Yale University is also cited concerning the motif: “. . . by using ‘red line,’ Netanyahu is shaping the political conversation in the United States . . . It's a bold phrase that speaks to convey specificity when no specificity has actually been specified. So it's very good for creating an impression of almost an ultimatum ...”

In examining the reception of Netanyahu’s speech, we want to consider whether any of the constitutive concepts he introduced have been taken up in subsequent discussions, which may help gauge the construct’s success. Jasinski suggests this aspect is essential for constitutive inquiry:

... an author or speaker may desire to alter the meaning of concepts or reshape an idiom, but such a desire may not be shared by the audiences that circulate and rearticulate the linguistic changes. The audience’s actions in this case actualize the constitutive potential of the text, thereby generating extensional force without their necessarily sharing in the intentions of the author or speaker (78).

Since Netanyahu constructed his ideological identities by reconstituting UN terms and values, the question remains whether these identities will be taken up in subsequent conversations. In examining the media discussions soon following the speech, there is little immediate evidence that its constitutive terms were recirculated.

Some media offered a deeper analysis of Netanyahu’s text and touched on concepts closer to the themes of “modernity” versus “medieval,” though at a surface level: “Netanyahu also recounted what he said was Iran's history of sponsoring attacks and providing aid to terrorist groups, the Iranian government's denial of the Holocaust, and calls to destroy Israel” (“Netanyahu Draws ‘Red Line’”); and “Much of Mr. Netanyahu’s speech was devoted to what he described as the existential and increasingly ominous threat that would be posed by a nuclear-armed Iran, which he equated to a nuclear-armed Al Qaeda. He portrayed a Middle East increasingly in the hands of Islamic radicals, many threatening Israel’s existence” (Gladstone and Sanger). Another article quotes a line in Netanyahu’s speech, followed by an interpretation of the implication: ”'Given this record of Iranian aggression without nuclear weapons,’ he said, ‘just imagine Iranian aggression with nuclear weapons.’” Israeli leaders
have warned repeatedly in recent weeks that Israel would carry out a unilateral military strike if Iran got close to making a nuclear bomb” (“Netanyahu Draws ‘Red Line’”).

While none of these media reports offer clear reflections about the value of the constitutive terms invoked within the speech, the perceptions of the underlying message seem to align with the intent of the rhetor. Netanyahu did not ask for, and likely did not expect that his UN counterparts would stop the General Assembly and take a vote concerning his petition. He did, however, succeed in gaining international attention for the major argument and assertions in his speech, and in stimulating seemingly genuine deliberation about policy options for preventing Iran’s evident nuclear weapons aspirations. It certainly stirred discussion among his two most highly valued target audiences: America and Israel.

At home, Netanyahu has enjoyed only mixed support concerning military intervention. Like the UN, the people of Israel are apprehensive about striking out against Iran, and would prefer the peaceful route—particularly if Israel cannot garner backing from their strongest ally, the United States. However, although there is disagreement about how to proceed, there is widespread recognition that Iran is an impending lethal threat. One Israeli journalist described the profound implications of Netanyahu’s appeal as viewed from a Jewish perspective. Uri Avnery writes that his first reaction to Netanyahu’s cartoon prop was “Shame that the supreme elected representative of my country would stoop to such a primitive rhetorical device, bordering on the childish” (17-8). He goes on to describe the scene, which could not be seen in broadcasts, of Netanyahu “speaking to a half-empty chamber” with an audience of “second-grade diplomats.” However, Avnery believed that more than anything, Netanyahu’s true audience was the Jewish people “at home and in the US. This audience was proud of him. He succeeded in touching their deepest emotions.

Here, Avnery draws a profound parallel between Netanyahu’s petition to the UN, and when the Biblical Esther “pleaded the case of the Jews threatened with annihilation,” at the hands of the Persian Empire—ironically the same land that is now Iran. It is evident from this illustration that the significance of today’s modern parallel is not lost on Israelis, and reveals a deep sense of their historical awareness as embodied in Netanyahu’s rhetorical types. Although Avnery concludes his article disheartened that Netanyahu is unlikely to reap the desired support, he nonetheless characterizes the effort as "the Speech of his Life," since it had been widely anticipated by Israelis at that critical juncture. Perhaps this secondary
audience—one that may indeed have to bear the responsibility of action—was the one Netanyahu most wanted to trumpet to the ready. Regarding this additional rhetorical context helps further illuminate the effort Netanyahu invested in creating such a profound, parallel, historical construct in his constitutive invention of the “people of modernity” and the “forces of medievalism.”

As Avnery predicted, any potential support for Netanyahu’s appeal evaporated in the year following his 2012 speech when a new agreement was struck with Iran in a US-led effort that invited the regime to take a small step toward deescalating their enrichment program in exchange for loosened international sanctions. Eager to see an end to the tension, the majority of the Western powers welcomed the opportunity to move closer toward the normalization of relations with Iran. While many remained skeptical, including key Middle East nations, most in the international community were eager for a refreshing break in harsh sanctions, and a renewed effort in diplomacy with the recently elected Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (perceived by many as a moderate). However, apparently recognizing the agreement as a policy shift to “containment,” Netanyahu made a stunning vow in his 2013 address, one year later, to the UN General Assembly. As described by commentators William Kristol and Michael Makovsky, “The most dramatic part of his speech was Netanyahu's declaration: "I want there to be no confusion on this point. Israel will not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons. If Israel is forced to stand alone, Israel will stand alone."

As the authors further characterize the 2013 speech, it is evident that the themes introduced in Netanyahu’s 2012 speech remain central in his view that the current crisis is a continuum of the historical confrontation with “the forces of medievalism.” “Netanyahu, who has a photo of Winston Churchill on his office wall behind his desk, was echoing Churchill's remark on July 14, 1940, during the Battle of Britain: ‘And now it has come to us to stand alone in the breach.’” Kristol and Makovsky go on to extend the comparison, and reinforce these earlier themes:

Netanyahu understands that behind all of this lies a failure of nerve and a collapse of will in much of the West that deserves to be compared to what Churchill faced in the 1930s. . . . Netanyahu said at the U.N. that "in standing alone, Israel will know that we will be defending many, many others."
In another article that refers to Netanyahu’s 2013 speech, Carl Bloice focuses on an apparent realignment of the traditionally adversarial relationships in the Middle East as a result of the perceived threat posed by Iran to the entire region in the wake of the new deal:

Netanyahu himself told the UN, "The dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran and the emergence of other threats in our region have led many of our Arab neighbors to recognize, finally recognize, that Israel is not their enemy. And this affords us the opportunity to overcome the historic animosities and build new relationships, new friendships, new hopes."

In reporting Netanyahu’s assessment, Bloice seems to affirm that traditional political allegiances are altering in response to the perceived Iranian threat. This effect validates Netanyahu’s 2012 themes, which urged members to unify in a common cause and redefine the ideological boundaries that may have traditionally divided them. Perhaps Netanyahu’s call for a united front against the Iranian threat was more feasible than the General Assembly seemed to recognize:

Israel wants to see a Middle East of progress and peace. We want to see the three great religions that sprang forth from our region – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – coexist in peace and in mutual respect. Let us commit ourselves today to defend these values so that we can defend our freedom and protect our common civilization (71).

Evaluating the success of Netanyahu’s constitutive invention may lie outside traditional measures. Although Charland’s research subject, the Québécois, did not ultimately succeed in establishing a long-lasting identity, the campaign did receive a measure of popularity. The terminology of Netanyahu’s theme, however, is not likely to persist, and it remains to be seen how the confrontation between these “people of modernity” and the “forces of medievalism” will ultimately play out, or whether Israel will be a key in that outcome or not. However, it is evident that, at least thus far, the message has resonated in part, and that the essential scheme somewhat superficially, remains.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: EXTENDING CONSTITUTIVE RHETORICAL THEORY

Through the work of Aristotle, Burke, Charland, and many others since, we have come to understand a primary function of rhetoric is to form the socio-political bonds that enable a rhetor to conduct deliberative processes. The rhetor’s effectiveness in establishing this connection by building ethos and deploying meaningful values within the text, therefore, largely determines the success of an argument. Nearly every rhetorical strategy radiates from the axis of identification for generating the persuasive momentum of an argument, and one of these strategies emerges as constitutive rhetoric. Through the process of invoking, defining, and uniting a people with common values and a common history, the constituting rhetor is able to control the terms, motives, and goals of the constructed ideology. If an audience is willingly “interpellated” into the constitutive identity, then the rhetor may succeed in persuading respondents concerning the larger argument.

This paper has expanded on current theories of constitutive rhetoric by suggesting that prior theories describe the essence of vital rhetor-audience relationship tasks, which are again: (1) creating ideological means of identification for the purposes of discovering and exploiting common topics as available means of persuasion (Aristotle); (2) redefining the subject-audience to both exploit and eliminate common lines of division (Burke; Charland); (3) controlling the terms and characteristics of the constituted identities for rhetorical purposes; (Charland) (4) establishing author/speaker ethos as a member of the constituted identity (Leff & Utley); and (5) for effectuating the purpose of moving the audience to attitude or action (Burke). However, what these theories have not considered is the usefulness of constitutive rhetoric as an available means to accomplish all of these functions, as well as two additional tasks.

These additional functions are served through constitutive invention, which seeks to construct a novel pair of ideological identities for the purpose of locating a new subject position that a marginalized rhetor (or group) can favorably occupy within the political
boundaries of the target audience. Through the process of constituting the target audience into a novel ideological, transhistorical identity, the rhetor can install rhetorically convenient characteristics and values that redefine both the audience and the rhetor to reframe the exigent socio-political circumstances and facilitate audience receptivity of the message. Furthermore, inventing a transhistorical antithetical identity imbued with objectionable characteristics enables the rhetor to construct a narrative that embodies the message of the text, control terms and definitions, affirm the constituting ideology, and assign motives concomitant with the rhetor’s argument. Much like Derrida’s “binary oppositions,” the rhetor uses the two ideological identities to starkly define each other (41).

I suggest that constitutive invention is actually the essence of constitutive rhetoric whenever a novel identity is invoked. Any nation or group that organizes for the first time must establish these charters of identity, and invariably sanctify themselves with a name and unique history that distinguishes them from any other. Often such constitutive rhetoric will invoke symbolic terms that define not only who and what the constituting body represents (ideologically and otherwise), but also invoke symbolic terms that define who or what the body is not. Such a process is intuitively necessary.

As already stated, the uniqueness in Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu’s 2012 address to the UN General Assembly is that the entire constitutive invention is an artifice constructed for the singular purpose of “making room” for his country (and thereby his argument) to be received in his attempt to mitigate their marginalized position among their oftentimes political adversaries, and transform them into political peers. This concept extends Leff and Utley’s description of deploying constitutive terms for the purpose of redefining the rhetor within his/her audience, but with the additional burden of inventing constitutive ideologies and terms for a similar, but more complex rhetorical purpose.

The likelihood that the specific terms of Netanyahu’s constitutive invention (modernity and medievalism) will persist beyond the scope of the speech seems doubtful. However, the construct made use of ideologies and motives already constituted within the UN Charter, and in essence, reconstituted those concepts in rhetorically kairotic terms, enabling Netanyahu to create a narrative convenient for the purpose of his petition. It remains to be seen just how much rhetorical rahab Israel made for itself in this endeavor, but having
established these novel identities, they remain an available means of persuasion, should the nation need to return to that well again.
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