

**A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENTS'  
STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESSES POST-1994**

by

Nkosi Robson Siphosihle

2017238375

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Supervisor: Ms R. du Plessis

Co-Supervisor: Professor D. Breshears

## DECLARATION

I, Nkosi Robson, declare that this dissertation, submitted for the Master of Arts in Communication Science degree at the University of the Free State, is my independent work. I further declare that this dissertation has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher education for a degree. I also acknowledge that the copyright is vested in the University of the Free State.



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I am grateful to my supervisors for their invaluable guidance and support, which was a cornerstone of my academic journey. I want to thank my family and friends for being a source of motivation every step of the way. I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to the National Research Foundation for funding my studies.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this scholarly work to my late mother – Dladla Phumzile – whose spirit and memory inspire me to keep trying.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

RDP	–	Reconstruction and Development Plan
CODESA	–	Convention for Democratic South Africa
SONA	–	State of the Nation Address
TRC	–	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
NPD	–	National Development Plan/Programme
MK	–	Umkhonto weSizwe
APLA	–	Azanian People's Liberation Army
ANC	–	African National Congress
PAC	–	Pan Africanist Congress

## ABSTRACT

In South Africa, a State of the Nation Address (SONA) is considered an important speech in the nation's political calendar. As notable and consequential as the SONA is, it remains a limitedly explored research avenue, especially from a dramatic criticism point of view. This dramatic criticism study was conducted to bridge this gap by unveiling and developing an in-depth understanding of the underlying motive behind each democratically elected South African President's first State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid. The study employed a pentadic analysis approach owed to Kenneth Burke (Cholid et al., 2019) to analyse a corpus of four purposively selected State of the Nation Addresses. The findings suggested the pentadic element *Scene* as the motive behind all the analysed State of the Nation Addresses. However, the label for the pentadic element *Scene* slightly varied across the four SONA speeches. Consequently, the study concludes that the underlying motive behind each democratically elected South African President's first State of the Nation Address was to induce cooperation of the SONA audiences in addressing the sociopolitical and economic challenges of the state post-apartheid.

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# CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

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## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Democratic political systems are an environment in which most forms of rhetoric exist (Burke, 2023:17). This is evident in South Africa, where the President takes a public platform to address the nation every year, creating a significant rhetorical *Scene*. Since the election of the first black majority government in 1994, the State of the Nation Address has emerged as the most consequential speech in South Africa's political calendar (Rudwick et al., 2021:247; Man, 2019:89). The significance of this annual speech underscores its prominence in South Africa's post-apartheid rhetorical landscape.

The importance of rhetoric in the State of the Nation Address lies in that SONA presents a platform for the President to perform several crucial tasks. These tasks include directly communicating national affairs to the public and strengthening democracy by being accountable and transparent. Furthermore, the platform allows the President to set a national mood of oneness, deepen national values, and inspire a national cause and patriotism amongst his people (Sikanku, 2022:177). Presidential speeches like SONA make interesting artefacts for scholarship because of their salience in the political life of a country and the influence that these speeches have on people (Navera, 2006:177).

Scholars urge that presidential speeches deserve to be investigated empirically (Sikanku, 2022:176; Navera, 2006:28). However, the literature on the research milieu of South Africa's SONAs shows that the subject remains a limitedly explored research avenue, especially from a rhetorical analysis point of view (Sekhonyane, 2020:13; Salvaleon, 2019:41). The significance of a rhetorical analysis is that it can unveil the meaning of a text (Zheng, 2022:26). The current study delves into the rhetorical intricacies of South Africa's State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid to decipher the underlying motive of this essential presidential communication phenomenon.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

More diverse research methodologies are needed within the scholarship of South Africa's SONAs because the empirical studies available portray a shallowness in comprehending these significant presidential addresses. This is problematic, because it leads to a one-dimensional understanding of the phenomenon. As a result, this study utilises a pentadic analysis method, as it is particularly adept at revealing the underlying rhetorical motives within speeches. This approach aims to provide insights to enhance a comprehension of South Africa's State of the Nation Addresses in the post-apartheid era.

## **1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVE**

The study aims to produce an in-depth understanding of South African Presidents' first State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid from a rhetorical analysis point of view.

The primary objective is as follows:

- To decipher the motive of South African Presidents' first State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid

## **1.4 METHODOLOGY**

Rhetorical analyses, in their outlook, tend to align with the characteristics of critical theory research (Melfi et al., 2021; Pflugfelder, 2015:443). Nevertheless, this study is embedded in the interpretivist research paradigm, because its aim and objective do not complement and satisfy the primary goals of critical theory research like critiquing and exposing power structure for social change and emancipation. Fundamentally, the current study seeks to develop and contribute an in-depth understanding of South Africa's SONA from a rhetorical analysis vantage point, which aligns with the goal of interpretivist research.

The study follows a qualitative approach, because it can allow uncovering the motive of the rhetors within their defined social context (Bernardi, 2021:107). Following the qualitative approach, the study uses a non-probability sampling method called purposive sampling to sample artefacts. According to Siripipattanakul et al (2022:56), purposive

sampling refers to criteria, judgement and characteristics-based sampling of participants. For this study, the data are four State of the Nation Address (SONA) speeches of South Africa, post-apartheid. Only the President's first SONA speeches constitute the sample in this study. To enumerate, the sample included Mandela's 1994-04-27, Mbeki's 1999-06-25, Zuma's 2009-06-03 and Ramaphosa's 2018-02-16 SONA.

Sikanku (2022:176) holds that a SONA is essential because it sets the tone for the President's term of office. In line with this view, the President's first SONA speeches are consequential. As such, purposive sampling is an ideal method to sample the artefacts. The official South African government website (<https://www.gov.za/state-nation-address#1990>) stores the original Presidents' speeches. For this study, they were imported into a Word document for analysis.

The study adopted Kenneth Burke's dramatic criticism as a data analysis method (Provenzano, 2022:107). According to Boscolo (2020:103), this method helps to uncover the motive or underlying agenda of a speaker's message. The pentad is the primary data analysis method in dramatism (Kojongian, 2019). Two steps were followed to perform a pentadic analysis. The first step involves labelling pentadic elements from the SONA speeches. The second step is conducting a pentadic ratio analysis for each SONA speech to identify the dominant pentadic element that defines the rhetorical motive of the studied subject (Erickson, 2022:8).

According to Foss (1989), labelling an artefact can be internal or external. Internal labelling focuses on the content of the artefact. In contrast, external labelling requires the collection of information external to the artefact, like the geographical area of the rhetorical act and the background or history of the rhetor, including any other relevant information. The scholar suggests that an internal approach to pentadic analysis provides deeper insights because it allows the researcher to critique the rhetoric from the perspective and mindset of the rhetor (Foss, 1989). As a result, the study analysed the SONA speeches using an internal approach.

After labelling the pentadic elements, the pentadic ratio analysis was conducted. According to Younus and Kareem (2021:489), a pentadic ratio is a proportion of a pentadic element relative to the other. The pentadic elements are *Act*, *Scene*, *Agent*,

*Agency and Purpose* (Poudyal, 2022: 56). A pentadic ratio helps to identify the dominant pentadic element in the artefact as labelled, which symbolises the rhetor's motive (Xie and Li, 2023: 5). A systematic pairing of each pentadic element with another makes the ratios, allowing for discovering a relationship between the elements as well as how they influence one another (Bourgonjon et al., 2011:93).

According to Knutsen and Knutsen (2020:679), a symbolic act contains 20 possible ratios found by the systematic pairing of pentadic elements. The main task in the pairing process is to discover if, in a ratio, the first pentadic element influences or controls the nature of the second pentadic element it is paired with (Said et al., 2021:447). To do this, the researcher asked questions like "Does the nature of the first element cause the second element to be in a certain way?" and/or "Does the first element affect or determine the way the second element is?" (Crittenden and Crittenden, 2022). After asking these questions, against each one of the 20 ratios, the researcher had to answer with a "yes or no" and sometimes with "unclear" to the questions next to each ratio. The pentadic element with the most "yes" is a dominant element that indicates the rhetor's motive (Lahorgue, 2023:30).

## **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Extant research underscores the need for a deeper understanding of presidential speeches in South Africa, particularly the significance of the motives behind post-apartheid SONA addresses. The utilisation of the dramatisitic criticism approach, precisely the pentadic analysis method, contributes to Communication Science, offering a systematic way to analyse political rhetoric with broader applications in future research. Moreover, the study aids South African universities offering rhetoric courses by showcasing the application of the "pentadic method" to a South African situation. Outside academia, the study's insights can benefit several entities. These include government officials, the office of the President or the Presidency, and civil society.

In South Africa, the State of the Nation Address fundamentally symbolises the official opening of parliament; it communicates the state of the nation and sets out the priorities and objectives of the government for the year ahead (Ngidi et al., 2022:74; Sibiya, 2017:2;

Kotze, 2019:448). Whatever the State of the Nation Address does, it inevitably first concerns government office-bearers. So, the insights yielded by this study will enhance government officials' understanding of the motive of SONA beyond the opening of parliament and communication of State affairs.

The study's insights can benefit the President's office when crafting a State of the Nation Address. The study's presented knowledge of the motive of SONA since 1994 will allow for an understanding of the rhetorical performance of SONA in the past. This knowledge will improve rhetorical communication strategies, inspire critical thinking, and ensure maximum effectiveness of future speeches. Drawing from the insights of this study, public relations officers in the President's office can advise on the crafting of SONA concerning related issues like the reputation management of the President's office.

Finally, civil society can find the insights of this study valuable concerning their role in a democratic society. According to Mlambo et al (2020:1-2), civil society groups like labour unions, faith-based organisations, foundations and professionals are essential in promoting good governance and healthy democracy. So, an in-depth understanding of the motive of SONA in the post-apartheid era can motivate the pursuance of civic engagements related to SONA in South Africa. The following section outlines the organisation or structure of this work.

## **1.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Each chapter plays a significant role in addressing the research objective, aim and problem of the study. The following sections provide an overview of each chapter.

Chapter 1 provided the necessary background information for this study, which led to the research problem and the study's primary objective. The chapter also provided an overview of the methodology and significance of the study.

Chapter 2 delves deep into the literature concerning the subject of the study. The discussion of literature organises itself into sections and subsections. To highlight the main headings, the literature discussion begins with a history of rhetoric. Following this,

the chapter adopts a working definition of the term 'rhetoric' for this study. Then, it portrays a picture of the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa pre-democracy and post-apartheid. After that, the chapter discusses a SONA as a research subject. There is a synthesis of empirical studies on presidential rhetoric in the latter, and then the research gap is stipulated.

Chapter 3 outlines and discusses the design of the research. The discussion begins with the philosophical foundation of the study. After that, the chapter stipulates and discusses qualitative research as the study's approach. Then, the methodology encapsulates purposive sampling, a data collection strategy, and the pentad as a data analysis technique. Towards the end, the chapter clarifies ethical issues.

Chapter 4 presents and describes the study's results of the pentadic analysis of the four SONA speeches. The chapter introduces and explains the findings relative to the research objective and supports the findings using raw data extracted from the analysed speeches.

Chapter 5 discusses and interprets the findings. Here, the chapter connects the findings to the reviewed literature and provides criticism of the President's SONA speeches.

Chapter 6 shows the study's contribution to scholarship and the real world, implications and trends. The chapter also provides recommendations for future research and limitations of the study, before finally concluding the study.

## **1.7 CONCLUSION**

The primary aim of this chapter was to help orientate one to an empirical inquiry focusing on a rhetorical analysis of South African Presidents' State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid. The orientation helped to give an overview of the crucial components comprising this dissertation. The orientation to the study touched on the background information of the matter in question, a statement of the problem, the research objective, the methodology, the significance of the study, and a summary of the chapters of the dissertation. The next chapter provides a nuanced understanding of the state of knowledge on the subject in question.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter seeks to evaluate and provide a comprehensive review of knowledge on presidential rhetoric, with a special focus on the State of the Nation Addresses in South Africa post-apartheid. In doing so, the chapter discusses literature organised in sections and subsections. The discussion begins with exploring the historical relationship between rhetoric and political communication from ancient Western democracy and modern Western democracy. The discussion also provides a working definition of the term “rhetoric”. Then, it offers the evolution of rhetoric as a field of study. After that, the State of the Nation Address is described. Next, the discussion provides a synopsis of the story of South Africa during apartheid and the transition to democracy. Onwards, the discussion provides a synthesis of empirical studies on SONA, ultimately revealing an existing gap in the scholarship of presidential rhetoric. It then presents dramatism as the study's underpinning theoretical framework. In the latter, a paragraph concludes the discussion of the literature.

### **2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RHETORIC AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN ANCIENT WESTERN DEMOCRACY AND MODERN WESTERN DEMOCRACY**

Rhetoric spans two thousand years, dating back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Porto, 2020:19). As old as rhetoric is, Professor Cawood holds that it remains as essential as it has ever been in history (Cawood, 2011:29). History shows that the emergence of democracy in Athens, the city-state of Greece during the 5<sup>th</sup> century, created a space in which rhetoric expanded (Frangakis, 2019). Athens' democracy was a direct democracy in which all citizens were allowed to participate in the decision-making and affairs of the city-state (Tridimas, 2017:210). Landauer (2019:7) claims that if a demos member wanted to influence the decisions and policies of Athens, they had to take a public platform and

persuade the audience. *Demos* is a Greek term referring to an assembly constituted by citizens of Athens, in which, at the time, mostly men participated (Pasquino, 2022:450). This suggests that in ancient democracy and political communication, rhetoric assisted speakers in persuading the audience of their desires.

Unlike ancient democracy in Greece, modern Western democracies have emerged as popularly representative democracies, implying that the politicians stand for those who support them in the assembly (Spier, 2019:222). In these democratic political systems, the basic way in which citizens can participate is through voting (Birchall, 2016:7). As such, leaders are expected to practise a special kind of speech to mobilise people or garner votes, making rhetoric central to such a democratic political system (Beyers, 2016:21; McDermott and Hatemi, 2018:2-3). In essence, this discussion implies a long-existing relationship between rhetoric and political communication in democratic settings. It would be folly to continue using the term 'rhetoric' without providing a definition. As such, the following section provides a working definition of rhetoric for this study.

### **2.3 DEFINING RHETORIC FOR THE STUDY**

Today, rhetoric is often perceived as "mere bombastic words from politicians that lack substance" (Foss et al., 2014:1). Albaladejo (2016:17) claims that rhetoric has multiple definitions; however, what is common amongst them is the idea of communication influencing an audience. There is also a growing narrative that rhetoric is present in various spheres of life, such as in courts and education, to mention a few (Samigova, 2016:46). For example, in courts of law, rhetoric is classified as forensic rhetoric, which is often referred to as oratory performed in legal trials focused on persuading jurors of committed crimes (Pâquet, 2018:73). Henriksen et al. (2020:13) claim that in the context of education, there is also the presence of rhetoric underscored by teachers' use of empathy to create student-centred classrooms and lessons. Therefore, this shows that rhetoric can be conceived in multiple ways, yet all boiling down to the persuasion of an audience. Considering that there are different conceptions of rhetoric in various spheres of life, it becomes crucial to provide a working definition for this study.

This study defines rhetoric as "The use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Bokor, 2014:170). Considering the objective of the present study, this adopted definition of rhetoric is suitable for this study, because it supports the investigation of the motive of South Africa's SONAs from the context of new rhetoric. To elaborate, this definition helps to approach the investigation of the motive of the South African Presidents' SONAs from a contemporary line of thought in rhetoric as a field of study. The adopted definition positions a SONA as a symbolic text that uses language to induce cooperation among people who naturally respond to symbols. From adopting a working definition of rhetoric for this study surfaces a need to understand how rhetoric evolved from classical to new rhetoric to contextualise the present investigation and define its scope.

#### **2.4 THE EVOLUTION OF RHETORIC ACCORDING TO PROMINENT FIGURES IN THE FIELD**

As stated in the preceding section, rhetoric dates back to the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., making it practically impossible to incorporate every historical detail of the evolution of rhetoric in this section. As such, this section focuses on prominent figures in the field. Again, due to the density and richness of the history of rhetoric, this section begins with an infographic representing the sequential evolution of rhetoric according to Gorgias, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian and Kenneth Burke. The infographic below seeks to visualise the evolution of rhetoric and make this section reader friendly.

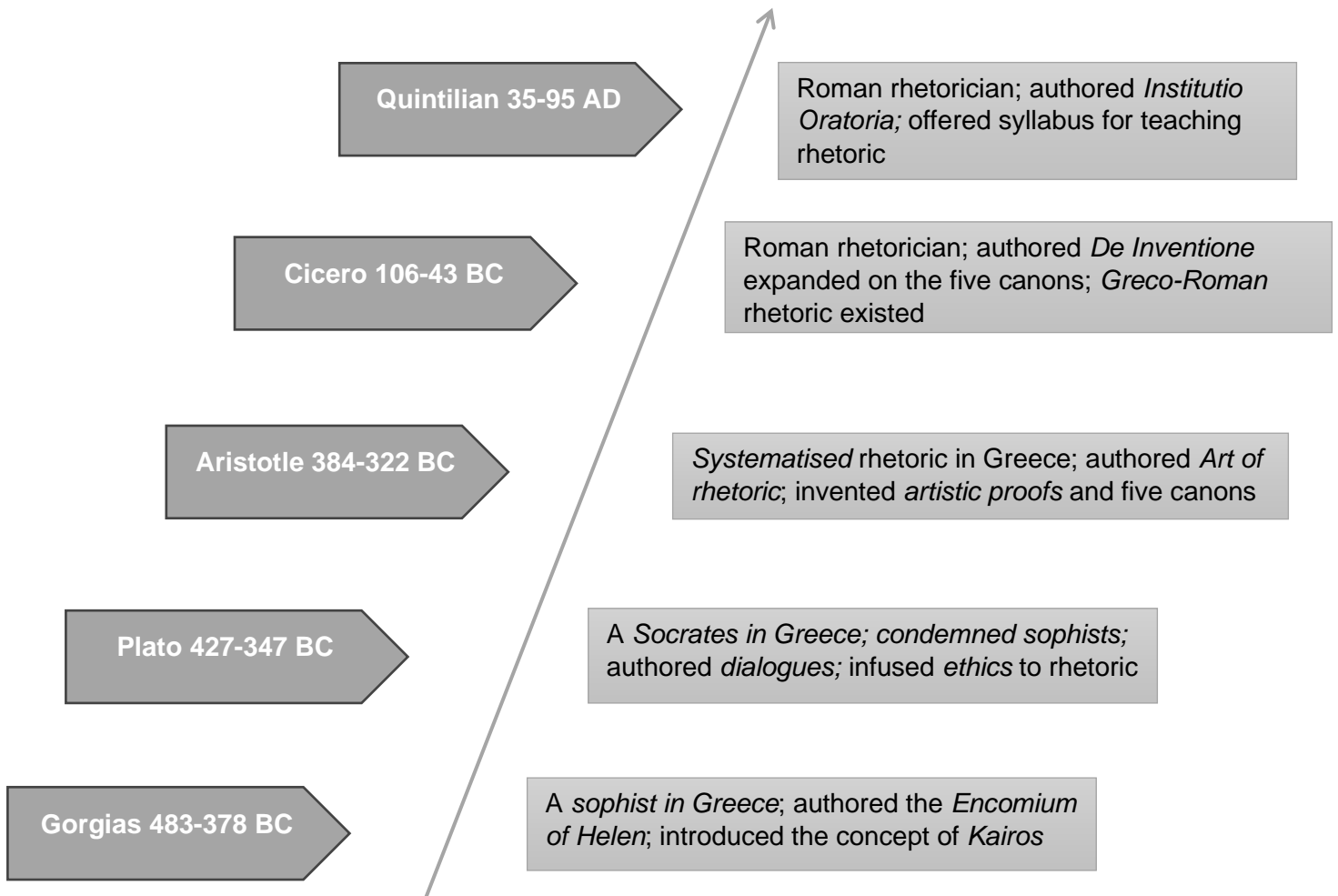


Figure 1: The evolution of classical rhetoric

### 2.4.1 Gorgias (483–378 BC)

Scholars widely credit Ancient Greece as the birthplace of rhetoric (Simonson, 2014:300; Borchers & Hundley, 2018:28). Due to the excessive need and value of eloquent public speaking in Athens' political communication, formal teaching of rhetoric began to exist, first with the Sophists and later with Socrates. The Sophists played a crucial rhetorical role in public speaking during the fifth century in Athens' democracy. The Sophists were paid teachers of rhetoric in Athens (Kelam and Vučić, 2019; Malikova et al., 2019:108). As Figure 1 shows, Gorgias is one of the renowned Sophists in Athens' rhetoric history. The Sophists firmly believed they could transform a weaker argument into a more robust one (Sholarin et al., 2015:179).

Gorgias's *Encomium of Helen*, dating from the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C., is a seminal text in rhetoric (Cullhed, 2015:290). The *Encomium of Helen* is considered an epideictic speech in which, in Gorgias's terms, "the speech praises Helen" (Spatharas, 2019:26). Helen was perceived to be a woman responsible for the eruption of a Trojan war (Köşker, 2016:8). The *Encomium of Helen* is the first attested rhetorical text showcasing the power of rhetoric where Gorgias defended Helen's innocence (Garrison and Peirano, 2019:29). Rountree (2019: 858) argues that as the theorisation and teaching of rhetoric began to gain traction, *Kairos* became necessary to inform the practice of rhetoric. *Kairos*, attributed to Gorgias, refers to "Seizing the opportune moment and choosing arguments for persuasion based on the situation" (Brazdauskaite, 2020:38).

#### **2.4.2 Plato (427-347 BC)**

Plato represents the Socratic rhetorical school of thought (Ballacci, 2018; Suvák, 2017; Moscardini et al., 2022:813). He dedicated his energy to the dialogues condemning Sophists' rhetoric, calling it "foul" and "ugly" (Herrick, 2020:2). On some occasions, calling it a mere "knack" that seeks to flatter and please (Blank, 2014: 15). Plato firmly held that there is a link between logic, ethics, and politics (Vidauskytė, 2022:248). As such, he hoped that his teachings would enable people to govern the city-state of Athens effectively (Mason, 2014:6). His dialogues with the Sophists like *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, among others, portray him as considering Sophists' rhetorical teachings and practices self-serving and unjust, while his rhetoric promoted ethics (Bonet, 2014:794; Irani, 2017:4). Overall, it seems that Sophists like Gorgias were self-proclaimed teachers of flattery rhetoric, whereas Socrates, like Plato, was a critic of Sophists' rhetoric and a proponent of ethical rhetoric.

#### **2.4.3 Aristotle (384–322 BC)**

Bloomquist (2020:57) posits that if Plato is remembered as the most compelling critic in the history of rhetoric, then Aristotle is the first to systematise rhetoric. Aristotle is the most famous and influential classical rhetorician (Frost, 2017). His contribution to rhetoric differs from that of Gorgias and Plato in the sense that Aristotle was the first forefather of rhetoric to offer guidelines for performing an analysis of how political discourses work in

*polis* (Bloomquist, 2020:64), *polis* being a setting where individuals express themselves by speech (Lobos, 2020:87). As an empiricist, Aristotle analyses how and why political language works, instead of creating a manual for political discourses or prescribing ways in which political speech should be crafted and presented (Bloomquist, 2020:64).

His treatise, *The Art of Rhetoric*, introduced the three means of persuasion: logos, ethos and pathos (Yunis, 2018). *Logos* means logical argumentation. *Ethos* speaks to the character of the speaker. *Pathos* represents an emotional appeal to the audience (Dumbrava, 2019:26). These terms have survived the passage of time to the present moment in academia and professions (Hutagalung and Juniwati, 2021:2). Aristotle also categorized rhetoric into deliberative, forensic and epideictic genres. Andersen (2020: 28) postulates that these three genres of rhetoric were defined according to the situation and the audience's role in the *polis*. As such, deliberative speeches refer to political speeches made in an assembly where the rhetor instructs the legislature on state matters in anticipation of the audience's reaction. Forensic speeches were made in the court, where the audience was expected to judge events already occurring. Finally, the epideictic refers to ceremonial speeches such as in funerals or Olympiads where the audience is expected to observe the rhetors' skilfulness in praising or blaming things in the present time (Andersen, 2020:28). Apart from the above-discussed three means of persuasion and classification of rhetorical speeches, Aristotle also devised five canons of rhetoric. The five canons include invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. Borchers and Hundley (2018:50) point out that Aristotle did not necessarily discuss memory, but in the *Retorica ad Herennium*, which is Cicero's work, memory is called the guardian of all rhetoric. The following section focuses on Cicero's contribution to rhetorical theory.

#### **2.4.4 Cicero (106–43 BC)**

According to Jonathan (2020:54-55), Cicero was a professional lawyer who held public offices in Rome and was an esteemed orator. Cicero authored several rhetorical treatises in his life, starting from an early age of his life with *De Inventione* and ultimately, *De Optima Genere Oratorum*, *Topic*, *De Oratore*, *De Fato*, *Paradox Storicorum*, *De Partitione Oratorio* and towards the end of his life *Brutus and Orator* (Brooks, 2017). The title of his famous writing, *De Inventione*, espouses Aristotle's notion of "invention" from the canons,

which speaks to finding the best argumentation for a specific audience. On the latter, his *De Oratore* echoes Aristotle's three means of persuasion: logos, ethos and pathos (Rubinelli, 2017: 20-21). This suggests that he was a proponent of Aristotle. His academic print on the development of rhetoric expands the scope of rhetorical theory, which makes others consider his work Greco-Roman rhetoric. Another vital Roman scholar who contributed to the field of rhetoric is Quintilian, whose work is discussed in the next section.

#### 2.4.4 Quintilian (35–95 AD)

The monumental work *Institutio Oratoria* is considered Quintilian's dominant contribution to rhetoric (Kienpointner, 2017:231). According to Murphy (2016:108), the *Institutio Oratoria* is a massive twelve-volume book of about 700 000 words. In this work, perhaps, the most influential thought to the theoretical development of rhetoric is his notion of the 'good man'. The good man theory is well captured by his conception of rhetoric as the "art of speaking well," as he held that "no man can speak well who is not good himself" (Bokhari, 2022:468). Therefore, he theorised that rhetoric is strongly associated with a moral character. This idea leans towards Plato's conception of rhetoric. It is paramount to highlight that Quintilian's visible mark on the development of rhetoric is also his ability to create a syllabus for teaching rhetoric (Murphy & Wiese, 2016).

## 2.5 THE EMERGENCE OF NEW RHETORIC



Figure 1 (continued): An evolution from classical to new rhetoric

### **2.5.1 Burke (20<sup>th</sup> century)**

Kenneth Burke is one of the most influential rhetoricians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Head, 2016:205). This American rhetorician is widely titled a pioneer of new rhetoric and sometimes 'Aristotle the second' or founding father of the new rhetoric (Zhong, 2017:68; Gao, 2022:299). According to Pålsson (2022:15), new rhetoric refers to the newly developed theories in rhetoric scholarship that are a product of the critique of traditional rhetoric. This includes but is not limited to Neo-Aristotelianism. Bourgonjon et al (2016:733) assert that Burke held that discourse should no longer be investigated as argumentative persuasion as in the past with traditional rhetoric. Instead, discourse must also be studied as a means of meaning-making. Since new rhetoric is epistemological, it allows for investigating what people's discourses mean (Bourgonjon et al., 2016:734). Burke's major contribution to rhetoric is his influential dramatism theory (Branaman, 2016:17).

Thus far, it appears that rhetoric originated as a tool for crafting the most persuasive public speaking speeches for political communication in Greece. However, rhetoric evolved with Plato infusing ethical rhetorical practices into the field. Aristotle then systematised the field; it transversed geographically to Rome, where it expanded into Greco-Roman rhetoric. All these developments represent classical rhetoric. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the field became a communication science research avenue with its trusted methods and theories. A major concern about the history of rhetoric is that it would be naïve to suppose that rhetoric did not exist in other parts of the world like Asia and Africa during the 5<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. So, this study urges rhetoricians in Africa, Asia and other parts of the world to revive the history of rhetoric for comprehensive and multidimensional knowledge and understanding. Fundamentally, the above discussion contextualises the present study in new rhetoric. Next, the section describes the subject of analysis of this study.

## **2.6 DESCRIBING SONA**

Sikanku (2022:177), asserts that besides the communication element SONA helps strengthen democracy by standing as a form of accountability and transparency.

Furthermore, the address can unite the nation, enhance national values, and propel the people toward a national cause and patriotism. Additionally, presidential speeches such as SONA can be used to set political agendas and persuade people. By extension, such presidential speeches can exhibit a nation's perennial problems and solutions to the problems (Miranda and Bringula, 2021:2).

In South Africa, the SONA can be seen as South Africa's version of the United States' State of Union Address and a ritual popularised by the late Nelson Mandela in post-apartheid South Africa (Kotzé, 2019:27). According to South Africa's Parliament, the SONA is considered the President's political statement setting out a social contract seeking to [...] make up the fabric of the Republic of South Africa. The State of the Nation Address is held annually, allowing the South African President to communicate the country's state to the nation. Ideally, it marks the official opening of parliament, but also gives the President a chance to set out the priorities and objectives of the government for the year (Ngidi et al., 2022:74; Sibiyi, 2017:2; Kotzé, 2019:448).



State of the Nation Address (2024)

Figure 2: An infographic of the importance of SONA in South Africa

The SONA is a nationwide broadcasted event on radio, television and the internet (Nanyeni, 2023:4). Therefore, the audience(s) can range from the immediate members of parliament to anyone viewing the broadcast of the State of the Nation Address on the

South African National Television, various radios stations, and other media-related broadcasting means such as social media. The SONA does not occur in a vacuum. So, for in-depth understanding of the motive of South African Presidents' SONAs post-apartheid, the study must explore the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa. The following section provides a snapshot of the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa during apartheid-and-amid democracy.

## **2.7 SOUTH AFRICA DURING APARTHEID AND TRANSITIONING INTO DEMOCRACY**

### **2.7.1 The brief history of South Africa during apartheid**

This section seeks to sketch the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa during apartheid and post-apartheid to gain a deep insight for the analysis of the South African Presidents' SONAs post-apartheid. Beginning with the apartheid era, Clark and Worger (2022) state that the term 'apartheid' emerged in the mid-1930s as a word that symbolises the importance of the Afrikaners and their cultural identity separate from that of others in South Africa. It is an Afrikaans term that translates to "apartness or segregation" (Dubow, 2014:10). Upon the election victory of the National Party led by Dr D.F. Malan in 1948, South Africa witnessed the introduction of apartheid as a supreme law (Rademeyer, 2014:121; Mnkeni-Saurombe and Zimu, 2015:42). Apartheid in South Africa was characterised by unjust statutes like the *Population Registration Act 30 of 1950* (RSA, 1950), *Bantu Authorities Act 68 of 1951* (RSA, 1951), and the *Extension of University Education Act 45 of 1959* (RSA, 1959), to mention a few.

Lelo (2020:269) asserts that the 1960s marked 'Big or Grand Apartheid' in South Africa, which intensified the segregation of South Africa and the cruelty of the police. According to Teeger (2015:29), the 'big or grand apartheid' refers to a period when the apartheid State dictated places where black and white people could reside, the kind of jobs they could apply for, including where as well as when they can travel. Caesar (2015:29) adds that the segregation was visible through the infamous 'whites only' and 'blacks only' signposts on beaches, cinemas, public toilets, government buildings like post offices and clinics.

### **2.7.2 Resistance to the National party and its 'Big or Grand apartheid'**

Resistance to apartheid can be well described by major apartheid abolishment and resistance events such as, among others, the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, the Rivonia Trial between 1963 and 1964, the well-known 1976 student uprising in Soweto, as well as international pressure. The Sharpeville massacre in 1960 is a point in South Africa's resistance to apartheid that is said to have brought to the international stage the evilness of apartheid (Asheeke, 2018:2; Di Stefano and Henaway, 2014). According to Spreen and Monaghan (2016), 21 March marks the day of the tragedy when the apartheid police opened fire on peaceful protestors, which became known as the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. Ayubi (2023:128) sets out that because of the Sharpeville massacre, international outrage compelled the United Nations to consider apartheid in South Africa a crime against humanity. Scholars believe that the massacre in Sharpeville was a turning point in South Africa's approach to anti-apartheid resistance from peaceful campaigns to violent armed resistance symbolised by the formation of the ANC and PAC's military wings known as Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) for the African National Congress (ANC) and the Azanian People's Liberation Army for the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) (Trippe, 2019:22; Mokoena, 2017:1; Thomas, 2021).

According to Andersen (2020: 20), Umkhonto weSizwe was focused on sabotage, while the APLA defended the revolution by killing informants, police and terrorising white people. In 1963, the MK headquarters at Rivonia was raided by the apartheid police. The MK high command, which included Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, and Nelson Mandela, were sentenced to life imprisonment at Robben Island for sabotage attempting to overthrow the apartheid government (Haasbroek, 2016:31). The imprisonment of the ANC leaders left the survival of the ANC to leaders in exile and military training camps outside the country, but the struggle against the oppressive regime did not stop.

The student uprising in 1976 is another popular act of apartheid resistance in South Africa. According to Heffernan et al (2016), on the morning of 16 June 1976, thousands of students confronted the armed police force of the apartheid government in the streets of Soweto, demanding the scrapping of Afrikaans as a language of instruction. The protest involved over 20 000 students, and at least 176 pupils were gunned down by the

apartheid police (Chenoweth and Schock, 2015:443). The harming of young, unarmed students fuelled the international pressure against apartheid. As an illustration, after this incident, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 392 condemning police violence and apartheid (Chenoweth and Schock, 2015:443). The path to democratisation of South Africa is jointly a product of domestic and international anti-apartheid actors. The following section highlights the sunset clause of legalised apartheid and the somewhat miraculous sunrise of democracy in South Africa.

### **2.7.3 The transition from apartheid to democracy**

The late 1980s symbolises an era where formal negotiations between the anti-apartheid parties and F.W. de Klerk's apartheid-led government began to pave the way out of apartheid (Sooryamoorthy and Sooryamoorthy, 2016). The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) became well known as a structure where the multiparty negotiations took place (Myeni, 2016). Although these were multiparty open negotiations, Cyril Ramaphosa appears to have spearheaded much of the negotiations on behalf of the anti-apartheid parties (Ellis, 1998).

History shows that the negotiations were never smooth sailing. According to Mancebo (2019:52) and Mbandlwa and Shezi (2020:347), the negotiations occurred amid political violence, mainly between the ANC and a pro-Zulu regional party called the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). In terms of Kaufman (2012:2), the political violence between 1980 and 1995 in South Africa can be synonymised with civil war, with other parties like the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Party (NP), amongst others, being considered responsible for the death of more than 20 000 people during this period.

Because of the threat posed by the political clashes and intense political violence against the negotiations, independent international actors from the United States, Europe and India helped to facilitate a mediation process leading to successfully signing a memorandum of agreement between the parties in conflict. Washinton Okumu stood as a signatory witness of the conflict resolution on 10 April 1994 (Jacobs, 2021:290). In April of the same year (1994), South Africa had its first non-racial multiparty election, signifying the end of the rule of apartheid and making democracy the future. In this election, the

ANC won overwhelmingly by 62,65%, followed by the NP with 20,39% votes; in third place, the IFP scored 10,54% votes, the Democratic Party got 1,73%, and other ideological parties (liberalism or Christianity) received a less than 2% votes (Chipkin, 2016:217). In the new dispensation, Mandela became the President often titled 'the first black President of South Africa' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015:326). What lay ahead for Mandela was reconciliation and nation-building.

#### **2.7.4 South Africa post-apartheid**

In 1995, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to reconcile the country. Du Toit (2017) claims that South Africans accepted reconciliation, while it was perceived as an acceptance of interdependence and commitment to justice and inclusivity. Nevertheless, data on public opinion surveys from 2003 to 2014 by organisations like the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation reveal that the government's failure to fulfil reparation payments, corruption of the State, as well as denial from white people have led to increased disillusionment when it comes to matters of reconciliation in contemporary South Africa.

Stauffer (2016:306) affirms that the TRC had a positive impact on the national discourse on apartheid, but still, in the present time, paradoxical views between different race groups exist about the value and legitimacy of apartheid, because of an incongruency between the past and the present perceptions around life during apartheid and life after apartheid. While the government sustained public participation in the new dispensation, 30 years later, there is general agreement that public participation has shrunk. Additionally, the TRC's role in social justice is barely clear, as corruption has increased, public service delivery has declined, and the unequal distribution of wealth persists, creating a wide gap between the poor and rich citizens of South Africa (Stauffer, 2016:306).

Another significant development post-apartheid was the 1996 Constitution (RSA, 1996). After 20 years into democracy, Glaser (2016) uses internal criteria (SA constitutional goals like the establishment of a functional democratic state) and external criteria (Ginsburg's four external criteria of constitutional performance) method to assess the

performance of the 1996 worldwide praised constitution over the two decades of its existence. The researcher uses representation, participation, equality and inclusion, pluralism, deliberation, performance on state institutions (executive, parliament, political rights), and challenges faced by the constitution as themes representing the internal performance of the constitution and on the latter Ginsburg representing the performance of the constitution externally.

The study's findings indicate that the elective institutions, in terms of the constitution, do a reasonably good job in the sense that although Africans dominate the government space, other small racial groups are fairly represented. After the 2014 election, women's presence in government rose to 39,5% in the National Assembly. Proportional representation has allowed for the entry of several political parties. Civil society can express 'representative claims' through protests or picketing and, by extension, internal organisational democracy processes (Glaser, 2016).

However, political party funding remains secret, and the voters do not usually know the agenda behind their candidates' sponsors. Voters sometimes must rely on courts and other organs to fight their government's unwelcome decisions. Trade unions' accurate representation of less-skilled workers remains questionable, as is the professionalism of NGOs, since some appear to have become elitists and are out of reach of the grassroots communities (Glaser, 2016). Finally, unrest, where citizens burn tyres and public property to grab their representatives' attention, demonstrates that citizens feel inadequately represented.

Regarding the Ginsburg criteria, the findings show that the constitution's legitimacy is questioned as ANC politicians, including left political organisations, share sentiments that the Constitution (RSA, 1996) might have been an unfortunate historical compromise rather than a progressive settlement. While others believe Mandela sold them out, others assert that the state is on the brink of collapse with the alarming violent student protests, corruption, and a suffering economy. Overall, based on the above findings and substantial scholarly evidence, the researcher concludes that since the availability of the 1996 Constitution, South Africa possesses a functional democracy; however, one that is facing serious challenges (Glaser, 2016).

After the global financial crisis, increased corruption, infrastructure deterioration, and state under-capacitation; a National Development Programme (NDP) was put in place to address these pressing issues in South Africa (Fourie, 2017). Given the presence of the NDP, research points out that South Africa has not achieved economic development according to Amartya Sen's framework. While the first eight years into democracy have established hopeful grounds for development, the later fourteen years have shown the opposite, yet not a terrible situation. Even though, globally, the economy has had poor performances and the South African policy environment weakened, the economy continued to move at a positive per capita rate, but this still left those at the bottom of the income distribution unable to move up (Fourie, 2017).

### **2.7.5 Highlights: South Africa's sociopolitical and economic life during apartheid and after**

This section has given a snapshot of South Africa's sociopolitical and economic life during and post-apartheid. In 1948, the country witnessed the introduction of apartheid, which unjustly governed the country according to race. Resistance to apartheid took away many people's lives. Political violence and clashes during the negotiations for democracy almost brought South Africa to civil war. International actors helped to mediate the conflict, and the 1994 election brought democracy. To build the nation and make democracy work, the TRC, a Constitution, and an NDP were put in place post-apartheid in South Africa. The intricacies of a SONA pertinent to its motive post-apartheid remain an avenue the present study seeks to explore empirically. As such, the above insights about the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa will be significant in the meaning-making of the motive of SONAs post-apartheid. The following section assesses empirical studies of SONAs for a deeper understanding of the subject.

## **2.8 A REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

### **2.8.1 Orientation to the review of empirical studies**

The subject of the current investigation, SONAs, is a common presidential communication phenomenon in some world democracies. This section seeks to find a pulse of the state of knowledge on the subject and show the existing void in the body of knowledge.

Consequently, this will show how the current investigation contributes to the body of knowledge on the subject. In doing so, the following sections take one on a journey of learning about analyses of SONAs internationally, within the continent of Africa, and eventually within South Africa.

### ***2.8.1.1 Analyses of SONAs abroad: Looking to the West***

Rhetoric scholars agree that politicians aspire to persuade their audience for political goals. Cabrejas Peñuelas analysed President Obama's 2015 State of the Union Address and Spain's Prime Minister Rajoy's 2015 State of the Nation Address (Cabrejas Peñuelas, 2018). Using metonymy as an analytical tool, the analyst found that the Presidents ideologically utilised metonymies in their addresses to convince their audience of their points of view on economic matters within their nations, respectively (Cabrejas Peñuelas, 2018). According to Cendekiaputri et al (2021:178), metonymy is a figurative language that refers to something using the name of something similar to it.

In 2023, Cabrejas-Peñuelas further scrutinised the same speeches using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a tool of analysis. In this recent analysis, the researcher sought to uncover Obama and Rajoy's employed transitivity patterns in the speeches and how they culminate to illustrate both presidents' ideological positions for persuasion in their 2015 State of the Union/Nation Addresses. The findings suggest that the two presidents used distinctively transitivity. Obama focused on desiderative mental clauses such as 'I want to work with this congress' and 'we could reduce' to help him express his goals for the middleclass, garner their votes, and persuade the congress of his policies.

In contrast, Rajoy predominantly employed relationally attributive clauses like 'we were [then would put a relational attribute].' In addition, Rajoy supplemented the point with statistics such as that 'spending has increased because more pensioners today exist than in the past'. Moreover, details of typical examples supported his statements. This relational attribution process in his speech made him consider himself a sincere and honest individual, which helped him garner votes (Cabrejas-Peñuelas, 2023:146).

The above comparative analysis of Obama and Rajoy's State of the Union/Nation Addresses shows that the end goal of these forms of presidential addresses is to convince

the audience to buy into the presidents' ideas and standpoint regarding state matters, like the economy. Rhetoric plays a vital role in these speeches for the Presidents to persuade the audience of their desires. These studies are helpful because they reveal the different techniques Presidents use to persuade an audience, like transitivity and metonymies. The following section takes one to an analysis of a SONA in an Asian country that partially exhibits South Africa's sociopolitical life after apartheid, the Philippines. The Philippines endured many years of colonialism under the colonial rule of Spain and later America (Perez, 2022:5). This makes the Philippines a fascinating example to gain insights about SONAs for understanding the case of South Africa.

### ***2.8.1.2 SONA analyses abroad: looking to the East***

A longitudinal study scrutinised the Presidents of the Philippines' State of the Nation Addresses between 1973 and 2015 (에머슨, 2018). The results indicate that during martial law, the Philippines' SONAs focused significantly on national rather than foreign and economic policies. In parallel, governance values like the representation system were high due to the President's emphasis on the legislative council and assembly. After martial law, domestic policies constituted two-thirds of the policies mentioned in the SONA speeches. On governance values, post-martial law, check and balance, and separation of powers were prominent governance values in the SONA speeches. Value for electoral systems came least with other values (에머슨, 2018).

Another longitudinal study of SONA speeches of the Philippine Presidents between 1987 and 2019 aimed at examining tourism strategic directions and programmes of action in the speeches (Capistrano and Notorio, 2021). Employing a content analysis method to 33 SONA speeches, the study yielded tourism policy, development, and the probable future of tourism as central themes of the analysis. Merging these themes resulted in a model that could guide and influence future tourism plans and programmes in the Philippines (Capistrano and Notorio, 2021). The above longitudinal studies of the Philippines SONA speeches underscore that over time, SONAs can be vital for research in understanding the past and present and shaping the future of a state. This signals that the current investigation is likely to discover the motive of South African SONA speeches

post-apartheid, because these speeches are certainly salient about the sociopolitical and economic life of a state and the ideologies of the President.

To uncover the meaning in experiential, interpersonal and textual functions of President Rodrigo Duterte's 2016 and 2017 SONA speeches, Dr Rolly Salvaleon utilised a critical discourse analytical tool (Salvaleon, 2018:140). The research findings show that in terms of the experiential function, Duterte relied heavily on mental processes to cut his message across regarding his plans, accomplishments and development in many areas of government. For the interpersonal function, the results suggest that the President's usage of modal verbs, pronouns and tenses in the speech appeared effective in setting out his attitude regarding his propositions in the speeches. Lastly, Duterte's addresses appear accurate, logical and coherent in the textual function. Based on these findings, the study concludes that ideology is central to linguistic choices in a President's political discourse (Salvaleon, 2018:140).

De Pano (2021) investigated President Duterte's four SONA speeches delivered between 2016 and 2019 to show how the Philippine President used the Aristotelian ethos dimension, namely competence, trustworthiness and goodwill in the speeches. These ethos dimensions represent experience, authority, and expertise for competence, stateliness, upholding of justice, and honesty for trustworthiness. Using content analysis to analyse the selected speeches, the researcher found that President Duterte used competence, trustworthiness and goodwill slightly equally in the speeches. However, a significant association exists between competence and trustworthiness (De Pano, 2021:176-182).

In another study, transitivity system processes helped to identify the significant process types and their participant roles in President Duterte's 2016, 2017 and 2018 SONA speeches (Salvaleon, 2019). Furthermore, it also uncovered the communicative implications of the process types in helping Duterte communicate his message. The study used a mixed-methods approach and found that Duterte overwhelmingly relied on material process type in all the speeches. The material process type enabled him to account for and cement his tangible action and development plans for his nation. The verbal process type came second, helping him to emphasise declarations and directives,

emphasising his humorous and capitative oratory. Regarding the relational process type, he positioned himself as the person who would spearhead the development of the Philippines (Salvaleon, 2019).

Studying Duterte's first State of the Nation Address using a transitivity system, a researcher contradicts Salvaleon's above findings. While Salvaleon found that President Duterte relied heavily and best relied on the material process type, another study finds that Duterte relied heavily on the mental process. In contrast, the material process type came secondary (Imperial, 2021). Since the studies utilised the same analytical tool to investigate the same phenomenon, it would be necessary for other researchers to interrogate this inconsistency regarding Duterte's SONA speeches further. Despite the contradictions, these studies offer valuable insights for the current investigation's understanding of presidential rhetoric in speeches like SONA.

Another research study investigated Duterte's 2016 and 2021 State of the Nation Addresses using an illocutionary speech act theory to see how the President used illocutionary acts and what they meant in the speech. The theory has five illocutionary acts: directive, declarative, representative, expressive and commissive (Lupas and Muico, 2022). Through a descriptive content analysis, the results of the study revealed 1 205 utterances in Duterte's SONA speeches and the representative illocutionary act having been used overwhelmingly by 61,95%, followed by the declarative act by 0,21% and the others with a minor contribution to the speeches. Incorporating these illocutionary acts means that Duterte sought to engage his government with the people and persuade his government to execute his plan. The results concluded that Duterte's language choice and illocutionary acts are the main factors determining the speech's influence and the audience's reaction (Lupas and Muico, 2022).

Earlier, Salvaleon (2018:140) pointed out that ideology influences the President's linguistic choices. Therefore, considering Lupas and Muico's conclusion above, it seems that ideology propels the President's linguistic choice, which becomes the linguistic and rhetorical strategy the President deems will drive the audience towards his desired goal. Indeed, from as far as ancient Greece's understanding of rhetoric, a rhetor deliberately used rhetoric and language tactics to persuade an audience towards his desired goal.

The explanation of why and how Duterte employs specific linguistic and rhetorical tools in SONA needs to go beyond being generic to offering specificity. It would be vital for scholars to begin offering context-specific explanations for a President's use of rhetorical devices in SONA. This step will shift society's old, generic blanket approach to understanding rhetoric in Presidential addresses to a case- and context-specific understanding.

Another study analysed presuppositions, what they trigger, and their function in Duterte's 5th State of the Nation Address. According to Ariyanti et al. (2020:903), presuppositions entail what a speaker assumes the recipient knows what will be said. The study uses a mixed-methods approach and a critical discourse analysis approach. Findings indicate that Duterte frequently used the lexical presupposition, and it triggered judging, implicative, and iterative verbs in the speech. In conclusion, the study urges that studying presuppositions in SONA enables an understanding of a president's communication, especially in states where failed rhetoric resembles failed states (Murillo and Yeh, 2021).

The above studies show that a SONA is a widely studied presidential communication phenomenon in the Philippines. The researchers approach it from various angles, offering a multi-dimensional understanding of the phenomenon in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the current study's approach (dramatism) remains foreign to the Philippines' methodology repertoires for analysing SONAs. Now, dramatism is unique in that it can unveil the motive of the President's speech (Boscolo, 2020:109). By applying dramatism to a President's SONA speech, researchers can move beyond testing a specific rhetorical tool's usage to what that means and why the Presidents do so.

Thus far, it is clear from the above studies that analysis of SONA is a prevalent research endeavour outside South Africa, especially in the Philippines. The research on SONAs from abroad shows that SONA is a crucial platform that presidents use to persuade an audience towards their desired point of view. The rhetorical methods or tools presidents use to convince people range from transitivity, metonymies, Aristotelian artistic proofs, illocutionary types and presuppositions, to mention a few (Lupas and Muico, 2022; Salvaleon, 2019; Cabrejas Peñuelas, 2018; De Pano, 2021).

These studies are crucial for understanding presidential rhetoric. However, most of them are testing how a President employed or to what extent the President used a specific rhetorical tool to persuade an audience. If not, they try to uncover a President's ideological position by analysing the policies in the speeches (에머슨, 2018; Capistrano and Notorio, 2021). It would be interesting to see more research attending to the dramatic question of "What is involved when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?" (Aniskova, 2020:12). This question will enable researchers to unveil the motive of presidents' speeches to make society aware of what is involved in SONAs and why. The following section tries to find the state of research on SONAs in Africa.

### ***2.8.1.3 SONA analyses in Africa***

Just as outside the context of Africa, the academic trend of analysing SONAs to uncover embedded ideologies and the extent to which rhetorical or linguistic tools are used in the President's SONA speeches is also visible in Africa. As an illustration, a critical discourse analysis study of President Mahama Dramani John's 2013 State of the Nation Address explored the President's embedded ideologies and linguistic tools (Fenyi and Sapaty, 2021). The results reveal that President Mahama utilised pronouns, metaphors and biblical allusions for embedding ideologies of economic difficulty, positive self-representation, urgency, power relations and human values in the 2013 SONA (Fenyi and Sapaty, 2021). Positive self-representation was also found in a critical discourse analysis of the 2018 SONA of President Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana (Logogye, 2021).

Adu (2015) examined epistemic modality within President John Agyekum Kufour's 2001 and 2008 SONA speeches. Epistemic modality refers to the certainty concerning the truthfulness of the speaker's message (Adu, 2015:2-3). The study's findings reveal that President John Agyekum Kufour relied heavily on modal adjuncts, with modal auxiliaries, to express the certainty of the message in the analysed speeches. The study claims that because the President was confident and convinced of the message of the State of the Nation Address, he could appear confident, knowledgeable and trustworthy (Adu, 2015). Although this study tunes to the trajectory of SONA analyses, which tests the President's usage of a specific linguistic method for persuasion, it is immaculate because it reveals

that certainty in the President's SONA message plays a vital role in persuading an audience.

Still in Ghana, a study explored the President's 2017 State of the Nation Address from both a political discourse and a linguistic point of view. From the political discourse angle, the research sought to uncover how the President employed linguistic devices of commissives (threats, promises and pledges) as espoused by Searle's Speech Act Theory of 1969 (Partey et al., 2018). Results suggest that the President frequently relied on pledges by 45%, on promises by 40%, and the latter by 15%. The study concludes that the President uses pledges extensively in this speech as a way of committing to the people and substantiating his political stance, which overall aims at persuading the audience of his ability to fulfil his vision and mission as a State leader (Partey et al., 2018).

A social psychology framework was applied to analyse President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's usage of linguistic devices like lexico-semantic, syntactic, phonologic, graphological and pragmatic devices in the 2017 SONA (Agbesi et al., 2023). The results suggest that the President's rhetorical language is simple while abstract. It is so because he sought to establish convergence with the audience. Consistent with Partey et al. (2018) conclusion, the study claims that the linguistic choices made by the President in the speech seek to convince the audience of the President's capability of materialising his promises (Agbesi et al., 2023).

According to Manu et al. (2023), presuppositions are an important linguistic element of presidential communication because they can influence the audience's interpretations and biases toward an event of presidential communication. Studying presuppositions in President Akufo-Addo's 2022 State of the Nation Address according to Yule and Saeed's framework of presuppositions, the researchers found that utilisation of presuppositions in the speech played an essential role in setting the President's message as factual, authentic, and truthful making the audience susceptible to the President's speech (Manu et al., 2023). This perspective is progressive and paramount to understanding presidential communication. It suggests that assumptions are also a rhetorical avenue presidents can explore and use to persuade their SONA audiences.

Recently, cutting-edge research on SONA in Ghana has employed textual analysis designs to analyse. Sikanku's research contends that most SONA analyses are linguistic research in Ghana, and there seems to be little focus on communication research regarding SONA in Ghana. In bridging this gap, the scholar investigated the topical areas of President Akufo-Addo's 2019 SONA and recurring themes following Shogan's framework (Sikanku, 2022:184-186). The findings show that social issues like housing, sanitation, and social amenities were topical themes of the speech. Political matters were second, while economic issues held the most minor emphasis (Sikanku, 2022:184-186). It is good that, recently, an African scholar has seen the need for a multidisciplinary and multidimensional understanding of SONA for our comprehensive knowledge of the subject. The current investigation has heeded Sikanku's lament and will contribute a rhetorical perspective for methodological, theoretical, and practical purposes.

The same scholars' SONA analysis interest and scholarship trend from the West (USA and Spain), East (Philippines), and West Africa (Ghana) prevail in the Southern part of Africa. In Namibia, a recent SONA analysis sought to show how Aristotelian and charismatic leadership theory influenced President Hage Geingob's rhetorical choices in the 2021 SONA to achieve his desires (Nanyeni, 2023). The results point out that the logos, ethos, and pathos rhetorical devices influence the President's speech, enabling him to demonstrate leadership by advancing democracy and unity and ascertaining security and stability amid the COVID-19 pandemic period (Nanyeni, 2023). Undoubtedly, researchers must continue showing from multiple angles how presidents use linguistic and rhetorical tools in their SONA speeches to persuade their audiences. In parallel, there is a need for research perspectives beyond investigating the usage of linguistic and rhetorical tools in a SONA speech. The new frontier for Communication scholars must be new rhetoric, systematically investigating SONA speeches to generate non-generic knowledge about the purpose of rhetoric in presidential speeches.

#### ***2.8.1.4 SONA analyses in South Africa***

Literature on SONA analyses in South Africa shows that a critical discourse analysis approach remains the most popular method of analysing South African SONAs. To illustrate, a recent study of President Nelson Mandela's 1994 and 1999 SONAs utilised

the critical discourse analysis approach to uncover the President's employed persuasion techniques and political ideologies embedded in the speeches (Ngidi et al., 2022:87). The findings revealed that President Mandela frequently relied on the pronoun "we" as a persuasion technique and partly used linguistic persuasion techniques like rhetorical questions, tenses, and vagueness to persuade South Africans of unity. Combining these strategies, the President predominantly portrayed the restoration of human dignity for all as his political ideology. Other political ideologies included individual freedom, caring for the poor, unity, a better life for all, and overcoming fear (Ngidi et al., 2022:87).

Investigating President Mandela's successor (Thabo Mbeki's) 2007 SONA, a critical discourse analysis study sought to uncover discursive strategies employed in the speech and to what extent the speech reflected South Africa's nation-building goal (Chaka and Adanlawo, 2023). The findings suggest that President Mbeki also relied heavily on pronouns like "we" to develop a strong emotional connection with the audience. The President did so to inspire national identity, social relations, and national cohesion with the people of South Africa; economic stabilisation enjoyed the least emphasis in the speech (Chaka and Adanlawo, 2023). Concerning the "economy dynamic" in South Africa's SONA, if alluding to Sikanku's finding of the analysis of Ghana's 2019 SONA, it appears that the economy dynamic is least stressed in African States' SONAs (Sikanku, 2022:184-186). Perhaps the African States are immensely overwhelmed by sociopolitical matters that undermine their African values and, therefore, seek the State leaders' immediate attention.

The trend of analysing South African SONA using a critical discourse analysis approach is also apparent in President Jacob Zuma's 2009–2014 SONA analysis (Koba, 2020). Koba (2020) investigated Zuma's 2009 and 2014 SONAs from a transitivity vantage point. The study reveals that Zuma predominantly relied on material processes to stress the achievements and develop a leadership reputation. The study concluded that his skilful communication influenced how the audience perceive his government and what it has achieved.

Recently, another study analysed President Cyril Ramaphosa's 2018 and 2019 SONAs using the critical discourse analysis approach (Sekhonyane, 2020). The study aimed to

unearth the rhetorical strategies employed in the speeches to persuade the audience of the President's desires. The findings show that President Ramaphosa used democratic rhetoric to decentralise power and ensure that everyone is taken as part and parcel of building South Africa and instead of emphasising policies, the President concentrated on political matters at hand when assuming power and using Mandela's legacy to persuade people of his ideal South Africa as a President (Sekhonyane, 2020).

#### **2.8.1.5 Research gap**

Thus far, it appears that SONAs have been studied from multiple linguistic and rhetorical angles from the West, East, West Africa and Southern parts of Africa. A major concern for the current investigation is that many of these studies only examine the usage of a linguistic or rhetorical technique or the extent to which it is employed in a speech. If not, the studies uncover embedded ideologies in the speeches. Moreover, many of the studies generically claim that the President employs linguistic or rhetorical strategies in a speech to persuade the audience of their desires. The current investigation urges scholars to go beyond examining the usage of linguistic and rhetorical strategies in presidential speeches to account for why the linguistic/rhetorical technique is employed the way it is discovered in the speeches. An answer to this question should not be generic but specific and contextual.

Considering the above-synthesised studies, the field of presidential rhetoric remains underdeveloped in Africa, and there is a need to raise the status bar of rhetoric in Africa, because rhetoric can be used by politicians to either pursue ethical or unethical ends. Society's knowledge of rhetoric can ensure less susceptibility to unethical rhetoric, build sophisticated thinkers and capacitated individuals able to discern politicians' rhetorical statements when necessary.

In the context of South Africa, the above synthesis of empirical studies shows that the limitedly available studies of SONAs rely only on a critical discourse analysis approach to analyse South African SONAs. This presents a need for methodological variation in the scholarship of South African SONAs. To the researcher's knowledge, the current investigation is the first of its kind to use dramatism as a rhetorical analysis framework for understanding South Africa's SONAs, post-apartheid. The dramatism brings specificity,

multi-dimensionality and a comprehensive understanding of South Africa's SONAs to the greater scholarship of Presidential rhetoric.

## **2.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.9.1 An introduction to dramatism**

This section presents a theoretical framework to understand the matter under investigation. In this regard, the investigation frames the phenomenon through the lense of dramatism theory developed by Kenneth Burke. According to Rutten and Soetaert (2014:332), dramatism can be defined as a theoretical understanding of human motives through terms borrowed from the study of drama. Dunn (2018:75) postulates that the dramatism theory of Kenneth Burke is popularly known for uncovering the motives behind rhetorical artefacts. Lambert and Orbe (2019:129) agree that Burke offered the theory to help understand the motives embroiled in language and thoughts as modes of action that pursue certain goals. Therefore, this warrants the application of dramatism as a suitable theory to understand the phenomenon under study. Through dramatism theory, the motive of SONA will be unveiled. The subsequent section discusses the assumptions and central concepts of the theory.

### **2.9.2 Dramatism tenets**

The theory's underlying assumption is that "life is drama" (Järvinen and Miller, 2014:881). Escoffery (1996:29) also holds that life is drama, suggesting that people's actions are symbolic. In Burke's terms, people are literary symbols using animals, and their action is rooted in language (Rutten and Soetaert, 2014:607). As such, the theorist suggests that studying a language can result in discovering the motive(s) of humans since language is theorised in this context as a mode of action rather than just a mode of communication (Järvinen and Miller, 2014). To fully understand the proposition of dramatism theory, three essential concepts need to be discussed: identification, the pentad and the guilt-redemption cycle.

### 2.9.3 Identification

According to Widiyari (2022:354), identification refers to existing commonalities between the speaker and audience, which Burke termed *substance*. The substance may involve physical characteristics, experiences, beliefs, talent, friendship, attitudes and occupation (Tendean, 2022:239). The more similar or familiar a speaker is with the audience, the greater the identification and the more probable that persuasion will occur (Widiyari, 2022; Tendean, 2022). As such, Burke holds that there is no persuasion without identification (Lambert and Orbe, 2019:137; Tendean, 2022:238).

### 2.9.4 The pentad

The dramatism theory has an analytical tool that Burke initially called a “pentad.” Cholid et al. (2019:256) posit that it is named a pentad because it comprises five elements. These pentadic elements are *Act*, *Scene*, *Agent*, *Agency*, as well as *Purpose* (Peterson, 2017:8). It remains a debate among scholars as to whether Burke added a sixth element called “attitude” to the pentad (Snee et al., 2023:727). It is paramount to note that a variety of scholars and even recent research do cite the idea that Burke later developed the method with “attitude” as the sixth term or element, making the pentad a hexad (Rutten and Soetaert, 2014:610; Poudyal, 2021:7; Rangoonwala, 2019). However, as shown above, the debate continues. Tendean (2022:240) maintains that the pentad remains adequate for investigating a text or speech. Considering Tendean's stance, the researcher sticks to the pentad rather than a hexad for this study. In his theory, Burke describes each pentadic element as shown in the table below, summarising the description of each element.

Table 1: A table describing the pentadic elements

The name of the pentadic element	Description of the element
1. Act	Refers to what was done
2. Agent	Is the individual performing the act
3. Agency	Refers to the means or tool(s) used to perform the act
4. Scene	Is the context in which the act occurred
5. Purpose	Is or are the reason(s) for doing the act

(Rountree and Rountree, 2015:353; Bates, 2016:323).

According to Kneupper (1979:133), a systematic pairing of the above pentadic elements results in twenty possible ratios that can yield the motive of the rhetor. The systematic pairing of the pentadic elements will be discussed thoroughly in the methodology section, because the study adopts the pentad as its data analysis method. To this point, it is essential to point out that dramatism serves a dual purpose as a theory and a method (Snee et al., 2023:726). The pentadic part of the theory can be used as a method for data analysis (Lemming, 2014). That is why further discussion is reserved for the methodology section in the upcoming research design chapter.

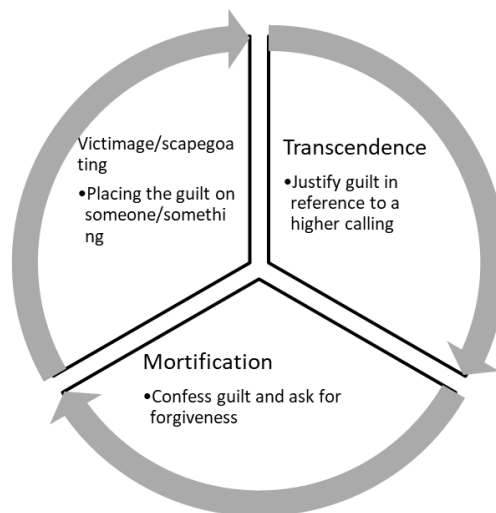


Figure 3: The Guilt-redemption Cycle

(Source: Billings, 2015:6)

Burke also argues that rhetorical communication is often motivated by getting rid of guilt (Starling, 2015:32; Regmi, 2023:14). The term 'guilt' is associated with negative tension, anxiety, and even shame. Guilt arises when an established societal order gets undermined (Snee et al., 2023:727). The theorist introduced a model called the 'guilt-redemption cycle' as shown in Figure 3, in which he explains the process of getting rid of guilt symbolically by an individual, or a group (Billings, 2015:6). The process begins with the existence of guilt or any negative feeling (Aleksic, 2023:19). In terms of the model, guilt is purged by employing either mortification, transcendence or victimage.

On the one hand, mortification involves purging guilt by blaming oneself, sacrificing self, restricting self, or restraining self. On the other hand, victimage speaks to shifting the blame to external actors to suffer on one's behalf. Therefore, the victim becomes a scapegoat. Between the two strategies, Burke indicates that victimage is preferred over mortification, mainly because it is better appealing to fight an external cause or enemy than to fight an enemy within oneself (Mackey-Kallis and Hahn, 1994:3). Kuypers (2000:153), argues that with divine power there exists the chances to purge guilt without the above-indicated strategies. Therefore, transcendence suggests justification of guilt by referring to a higher order or divine being.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

In summary, this chapter has shown that rhetorical communication works hand in hand with political communication in a democratic setting. It is also clear that rhetoric has dramatically shifted from a mere rhetorical skill for good public speaking to a well-rounded research field with its trusted research methods and theories, which allow this study to investigate the motives of the State of the Nation Addresses. The chapter has given an overview of the sociopolitical life of South Africa during Apartheid and transitioning into democracy to form and suggest a comprehensive understanding of the possible motive of the post-apartheid SONA speeches in South Africa. A synthesis of empirical studies in the field of presidential rhetoric in South African SONAs has revealed a methodological gap within the scholarship. The identified gap in the literature makes conducting the

current investigation necessary and valuable. The following chapter provides the design and methodology for this present study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN**

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### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study adopts a qualitative rhetorical analysis design to investigate a corpus of four purposively selected South African SONA speeches, post-apartheid. This design is significant, because it allows for a systematic and rigorous investigation of the SONA speeches to generate rich insights about their motives, post-apartheid. This chapter consists of sections, each discussing aspects outlining the design of the study. Firstly, the chapter explains rhetorical analysis research. This is followed by a discussion of the interpretivism research paradigm as a philosophical foundation of the study. Next, the chapter shows the study's adopted research approach. After that, the chapter discusses the methodology, which encapsulates data sampling, data collection, and data analysis methods adopted in the study. Lastly, the chapter examines ethical issues and discusses the study's trustworthiness.

### **3.2 RHETORICAL ANALYSIS**

Rhetorical analysis is a type of research that studies features of texts to decipher their performance of communication or discourse (Iso-Rautio, 2022:9). Although there are various rhetorical analyses, the current study falls within rhetorical criticism. Rhetorical criticism incorporates both traditional and new rhetoric (Salehi et al., 2022:36). A striking difference between traditional and new rhetoric is that traditional rhetoric focuses on examining skilful public speaking, while new rhetoric is, by extension, concerned with the analysis and interpretation of a rhetorical text (Lahti, 2018:14). Rhetorical criticism is defined as “a qualitative research method that allows for systematic analysis and investigation of symbolic behaviours and/or artefacts to understand the rhetorical process” (Yan, 2018). Researchers use multiple rhetorical criticism methods from new rhetoric to investigate artefacts. This includes, but is not limited to, neo-classical criticism,

neo-Aristotelianism, critical-cluster criticism, fantasy-theme criticism, feminist criticism, generic criticism, ideological criticism, metaphoric criticism, narrative criticism, and dramatistic criticism (Burgchardt, 2010). This study adopts the dramatistic criticism approach.

Rhetorical analysis has an added advantage because it allows the researcher to go beyond a description of the phenomenon to critique the phenomenon, which is significant. After all, the judgment helps to explain social actions in a specific context (Condit et al., 2012:387). Even though rhetorical analysis research has this added advantage, its main weak point is subjectivism (Bakke, 2019:164). It is considered subjective because rhetorical analyses require the researcher to apply their interpretation and creative skills to analyse an artefact, which may be biased. Preconceptions and beliefs, including feelings, may influence the analysis process, making the research process subjective.

### **3.3 PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT**

A philosophical statement is vital because philosophy guides all research (Ugwu et al., 2021:117). According to Ranaei (2018:53), philosophy refers to assumptions or beliefs regarding the construction of knowledge. A set of beliefs and agreements shared among scientists about a phenomenon constitute a specific research paradigm (Ranaei, 2018:53). The most popular paradigms are positivism, interpretivism, critical theory and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2016). The current study adopts the interpretivism paradigm.

A study embedded in interpretivism is a study that seeks to understand a subjective world as experienced by humans (Ugwu et al., 2021:120). Its primary interest is to interpret the meaning a research subject gives to their lives, which researchers can discover through language. The paradigm encourages that knowledge can be developed from the viewpoint of the research subject (Ugwu et al., 2021:120). Max Weber named this phenomenon *Verstehen*. According to Yağmurlu (2018:5), *Verstehen* refers to the interpretative process of developing knowledge from the context and viewpoint of the research subject.

The paradigm opposes the positivists' view that a single truth or reality exists. Instead, the interpretivism paradigm supports a view that multiple realities exist because humans construct and reconstruct their reality by reacting differently to different situations (Yağmurlu, 2018:5). This is also underscored by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche asserting that "we can only have interpretations rather than facts" (Heit, 2018:46). This quote of the proponent of interpretivism implies that the interpretivism paradigm emphasises and accepts multiple interpretations of a single phenomenon rather than a single truth as the positivists suggest. In interpretivism, the researcher and the research subject are inextricably inseparable during the process of constructing knowledge, and their context influences their reality (Ugwu et al., 2021:120).

Intuitively, researchers tend to place a rhetorical criticism study within the critical theory paradigm. Nonetheless, the interpretivist paradigm is the appropriate paradigm for this study, compared to the other paradigms like positivism, critical theory, and pragmatism. It is appropriate because the principles of interpretivism allow the study to adopt effective and efficient methods to address its objective adequately. As an illustration, the paradigm enables the adoption of an interpretative rhetoric approach to investigate the phenomenon for an in-depth understanding. Moreover, the interpretivism paradigm aligns with the goal of the current study, which is to decipher the motive of SONA speeches. The interpretative paradigm facilitates textual data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Furthermore, it allows for interpretation of the data from the viewpoint of the research subject (speeches) without isolating the researcher from the meaning-making process. The joint construction of knowledge between the researcher and the research subject of the phenomenon under study is an opportunity for developing and gaining rich insights about the phenomenon.

It is important to note that the current study is outside the scope of positivism, since rhetorical criticism is, in essence, qualitative and interpretative. Moreover, this study diverges from the critical paradigm because its primary concern is an in-depth understanding of the SONA rather than challenging institutional structures and discourses pertinent to SONA. The current study does not need a combination of methods and approaches from opposing strands of research to address the study's objective, as the

pragmatism paradigm would suggest. On the whole, locating the study within the interpretivism paradigm is informed by previous similar studies, which show that a rhetorical analysis study can be facilitated by an interpretative paradigm rather than the other paradigms unless the objectives of another study require otherwise (Thomson et al., 2018:130; Dlamini, 2019:33; Nkoala, 2022:90; Karanja, 2019:32).

### **3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The study adopts a qualitative approach. Savin-Baden and Major (2023) posit that there is yet to be a single definition for qualitative research. Here, qualitative research is an iterative process under which getting closer to the phenomenon studied helps to improve the scientific community's understanding of the matter (Aspers and Corte, 2019:155). Broadly, qualitative research speaks to research that takes the form of a naturalistic approach and deals with non-numerical data (Nassaji, 2020:427). According to Muzari et al. (2022:15), the qualitative approach is characterised by multiple factors, including, but not limited to the fact that the researcher serves as the instrument of data collection and, as is for this current study, the researcher is also a data analysis tool. Furthermore, data analysis is often inductive or bottom-up rather than deductive or top-down. Finally, the approach seeks in-depth understanding, often leading to new, more profound knowledge rather than generalisable universal truths (Muzari et al., 2022: 15).

The study seeks to uncover the motive behind the South African President's State of the Nation Addresses through a dramatisitic analysis of the President's speeches. Therefore, in comparison to the quantitative and mixed-methods approach, the qualitative approach is most suitable for studying the State of the Nation Address. This is so because the qualitative approach allows for interpreting the rhetor's meaning and action to offer rich perspectives about the phenomenon (Rahman, 2020:104). Moreover, the qualitative approach is advantageous to this study because it is flexible and can allow the researcher to test and find the most compatible methods to study the phenomenon (Rahman, 2020:104).

The flexibility of the qualitative approach allows for the addition of another rhetorical criticism method, such as narrative criticism, if the initial method is inefficient to investigate

the motive of the President's State of the Nation Address adequately. The key attributes of a qualitative approach mentioned above, like the interpretation of the research subject's meaning for rich perspectives about the studied phenomenon and flexibility of the research design, are research aspects that a quantitative approach is foreign to. For the latter, a mixed-methods approach is not necessary for this study, as there is no need for a quantitative element in investigating the motive of the rhetors using textual data.

Equally, it is vital to highlight that, similar to any other research approach, a qualitative approach has shortcomings. Taherdoost (2022:59) mentions that amongst other disadvantages of qualitative research approaches, qualitative research often suffers from criticism of the generalisation of findings due to the issue of a small sample size. Qualitative research scholars hold that sample size can be determined by several factors such as epistemology, methodology, and even practically related issues (Vasileiou et al., 2018:2). As qualitative research scholars argue, it is safe to assume that the methodology and practical issues will affect the sample size. Fundamentally, qualitative research's interest sits in producing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon rather than generalisation (Subedi, 2021:7). Nonetheless, to ensure the rigor of this study, all followed research procedures are meticulously articulated in this paper, including researcher biases, to ensure transparency and ethicality.

Vasileiou et al (2018:2) also show that the difficulty of data analysis and interpretation in qualitative research can be an obstacle. To address this limitation, the less data there are, the more manageable the data analysis and interpretation are. The researcher is proficient in dramatic criticism, because they acquired this knowledge during their previous postgraduate rhetoric studies. The researcher's knowledge of dramatic criticism helped to minimise errors during the data analysis process and interpretation because of their familiarity with the analysis method's guidelines. Moreover, knowledge of dramatic criticism ensures that the data analysis and interpretation process is iterative, allowing for member-checking. The researcher's expertise in dramatic criticism is an added advantage for addressing the research objective of this study and, most vitally, for addressing the limitation of the research approach in question.

## **3.5 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.5.1 Sampling method**

The study adopts a nonprobability sampling method called purposive sampling. According to Obilor (2023:4), purposive sampling refers to a sampling method that allows for selecting research subjects based on the characteristics that satisfy the objectives of a study. This sampling method is essential for this study because it enables the researcher to select the research subjects that can help address the study's objective adequately. Farzinfar et al. (2023:20) posit that researcher biases can become the most significant disadvantage of purposive sampling. To address such a disadvantage, the guidelines for performing the purposive sampling below will help external research experts validate the sampling method and its relevance for this study.

In the case of the current study, it would mean that purposive sampling is a selection of SONA speeches (artefacts) that exhibit the following characteristics:

- A South Africa SONA speech as outlined in Table 2 in the subsequent section.
- Only the first SONA speech for each of the democratically elected Presidents are selected. This speaks to Presidents who became Presidents through national elections and not through the interim processes.
- For the Presidents who had two terms, only their first-term SONA speech is considered.

Noting the above characteristics of the speeches required to address the objective of the study, purposive sampling becomes the only qualitative research sampling method that can afford the researcher the powers to select the speeches that will be useful in addressing the research objective and filtering any other speeches that are not useful for the study.

### **3.5.2 Data collection method**

The data for this study are secondary data known as State of the Nation Address speeches, which are readily available on the South African government website.

Wijethunga and Jayarathne (2023:199) define secondary data as readily available information from someone other than the immediate researcher, which include articles, books, company records, government publications as well as internet material. In the era of artificial intelligence or the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, it is fair to become sceptical of the authenticity and originality of data collected online for research purposes. Kumari (2022:779) agrees that other websites on the internet need to be regulated, making them not worthy of being data sources for research. However, government websites are the most regulated websites that publish original information worthy of research. In light of this, the data for this study were collected from the government website (<https://www.gov.za/state-nation-address#1990>). Only the Presidents' first SONA speeches were collected from the website, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: A table showing the study's sample of artefacts (data).

<b>The President/Rhetor</b>	<b>Speech date</b>
Nelson Mandela	1994-04-27
Thabo Mbeki	1999-06-25
Jacob Zuma	2009-06-03
Cyril Ramaphosa	2018-02-16

Sikanku (2022:176) holds that a SONA is an important speech, because it sets the tone for the President's term of office. In line with this view, the present study holds that a President's first State of the Nation Address sets a tone for his term of office better than any of his subsequent SONA speeches in his tenure. The first SONA is a critical moment where the voters, followers and even people in the diaspora keenly await the elected person to address them. Moreover, this is a special moment when even the opposition parties, media outlets and non-partisans closely observe the new incumbent as he presents his plan and addresses the nation. As such, if there is an interesting SONA speech to select for research, it must be a President's first State of the Nation Address.

Though the above serves as a clear plan for data collection, it is essential to highlight inconsistencies with President Ramaphosa's 2018-02-16 State of the Nation Address, as this was his first SONA, but not as a President delivered through national

elections. This is because, in 2018, he finished Jacob Zuma's term of office after his resignation. Nevertheless, Ramaphosa eventually became democratically elected as the President of South Africa in the following year. This differs from the case of Kgalema Motlanthe, who was just an interim President after Thabo Mbeki's resignation and before Jacob Zuma's election. The inconsistency with Ramaphosa's case has minor effects on the study's rigor compared to Kgalema Motlanthe's case. After all, Motlanthe did not subsequently become the country's President through national elections.

### **3.5.3 Data analysis method**

The study adopts a rhetorical analysis method found in dramatic criticism developed by Kenneth Burke (Provenzano, 2022:107). According to Boscolo (2020:103), this is a rhetorical criticism method adept at uncovering a speaker's or a message's motive or underlying agenda. The technique within dramatism theory is named the pentad (Kojongian, 2019). As stated in preceding chapters, Burke designed the pentad as a methodological tool to study and understand humans' rhetorical communication. Through the pentadic method, one can unveil the motive of the studied human communication (De Roover, 2018:3). Additionally, this study adopts the pentad as its data analysis method, because literature has shown that the technique has previously been applied to other artefacts in previous studies and found effective in revealing the motive of the studied artefacts (Aldridge, 1995; Dunn, 2018; dR Crisostomo-Pilario, 2022).

Two crucial steps must be followed to perform a pentadic analysis. The first step is labelling the pentadic elements from the artefact. The pentadic elements are *Act*, *Scene*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose* (Poudyal, 2022:56). The second step is to perform a pentadic ratio for each of the SONA speeches to identify the dominant pentadic element which reveals the rhetorical motive of the speech under scrutiny (Erickson, 2022: 8). According to Foss (1989), the process of labelling an artefact can be internal or external. Internal labelling focuses on the content of the artefact. In contrast, external labelling requires information external to the artefact, such as background about the rhetor, information about the context and so on.

The internal pentadic analysis approach is inductive, while the external pentadic analysis approach is deductive. What sets an inductive data analysis approach apart from a deductive data analysis approach is that the inductive approach analyses data from the bottom up, usually to generate new theories. In contrast, the deductive approach tests already existing or preconceived ideas from the data, usually to test existing theories, so it is a top-down approach (Kalpokaite and Radivojevic, 2019:46). Foss (1989) suggests that an internal approach to pentadic analysis provides deeper insights, because it allows the researcher to critique the rhetorical act from the perspective and mindset of the rhetor (Foss, 1989). As a result, the study approaches the SONA speeches from an internal point of view. As an illustration of an internal pentadic labelling, take the situation below:

*While turning a corner around his neighbourhood, Andile accidentally hits a pedestrian at night. He realises that he has hit a person. Instead of stopping and calling for help, he drove away and kept silent, avoiding the consequences.*

Internal pentadic labelling for the above scenario may look as follows:

*Act – Fleeing the scene after accidentally hitting a pedestrian*

*Scene – An accident at night in a corner around Andile's neighbourhood*

*Agent – Andile*

*Agency – A car*

*Purpose – To avoid the consequences of hitting a pedestrian.*

It is important to notice that the content of the scenario regarding Andile's situation informs the label for each pentadic element above. External labelling would require the researcher to get more information about Andile, his neighbourhood, maybe information about the corner, information about his car, and maybe look for witnesses or CCTV footage of the scene if available. An external labelling for the scenario may look as follows:

*Act – A car hits a person and drive off*

*Scene – A car accident, at night in a hijacking zone*

*Agent – A car driver*

*Agency – A car*

*Purpose – To avoid hijacking*

Looking at the above labelling, one may see that the labelling is based on information imagined by the researcher based on what they generally know about the phenomenon. The bottom line is that the content of the artefact strictly informs internal labelling, while external labelling requires external information to label the pentadic elements. No one approach is better than the other. However, internal labelling allows the critic or researcher to approach the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the rhetor (Foss, 1986). In contrast, external labelling compels the critic or researcher to approach the phenomenon from pre-existent views, not of the rhetor.

This study argues that artefacts like public speeches can be approached from the internal labelling point of view because they have content, while images and other artefacts that do not have content can be approached from the external point of view. Even when investigating the artefact from an external point of view, the researchers must strive for accuracy and honesty when labelling the artefact to make their work empirical. Some cases may require a mixture of the two approaches to produce a more nuanced understanding of the motive. Imagine observing a student slapping another student in class. Both internal labelling “your literal observation” and external labelling “researched information” about the phenomenon may be helpful in developing a nuanced understanding of the motive of the student who slapped the other.

After successfully labelling the pentadic elements, a step of performing a pentadic ratio follows. A pentadic ratio is a proportion of one pentadic element relative to the other (Younus and Kareem, 2021:489). A pentadic ratio helps to identify the dominant pentadic element according to the labels. The dominant pentadic element symbolises the rhetor's motive (Xie and Li, 2023: 5). The ratio is made up of a systematic pairing of each pentadic element with the other to discover a relationship between the elements as well as how they influence one another (Bourgonjon et al., 2011:93). So, the dominant pentadic element means that the pentadic element influences the other elements more in the

speech and is the most stressed element in the speech, which demonstrates the rhetor's motive.

The main task in the pairing process is to discover if the first pentadic element, as per its label, influences, controls or determines the nature of the second pentadic element it is paired with (Said et al., 2021:447). According to Knutsen and Knutsen (2020:679), a symbolic act contains 20 possible ratios.

The twenty possible ratios are *scene-act*, *scene-agent*, *scene-agency*, *scene-purpose*, *act-scene*, *act-agent*, *act-agency*, *act-purpose*, *agent-scene*, *agent-act*, *agent-agency*, *agent-purpose*, *agency-scene*, *agency-act*, *agency-agent*, *agency-purpose*, *purpose-scene*, *purpose-act*, *purpose-agent*, and *purpose-agency* (Wilson, 2019:34).

To do the 20-ratio analysis, a researcher must ask questions like "Does the nature of the first element cause the second element to be in a certain way?" and/or "Does the first element affect or determine the way the second element is?" (Crittenden and Crittenden, 2022). After asking such questions, against each one of the 20 ratios, the researcher must answer with a *yes* or *no* and sometimes with *unclear* to the questions next to each pair of a ratio. The pentadic element with the most *yeses* is a dominant element which indicates the rhetor's motive in the artefact (Lahorgue, 2023:30).

As an illustration, going back to Andile's situation to demonstrate a *scene-act* and *act-scene* ratio as per the created labels above. On the one hand, the question to ask for *scene-act* is whether the *scene* being "an accident at night in a corner around Andile's neighbourhood" caused or influenced the *act* of "fleeing the scene after accidentally hitting a pedestrian" to be in that way. In other words, did the accident at night in a corner around Andile's neighbourhood cause or influence Andile to flee the scene? An answer to this question is "yes" because he realised that he had hit a person and decided to run away to avoid the consequences. In the analysis, it would look as follows: *scene-act=yes*.

On the other hand, the question(s) to ask for the *act-scene* ratio is whether the *act* of "fleeing the scene after accidentally hitting a pedestrian" caused or influenced the *scene* being "an accident at night in a corner around Andile's neighbourhood" to be in this way.

In simple terms, did fleeing the scene cause or influence an accident at night in a corner around Andile's neighbourhood". The answer is no, because running away did not cause the accident. Instead, the accident led to Andile's flee. So, in the analysis, it would be *act-scene=no*. After doing this for each of the 20 pentadic ratios, one can figure out the underlying motive from the viewpoint of the rhetor or expressed situation.

Before closing the discussion of the pentadic method, it is vital to point out that sometimes the analysis can result in two elements having an equal number of *yeses*, suggesting that the motive of the rhetor spread across the elements. Another possible situation, though rare, is where no element(s) appears prominent from the analysis. This suggests something interesting about the motive of the rhetor. Firstly, it is that the rhetor needs to create a clear worldview that sticks to a single element, or the rhetor needs to interpret the situation correctly. Secondly, it could be because the rhetor has decided not to emphasise a single element (Foss, 1989:376). Although Foss suggests that the internal/inductive pentadic analysis approach is good because it allows for studying the subject from the viewpoint of the rhetor. Based on the example of Andile's situation, this study holds that the meaningfulness of either internal/inductive or external/deductive approach can be affected by how much valid information is available for either internal or external approach to make a profound and nuanced analysis of the rhetorical artefact or situation.

Although the pentad is relevant and suitable for analysing the South African Presidents' State of the Nation Addresses to unveil their motives, like other qualitative data analysis methods, the pentad is not free from imperfection. Noteworthy, a significant disadvantage of the pentadic analysis is that the data analysis process is, by essence, subjective (Tham et al., 2023:10). So, this may have an impact on the receipt of the findings as valid. To address subjectivity in this study, a rhetoric and dramatic criticism expert first supervised the data analysis to check and correct inconsistencies. Furthermore, the process of data analysis is triangulated. According to Lemon and Hayes (2020:605), triangulation refers to a qualitative strategy of ensuring the validity of data analysis by converging information between different independent analyses of the data by various analysts. For this study, multiple parties were involved in the data analysis where they

independently assessed the data to minimise biases and subjectivity and ensure the results' rigour and trustworthiness.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This study takes the form of desktop research. According to Ngubane (2022:20), desktop research speaks to research relying on secondary data without undertaking fieldwork. Kucera (2022:5) asserts that consideration of ethical issues is indispensable even in desktop research. Hanchard (2022:560) postulates that considering ethical issues makes the rhetorician or researcher accountable and reflective of the research process, which involves their actions when collecting and analysing data as well as the implications thereof. As such, being accountable for the process taken to produce research insights increases the openness and vulnerability of the research, allowing others to replicate the study. Explicitly engaging ethical issues serves a pedagogical role in teaching other researchers critical insights concerning collection and analysis of data as well as presentation of findings (Hanchard, 2022:560).

As such, this section highlights the ethical issues involved in conducting a rhetoric desktop study. Firstly, it is vital to indicate that this study received ethical clearance from the University of the Free State's General/Human Research Ethics Committee (UFS-HSD2023/2143-0001) on 20 November 2023 (refer to the appendix section for the ethical clearance letter). According to Wardhono and Lestari (2023), ethical clearance is a process of reviewing research proposals by a certified research committee to determine the ethicality of a study. This process precedes the beginning of the research so to ensure that the proposed study follows ethical principles and procedures to minimise negative consequences to research subjects (Wardhono and Lestari, 2023:417).

Walliman (2021:43) underscores that in research, there are two aspects to consider regarding ethical issues. First, the researcher must be honest, have integrity, and be frank. The second is the treatment of the research subject concerning confidentiality, anonymity and courtesy, including informed consent (Walliman, 2021). In the case of this study, the second aspect is less critical, since the research subjects are speeches or texts that are publicly available. The University of the Free State's research and integrity and

ethics policy considers such research minimal risk research. This is because less harm to research subjects is possible in desktop studies compared to medical, laboratory, and human experimental research (UFS Ethics policy, 2018:7).

The data for this study are secondary data known as the State of the Nation Address speeches, which are readily available on the South African government website. Since the data are publicly available, it implies that one does not necessarily have to anonymise the identity of the rhetor, as it would perhaps be in the case where the speeches are not in the public eye. Nevertheless, honesty, integrity and frankness remain crucial during the analysis and interpretation of the speeches, especially after noting that this study is not immune to subjectivity.

To ensure honesty, integrity, and frankness, the study meticulously explains and accounts for the methods employed for conducting this study. Furthermore, the study is conducted with maximum cognisance, respect and adherence to the University of the Free State's research integrity and ethics policy (UFS Ethics policy, 2018). When a study is done on a desktop, it is easy to overlook ethical issues, because the research does not deal with human beings and other living things. The above discussion of ethical considerations for this investigation sensitises desktop researchers about ethical issues involved in rhetoric desktop research. This contributes to the broader scholarly discourse on research ethics in rhetoric and informs future research about the field's ethical dilemmas and ways of navigating them.

### **3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

One of the most vital components of empirical research is validity and reliability. According to Rose and Johnson (2020:434), trustworthiness for qualitative research concerns systematic rigor of the research plan used to conduct the study, credibility of the individual who conducted the study, and dependability of the findings, including applicability of the research plan. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability as criteria for ensuring or accounting for the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. The subsequent paragraphs briefly explain the

criteria and how the current research navigated validity and reliability for the study's trustworthiness.

Nassaji (2020:428), postulates that credibility is a qualitative research principle that concerns the believability of the research findings and conclusions. To meet this criterion, the study's analysis process, findings, and conclusions were subjected to a triangulation process where the researchers' supervisor, Ms du Plessis, and co-supervisor Prof. Breshears, examined the study's analysis process, findings and inferences individually. To a great extent, the researcher further submitted the research to additional qualitative research experts, Dr Sekonyela and Dr Makati, for member-checking purposes. Experts' feedback helped to consolidate the study's research findings and inferences. This process was indispensable, because it helped to ensure that inconsistencies and mistakes were picked up, corrected and that the study followed the set research protocol.

Regarding the data, the study copied the speeches verbatim from the South African government website into a prepared Word document. It was converted to a PDF document to preserve the format of the speeches or artefacts. Nothing was modified on the documents; they were analysed as original, as extracted from government website. This helped to ensure that the data reflected the writing of the rhetor.

Scholars can depend on this study. According to Nassaji (2020:428), dependability in qualitative research speaks to reliability in the sense that the study shows consistency in terms of processes like data collection, analysis, and so on. This principle requires a qualitative researcher to report all the decisions and steps taken to arrive at the findings and conclusion thoroughly and honestly, so that any other person can follow and arrive at similar interpretations. The study is dependable, because the researcher tried as much as possible to account for every step followed and the decisions made to arrive at interpretations made in this study. Furthermore, the researcher tried to use understandable language and limited jargon so that other scholars could understand the process.

Nassaji (2020:428) posits that confirmability entails how much others can confirm or replicate the study's interpretation and conclusions. To ensure that people can confirm the interpretation and conclusion of the study, the researcher extensively described the

data and findings in a clear and organised manner so that people could easily follow and confirm the study's interpretation and conclusions. The researcher also relied on visual aids like tables, figures and diagrams to enhance the confirmability of the study's findings, interpretations and conclusions.

Finally, transferability is also an important criterion to address, as much as the study sought not to generalise the findings. According to Nassaji (2020:428), transferability refers to the degree of applying or transferring the study's findings, interpretation and conclusions into similar contexts. The study's findings are undoubtedly ungeneralisable to the post-apartheid era of SONA in South Africa. However, because the study has offered rich and thorough explanations of the research process, future researchers who will study the exact speeches can transfer the knowledge produced by this study into their research endeavours. Combining all these criteria helped to ensure the study's trustworthiness as a scholarly and empirical work.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter extensively discussed the design of the study. The discussion showed that the study is a qualitative rhetorical analysis embedded in the interpretivist's research paradigm. Based on the study's goal of seeking an in-depth understanding of the motives of the SONAs. Interpretivism was stressed as the most suitable paradigm to facilitate designing a methodology that can help attain such a goal effectively and efficiently as far as the methodology is concerned. Firstly, purposive sampling is pointed out as the study's sampling method. Secondly, a strategy for collecting data from the South African government website is explained and justified in detail. Finally, Kenneth Burke's pentadic method is discussed as the study's data analysis technique. Moreover, the chapter outlines ethical issues and trustworthiness for this rhetoric study. The next chapter delves into a presentation and description of the results of the pentadic analysis of the collected data.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS**

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### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the findings of a pentadic analysis of a corpus of four South African Presidents' SONA speeches. The chapter begins with restating the study's objective. Next, it ascendingly describes the findings on the four speeches, starting from Mandela's 1994 SONA to Ramaphosa's 2018 SONA. Raw data are used to support the findings of the SONA speeches. After that, a table will summarise the findings. In the end, a paragraph concludes this chapter.

### **4.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This section serves the purpose of reintroducing the objective of the study. Restating the study's objective before unpacking the findings is vital to refresh one's memory of the study's primary goal.

- To decipher the motive of South African Presidents' first State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid

### **4.3 NELSON MANDELA'S 1994-04-27 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS**

The pentadic analysis began with scrutiny of Nelson Mandela's 1994 SONA speech. The speech was labelled from an internal point of view during the analysis. Internal labelling means that the labelling focuses on the content of the speech rather than external knowledge about the speech (Foss,1989). The following sections discuss the labelling process for this speech's five pentadic elements.

To begin with, the labelling of the pentadic element *Act*. The pentadic element *Act* was labelled as 'Creating a people-centred society'. The supposition that the rhetor presents

the pentadic element *Act* in the speech as 'creating a people-centred society' can be supported by the excerpt below from the rhetor's speech where he states that.

*We must construct that people-centred society of freedom in such a manner that it guarantees the political and the human rights of all our citizens.*

The phrase '*creating a people-centred society*', amongst other several occasions in the speech, also appears at the end of the speech when the rhetor states that.

Our road to that glorious future lies through collective hard work to accomplish the objective of *creating a people-centred society* through the implementation of the vision contained in our reconstruction and development plan.

The above indented raw information or content of the speech supports the labelling of the pentadic element *Act* as 'creating a people-centred society'. Based on the above excerpts, the rhetor appears to be stressing '*creating a people-centred society*' as a task the government must execute. Ideally, the pentadic element 'Act' refers to what has happened or occurred (Rountree and Rountree, 2015:353; Bates, 2016:323). Notwithstanding, this study proposes that the pentadic element *Act* can also mean what must happen in the future. So, this study introduces an additional way of understanding the pentadic element *Act*, because SONA often speaks about what is yet to occur in the year commencing.

The next pentadic element labelled during the analysis process was *Agent*. The label for the pentadic element *Agent* was 'Government of national unity'. According to Southern (2015:244), the Government of national unity means a body of political parties who share power. In the case of South Africa, the African National Congress, Inkatha Freedom Party, and National Party constituted the government of national unity after South Africa's 1994 democratic election (Mpanza, 2014:1). The pentadic element *Agent* was labelled this way because, within the speech, the rhetor shows the 'Government of national unity' as the one which must perform the *Act* of 'Creating a people-centred society'. The labelling of the pentadic element *Agent* as 'Government of national unity' is well reflected by the below information extracted from the content of the speech in which the rhetor speaks about the government of national unity relative to the creation of a people-centred society.

Today, I am happy to announce that the Cabinet of the *Government of National Unity* has reached consensus not only on the broad objective of the creation of the *people-centred society* of which I have spoken, but also on many elements of a plan broadly based on that Programme for Reconstruction and Development

As per the above information, the rhetor appears to be constructing the *Agent* as the 'Government of national unity' rather than himself as the President. Hence, the *Agent* is during the analysis considered and labelled the 'Government of national unity' as the rhetor presents in the speech the GNU as the entity responsible for the 'creation of a people-centred society'.

The third pentadic element, *Agency*, was labelled as the 'Reconstruction and Development Plan'. The pentadic element *agency* is labelled this way because it appears within the speech that the *Agent* being the 'Government of National Unity' is supposed to utilise the 'Reconstruction and Development Plan' as its tool for pursuing the *act* of 'Creating a people-centred society'. The supposition that the *agency* is constructed in the speech as a 'Reconstruction and development plan' can be accounted for by the excerpt below where the rhetor states the following.

Our road to that glorious future lies through collective hard work to accomplish the objective of creating a people-centred society by implementing the vision contained in our *reconstruction and development plan*.

Looking at the above statement of the rhetor in the speech, the RDP, the 'Reconstruction and Development Plan' is highlighted as a helping tool which the 'Government of National Unity' must implement to realise the *Act* of 'creating a people-centred society'.

The fourth pentadic element, *Scene*, was labelled as 'A newly democratic South Africa with various social, economic and political challenges'. According to Rountree and Rountree (2015:3530) and Bates (2016:323), the pentadic element *Scene* refers to the context in which the *Act* occurred. It is paramount to highlight that the term 'context' holds various meanings, including, but not limited to time, geographic area or even situation(s). In this study, the pentadic element *scene* label refers to a wide range of aspects that

revolve around what defined the country's conditions at the time. For example, this was a time when South Africa had just transitioned from apartheid to becoming a democratic state. A newly democratic state that was faced with reconciliation issues, poverty and immigration challenges, amongst many others. Therefore, the labelling of *Scene* as shown above illustrates the multifaceted meaning that the word context may hold.

The pentadic element *Scene* was labelled as shown in the above discussion because in the content of the speech, the rhetor seems to present the scene in the following way:

My government's commitment to create a people-centred society of liberty binds us to the pursuit of the goals of freedom from want, *freedom from hunger, freedom from deprivation, freedom from ignorance, freedom from suppression and freedom from fear.*

The nation must come to terms with its past in a *spirit of openness and forgiveness* and proceed to build the future on the basis of *repairing and healing.*

The Government is determined forcefully to confront the *scourge of unemployment*, not by way of handouts but by the creation of work opportunities.

The Government will also deal sensitively with the issue of *population movements into the country*, to protect our workers, to guard against the exploitation of vulnerable workers and to ensure friendly relations with all countries and peoples.

The Government is also taking urgent measures to deal firmly with *drug trafficking some of which is carried out by foreign nationals who are resident in the country.* We must *end racism in the workplace as part of our common offensive against racism in general.* No more should words like Kaffirs, Hottentots, Coolies, Boy, Girl and Baas be part of our vocabulary.

The above excerpts from Mandela's 1994 SONA speech portray a good picture of the *scene* that the rhetor speaks of in the speech. Looking closely, one may see that the *scene* speaks to the country's conditions at the dawn of a democracy.

The last pentadic element, *Purpose*, was labelled as 'To expand human fulfilment and extension of freedom'. From this label for the pentadic element *Purpose*, the rhetor explains why the *Agent* or 'Government of National Unity' needs to perform the *Act of* 'Creating a people-centred society'. According to Rountree and Rountree (2015: 353) and Bates (2016: 323), the pentadic element *Purpose* refers to the reasons behind doing the *Act*. The *Purpose* or reasons for performing an *Act* of 'creating a people-centred society' is to '*Expand human fulfilment and extend freedom*'. This labelling of the pentadic element *Purpose* is derived from the content of the speech, supported by an excerpt below, taken from the speech.

Accordingly, the purpose that will drive this government shall be the expansion of the frontiers of human fulfilment, the continuous extension of the frontiers of the freedom.

The above excerpt shows what the rhetor presents as the 'Purpose' of the 'Act' within the speech.

A second step of pentadic analysis of the speech included analysis of pentadic ratios. Twenty ratios were made by pairing each labelled pentadic element with another. The pentadic ratios analysis helped to determine the motive of the speech by asking against each pair of ratios if 'yes or no' or 'unclear' a specific pentadic element causes, determines, or influences the other pentadic element in a certain way (Xie & Li, 2023:5; Lahorgue, 2023:30). Figure 4 below shows the pentadic ratio process for the 1994 SONA of Mandela.

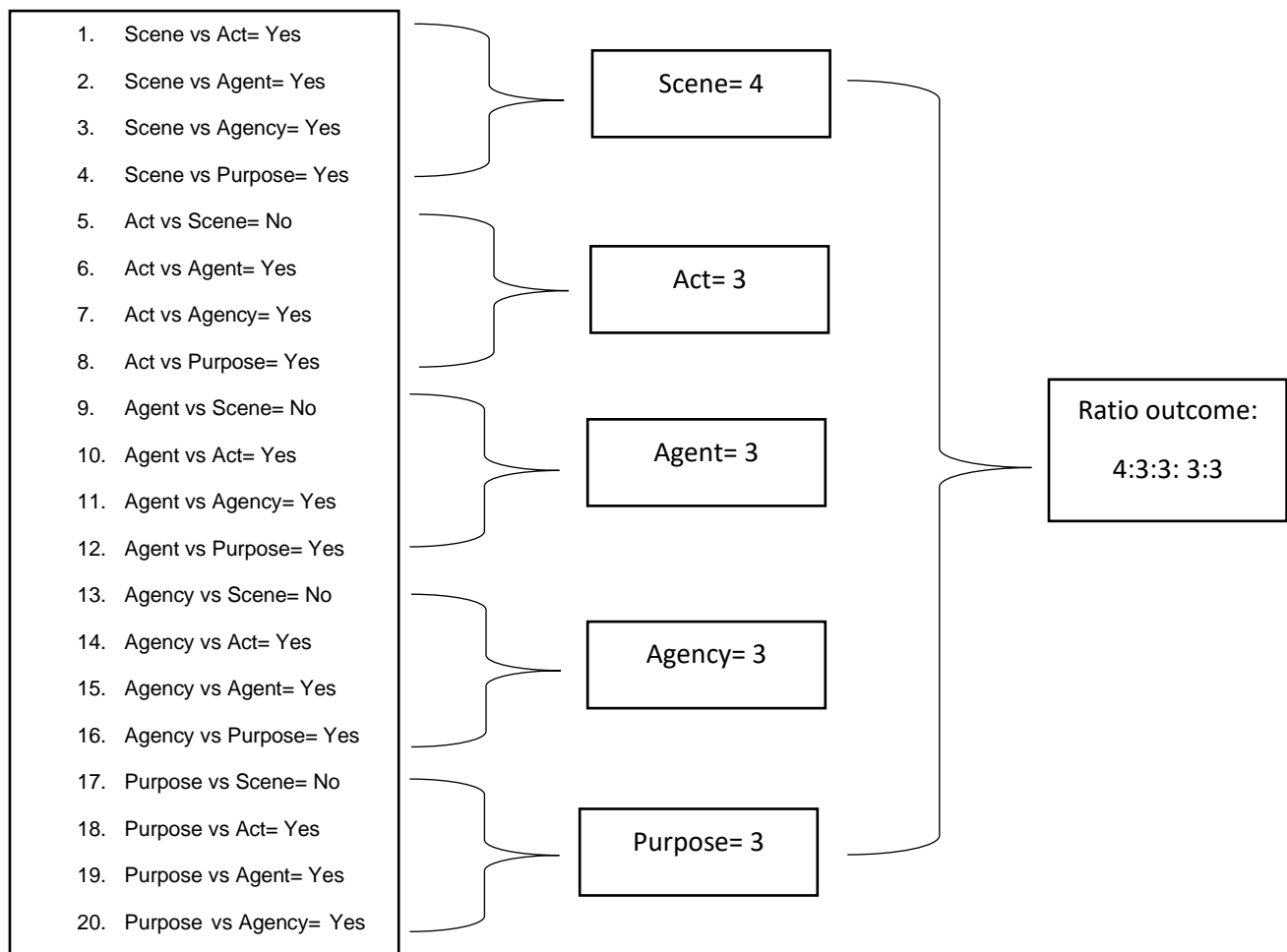


Figure 4: A diagram of the pentadic analysis process on Mandela's 1994 SONA speech

As Figure 4 above shows, for the case of Mandela's 1994 SONA speech, the outcome of the pentadic ratio analysis was such that the *Scene* had four *yeses*, the *Act* had three *yeses*, the *Agent* had three *yeses*, the *Agency* had three *yeses*, and *Purpose* had three *yeses*. As such, the ratio outcome becomes 4:3:3: 3:3, making the pentadic element *Scene* the pentadic element with the most *yeses*. Since the pentadic element *Scene* has the most *yeses* on the ratio. The ratio underscores *Scene* as a predominant pentadic element compared to the other pentadic elements. Consequently, the pentadic element *Scene* is the underlying motive of Mandela's 1994 SONA speech.

Foss (1989:376) highlights that one should not be surprised when two pentadic elements emerge with an equal number of *yeses*. This means that the rhetor's motive spreads

across the two pentadic elements. Although this is rare, Foss also taught that one should not be surprised if not one of the pentadic elements emerges as dominant. This suggests that the rhetor failed to interpret the situation correctly or the rhetor intentionally decided not to stress a single element for some reason. Although Foss had prepared the researcher for the above-mentioned special cases, it was intriguing that though the pentadic element *Scene* rose as the dominant pentadic element in this study, the other three pentadic elements were almost equal to the *Scene*. The researcher calls this a surprising finding and will construct its meaning in the discussion chapter.

#### **4.4 THABO MBEKI'S 1999-06-25 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS SPEECH**

The pentadic analysis of President Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech began with labelling the pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency*, *Scene*, and *Purpose* from the speech. To start by describing the labelling of the pentadic *Act*. It is essential to highlight that during the analysis of the SONA speech of Mbeki's predecessor President Mandela, the pentadic element *Act* was labelled as 'creating a people-centred society'. In Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech, the analysis reveals the *Act* to merely recommit to Mandela's *Act* of 'creating a people-centred society'. However, the *Act* for Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech is rephrased to 'building a caring society'. The excerpt from the speech below supports the labelling of *Act* for Mbeki's 1999 SONA.

To these masses we owe the obligation to *recommit the government* on whose behalf I speak, to the *construction of a people-centred society*. This I am happy to do with all the authority at my command.

The above-indented section shows that the rhetor emphasised the 'creation of a people-centred society' as the *Act* that his government had to fulfil. However, in his speech, instead of using the phrase 'creation of people-centred society' to define the *Act*, the rhetor continuously uses the words "building a caring society". This situation is evident from the content of the speech as illustrated by the indented excerpt below, in which, from many other occasions in the speech, the rhetor uses the phrase 'build a caring society' to define the *Act*.

What will guide us in everything we do will be the challenge to *build a caring society*.

According to the above statement from the speech, the rhetor decided to maintain the *Act* as his predecessor's but rephrased it to 'building a caring society.' Hence, in the case of Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech, the pentadic element *Act* was ultimately labelled 'building of caring society'.

Following this was labelling the pentadic element *Agent* from the speech. An internal pentadic point of view of the pentadic labelling of the pentadic element *Agent* suggested it to be 'Government and the people'. The logic for labelling *Agent* as 'Government and the people' can be accounted for by the excerpt from the speech below.

For this reason, this is not a task that can be carried out by the government alone. The challenge of the reconstruction and development of our society into one which guarantees human dignity, faces the entirety of our people.

It is a national task that calls for the mobilisation of the whole nation into *united people's action*, into a partnership with government for progressive change and a better life for all, for a common effort to build a winning nation.

The Government therefore commits itself to work in a close partnership with all our people, inspired by the call – Faranani! – to ensure that we draw on the energy and genius of the nation to give birth to something that will surely be new, good, and beautiful.

From the indented excerpt, it is apparent that the rhetor stresses that the *Act* of 'building a caring society' is a national task requiring the inclusivity of all people. As such, the *Agent* is not just the government but the 'Government and the people'.

The third pentadic element, *Agency*, was labelled as the 'Reconstruction and Development Programme as well as the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme'. These are tools that the rhetor speaks of as tools that are inherited by his administration directly from his predecessor to help perform the *Act* in his administration.

Labelling the pentadic element *Agency* emanates from the below view of the rhetor in the speech.

The *Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)* and the *Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme (GEAR)* were implemented by our first democratic government to achieve socio-economic transformation and macro-economic stability.

The structural changes entailed within these processes were also to take place within the context of our economy becoming more competitive as it integrated itself within the global economy.

The *RDP and GEAR* will remain the basic policy objectives of the new government to achieve sustainable growth, development, and improved standards of living.

A thorough reading of the above excerpts shows that the *Agent* being 'the government and the people' inherited Mandela's tool(s) or agencies for pursuing the 'Act' of 'building a caring society'.

The pentadic element *Scene* was labelled as 'South Africa grappling with pervasive social, economic and political issues'. Like Mandela's case of the *Scene*, Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech presents the *Scene* as the country's conditions when Mbeki assumed power in 1999. The sentiments below of the rhetor support the labelling of *Scene* as indicated above.

One of the central features of the brutish society we seek to bring to an end is the impermissible level of crime and violence. Acting together with the people, we will heighten our efforts radically to improve the safety and security of all our citizens.

The areas of high crime concentration, including all crimes of violence, are the black and poor areas of our country.

These include such areas as Tsolo in the Eastern Cape, Thabong in the Free State, Katlehong in Gauteng, Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal, KaNyamazana in

Mpumalanga, Mafikeng in the Northwest, Galeshewe in the Northern Cape, Thohoyandou in the Northern Province and Mitchells's Plain in the Western Cape.

Job creation, the opening up of opportunities for all our people to earn an honest living as well as the protection of the rights of all our working people, remain matters of critical concern to the Government.

We will continue actively to address all these matters, including such important questions as skills development, the casualisation of labour, illegal foreign workers and workers whose rights are not protected.

Similarly, the Government will tighten its tracking of the poverty question to ensure that government policies and programmes are actually succeeding to reduce the levels of poverty in our country.

The Government will also review all the work done so far to confront the scourge of HIV/AIDS with a view to the intensification of all efforts relating to this epidemic.

Of critical importance will be that we take all necessary steps to ensure that the partnerships against HIV/AIDS that have been formed and the public education campaigns we have been conducting do actually result in changing behaviour patterns, improve support to AIDS victims and orphans and speed up steps towards the development of a vaccine.

This will be an important contribution to the effort we must sustain to wipe out the legacies of racism and sexism, which continue to afflict our society.

Because the *Scene* speaks to the country's conditions in 1999, it appears from the above-indented information taken from the speech that the *Scene* covers a wide range of social, economic and political issues. For example, the excerpt shows that by 1999, after apartheid the country was grappling with impermissible levels of crime and violence, corruption, persistent poverty in rural areas, the scourge of HIV & AIDS, perennial racism and sexism, as well as an unemployed and unskilled population.

Finally, the pentadic element *Purpose* was labelled as 'To improve the quality of life, reconcile and build a nation'. Like the *Scene*, the pentadic element *Purpose* encompasses several matters: improving the quality of life, the economy, fighting crime, corruption, and violence, African Renaissance, advancing human dignity for all citizens and ensuring the success of national reconciliation and nation building. It is worth noting that *Purpose* in Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech differs slightly from his predecessor's *Purpose* in that it Mandela speaks to human fulfilment while Mbeki stipulates the matters he seeks to resolve by 'creating a caring society'. Otherwise, it is still more or less the same *Purpose*. The excerpts from the speech below support labelling the pentadic element *Purpose*.

This society must guarantee the dignity of every citizen on the basis of a good quality of life for every woman, man and child, without regard to race, or colour or disability.

It must be sustained by a growing economy capable of extending sustainable and equitable benefits to all our people.

Further to improve the quality of life of all our people, especially the most disadvantaged, the Government will maintain its approach to reprioritise public spending to maintain and improve the safety net available to the most disadvantaged in our society.

We consider the work of restoring the pride and identity of all our people of vital importance to the task of advancing the human dignity of all our citizens and ensuring the success of our efforts towards national reconciliation and nation building.

The Government will also focus on the tasks of achieving the objectives of the African Renaissance and ensuring that the next century evolves as the African century.

From the above sentiments of the rhetor in his speech, it appears that the *Act* of 'building a caring society' is aimed at fulfilling the *Purpose* of 'Improving the quality of life, improving the economy, Fight crime, and corruption and violence, integrate African Renaissance,

advance human dignity of all citizens and ensuring the success of national reconciliation and nation building’.

The second step of a pentadic analysis of President Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech was an analysis of the pentadic ratios to determine the motive of the speech. Twenty ratios were formed by systematically pairing the labelled pentadic elements. Against each pair of the pentadic elements, the idea was to determine if *yes* or *no* or *unclear* the first pentadic element influences or controls the second pentadic element in a certain way.

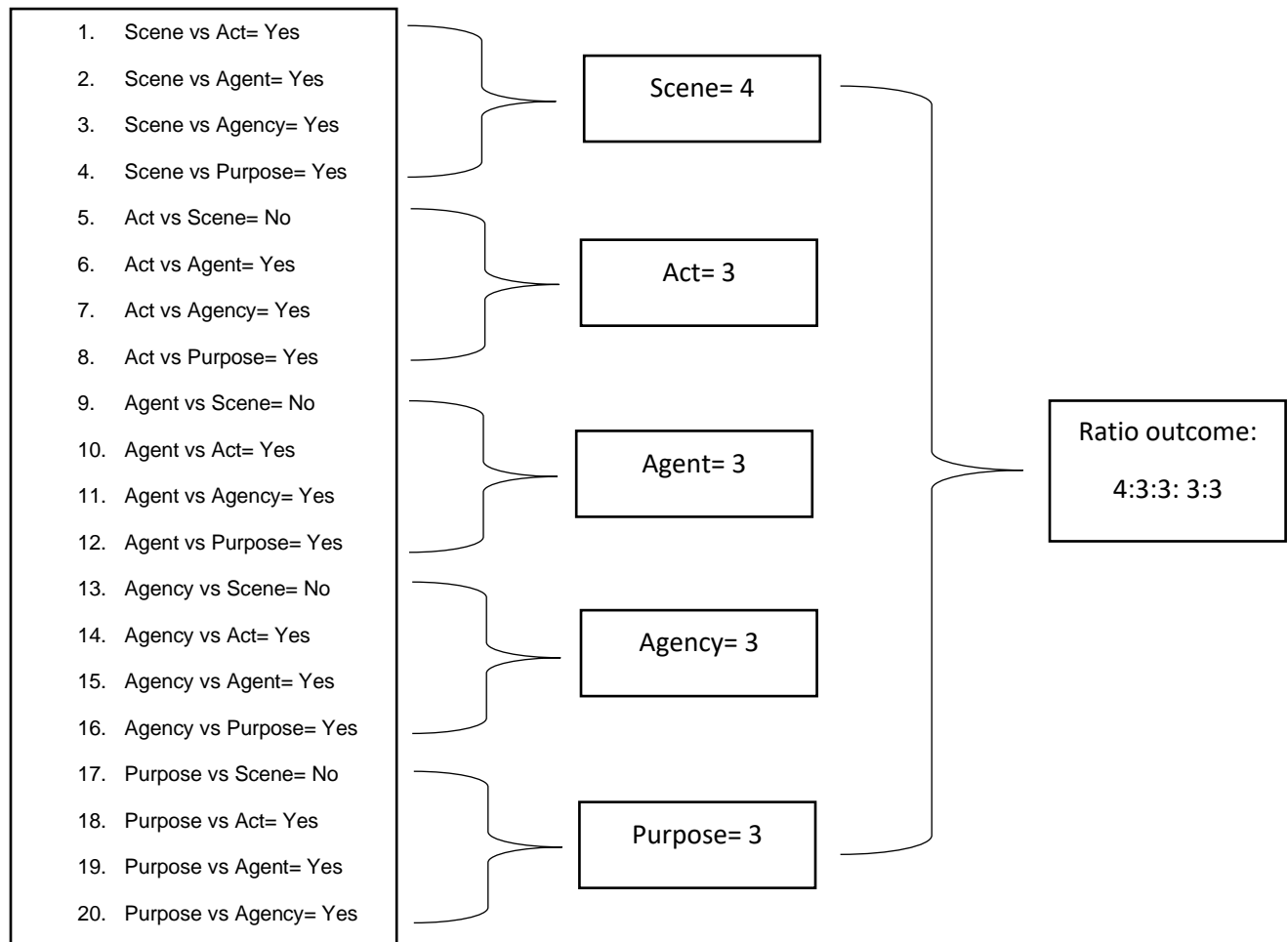


Figure 5: A diagram of the pentadic analysis process on Mbeki's 1999 SONA

As illustrated in Figure 5 above, the number of *yes* for each pentadic pair determines the motive of the rhetor. Like Mandela's speech, the outcome of the pentadic analysis of Mbeki's speech showed *Scene* to have four *yes*, *Act* had three *yeses*, *Agent* had three *yeses*, *Agency* had three *yeses*, and *Purpose* had three *yeses*. As such, the ratio was 4:

3: 3: 3: 3. In the case of this speech's ratio analysis, the pentadic element *Scene* is an element with the most yeses out of all the other pentadic elements. Therefore, the pentadic element *Scene* is the motive of Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech. As in Mandela's speech, it is difficult to overlook the trend that the other four pentadic elements are equal and almost equal to the pentadic element *Scene*. What this means continued to fascinate the researcher, and its meaning will be accounted for in the discussion chapter because it is a finding worth discussing.

#### **4.4 JACOB ZUMA'S 2009-06-03 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS SPEECH**

Equally, in President Jacob Zuma's 2009 State of the Nation Address, each of the five pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency*, *Scene* and *Purpose* was labelled internally from the speech. The pentadic element *Act* comes first. In this speech, *Act* was labelled as 'celebration and protection'. The labelling of the pentadic element *Act* can be supported by the statements extracted below from the rhetor's speech.

Today's occasion is a celebration of what makes this democracy work. It is also a celebration of our culture of continuity and collective responsibility.

We take as our starting point the framework for South Africa's response to the international economic crisis, concluded by government, labour and business in February this year. We must act now to minimise the impact of this downturn on those most vulnerable.

It is paramount to note that the *Act* is dual in Zuma's 2009 SONA speech: it is a celebration and protection. As shown by the excerpt above, the rhetor calls for celebrating what makes democracy work and responding to the international economic crisis. So, the *Act* is unique from the previous two speeches because it is dual. In one way, the rhetor calls for celebration, which can be considered a pleasant expression. The previous two speeches called for building a broken nation, which is not a pleasant expression. If this means South Africa was beginning to see the light when Zuma assumed power in 2009? it remains a point of discussion for the next chapter. In the other way, the rhetor calls for protection of what is being celebrated from the impact of the 2008 global economic crisis.

Before moving to the next pentadic element, it is important to state that though the *Act* is dual, the rhetor stressed more the “protection” than the “celebration”.

Following the labelling of the pentadic element *Act*, the element *Agent* was then labelled from an internal pentadic point of view. The element *Agent* was labelled as *Government* because of the emphasis that the rhetor placed on the *Government* in relation to the performance of the *Act*. The rhetor statement in the speech below supports this.

In pursuit of these goals, our *government* has identified 10 priority areas, which form part of our Medium-Term Strategic Framework for 2009 to 2014.

The Industrial Development Corporation has developed a programme to fund companies in distress. We will also ensure that *government* buys more goods and services locally, without undermining our global competitiveness or pushing up costs beyond acceptable level.

The main goal of *government* for the medium term is to ensure that our foreign relations contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to sustainable economic growth and development.

Notwithstanding the above, one certainly cannot ignore that the rhetor does not overlook the need for partnership, which Mbeki spoke of, between the government and nongovernmental stakeholders regarding the performance of the *Act*. This is clear from the below utterances of the rhetor on the speech.

It is more important now than ever that we work in partnership on a common programme to respond to this crisis.

Nevertheless, in his speech, the rhetor still acknowledges the “government” as the key player in the performance of the *Act*. Zuma's case differs from President Mbeki's as he emphasised the “partnership between government and external stakeholders” to pursue the *Act* much more than Zuma in their speech. Hence, the *Agent* was labelled as *Government* due to the overwhelming emphasis that the rhetor puts on '*Government*' as the leading player concerning the *Act*, especially in the case of 'responding to the international economic crisis'.

The pentadic element *Agency* was labelled 'Medium-Term Strategic Framework for 2009 to 2014'. The rhetor's suggestion of the framework mentioned above, as per the content of his speech, is the tool that guides the Government in performing the *Act*. The below statement supports the labelling of *Agency* as extracted from the content of the rhetor's speech.

In pursuit of these goals, our government has identified 10 priority areas, which form part of our *Medium-Term Strategic Framework for 2009 to 2014*.

Even though the rhetor suggests the *Agency* to be *Medium-Term Strategic Framework for 2009 to 2014* from the content of the speech, it is paramount to indicate that the *Agency* is similar to past *agencies like the RDP & GEAR* from Mandela and Mbeki because Zuma's *Medium Term Strategic Framework for 2009 to 2014* also focuses on amongst other things alleviating poverty, which the *RDP and GEAR* aspired to overcome as well. However, what distinguishes the *Agency* in Zuma's case from his predecessors is the *Scene*, which its description follows in a subsequent section. This change in the naming of the *agency* for Zuma is crucial to highlight because the study may have valuable insights to draw for addressing its objective.

The pentadic element *Scene* was labelled as *Unprecedented global economic downturn*. While the *Scene* is labelled as an *Unprecedented global economic downturn*, this does not disregard the fact that socio-economic challenges are still presumably indicators of the *Scene* as espoused in Mandela and Mbeki's speeches. Here, the *Unprecedented global economic downturn* appears to be the main focus of the rhetor, yet without neglecting the perennial socio-economic challenges of the country as they seem to have continued to be central to the scene *Unprecedented global economic downturn*. In other words, while the rhetor devises the *Scene* to center around the *Unprecedented global economic downturn*, the past socio-economic matter inherited from his predecessors are in-calculated to the *Unprecedented global economic downturn* as far as the *Scene* is concerned. The below excerpt taken from the content of the rhetors speech supports the labelling of the element *Scene*.

The past year has seen the *global economy enter a period of crisis unprecedented in recent decades*. While South Africa has not been affected to

the extent that a number of other countries have, its effects are now being clearly seen in our economy. We have entered a recession.

The *economic downturn* will affect the pace at which our country is able to address the social and economic challenges it faces. But it will not alter the direction of our development.

From the above excerpt, while the pentadic element *Scene* is centred around the 2008 global economic crisis, the country's past challenges are part and parcel of the rhetor's defined *Scene*.

As indicated earlier, the term *Scene* can be used interchangeably with 'context', which holds various meanings like time, space, situation, or event, to mention a few. In the case of this speech, the *Scene* entails an event, time, or situation being 'the 2008 global economic crisis'.

Finally, the pentadic element '*Purpose*' was labelled as 'To minimise the impact of the global economic downturn'. The rhetor's content of the speech below supports labelling the pentadic element *Purpose*.

We take as our starting point the framework for South Africa's *response to the international economic crisis*, concluded by government, labour and business in February this year. We must *act now to minimise the impact of this downturn* on those most vulnerable.

We make a commitment that working together we will speed up economic growth and transform the economy to create decent work and sustainable livelihoods.

In addition, Madiba taught us well that this country belongs to all, black and white. Working for reconciliation and unity will remain important as we move forward.

From the above sections of the speech, it is clear that the rhetor stressed minimisation of the aftermath of the global economic crisis in South Africa as the *Purpose* for performing the *Act* without neglecting perennial issues like 'reconciliation and unity'. So, the rhetor

emphasises the minimisation of the impact of the global economic downturn but also highlights that South Africa's perennial socio-economic and political matters were still a concern of the new dispensation since Mandela's era.

The last step in the speech analysis involved a pentadic ratio analysis. Here, the researcher systematically paired the five pentadic elements with one another in their labelled form. The pairing led to twenty ratios. In this step, the task was to determine *yes* or *no* or *unclear* if the first pentadic element influences or controls the pentadic element paired with in a certain way.

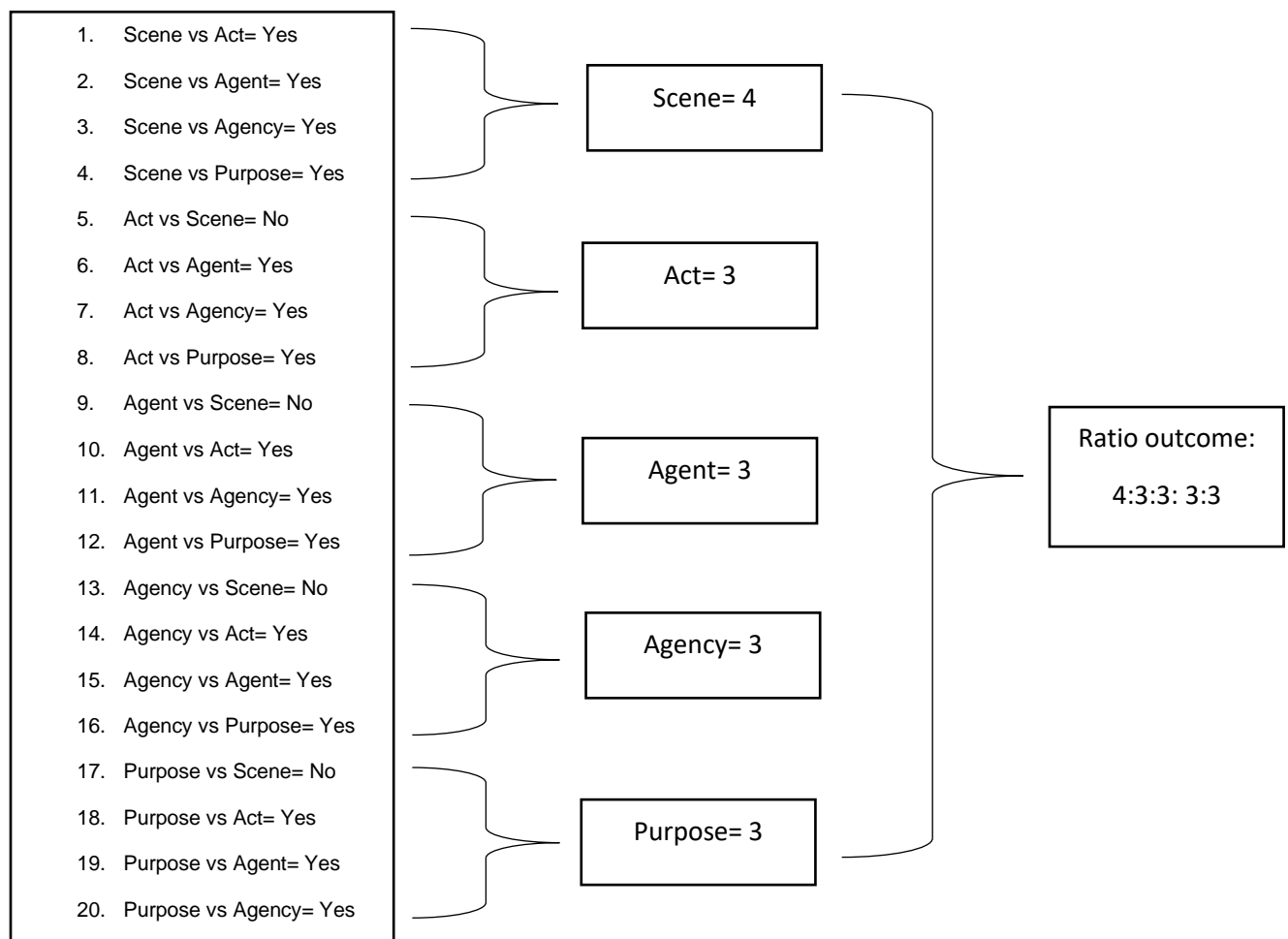


Figure 6: A diagram of the pentadic analysis process on Mbeki's 1999 SONA

As illustrated in Figure 6 above, the pentadic ratio analysis resulted in *Scene* having four *yes*, *Act* with three *yes*, *Agent* with three *yes*, *Agency* with three *yes*, and *Purpose* with three *yes*. As such, the ratio for this speech was 4: 3: 3: 3: 3. Considering this, the pentadic

element *Scene* emerged as the element with the most *yes*. This outcome means that the pentadic element *Scene* emerged as the motive of the speech, as in the other speeches already discussed. Noteworthy, the trend where the *Scene* appears dominant while the other pentadic elements are equal and closely equal to the *Scene* prevailed even in this speech. This concretises its meaningfulness, which the discussion chapter will interpret and discuss. The following section discusses the last speech in the analysis.

#### **4.5 CYRIL RAMAPHOSA'S 2018-02-16 STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS SPEECH**

The pentadic analysis of President Ramaphosa's 2018 State of the Nation Address also began with internal pentadic labelling of the pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency*, *Scene* and *Purpose*. The pentadic element *Act* was labelled *Renewal and hope* mainly because the rhetor's speech suggests so within the speech. This case is evident when the rhetor states the following.

We honour this son, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and this daughter of the African soil, Albertina Sisulu, in a year of change, *in a year of renewal, in a year of hope*. We honour them not only in word, but, more importantly, in direct action towards the achievement of their shared vision of a better society.

In light of the above, the rhetor shows that his assumption of power in 2018 had to come with 'renewal and hope'. Amongst other occasions within the speech, these sentiments also appear towards the end of the rhetor's speech, as shown below.

Our task, as South Africans, is to seize this moment of *hope and renewal*, and to work together to ensure that it makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our people.

Through the above excerpts from the speech, the rhetor presents the *Act* as *hope and renewal*. This label for the *Act* in Ramaphosa's 2018 SONA is exciting, because it suggests something valuable about the rhetor's SONA over two decades since the demise of apartheid.

The second pentadic element, *Agent*, was labelled *President Ramaphosa*. Despite the rhetor's inability to overlook the “united people's action” or “national task” that Mbeki spoke of in pursuing his *Act*. Here, it is worthwhile clarifying that the rhetor does show the need for partnership between government and nongovernmental actors in the performance of the *Act* as shown below.

This year, we will be initiating measures to set the country on a new path of growth, employment and transformation. We will do this by getting social partners in our country to collaborate in building a social compact on which we will create drivers of economic recovery.

*We have to build further on the collaboration with business and labour to restore confidence and prevent an investment downgrade once more. Tough decisions have to be made to close our fiscal gap, stabilise our debt and restore our state-owned enterprises to health.*

In the speech, *President Ramaphosa* seems to be an *Agent*, because the speech presents him as the driver of the *Renewal and Hope*. Ramaphosa, as the administrator of 'Renewal and hope', is evident from how the rhetor emphasises *I will* in his speech, as shown below.

During the course of the next few months, *I will* visit every national department to engage with the senior leadership of all our government departments to ensure that the work of government is effectively aligned. *I will* also find time to meet with provincial and local government leaders to ensure that the state, in its entirety, responds to the pressing needs of our people.

To this end, *I will* therefore be establishing a Youth Working Group that is representative of all young South Africans to ensure that our policies and programmes advance their interests.

While the above supports the case of labelling the element *Agent* as '*President Ramaphosa*', it is also imperative to highlight the complexity of the *Agent* in this speech. The “Government, including other actors and ordinary citizens” are presented as individuals who must discharge what is required to perform the *Act* of 'Hope and renewal'.

Considering this, it is easy to think that the *Agent* is the *Government* or *Jointly the Government and the people*. As shown above, while the government office bearers and people are dischargers of the work, President Ramaphosa appears to be the driver and custodian of the process. It is important to note that general knowledge about government and governance in South Africa does not inform the label's logic. Instead, it is the speech's content since Ramaphosa emphasised "I will".

Following this was the pentadic element *Agency*, labelled as 'the legacy and memory of Nelson Mandela and other historical figures of the nation'. In this regard, the rhetor uses South African historical icons to instigate the *Act of Hope and renewal*. This approach by the President is evident from the excerpt below of the speech.

We honour this son, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and this daughter of the African soil, Albertina Sisulu, in a year of change, in a year of renewal, in a year of hope.

We honour them not only in word, but, more importantly, in direct action towards the achievement of their shared vision of a better society. We should honour Madiba by putting behind us the era of discord, disunity and disillusionment.

We should put behind us the era of diminishing trust in public institutions and weakened confidence in our country's leaders.

We should put all the negativity that has dogged our country behind us because a new dawn is upon us and a wonderful dawn has arrived. It is a new dawn that is inspired by our collective memory of Nelson Mandela and the changes that are unfolding. As we rid our minds of all negativities, we should reaffirm our belief that South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

Considering the above, it is evident that the rhetor relied on respected South African figures as an *Agency* that assists in performing the *Act of Hope and renewal*. Furthermore, in the closing remarks of the rhetor's speech, this notion further supports the label *Agency*.

We have done it before and we will do it again – bonded by our common love for our country, resolute in our determination to overcome the challenges that lie ahead and convinced that by working together we will build the fair and just, and decent society to which Nelson Mandela dedicated his life.

As I conclude, allow me to recall the words of the late great Bra Hugh Masekela.

In his song, 'Thuma Mina', he anticipated a day of renewal, of new beginnings.

Ramaphosa's predecessors clearly stated the framework, such as RDP, GEAR and Medium strategic framework for 2009–2014 that would help pursue the *Act* in their respective speeches. President Ramaphosa presents a historical figure's legacy as something that must lead the *Act of Hope and renewal*.

The pentadic element *Scene* was labelled as 'mistrust and weakening confidences in the leadership'. The labelling of the element can be supported by the excerpts from the speech below.

We should put behind us the *era of diminishing trust in public institutions and weakened confidence in our country's leaders*. We should put all the negativity that has dogged our country behind us because a new dawn is upon us and a wonderful dawn has arrived

Our most *grave and most pressing challenge is youth unemployment*.

Many of our *state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are experiencing severe financial, operation and governance challenges*, which has impacted on the performance of the economy and placed pressure on the fiscus.

This is the year in which we will turn the *tide of corruption in our public institutions*.

The state we are in as a nation is that while poverty declined significantly following the democratic breakthrough of 1994, we have *seen reverses in recent years*. Poverty levels rose in 2015, unemployment has gone up and *inequality has persisted*.

On 16 December last year, former President Jacob Zuma announced that government would be phasing in fully *subsidised free higher education and training for poor and working-class South Africans over a five-year period*.

The above statements from the speech account for the labelling of *Scene*. As seen above, the label for the pentadic element *Scene* encapsulates a wide range of the perennial and new socio-political and economic issues of the country. However, what is of high note is ‘diminishing trust in public institutions and weakened confidence in our country’s leaders’ Lastly, the pentadic element ‘Purpose’ was labelled as the ‘Realisation of Mandela’s vision of a democratic, just, and equitable society’. The labelling of the element *Purpose* in this way is informed by the content of the speech, as shown below.

We have dedicated this year 2018 to his memory and we will devote our every action, every effort, and every utterance to the realisation of his vision of a democratic, just and equitable society.

Guided by his example, we will use this year to reinforce our commitment to ethical behaviour and ethical leadership.

In celebrating the centenary of Nelson Mandela, we are not merely honouring the past, we are building the future and particularly the future that Mandela envisaged.

The above statements from the rhetor’s speech show that the primary purpose of the ‘Renewal and Hope’ *Act is to realise* Mandela’s vision of South Africa. This situation is interesting because it reveals crucial insights about the rhetor and his speech decades after apartheid.

The second step after labelling the pentadic element on the speech involved an analysis of the pentadic ratios. A systematic pairing of all the five pentadic elements in their labelled form with one another produced twenty pairs. To figure out the dominant element, the researcher asked against each pair if *yes* or *no* or *unclear* the first element influences or controls the nature of the other element paired with in some way.

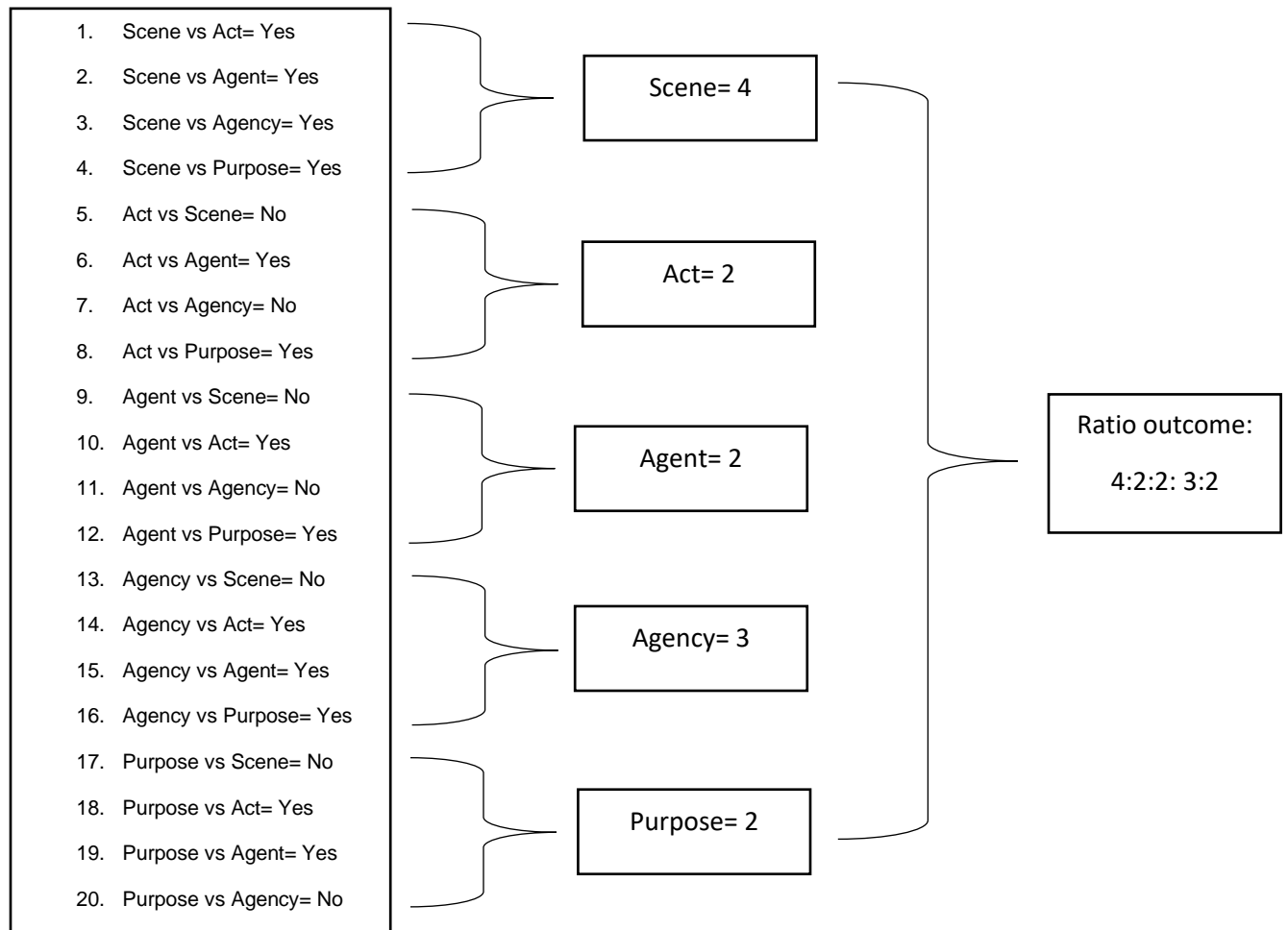


Figure 7: A diagram of the pentadic analysis process on Ramaphosa’s 2018 SONA

As illustrated in Figure 7 above, the process yielded *Scene* having four yes, *Act* having two yes, *Agent* having two yes, *Agency* having three yes, and *Purpose* having two yeses. As such, the ratio for this speech analysis was 4: 2: 2: 3: 2. This meant that the pentadic element *Scene* had four yes, making it the dominant pentadic element in the speech. It is worth highlighting that this is the only speech with a different ratio outcome from the previous speeches. This could also speak volumes about the rhetor and the country two decades after the demise of apartheid. So, the discussion chapter will explain this significant change in South Africa’s SONA post-apartheid. The following table summarises the findings of the study.

Table 3: A summary of the results of a pentadic analysis of four democratically elected South African Presidents' First State Of The Nation Addresses post-apartheid

Rhetor	Labels for the pentadic elements	Pentadic ratio	Dominant pentadic element and the number of 'yes'.
Nelson Mandela	<p>Act – Creating a people-centred society.</p> <p>Agent – Government of National Unity</p> <p>Agency – Reconstruction and Development Plan</p> <p>Scene – A newly democratic South Africa with various social, economic and political challenges.</p> <p>Purpose – To expand human fulfilment and extension of freedom.</p>	<p>Act: Agent: Agency: Scene: Purpose</p> <p>3: 3: 3: 4: 3</p>	Scene with 4 yeses
Thabo Mbeki	<p>Act – Building a caring society</p> <p>Agent – Government and the people</p> <p>Agency – Reconstruction and Development Plan &amp; Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme</p> <p>Scene – South Africa grappling with pervasive social, economic and political issues</p>	<p>Act: Agent: Agency: Scene: Purpose</p> <p>3: 3: 3: 4: 3</p>	Scene with 4 yeses

	<p>Purpose – To improve the quality of life, reconcile and build a nation.</p>		
Jacob Zuma	<p>Act – celebration and protection</p> <p>Agent – Government</p> <p>Agency – Medium-term Strategic Framework for 2009 to 2014</p> <p>Scene – Unprecedented global economic downturn</p> <p>Purpose – To minimise the impact of the global economic downturn</p>	<p>Act: Agent: Agency: Scene: Purpose</p> <p>3: 3: 3: 4: 3</p>	Scene with 4 yeses
Cyril Ramaphosa	<p>Act – Hope and Renewal</p> <p>Agent – President Ramaphosa</p> <p>Agency – The legacy and memory of Nelson Mandela and other historic figures of the nation</p> <p>Scene – Mistrust and weakening confidence in the leadership.</p> <p>Purpose – Realisation of Mandela’s vision of a democratic, just, and equitable society</p>	<p>Act: Agent: Agency: Scene: Purpose</p> <p>2: 2: 3: 4: 2</p>	Scene with 4 yeses

## 4.6 CONCLUSION

This study sought to decipher the underlying motive of the four democratically elected President's first SONA post-apartheid. The results of the pentadic analysis of the four speeches above show the success of the study in addressing its objective. The study found the pentadic element *Scene* as the dominant element for all four speeches. Foss (1989) states that the dominant pentadic element is the motive of the speech. Therefore, the underlying motive of the four speeches is *Scene*, which is labelled differently for each analysed speech. The analysis yielded an unexpected finding where the other four pentadic elements are equal and almost equal to the pentadic element *Scene*, which may suggest something interesting about the method and the speeches. This was the case for only the first three speeches while Ramaphosa's speech showed a different case. The next chapter thoroughly discusses and interprets the above-presented findings concerning the objective of the investigation.

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter uncovered the underlying motive of the South African Presidents' first State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid. Through a rigorous pentadic analysis of four SONA speeches, the study reveals the pentadic element *scene* as the predominantly controlling factor across the four SONA speeches, which the study considers the underlying motive of the South African Presidents' first State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid. In this discussion chapter, the focus is on constructing meaning of the findings to achieve a deepened understanding of the motive of SONA in post-apartheid South Africa.

The chapter organises the discussion of the findings in ascending order of the speeches, from Mandela's 1994 SONA to Ramaphosa's 2018 SONA. The interpretation plunges into comparing the findings with previous knowledge or literature on the topic, highlighting convergencies, novelty and divergences. Furthermore, the interpretation explores the explanation of the findings in terms of the theoretical framework for an in-depth understanding of the motive of SONA. To a greater degree, the discussion examines and reveals patterns, trends and relationships within the findings of the pentadic analysis of the four speeches. Additionally, the chapter indicates the implications of the study's findings for each speech in the practical world. Then, the discussion shows the study's limitations and recommendations for future research. A conclusive paragraph at the end sums up the study.

### 5.2 PRESIDENT MANDELA'S 1994-04-27 SONA

The pentadic analysis helped to achieve the study's objective by unveiling the pentadic element *scene* as the motive of President Nelson Mandela's first State of the Nation Address. The *scene*, labelled as *A newly democratic South Africa with various social, economic and political challenges* suggests that in 1994, South Africa had attained

democracy, but its state was unpleasant. In the speech, Mandela portrays the country as a new democracy faced with various and intense sociopolitical and economic challenges like the need for reconciliation, poverty and immigrants' illegalities like drug trafficking, to mention a few. The intention behind unveiling the motive of SONA post-apartheid was to develop a deeper understanding of presidential rhetoric in South Africa in the post-apartheid era. The insights about Mandela's rhetoric in the 1994 SONA are unpacked in the subsequent paragraphs.

Literature shows that in South Africa, SONAs allow the Presidents to communicate the state of the country and the government's agenda (Ngidi et al., 2022:74; Sibiyi, 2017:2; Kotze, 2020:448). As such, this study holds that Mandela's emphasis on the *scene* in his 1994 SONA was to communicate the state of the country as he assumed power in the new democratic dispensation. South Africa's history shows that between 1948 and 1980, the country experienced apartheid, where people were unjustly segregated and ruled according to their race. During the apartheid defiance period, many blacks, coloureds, Indians and some white people were arrested, if not killed, by the apartheid regime. During the negotiations for democracy, political violence brought the country close to a civil war due to political clashes between the ANC, IFP and NP. International actors played an important role in bringing about democracy in South Africa. As such, this study holds that 1994 began a new chapter for South Africa. Indeed, after a struggle against apartheid, it is expected that the 1994 SONA would have had to communicate and emphasise the *scene* for the benefit of all the people in South Africa, the diaspora, Africa, and the globe.

SONAs do not just end by communicating the state of the country. Sikanku (2022:177) claims that SONAs can strengthen democracy and demonstrate accountability as well as transparency. SONAs can also unite people, deepen national values and inspire a national cause and patriotism. So, Mandela's SONA sought not only to communicate the country's state. Instead, the speech had an underlying agenda pertinent to the *scene*. A possible explanation for the predominance of the *scene* is that the speech revolves around the *scene*. However, the other pentadic elements were closely as vital as the *scene* because the rhetor has a purpose which cannot be achieved without stressing in

the speech what should be done about the scene, by who, how, where and why. This explains why the other four pentadic elements, *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose*, were found to be almost equal to the pentadic element, *Scene* in the speech.

A past critical discourse analysis study of President Mandela's 1994 and 1999 SONAs shows that President Mandela used rhetorical devices like the pronoun "we", rhetorical questions, and creative tenses to present his political ideologies and convince South Africans of the achievements and challenges of the new democratic South Africa. (Ngidi et al., 2022). The present study's findings align with these past research findings in that the studies respectively show that the *scene* was a central element in the 1994 speech. The present study takes the scene as a newly democratic South Africa with various social, economic and political challenges like reconciliation, poverty and immigration. In complement, the past study also suggests the newly democratic state's challenges and achievements as an element to which Mandela paid much attention to in the speech. This alignment between the present study's findings and past research is also evident in Professor Cawood's research, showing that Mandela's rhetorical imprint during his presidential period is characterised by his focus on reconciliation and reconstruction of South Africa, post-apartheid (Cawood, 2011).

From a critical discourse analysis point of view, past research uncovers rhetorical devices like the pronoun "we" and other devices as rhetorical means that the rhetor used to convince his audience of the scene (Ngidi et al., 2022). There seems to be a growing narrative in the literature that world leaders like President Mahama Dramani John of Namibia, Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines, Mandela and Mbeki of South Africa tend to rely on pronouns like "we" to persuade their SONA audiences (Chaka and Adanlawo, 2023; Fenyi and Sapaty, 2021; Salvaleon, 2018:140). The present study conceives rhetoric as the use of language as a symbolic means for inducing cooperation in an audience, which by nature is a symbol-using body (Bokor, 2014:170). So, the rhetor employed rhetorical devices in the 1994 SONA to induce the cooperation of his audience with respect to the *Scene*. The present study holds that the rhetorical devices or pronoun "we" spoken about are symbolic means of inducing cooperation from Mandela's audience, which is naturally a symbol-using entity.

In the ancient direct democracy of the city-state of Greece called Athens, any man who wanted to occupy a public office and lead people in a certain way had to take a public platform and persuade the people (Landauer, 2019:7). As such, rhetorical knowledge became an essential skill. The 1994 SONA speech resembles this ancient democratic governmental activity in that, as a leader, Mandela took a public platform to persuade the audience of the state of South Africa as it entered a new dispensation. The present study's findings suggest that the rhetor portrayed the *scene* as unpleasant. Therein, put forward that the “government of national unity” must “create a people-centred society” using the “reconstruction and development plan” for “expansion and extension of freedom” in South Africa. So, just as during the fifth century in Athenian democracy, Mandela sought to induce the cooperation of the people to change the unpleasant 1994 status quo.

Mandela’s ideal post-apartheid South Africa can be well represented by his infamous Rivonia Trail quote below.

*During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination, I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die (Mtumane & Bobelo, 2022:65).*

The above quote can be said to represent Mandela's envisaged sociopolitical and economic state of South Africa post-apartheid. This study’s findings revealed that when President Mandela assumed power in 1994, the state of South Africa was characterised mainly by numerous socio-economic issues like poverty, racism, *a severe need for reconciliation, [...] and foreigners' illegal activities like drug trafficking*. As such, this study firmly holds that President Mandela required the public's cooperation to build a nation that reflected his desired post-apartheid South African attributes.

In fact, this present study imagines a scenario that, perhaps before anything else, the elephant in the room for President Mandela in 1994 was the cooperation of the people to the new societal order. Zitzke (2017:205) indicates that the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), among other right-wing groups, did not want apartheid to

end. Moreover, political violence persisted until 1995 (Kaufman, 2012:516). As fragile and as much of an infant the democracy was, it had to endure such challenges. Literature on SONA analysis in Africa seems to set out that post-independence, peace-loving democratic African Presidents (Mandela, Akufo-Addo) dedicate tremendous energy to the sociopolitical wellness of their State rather than radical economic pursuance (Chaka and Adanlawo, 2023; Sikanku, 2022:184-186). So, if anything was of priority for President Mandela in 1994, it must have been the cooperation of the people to build his ideal democratic South Africa.

The history of classical rhetoric shows that Plato introduced ethics into rhetorical practices. VIDAUSKYTĖ (2022:248) calls this kind of rhetoric “virtuous rhetoric” and defines it as a kind of rhetoric that demonstrates a link between logic, ethics and politics. Mandela’s rhetoric in the 1994 SONA speech is virtuous in the sense that within the speech, the rhetor attempted to induce an audience’s cooperation for the betterment of the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa post-apartheid. While doing so, the rhetor exhibits logic by using the state of the country *scene* post-apartheid to persuade the audience of his political stance on the affairs of the state and its ideal future. This study argues that this goal is ethical: to build a peaceful and united democratic country. Indubitably, it is, by extension, a commendable act of rhetoric. The present study supposes that Plato would be proud of this kind of rhetoric in a democratic setting.

It would be uncalled for to set an impression with the complement in the preceding paragraph that the rhetoric of Mandela's 1994 SONA speech succeeded exceptionally in inducing the cooperation of his audience to building his desired post-apartheid South Africa. Learning from previous research, the Philippine President Rodrigo’s rhetoric with her SONA speeches attempting to convince the Philippine people of the need to change the system of government from unitary to federalism failed because the Philippines traditionally did not believe in federalism (Ladia, 2022). Therefore, the speech’s rhetoric does not imply or equate to the audience's automatic cooperation to the President's desires. The point is that the current study has argued in the preceding paragraph that Mandela's rhetoric in the 1994 SONA speech was a demonstration of virtuous rhetoric and is commendable. The above should not set an impression that the rhetoric yielded

optimal cooperation of the audience in building his desired post-apartheid South Africa, as previous rhetorical analysis of the Philippine President Rodrigo's SONA shows that rhetoric in a speech does not necessarily guarantee the success of the speech in changing the mindset of the audience, especially when there is lack of identification between the leader's idea and the audience.

Judging if Mandela's rhetoric succeeded is not of primary interest of this study. Notwithstanding, Mandela's rhetoric in the 1994 SONA speech cannot have gone without leaving its mark on the *scene* of the dawn of democracy in South Africa if noting and understanding his role as the chief representative of anti-apartheid parties during the CODESA negotiations (Manikandan, 2019:87). Then, Mandela had likely established what Kenneth Burke in his dramatism theory calls "substance" or "identification" to have enabled his 1994 SONA speech to leave its mark at least to the audience that could identify with him and his ideals. Learning from Aristotle's artistic proof 'ethos', which speaks to the character as a means of persuasion (Dumbrava, 2019:26). Proponents of Aristotle can say that Mandela had established an appealing character, which must somehow have enabled him to persuade the public through the 1994 SONA speech.

In Burke's terms, the substance or identification spoken of in the above paragraph ensures persuasion, and without it, persuasion cannot occur (Widiasari, 2022; Tendean, 2022; Lambert & Orbe, 2019:137; Tendean, 2022:238). According to Widiasari (2022), substance or identification speaks to rapport regarding characteristics, experiences, beliefs [...] and attitudes shared between the speaker or rhetor and the audience, enabling persuasion. The current study acknowledges that the commonality, as Burke suggests, between the speaker and the audience is paramount for persuasion to occur. However, the identification construct is somewhat deficient if needed to explain the relationship between persuasion and SONA in a post-apartheid democratic setting in Africa. For example, Mandela strongly identified with a certain segment of society, but also had a strong lack of identification with a certain segment of society. As such, the theory fails to account for what happens when the audience is heterogenous since, according to the theory, persuasion depends on identification.

The weakness of the identification theoretical construct is that it cannot account for something important such as that. As much as persuasion depends on the shared commonalities between the speaker/rhetor and the audience, persuasion is also heavily dependent on the speaker or rhetor's rhetorical repertoire. This study defines rhetorical repertoire as the speaker or rhetor's available total means of persuasion. This conception hangs closely with Aristotle's conception of rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering all of the available means of persuasion in any particular case" (Hauser, 2018). So, persuasion is likely not going to occur or will occur to a limited degree if there is a mismatch between the speaker/rhetor's embedded rhetoric in the speech and his/her rhetorical repertoire. For example, one can craft an excellent rhetorical speech, but if the person is immoral, chances of persuading the audience are less than they would have been when the person is moral and holds an excellent speech in a defined context.

Furthermore, research in the recent past shows that 30 years into democracy, with the help of the 1996 constitution, South Africa has enjoyed a functional democracy but is facing severe challenges (Glaser, 2016). To this point, Stauffer (2016:306) postulates that a general agreement exists among scholars that though the newly formed post-apartheid government managed to keep public participation in growing the infant democracy, moving onward, this participation has shrunk or showed a loss of momentum. This democracy, which the people continued to keep alive through perhaps their votes, faces severe challenges like service delivery unrest (Glaser, 2016). Therefore, the rhetoric of Mandela's 1994 SONA did leave its mark on reforming the sociopolitical and economic life of the post-apartheid South African settlement. However, it is a mark that cannot be said to have yielded his desired South Africa entirely during his term of office.

According to Foss (2014:1), nowadays, society often takes rhetoric as merely bombastic words from politicians with no substance. Mandela's rhetoric in the 1994 SONA speech challenges this misleading societal belief of rhetoric as mere political statements with no substance, mainly because Mandela's case shows that rhetoric can simultaneously be logical, political and ethical. In other words, rhetoric is not necessarily flattery and foul if used for moral purposes and understood correctly. Instead, it is a powerful tool that can

induce an audience's cooperation in instilling a democratic sociopolitical and economic order.

Foss (1986:376) highlights that one must not be surprised if the results of a pentadic analysis show two pentadic elements having an equal number of *yeses*, as this means that the rhetor's motive spreads across the elements. Neither should be the case if no pentadic element emerges prominently, because that suggests something interesting about the rhetor's motive; this may mean the rhetor failed to understand the situation or the rhetor decided not to emphasise a specific element for some reason(s). Surprisingly, the present study found the pentadic element *scene* to be the dominant pentadic element with 4 *yeses*, while the other elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose* emerged as being equal with one another having 3 *yeses*, making them almost equal to the pentadic element *scene*. Since Foss claims that if the pentadic elements are balanced, that means the rhetor gives equal emphasis to the elements, suggesting that the motive spreads across the elements. In the case of the present study, the *scene* remains the motive of the President, because it holds the greatest emphasis in the speech. The pentadic elements *act*, *agent*, *agency* and *purpose* hold a balanced emphasis in the speech but one which is secondary to the *scene*.

A possible explanation for the above case is that SONA typically stresses the state of the country *Scene*, but then whatever is stressed about the *scene* needs someone as an *Agent* to do something as an (*Act*) using some tools (*Agency*) to achieve the rhetor's desires (*Purpose*) concerning the scene. In terms of Mandela's 1994 SONA, the *scene* was characterised by unappealing and unpleasant sociopolitical and economic issues like reconciliation, poverty and illiteracy needing the government of national unity as an *Agent* to create a people-centred society as an 'act' using the Reconstruction and Development Plan as an *Agency* for bringing about expanded human fulfilment and extended freedom as the *Purpose* of the President. So, the pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose* hold equal importance in the speech, but one which does not supersede the *scene*.

### 5.2.1 Implications for SONA

The current study's finding of the *Scene* as the motive of the 1994 SONA adds an essential aspect to the conception of SONA. According to Ngidi et al (2022:74), Sibiyi (2017:2), and Kotze (2020:448), the State of the Nation Address in South Africa is considered a Parliament-opening annual event affording the President a chance to communicate the state of the country to the nation and setting out priorities and objectives of the government for the year lying ahead. However, outside South Africa, academics have expanded on the conception of SONA by pointing out that SONA can, beyond being informative of the state of a country, stand as a President's way of showing accountability and transparency (Sikanku, 2022:177). In addition, Miranda and Bringula (2021:2) postulate that SONA can also be capitalised on to set the political agenda and sometimes seek pursuance of persuasion as well as the portrayal of the perennial issues and solutions of the problems of the country. Without disregarding the existing scholarship's conception of a SONA, the current investigation contributes to this conception of SONAs by adding that a SONA can also mean a Presidential speech that is fundamentally *scene*-oriented, which a president can use to induce cooperation of the audience to respond to the *scene* as the President desires.

### 5.2.2 Summary

Overall, the above discussion and interpretation of the *Scene* as the motive of Mandela's 1994 SONA speech has brought about an in-depth understanding of this specific SONA speech from a rhetorical point of view. Firstly, the discussion established that the *Scene* was the main factor or controlling element in the design of the 1994 SONA and its rhetoric. Although, the speech revolved around the *scene*, the rhetor's motive is contingent to other four pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose*. Hence, they are almost equal to the pentadic element *scene*, the primary concern of the rhetor. Simply put, in the speech Mandela was concerned with the sociopolitical and economic state of the country as he assumed power in 1994. The findings show that South Africa had attained democracy but suffered from various social, political and economic challenges like reconciliation, immigrant illegalities and poverty. So, he stressed the *Scene*, requiring that the 'government of national unity' must 'create a people-centred society' using the

'reconstruction and development plan' in order to "expand human fulfilment and extend freedom'. Consequently, the study concludes that the rhetoric embroiled in the 1994 SONA speech is 'virtuous' rather than flattery due to its focus on the reformation of South Africa post-apartheid. Additionally, Mandela's rhetoric in the 1994 SONA speech is commendable. It is commendable because rather than seeking to pursue self-serving goals, the discussion suggested that the rhetoric sought to induce cooperation of the post-apartheid South African society in the rhetor's attempt and journey of building a peaceful and equal post-apartheid South Africa for the benefit of all people.

The discussion has shown that even though President Mandela's rhetoric did not yield optimal cooperation of the public in bringing about his entirely desired post-apartheid South Africa, the rhetoric in the 1994 SONA speech left its observable mark on the building of Mandela's desired post-apartheid South Africa. The discussion also revealed that the identification of the theoretical construct of dramatism is deficient in fully explaining presidential rhetoric in SONA of a country with a history of apartheid. As such, its expansion would be invaluable to studying and understanding African presidential communication in-depth. Finally, the interpretation of Mandela's SONA has contributed to the conception of SONA, considering SONA as a scene-oriented speech allowing the President to induce cooperation of the audience regarding the scene. The following section extends the discussion and interpretation of South African SONA by interpreting the 1999 State of the Nation Address results of President Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's successor.

### **5.3 PRESIDENT MBEKI'S 1999-06-25 SONA**

Like President Mandela's 1994 SONA speech, the pentadic analysis of Thabo Mbeki's 1999-06-25 SONA speech revealed the pentadic element *Scene*, labelled 'South Africa grappling with pervasive social, economic and political challenges' as the motive of the speech. In this speech, Mbeki portrays South Africa as facing impermissible levels of crime and violence, corruption, persistent poverty in rural areas, the scourge of HIV & AIDS, racism and sexism, as well as an unemployed and unskilled population, amongst other challenges. Looking closely at these indicators of the *Scene* for the 1999 SONA speech, one can notice that the *scene* for the 1999 SONA only differs a little from the

*Scene* of the 1994 SONA. For example, poverty is a common indicator of the *Scene* between the 1994 and 1999 SONAs, but HIV & AIDS is not. This implies that some of the 1994 challenges persisted from Mandela into Mbeki's administration, yet he also encountered his unique challenges in 1999.

During the discussion of the outcome of a pentadic analysis of President Mandela's 1994 SONA speech, this study postulated that Mandela's rhetoric left its unignorable mark on the rhetorical pursuance of inducing the cooperation of the public in dealing with the sociopolitical and economic challenges of post-apartheid South Africa. The study argued that it would be premature to set an impression that Mandela's rhetoric exceptionally succeeded in inducing public cooperation in dealing with the sociopolitical and economic challenges of post-apartheid South Africa at the dawn of democracy. The finding of the pentadic analysis of Thabo Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech concretises this claim, because it shows that sociopolitical and economic matters like racism and poverty were still prevalent in the social, political and economic life of South Africa, even after the end of Mandela's term of office. So, the rhetoric did not necessarily yield the President's entirely desired post-apartheid South Africa at the end of his tenure.

Ngesi (2020) developed a criticism of Thabo Mbeki's several speeches, including the 1999 SONA, looking at the President's discourse on racism. Ngesi shows that in the discourse of HIV and AIDS around 1999, Mbeki held that Western solutions to South Africa's HIV and AIDS matter must not override inter-African solutions to HIV and AIDS. Mbeki's position and rhetoric on HIV and AIDS were challenged and dragged into the race matters by his political opponent, claiming that Mbeki was using the race card to cover his incompetencies on the HIV and AIDS matter around 1999. What is happening here is that the criticism by Ngesi concerning President Thabo Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech shows that the *Scene* when Mbeki assumed power in 1999 was, amongst other things, characterised by challenges of HIV and AIDS and racism, which this study found to be some of the indicators characterising the *Scene* of the 1999 SONA. Therefore, Ngesi's study supports the current study's finding in Thabo Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech.

Furthermore, Ngesi concluded his criticism of Mbeki's oratory by stipulating that President Mbeki was just interested in creating an open space where all South Africans could openly

engage in discourses like HIV and AIDS as well as racism in post-apartheid South Africa, especially after becoming the President of the country (Ngesi, 2020). Regarding Habermas' principles, what Mbeki was doing was good, because consensus on a problem gives legitimacy to the resolutions (Ngesi, 2020). Considering Ngesi's conclusion, the present study argues that, like his predecessor, Mbeki's motive in the 1999 SONA was to induce audience cooperation in dealing with the sociopolitical and economic life of post-apartheid South Africa in 1999.

One of the propositions of dramatism theory is that without the identification between a speaker and the audience, persuasion cannot occur (Lambert & Orbe, 2019:137; Tendean, 2022:238). In other words, no persuasion could have happened without the identification between Mbeki and the SONA audience. Based on Ngesi's conclusion that Mbeki's oratory sought to establish the openness of the public to matters of HIV and AIDS, it is safe to assume that Mbeki's rhetoric in the 1999 SONA also sought to establish identification between the government, himself, and the public so to achieve the public's cooperation in dealing with the post-apartheid sociopolitical and economic matters of the country like HIV and AIDS. This study praises this rhetorical approach by Mbeki, because without a common and shared interest and attitude between him, his administration, legislature, and the public regarding resolving matters like HIV and AIDS, poverty, and many others, there can be no positive change. For example, if society disregarded Mbeki's proposition of inter-African solutions to HIV and AIDS, then South Africa and others could not have cooperated with the President's desired manner of handling the crisis.

The *Scene* in Mbeki's 1999 SONA shows that some of the sociopolitical and economic indicators of the 1994 *Scene* prevailed into Mbeki's term of office. A possible explanation for the persistence of some sociopolitical and economic challenges like racism and poverty from 1994 to 1999 is a lack of identification between the post-apartheid President and the general public. Interestingly, while in Mandela's 1994 speech analysis, the pentadic element *Agent* was labelled 'government of national unity', in Mbeki's 1999 SONA, the pentadic element *Agent* was labelled 'government and the people'. According to the dramatism theory, the *Agent* is the person who performs the *Act*. It seems clear

that Mandela stressed the GNU to drive positive change in the 1994 scene. However, his successor stresses a collaboration between the 'government and the people' to pursue change in South Africa's pervasive 1999 *Scene*. This development in the 1999 SONA concerning the *Agent* justifies that Mbeki's rhetorical goals sought intensification of the identification or substance between his administration and the public.

Mbeki's ambition for cultivating intense identification between his administration and the public is noticeable if noting that past research by organisations like the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation revealed that the failure of government to fulfil reparation payments, corruption of the State, as well as denial from white people led to increased disillusionment when it comes to matters of reconciliation post-apartheid in South Africa. Moreover, while Mandela's Truth and Reconciliation Commission had a national impact on apartheid in South Africa, competing views exist among South African races about if life was better during apartheid or during democracy (Stauffer, 2016:306). So, by 1999, not everyone was on the same page about the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa and its future. Interestingly, the rhetor clearly understood the scene and crafted the SONA to pursuance of intense identification between the public and the government for realisation of the state-man's desired post-apartheid South Africa.

The lack of maximised identification between the first democratically elected South African President and the public, post-apartheid, should not be surprising if one understands that between 1994 and 1999, the new democratic settlement was still in its infancy. As such, it would have been folly to expect maximum cooperation of the post-apartheid South African public in bringing about a total end to *crime and violence, poverty, racism, [...] and unemployment and unskilled population in South Africa* over five years. The lack of identification is possible if one acknowledges that many people in South Africa lived under an unfulfilling pre-democracy societal order; a societal order that hated multiracialism which, through the *Bantustans Act of 1959* (RSA, 1959), forcefully moved about 3,5 million black people to townships, homelands and rural areas (Evans, 2019:372), according to Vandenbosch (2014:24), creating solid white and small black segregated states.

Anticipating maximum cooperation of the post-apartheid South African public within five years would have been folly if noting that the society endured a societal order for a long time that, through the *Bantu Education Act of 1953* (RSA, 1953), normalised segregated and unequal education for various races (Mhlauli, Salani and Mokotediv, 2015:205; Crawshay-Hall, 2020:14); a societal order that even at higher education level through the *Extension of University Education Act 45 of 1959* (RSA, 1959) established and normalised racially segregated higher education and training (Seabi et al., 2014:68).

It would even be unwise to have expected maximum cooperation of a post-apartheid society in dealing with the *scene* of post-apartheid South Africa in Mandela's era, if noting that when the society attempted defiance of the apartheid rule, more than 8000 people of all races (Africans, Indians, Coloureds and White communists) were arrested and others killed or injured (Rametse, 2016:3); the societal order which in the Sharpeville enabled apartheid police agents to open of fire on protestors who were against apartness. By extension, it was a societal order that enabled the imprisonment of the anti-apartheid leaders; a societal order that in June 1976 enabled the killing of at least 176 pupils by the apartheid police force for protesting Afrikaans as the language of instruction (Chenoweth and Schock, 2015:443). Finally, it would be premature to have expected maximum cooperation of the post-apartheid South African public in dealing with the post-apartheid *scene* if noting that the Afrikaner groups like the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), among other right-wing groups, did not want apartheid to end (Zitzke, 2017:205).

The present study holds that the motive behind Mbeki's 1999 SONA involved the continuation of inducement of cooperation of the post-apartheid public, but also an attempt to enhance identification between the President, government, and the public to deal effectively with the post-apartheid *Scene*. The idea that Mbeki's 1999 SONA continued Mandela's rhetorical goals can be supported by the pentadic analysis of Mbeki's 1999 SONA, which shows the pentadic element *Agency* as 'Reconstruction and Development Plan & Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme'. These are the tools President Mandela's administration determined would lead to his envisaged post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, Mbeki inherited Mandela's tools for positive change, which implies that the 1999 SONA was primarily a continuation of Mandela's goals.

The above position of the present study is also supported by a past critical discourse analysis study indicating that during his tenure, President Mbeki's oratory heavily relied on pronouns like "we" to develop a strong emotional connection with the audience. The President did so to inspire national identity, social relations and national cohesion with the people of South Africa; economic stabilisation enjoyed the least emphasis in the speech (Chaka and Adanlawo, 2023). In light of the connection between the present study's position and these past findings, the present investigation commends the oratory of Mbeki, because the inclusivity of all people in state affairs was the much-needed element in building rapport between the government and the people concerning attitude, culture, and other properties for responding positively to the President's desires. It is this identification, which, in terms of the dramatism theory, can have allowed for the cooperation of the public in dealing effectively with the 1999 post-apartheid *scene* characterised by impermissible levels of crime and violence, corruption, persistent poverty in rural areas, the scourge of HIV & AIDS, perennial racism, and sexism, as well as an unemployed and unskilled population.

Like Mandela's 1994 SONA, the surprising finding where the *Scene* is dominating with 4 *yeses*, whereas the other pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose* are equal, having 3 *yeses* was also observed in the 1999 SONA. Just as indicated in the case of Mandela's 1994 SONA, though the speech gives predominance to the pentadic element *scene*, the other pentadic elements are of secondary importance because they speak to what must happen about the scene, done by who, using what and for what reasons. This trend seems to build the idea that everything else in the SONA speeches revolve around the *scene*. So, the *scene* determines who should do what, how and why.

### **5.3.1 Implications for SONA**

The re-emergence of the pentadic element *Scene* as the motive of the 1999 SONA speech portrays a particular picture and develops a specific understanding of what a State of the Nation Address is by conception, at least in the post-apartheid era in South Africa. According to Kotzé (2019:27), the SONA is considered an annual ritual and political statement of the President, in which he sets a social contract with the nation that highlights the country's fabric. Other views claim that the SONA is a representation of the official

opening of parliament and an event allowing the President to speak with the nation about his priorities and objectives for the new year (Ngidi et al., 2022:74; Sibiyi, 2017:2; Kotze, 2019:448). This study offers a rhetorical perspective concerning the conception of a SONA. In this regard, a SONA is a *Scene*-oriented speech aimed at inducing the audience's cooperation concerning the *Scene*.

Finding *scene* as the motive behind both the 1994 and 1999 SONA speeches concretises previous knowledge about the functions of SONA. Prior research shows that SONA stands as an act of democracy consolidation by displaying transparency and accountability. SONAs can help build and drive a nation towards a common goal and patriotism. SONAs can record a country's perennial issues and solutions (Sikanku, 2022:177; Miranda & Bringula, 2021:2). The continuation of the rhetorical goal of inducing cooperation in the public in the 1999 SONA and reflection of sociopolitical and economic matters observed in the 1994 SONA is a clear indication that while there is pursuance of rhetorical goals, the speeches seem to keep a record of sociopolitical and economic issues of the country as well as their solutions over time.

### **5.3.2 Summary**

The above discussion and interpretation of the *Scene* as the motive of Mbeki's 1999 State of the Nation address has raised a few important points to remember. Firstly, the 1999 SONA was merely a continuation of Mandela's attempt to induce the cooperation of the SONA audience in dealing with the sociopolitical and economic conditions of post-apartheid South Africa. Secondly, the indicators of the *Scene* as the motive of Mbeki's 1999 SONA suggest that Mandela's rhetoric did not necessarily achieve maximum cooperation of his audience during his five-year tenure of office, because the 1999 SONA shows that racism and poverty, among other sociopolitical and economic matters, prevailed after Mandela's tenure. Finally, regarding the dramatism theory, the 1999 SONA seems to have also been interested in optimising identification between the 1999 South African President's government and the audience so that the President could realise the desired post-apartheid South Africa. The following section discusses President Jacob Zuma's 2009 State of the Nation Address findings.

#### 5.4 PRESIDENT ZUMA'S 2009-06-03 SONA

Like the outcome of the pentadic analysis of the other two State of the Nation Addresses of President Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki in 1994 and 1999, the study found that the motive of President Jacob Zuma's 2009 State of the Nation Address was the pentadic element *scene*. However, what is worth noting about the *Scene* in Zuma's 2009 SONA is that the prominent indicator of the *Scene* is a global economic matter, rather than domestic matters, as has been for the previous speeches. Hence, this study labelled the *Scene* for the 2009 State of the Nation Address as an 'unprecedented global economic downturn'. Although the pentadic analysis of President Jacob Zuma's 2009 SONA revealed the *scene* as indicated above, it is still worth noting that this does not mean domestic matters like poverty were now a thing of the past. The case of Zuma only means that the 2009 SONA predominantly stressed the 'global economic downturn' as the *Scene*.

Zuma's 2009 SONA presents a new perspective on the *Scene* of South Africa since 1994. Fourie (2017) indicated that the first eight years of democracy showed signs of hope for development in South Africa. Fourteen years later, the hope for development was blurry. For instance, even during the global economic downturn and weakening of the country's policy environment, the country's economy continued to move at a positive per capita rate, yet still not allowing those at the bottom of the income distribution to climb the economic ladder. Additionally, past research has also found that because of the 1996 constitution, in two decades post-apartheid, South Africa has enjoyed a functional democracy but was still facing serious challenges (Glaser, 2016). In line with these studies, the findings of the present study suggest that even though the 2009 SONA gives predominance to the 'global economic downturn' as the *Scene*, domestic affairs like 'celebrating what has made democracy work and the collaborations' underline that at least in the 2009 SONA, the rhetor had something pleasant to communicate about the country.

The argumentation of the present study in the preceding paragraph aligns with previous research of Zuma's 2009 SONA showing that the President used language to portray a

positive story about South Africa's progress. Simultaneously, downplaying existing challenges and criticism which influenced the audience's perception of his administration and the gains achieved since 1994 (Koba, 2020). So, indeed in 2009, the country was on a good path, but some challenges were still persisting.

If eight years into democracy, South Africa showed signs of development and, in two decades, enjoyed a functional democracy, supposedly, the 2008 global economic crisis had to have been a significant concern for the President, because his failure to respond effectively to the global economic recession was probably going to cause a greater reverse to the development achieved since 1994. So, the motive behind the 2009 SONA was to induce the public's cooperation in mitigating the global economic downturn to preserve the little development achieved since 1994.

The present study holds that giving prominence to the 'global economic downturn' was a demonstration of 'Kairos', meaning the ability to seize the opportune moment to make certain arguments for persuasion (Brazdauskaite, 2020:38). In the case of Zuma's 2009 SONA the rhetor seems having correctly analysed the rhetorical situation. Though facing serious challenges, by 2009, the country was at least showing signs of hope for progress, which is not common in African countries post-independence. By this time, the country had situated itself on the global stage as a key role-player, expected to host a soccer world cup in 2010, just a year after Zuma assumed power. So, focusing immensely on the 'global economic downturn' was to show the audience, particularly international actors, that despite the persistent challenges, South Africa was prepared to participate fully in the sociopolitical and economic activities of the global community.

In the findings chapter, the pentadic element *Act* for Zuma's 2009 SONA was presented as 'celebration and protection'. Regarding the speech analysis, the celebration speaks to 'celebrating unity and what had made democracy work'. As such, it is fair to assume that Mandela and Mbeki's rhetorical goal of eliciting identification or substance between the government and the public had come to some form of fruition going to the beginning of Zuma's administration. This point is logical because, for the first time since 1994, Mbeki's successor communicated something pleasant to the audience: to 'celebrate', which is not necessarily evident in Mbeki and Mandela's speeches. The 'protection' part of the label

for the 2009 *Scene* also shows that some gains had been made since 1994, which Zuma thought must be protected from the aftermath of the 'global economic downturn'.

According to Tatcho (2020:1), unprecedented global crises require immense persuasive leadership to induce the cooperation of the public or face loss of political control. Considering Tatcho's assertion, it can be postulated that Zuma's emphasis on the 'global economic downturn' in 2009 was an attempt to avoid the loss of political power domestically but much more in the global frontiers. Much more internationally, because the country was expected to host a World Cup two years after the 2008 global economic crisis, which assumably could attract massive investments from international investors, tourists, infrastructural development and forge global sociopolitical and economic relationships. Therefore, Zuma's failure to respond effectively to the global economic matter could have hampered the country and the President's political image locally and internationally, leading to the loss of political power. Hence, the 2009 SONA predominantly sought inducement from the audience in response to the 'global economic downturn'.

The literature suggests a narrative that post-independence, African Statesmen prioritise the sociopolitical wellness of their States more than economic matters in their SONAs (Chaka and Adanlawo, 2023; Sikanku, 2022:184-186). Indeed, the primary motives of Mandela and Mbeki align with this perspective, but Zuma's case partly contrasts it. This is so because, at the top, Mandela sought to build a people-centred nation, while Mbeki expanded on that by seeking to build a caring nation. Looking closely at Zuma's case, the attention is directed more to a worldwide economic concern, despite how less directly effectual the phenomenon was to the country. Here, the major concern was an economic dynamic rather than the sociopolitical dynamics of the nation, implying that an African Statesman's prioritisation of issues in SONA depends on the *Scene* when the SONA is to occur.

Another factor contributing to African Statesmen's prioritisation of socio-politics over economic affairs in their SONA is the history of the African man. For example, in 1948, an apartheid government was established in South Africa (Rademeyer, 2014:121; Mnkeni-Saurombe and Zimu, 2015:42). The apartheid government represented

segregation between South Africans signified by the infamous ‘whites only’ and ‘blacks only’ signposts in areas like beaches and government services (Caesar, 2015:29). Furthermore, the apartheid government dictated areas where blacks and white could reside, the jobs they could do and where they could travel (Teeger, 2015:29). However, even before apartheid South Africa went through many years of colonialism. When the country prepared itself for a transition to democracy, it faced violent political clashes between the ANC, IFP and the National Party and others (Mancebo, 2019:52; Mbandlwa and Shezi, 2020:347; Kaufman, 2017:516). So, it is logical that post-independence, the primary concern of the African President will be to address sociopolitical issues affecting the State’s sociopolitical wellness rather than prioritising the economy.

Furthermore, the present study argues that some of the African States, if not many, post-independence, need to deal with the systemic legacy of colonialism and/or apartheid while also needing to build their countries into competitive States in the global economy. Hence, at the dawn of democracy in the 1994 SONA, the rhetor persuades the audience towards building a people-centred nation rather than an economic superpower in Africa or the world. In short, domestic sociopolitical issues like violence, equality, illiteracy, and so on post-independence become urgently concerning, such that economic dynamics become the least concern of the African Statesmen immediately after attaining independence. Zuma’s 2009 SONA seem to suggest that African statesmen aim to build and present their nations to the global actors as a favourable African environment for investments, tourism, and even loans from institutions like the IMF and World Bank. So, rather than building sustainable means of production for economic purposes, the Statesmen can only build a sociopolitically favourable environment for a philanthropist or loaner to invest resources into his country.

Zuma’s distinguishable primary concern about the economy dynamic over his predecessors could be clearer if comparing the pentadic element *Agency* of Mandela and Mbeki with Zuma’s *Agency*. In 1994, Mandela proposed the ‘Reconstruction and Development Plan’ as his *Agency* for achieving his desire ‘free South Africa’. Mbeki inherited the ‘Reconstruction and Development Plan coupled with the Growth, employment and Redistribution Programme’ as his *Agency* for achieving goals like his

predecessor's. Instead of directly inheriting his predecessors' *AGENCY*, Zuma introduced the 'Medium-term Strategic Framework for 2009-2014'. In the 2009 SONA, the rhetor demonstrates how Zuma could not adapt the conventional *Agencies* to his rhetorical goals concerning the 2009 *Scene* considered in this study as an 'unprecedented global economic downturn'. This is because the 'RDP and GERP' were designed as *Agencies* which must be used to respond primarily to domestic affairs of the nation post-apartheid rather than an 'unprecedented global economic downturn'. Moreover, the study also holds that the 'Medium-term Strategic Framework for 2009-2014' is a clear indication of the rhetorical pursuance of cooperation in international actors into believing that despite the global economic crisis, South Africa has a clear plan for remaining a place to direct investments, give loans and continued international relations.

Surprisingly, even though Zuma's 2009 SONA focuses significantly on an 'international economic scene' the trend of the unexpected finding where the other pentadic elements *Act, Agent, Agency and Purpose* emerge closely equal to the pentadic element *Scene* is also observable in Zuma's 2009 SONA. So now, there seems to be concretisation that all the other pentadic elements revolve around the *Scene*, but hold a secondary status if compared to the *Scene*. They are so important that they needed to be closely matched with the *Scene*. This is logical if noting that for President Zuma to minimise the impact of the global economic downturn he needed the government to follow the Medium-Term Strategic Framework for 2009 to 2014 so to protect the gains of the State since 1994 and persuade international actors of the State's friendliness for investments, tourism and so on despite the state of things locally and globally.

#### **5.4.1 Implications for SONAs**

Zuma's 2009 SONA shows that it has predominantly directed attention to an international economic issue or *Scene* and, therefore, focused predominantly on inducing cooperation of international economic actors. Regarding the functions of a SONA, the current investigation contributes that, directly or indirectly, a SONA can influence audiences outside the country. The influence may include change in the behaviour, mindset or perception of foreign nationals, foreign investors, tourists, and the people in the diaspora about the country in relation to the *Scene*. So, SONA can stand as a source of knowledge

about the country's state, positively or negatively influencing investments, partnerships, relationships and tourism.

#### **5.4.2 Summary**

The discussion of Zuma's rhetoric in the 2009 SONA has uncovered that the underlying rhetorical motive of the speech was to induce the cooperation of the SONA audience in mitigating the 'unprecedented global economic downturn' around 2009. It was deduced that when Zuma assumed power, South Africa had made some progress in terms of its social, political and economic well-being compared to 1994. So, the identification that Mandela and Mbeki sought to achieve had, to some degree, been achieved. As such, because of the *scene*, Zuma's 2009 SONA prioritised outward collaborations. This does not mean domestic affairs like fighting poverty were put behind or eradicated. Instead, it means that the President's *Scene* in 2009 sought more attention when he assumed power, since South Africa was expected to host a FIFA World Cup a year after his inauguration. Furthermore, the discussion of the 2009 SONA contradicts literature in that African Presidents inherently prioritise sociopolitical issues over their state of economy. Instead, the study proposed that the factors contributing to this trend in African President's SONA are the *scene* and history of the African Statesmen. To a greater degree, the discussion has suggested that SONA can influence an international audience in some ways. The following section discusses President Cyril Ramaphosa's outcome of the pentadic analysis of his 2018 State of the Nation Address.

#### **5.5 PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA 2018-02-16**

The study successfully achieved its objective by unveiling the pentadic element *Scene* as the motive of President Ramaphosa's 2018 SONA. The *Scene* in this speech was considered 'mistrust and weakening confidences in the leadership'. In this speech, the rhetor characterised the *Scene* as a state where there was 'diminishing trust in public institutions and leaders, a high unemployment rate, a reverse in poverty reduction, and underperforming state-owned companies, including student protests for free education'. These issues indicate the *Scene* when President Cyril Ramaphosa assumed power in 2018.

Oddly, 24 years after the inception of democracy, the 2018 SONA label still appears, reflecting unappealing indicators of the *Scene* dating back to Mandela's 1994 SONA, such as poverty. If recalling the labelling of the *Scene* for the 1994, 1999 and 2009 SONA speeches, one may see that the label for the *Scene* in the 2018 SONA has a somewhat unique aspect. Though each of the three previous SONA speeches had different labelling, President Cyril Ramaphosa's speech is more unique in the sense that amongst what indicates the *Scene* is 'diminishing trust in public institutions and weakening confidence in the country's leaders'. This aspect of 'mistrust and weakening confidence in leaders' never appeared in Mandela's 1994 SONA, Mbeki's 1999 SONA, or Zuma's 2009 SONA.

What could the above mean about the motive of the 2018 SONA? Thus far, the study has established that the motive of the previous three SONA speeches has been attempting to induce the cooperation of the SONA audience in dealing with their respective *Scenes*. A similar line of thinking applies to the 2018 SONA, but with a new development. In other words, the motive of the 2018 SONA was not just to induce the public's cooperation in dealing with the country's material conditions, such as poverty. Instead, the motive of the 2018 SONA was also to acknowledge that the government must restore trust in the government and public institutions of the country.

Therefore, the above suggests that the motive of the 2018 SONA served two parallel purposes. On the one hand, it induces the public's cooperation in dealing with new sociopolitical and economic matters like suffering and underperforming state-owned entities and perennial sociopolitical and economic issues like poverty and corruption. On the other hand, it induces the cooperation of the public in the President's restoration of trust and confidence in government officials and the public institutions they govern.

When discussing the motive of President Mbeki's 1999 SONA, the discussion highlighted that Mbeki's 1999 SONA speech was a continuation of Mandela's rhetorical goals and pursuit of intensified identification between the President and the audience. This identification refers to common beliefs, talent, friendship and attitudes between the President and the audience (Widiasari, 2022:354; Tendean, 2022:239). Seemingly, the 2018 SONA's motive of restoring trust and confidence in the government and public

institutions from the SONA audiences indicates that, over time, the identification between an ANC government and the public got hampered.

Kenneth Burke, in his dramatism theory, teaches that without identification, persuasion cannot take place (Lambert & Orbe, 2019:137; Tendean, 2022:238). The theory suggests that the identification or shared attitude between the ANC government and the public is of utmost significance in achieving poverty alleviation, unemployment reduction and corruption eradication. State office bearers, the private sector, civil society, ordinary South Africans, and even international actors can only embrace and obey the government's proposed strategies and policies for dealing with the *Scene* if identification exists between the government and the public.

The phenomenon here takes one back to an ancient Roman rhetorician, Quintilian, who stated that no man can speak well if he is not good himself (Bokhari, 2022:468). Accordingly, President Ramaphosa could not have achieved the cooperation of the public in dealing with sociopolitical and economic matters of the State in 2018 if the public or a segment of the public considered him or the political party deploying him was not good. In other words, he could not have spoken well if he was perceived as not a good man. In this context, speaking well means achieving persuasion. Hence, beyond attempting to induce the cooperation of the audience in dealing with the 2018 sociopolitical and economic issues of the State the President needed to restore trust and confidence in the government and public institutions to realise a renewed path towards realisation of ANC's initially idealised post-apartheid South Africa.

Most importantly, the motive of President Cyril Ramaphosa's 2018 SONA reveals a shift in South Africa's SONA in the post-apartheid era. This shift is a change from focusing solely on inducing the public's cooperation in dealing with the state's material conditions to inducing the public's cooperation in trusting and believing in the ANC government and the public institutions it governs. It is essential to highlight this shift in the motive of SONA post-apartheid because it shows that by 2018, South African problems had gone beyond the year-to-year sociopolitical and economic issues like poverty and racism to a leadership crisis.

The shift in the motive found in the 2018 SONA suggests the existence of guilt from the President and, by extension, from his political party too. In the dramatism theory, Burke argues that rhetorical communication is motivated by a need to purge guilt (Starling, 2015:32; Regmi, 2023:14). Guilt refers to any negativity, tension and anxiety, including shame stimulated by transgression to acceptable societal order (Snee et al., 2023:727). In the transition to democracy, through the 1994 ANC manifesto, the political party that President Cyril Ramaphosa is representing (ANC) promised South Africans a democratic settlement characterised by democratic principles of equality, non-racism, and non-sexism. Moreover, President Cyril Ramaphosa's political party promised the people safety, peace, freedom of speech, poverty alleviation, literacy, and non-discrimination. The political party essentially pledged that the people shall govern, and that South Africa would claim its rightful place in global affairs (anc1912.org.za, 2017).

The findings of this study show that since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sociopolitical and economic life of South Africa started showing signs of reverse, if not failure, from the ANC's ability to deliver the 1994 promises mentioned in the above paragraph. For example, the findings in this study show that since President Mbeki's first State of the Nation Address in 1999, poverty and corruption, amongst other things, have been part of the indicators of the *Scene*. Since the advent of democracy in 1994 up to 2018, the ANC Presidents have been trying to induce the cooperation of the people in dealing with the issues. Therefore, it is safe to posit that guilt existed in the ANC due to the stressing of trust issues and the lack of confidence in government and public institutions from the public in the 2018 SONA. The guilt is that corruption tainted the ANC government officials' image, which became a priority problem for Ramaphosa. According to this current study, the 2018 SONA's motive was not only to induce cooperation of the SONA audiences in dealing with new (collapsing SOEs) and perennial (poverty) problems of South Africa, but the motive was also to purge guilt of leader's failures.

The purging of guilt is evident in the 2018 case if noting that the previous three SONA had respective frameworks like the RDP, GERP, MTSF 2009–2014 as *Agencies* or *Tool* for achieving the desired post-apartheid South Africa. Ramaphosa's case is different, the analysis reveals the pentadic element *Agency* as 'legacy of Mandela and memory of

historical figures of South Africa'. Aristotle's disciples would say that Ramaphosa's rhetoric in the 2018 SONA focused on ethos instead of logos as his predecessors did. This is primarily because his *Scene* had issues of mistrust and confidence which admittedly required evoking of emotion and Mandela's legacy was a good rhetorical move because of his credibility.

A previous study assessed President Ramaphosa's 2018 and 2019 SONAs to discover rhetorical strategies that the President used to construct the reality that he desired the SONA audiences to perceive. The study found that Ramaphosa used democratic rhetoric and decentralisation of power to persuade the SONA audience of his desired reality (Sekhonyane, 2020). This previous study does not show the reality that President Ramaphosa desired the SONA audiences to perceive. Interestingly, the current investigation does show, at least for the 2018 SONA, that President Ramaphosa aimed at constructing a reality that positions the ANC as a political party that is realising its problems and working on renewal while continuing to try and deal with the new and perennial sociopolitical and economic conditions of the State. By so doing, the President was rhetorically dealing with two aspects through his SONA. First, it encourages public cooperation in dealing with the country's new and perennial sociopolitical and economic issues. Secondly, it induces the public's cooperation in trusting again and believing in the ANC government and the public institutions it governs.

The study notices that the surprising findings trend across Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma's SONAs where the pentadic element *scene* holds prominence in the speeches while the pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose* hold equal importance just below the *scene* stopped in the 2018 SONA. In Ramaphosa's 2018 SONA, the *Scene* continued to hold prominence with 4 *yeses* in the speech while the pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent* and *Purpose* also continued to be equal but with 2 *yeses*, showing that they went downward in terms of emphases in the 2018 SONA. Here, the pentadic element *Agency* emerged having 3 *yeses* closely equal to the pentadic element *Scene*.

This above is unique but should not be surprising if considering that the past three SONAs did not have the component of 'leadership crisis' as one of the factors characterising the *Scene*. This shows that the 2018 SONA is different in that it predominantly pursues an

agenda which the previous three speeches did not stress. So, the downplay of the pentadic elements *Act*, *Agent*, *Agency* and *Purpose* shows that the rhetorical dynamics and landscape in the 2018 SONA had changed due to dramatic changes in the sociopolitical and economic life of the country. Furthermore, if looking at the pentadic element *Agency* for the previous three speeches one would see that there are solid frameworks representing logos while Ramaphosa's *Agency* is superficial representing ethos. Due to these differences between the three previous SONAs with the 2018 SONA one may conclude that Ramaphosa's *Agency* was merely a propaganda technique called 'transfer'. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers, Pascoe and Smith (2023:107), transfer as a propaganda technique refers to the adapting of the credibility of someone or something into your persuasive message. In this case, Ramaphosa adapted Mandela and other historical leaders' credibility into his 2018 SONA as *Agency* for restoring trust and confidence in leaders and government institutions from the audience. This is consistent with past research showing that Ramaphosa focused more on political issues and used Mandela's legacy to influence the audience of the ideal post-apartheid South Africa that he desired (Sekhonyane, 2020).

### **5.5.1 Implications for SONA**

Alluding to the early development of rhetoric in Greece, Plato dedicated his time to condemning sophistry rhetoric. He believed the Sophists were teaching flattery and pleasing rhetoric (Blank, 2014:15). He seemed concerned about how the Athenians capitalised on this rhetoric to pursue self-serving agendas in government. The results of the 2018 SONA characterise Plato's concern. President Ramaphosa's 2018 SONA is an encomium type of speech, flattery and pleasing speech aiming at pursuing self-serving agendas of the ANC. This is evident from the rhetor's use of Mandela's legacy (credibility) to appeal to the audience's emotions and gain their trust and confidence. This agenda reflects the misuse of a state platform (SONA) to pursue self-serving political party interests. Ideally, there must be a distinction between governmental or state activities and political party activities in South Africa. In the case of the 2018 SONA, it seems that political interests are pursued on a state or government platform. Therefore, it is vital to

highlight that SONA can be capitalised on or hijacked to pursue self-serving political agendas, which Plato considered unethical.

### **5.5.2 Summary**

The findings of the 2018 SONA are uniquely exciting in that they reveal an important aspect of South Africa's SONA since 1994. The 2018 SONA highlights how the South African issues had amounted to a leadership crisis where the people had started to mistrust leaders and lose confidence in government institutions. To a certain degree, they rebel against the government through violent protests such as the infamous 'fees must fall' student protest. Due to this *SCENE*, the above discussion showed President Ramaphosa acknowledging guilt for not delivering what they promised the people and seeking to induce the cooperation of the audience into believing once more that the leadership will deliver. The present study urges that this is a demonstration of 'flattery' and 'pleasing' rhetoric aimed at invoking emotions in the audience to regain trust and confidence so as to continue being in power.

## CHAPTER 6: MOTIVES OF SONAS: KEY LESSONS

First and foremost, for all the four selected SONA speeches, this study has revealed that the motive has been to induce cooperation in resolving the sociopolitical and economic conditions of the state post-apartheid. There are several key takeaways for academia, government, civil society, diaspora and the international community from the study's success in deciphering the motive of SONA speeches in South Africa post-1994. This section highlights the significant developments brought about by this study on the subject.

This study proposes a rhetorical definition: SONA is a deliberately scene-oriented presidential speech aiming at inducing cooperation of its audience concerning the scene. This new definition of SONA applies to rhetoric and political communication. The study invites further examination of the applicability of this definition to SONA studies in South Africa.

Beyond a definition, this study contributes a vital aspect to previous knowledge on the functions of SONA. SONA was previously known for performing the following functions:

- Open Parliament
- Offer a President a chance to set the government's agenda for the new year and communicate the government's achievements, policy propositions, and the state of the country in general.
- Offer a President a chance to set out their political ideology.
- Persuade a nation of patriotism and common goals.
- Build a nation's identity.
- Serving as a record of the sociopolitical and economic life of the country over time (Ngidi et al., 2022:74; Sibiyi, 2017:2; Kotze, 2019:448; Sikanku, 2022:177; Miranda and Bringula, 2021:2).

The present study contributes that a SONA also functions in the following ways:

- A SONA can help international audiences to know more about the country for decision purposes about relationships, investments, tourism and so on.
- A SONA can be capitalised on for pursuing self-serving political agendas, which sometimes may be unethical.

This study notices a shift in the motive of SONA post-apartheid. The shift is a change from a sole focus on inducing the cooperation of the public in dealing with the material conditions of the country to an intent to induce cooperation of the SONA audiences in the preservation of the 'ruling party status' of the ANC through attempting to restore trust in the government and public institutions. The shift spoken of here became apparent in the 2018 State of the Nation Address. This phenomenon reveals that presidents can capitalise on the SONA opportunity to pursue their political party goals rhetorically. The following section discusses the implications of the findings of this research for the real world.

The findings suggest that the motive of the 1994, 1999, 2009, and 2018 SONA speeches remained the pentadic element *Scene*. When looking at the labels of the *Scene* for each selected speech, the *Scene* slightly differs in what indicates the *Scene*, except that they all signify an unpleasant *Scene*. For example, Mandela sought the cooperation of SONA audiences to bring about unity. Mbeki also wanted the same. Zuma only differs by wanting cooperation in response to a global economic crisis (still, this was an unpleasant scene). Finally, Ramaphosa sought the cooperation of SONA audiences in restoring trust and confidence in the ANC government and public institutions. So, from one ANC President to the other, the *Scene* has remained unpleasant since 1994. Makoro (2018) urges that the rise of political figures to power calls for urgency in examining their rhetoric to educate and enable the public to distinguish falsehood from the truth when they are convinced to vote. According to Makoro, the current study posits that the trend in the findings of this study reveals how important rhetoric education is for the audience to be aware of rhetoric and the power it holds.

## 6.1 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORLD

This study sets the stage for raising the status bar of rhetoric as a field of study in Africa. The study offers a deeper understanding of presidential rhetoric, specifically SONA, providing a nuanced understanding of the political communication in democratic South Africa.

The study contributes a valuable dramatic perspective of SONA to the public discourse pertinent to SONA. Society's understanding of the underlying rhetorical motive behind the South African President's State of the Nation Addresses post-apartheid can have an impact on their perception of SONA and help them evaluate SONA messages delivered by their Presidents, encouraging the ability to judge politicians' rhetoric and making them sophisticated thinkers. At the same time, the study can be helpful to the office of the President in writing State of the Nation Addresses going forward. For example, the study shows that the influence of SONA goes beyond South Africa to the international world and diaspora, so this can help SONA writers expand their horizons when writing SONA. Moreover, the study can help the office of the President to assess public relations matters before each SONA is released, ensuring the reputation management of the office of the President.

The study identified a problem within the scholarship of SONA analysis and presidential rhetoric in South Africa: SONA in South Africa has been understood only by critical discourse analysis for some time. This study urged that there is a need for methodological variation in the analysis of South African SONA to bring about a multidimensional understanding of the subject. This study argued the multidimensional understanding of SONA would bring about an in-depth understanding of the subject. Indeed, this study has succeeded in contributing to solving this problem by introducing dramatic criticism as an alternative way of analysing SONA. This achieved endeavour has caused the necessary methodological variation in the subject's research, contributing to a multidimensional understanding of SONA. Moreover, the study offers rhetoric students in South African universities a more relatable application of the dramatic criticism method,

informing application in future research. Finally, this study contributes a definition of SONA for the academic field of rhetoric.

This study has also revealed the deficiency of the dramatism theory in fully explaining presidential communication in a super-diverse setting. The study specifically critiqued the identification tenant of the theory. According to the theory, without identification persuasion cannot occur. The findings of the current study regarding Mandela's speech show that his rhetoric of inducing cooperation of the SONA audiences succeeded but to a certain degree despite the identification he assumingly had in South Africa and beyond. So, there is a problem with the statement in the theory that persuasion can only occur when there is an identification between the speaker and the audience. What happens when the audience is super-diverse? This study proposed refinement or expansion of the theory on identification to say that the rhetorical repertoire of the speaker and how that is used to the best ability of the speaker in relation to the context determines if persuasion will occur or not. So, identification is something that can be manipulated by the rhetor to achieve the desired reaction of the audience in a specific context.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study has uncovered the underlying motive of SONA for only four purposively selected speeches. This contribution has led to a deeper understanding of the phenomena rather than generalising the findings. In the past 30 years into democracy, South Africa has had more than 30 State of the Nation Addresses. Due to time constraints, this study has only assessed four of the many available SONA addresses, which affect the generalisability of the findings of this study. It would be interesting to see the adoption of a different research design to analyse South Africa's SONA in the post-apartheid era. For instance, future research can adopt a longitudinal research design or analysis to help follow the evolution of presidential rhetoric within South African SONA over time.

This study has revealed that later in South Africa's democracy, a SONA appears to have assumed a somewhat political campaigning element compared to the early SONA speeches in the advent of democracy. As such, it would be interesting to see future

research engaging this aspect from a critical research paradigm point of view to bring awareness and expose and critique any unjust use of SONAs by politicians. Critical research can help emancipate SONA audiences from political figures' self-serving agenda, especially those unfamiliar with rhetoric.

The current study provides a deeper understanding of presidential rhetoric in SONA post-apartheid. However, it would be interesting for future research to assess the audiences' reception of SONA. In this regard, future research can adopt an ethnographic approach to evaluate social media users' reception and interaction with South African SONAs post-apartheid. Moreover, in the 2024 general election, the ANC lost its majority rule and now shares power in the form of a government of national unity. It will be interesting for future research to explore how these changes have shaped and will shape SONAs, given the political settlement.

### **6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study faces two significant limitations. These are the generalisability of the findings and subjectivity. To begin with discussing the generalisability of the findings. Malik and Norman (2023:47) define generalisability as the degree of applicability of the research findings of a study with a specific sample size to a larger population or other contexts. Due to time constraints, this study relies on a small sample size. According to Cui and Gong (2018:635), a small sample size tends to lack a complete representation of the larger population, limiting the generalisability of the findings. SONA is an annual event in South Africa (Ngidi et al., 2022:74). This implies that South Africa has had more than thirty SONA addresses in the post-apartheid era. The findings of this study emerge from a corpus of four of the many available SONA speeches. Even though the study offers an in-depth understanding of the speech from a rhetorical point of view, it is impossible to generalise the findings across all the post-apartheid SONA speeches because the data do not fully represent the larger population of the SONA speeches delivered after apartheid in South Africa.

It is essential to highlight subjectivity as a limitation of the study, considering that it employs a dramatic criticism approach to analyse the four purposively selected SONA

speeches. Dramatistic criticism is a rhetorical analysis method that helps to uncover the motive of the speaker's message or action (Boscolo, 2020: 103). Applying dramatistic criticism to analysing any artefact requires the researcher to interpret it skilfully. As such, the dramatistic criticism process may become subject to the researcher's thoughts, feelings, beliefs and perspectives. Subjectivity can impact the validity and reliability of the research findings. Nevertheless, triangulation of the data analysis process and member-checking helped minimise the influence of researcher biases in this study.

#### **6.4 CONCLUSION**

The study's primary objective was to uncover the underlying motive of each democratically elected South African President's first State of the Nation Address post-apartheid from a rhetorical analysis point of view. Through a pentadic analysis of a corpus of four purposively selected SONA speeches, the study successfully addressed this objective and achieved its aim.

The analysis yielded the pentadic element *Scene* as the underlying motive behind all the selected State of the Nation Addresses. It is essential to highlight that even though the pentadic element *Scene* appears as the motive across all the selected SONA speeches, the label for the pentadic element *Scene* varied across the four SONA speeches. Furthermore, although the *Scene* differed from one SONA speech to another, the study noticed that since 1994, the *Scene* has remained unpleasant in South Africa. As such, the motive of the SONA was to induce the cooperation of SONA audiences in dealing with the socio-political and economic conditions of the State post-apartheid. In simple terms, the motive of the SONA speeches has been attempting to induce cooperation of South Africans, government officials, and other SONA audiences internationally in the fight against poverty, crime, racism, reconciliation, unity, HIV and AIDS, unemployment, corruption, and other socio-political and economic matters post-apartheid in South Africa.

The study also unexpectedly found that though the pentadic element *Scene* appeared a predominant pentadic element across the four speeches. In the first three speeches, the other pentadic elements held a secondary emphasis in the speeches. This trend changes

with the 2018 SONA. The study concluded that for the first three speeches the trend means the *scene* determined the nature of the other pentadic elements. Ramaphosa's case was different, because the political landscape of SONAs had changed dramatically in South Africa by 2018.

The study's findings have contributed to academia and the practical world. Firstly, this study proposed a new rhetorical definition of SONAs in South Africa. The study suggested that SONAs should be defined as a deliberately *Scene*-oriented presidential speech aimed at inducing the cooperation of its audience concerning the *Scene*. It is important to note that previous research on the subject needed a rhetorical definition of a SONA because previously, SONAs were described rather than defined. This contribution has brought the academic community closer to an in-depth understanding of the subject in a defined context.

Furthermore, over time, the findings revealed a shift in the motive of a SONA in the post-apartheid era in South Africa. This shift was from the President's intent to induce cooperation of SONA audiences in dealing with sociopolitical and economic matters of the country to the President's intent to induce cooperation of the SONA audiences in trusting and believing in the ANC government and the public institutions it governs. This shift became apparent with the 2018 SONA. Considering this shift, the study argued that SONAs have formed a somewhat political campaigning role. This brings awareness to SONA audiences that SONAs go beyond mere Presidents' communication of the state of the country, government achievements, and policy interventions to pursue political party goals. This revelation can help SONA audiences become less easily susceptible to flattery presidential rhetoric and give the people the ability and capacity to judge their politicians' rhetoric.

The major problem that this study sought to address was the need for more methodological variation in the scrutiny of a SONA, which caused the understanding of a SONA to be one-dimensional. This study has employed a dramatic approach to the analysis of SONAs, causing methodological variation in the research field and resulting in a multidimensional and comprehensive understanding of SONAs for the academic community. By extension, this study may aid the rhetoric curriculum of South African

universities offering rhetoric classes, such as the University of the Free State. Communication science student researchers can replicate the findings in a related student research endeavour.

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## **APPENDIX**

**GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)**

20-Nov-2023

Dear Mr Robson Nkosi

**Application Approved**

Research Project Title:

**A Rhetorical Analysis of South African Presidents' State of the Nation Addresses Post-1994.**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2023/2143**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Adri Du Plessis**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

**Adri**  
**Du**  
**Plessis**

Digitally  
signed by Adri  
Du Plessis  
Date:  
2023.11.20  
20:30:51  
+02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela  
Drive  
Park West  
Bloemfontein 9301  
South Africa

P.O. Box 339  
Bloemfontein 9300  
Tel: +27 (0)51 401  
9337  
[duplessisA@ufs.ac.za](mailto:duplessisA@ufs.ac.za)  
[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)



Figure 8 Ethics Clearance letter

**CORNELIA GELDENHUYS**

☎083 2877088  
[corrieg@mweb.co.za](mailto:corrieg@mweb.co.za)

26 October 2024

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Herewith I, **Cornelia Geldenhuys (ID 521114 0083 088)** declare that I am a qualified, accredited language practitioner and that I have edited the following dissertation:

**A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENTS'  
STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESSES POST-1994**

by

**Nkosi Robson Siphosihle  
2017238375**

All changes were indicated by track changes and comments **for the author to verify, clarify aspects that are unclear, make the necessary adjustments and finalise.** The editor takes no responsibility in the instance of this not being done. The document remains the final responsibility of the author.



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**C GELDENHUYS**  
**MA (Lin) cum laude, MA (Mus), BA Hons (French), HED, HDL, UELM**

Accredited member/Geakkrediteerde lid, SATI, Membership/Lidmaatskap: 1001474 (A/E-E/A)  
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Figure 9 Language editing certificate