

## Political Rhetoric and Sectarian Agitations: An Analysis of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's Speeches in Handling the Abduction of The Chibok School Girls

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### Abstract

Since 2009, the Federal Government of Nigeria has been engaged in war against Boko Haram terrorists. A high point of the war was the kidnapping of about 276 girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok by Boko Haram terrorists on 14th April, 2014. Political rhetoric has been found to play a key role in countering acts of terror, managing terrorism and its aftermath, seeking support from both citizens and the international community and building citizens' confidence in a nation's government and its military. It is against this backdrop that this study set out to undertake a rhetorical analysis of selected speeches by Goodluck Jonathan in handling the abduction of the Chibok School girls. The study was anchored on Austin (1962)'s speech act theory and the Neo-Aristotelian method of rhetorical criticism. Findings revealed that the rhetorical canons of *inventio*, *dispositio* and *memoria* were effectively used by Goodluck Jonathan to highlight the devastating effect of Boko Haram's acts of terror on the Nigerian populace and to make a plea for a unified front in tackling the menace. *Pathos*, a rhetorical proof, was significantly employed to draw support from the audience. The recommendation was on the need for the government to have a robust rhetorical strategy in place that can cater for sectarian agitations and exigencies such as the Boko Haram insurgency.

**Keywords:** Boko Haram, Rhetoric, Rhetorical Canons, Rhetorical Proofs

### 1. Introduction

At various times in human history, language has been resourced exhaustively by most public speakers to influence their audiences' attitudes towards exigent issues or events. This artful use of language, especially when it involves persuasive speech, is usually described as rhetoric – a communication term that has emerged from a chequered history of controversies which has generated mixed feelings of some sort regarding its actual meaning, motif, or motive. Rhetoric is described as the systematic study and intentional practice of effective

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symbolic expression aimed at achieving the purpose of the symbol – user, whether that purpose is persuasion, clarity, beauty, force or mutual understanding.

This underscores the skilful use of language as an “effective symbolic expression”, to realise the goal of the speaker. As noted by Griffin and Foss [1], the speaker’s intention may vary from what is termed the traditional use of rhetoric (delivering persuasive arguments in public discourse, especially in politics and courts of law), to its contemporary use which has come to include a wide range of communication purposes whether intentional or not, that take place in socio-political, religious or economic contexts. Thus, the concern of this study becomes appropriate as it intends to analyse the rhetoric of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan on the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School girls. In times when sectarian violence becomes manifest, such as the one by Boko Haram, political rhetoric has been found to play a key role in countering the acts of insurgents, building citizens’ confidence in a nation’s government and its military, drawing support from citizens, as well as from the international community. An overwhelming submission in the literature posits that political rhetoric has the potential to play a vital role in undermining some of the factors that have been identified as drivers of sectarian violence.

The use of rhetoric can be instrumental in enhancing the freedom of abductees held hostage by insurgents and further mitigate the scourge of terrorism on citizens. Since 2009, the Federal Government of Nigeria has been engaged in war against Boko Haram insurgency [2]. The war has adversely affected six out of the nineteen states in northern Nigeria, namely: Adamawa, Borno, Bauchi, Gombe, Kano and Yobe, with the heaviest toll on Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. A highpoint of the war which has attracted global attention was the kidnap of about 276 girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok by Boko Haram terrorists on 14th April, 2014. Political rhetoric has been found to play a key role in countering sectarian agitations, acts of terror, managing terrorism and its aftermath, seeking support from both citizens as well as the international community and building citizens’ confidence in a nation’s government and its military. It is against this backdrop that this study set out to undertake a rhetorical analysis of selected speeches by Goodluck Jonathan in handling the abduction of the Chibok School Girls [3]. The study will address the following research questions.

- i. What rhetorical canons were deployed by Goodluck Jonathan in respect of the abduction and efforts to rescue the Chibok School Girls?
- ii. What rhetorical proofs were predominant in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan in respect to the abduction and rescue of the Chibok School Girls?

The speech acts theory is traced to the works of a German philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein who was the founder of a line of thought called ordinal language thought. It is Wittgenstein’s idea that the meaning of language depends on its actual use. However, the speech act theory owes its prominence to John Langshaw Austin who in his book *How to Do Things with Words* published in 1962, shed light on the use aspect of language and shifted from philosophical arguments to ordinal language. Austin’s idea as expressed in the speech acts theory is that language in speech is used for many functions such as promises, invitations, requests and so on. The author goes on to explicitly state that an utterance performs an act without naming it. Austin also proposes that some forms of speech, even if they do not contain explicitly performative verbs, may serve to perform acts implicitly [4].

Levinson explains that speech act denotes “the sense in which utterances are not mere meaning bearers, but rather in a very real sense of things that is perform actions”. With recourse to language as a medium for communication, Poythress advances that speech act “sets language in the context of human action and inquiries about the functions and purposes of human action that are accompanied by sentences”. From the foregoing, speech act has been said mean that an utterance has a performative function in language and communication. In other words, speech act takes a close look at the things said, how such things are said and what the things said really mean. Language use is considered as more of action instead of a medium deployed to convey and express. Baktir adds that communication is a function of language and it is carried out by speech in spoken language.

Speech is represented by shorter or longer strings of linguistic items used in order to express a particular purpose either written or spoken. The underlying theme behind the philosophy of speech act is that a statement not only describes a situation or states certain facts, but also performs a specific kind of action by itself [5]. Little John posits that:

*Speech act theory identifies what it takes to make a successful statement to have an intention understood. When a speaker speaks, he performs an act. The act may be stating, questioning, commanding, promising or a number of other possibilities. Speech, then is not just used to designate something, it actually does something. That is why the basic unit of speech is always a speech act.*

This is in consonance with the definition of speech act by Searle who notes that: “speaking a language is performing a speech act, acts such as making statements, giving commands, asking questions and making promises. All linguistic communication involves linguistic (speech) acts”. This definition of speech acts is apt as it highlights that there are various dimensions to communication. These communication dimensions are social, historical, cultural and psychological. With the foregoing postulations in mind, it is imperative to relate the speech act theory to rhetoric and in effect this study. It is worthy of note that rhetoric has a bearing on how language is at work orally and in writing, and also become proficient in applying the resources of language to speech and writing [6].

No doubt, it could be understood that every utterance of a human is rhetoric, because all human utterances are speech-acts meant to serve specific purposes and in this instance the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan which are meant to persuade. Rhetoric studies the effectiveness of language comprehensively, including its emotional impact, as well as its propositional content. Traditionally, rhetoric as cited in various sources has been defined by Aristotle as the art of discovering every available means of persuasion. Thus, generating persuasive discourses or arguments by all available means or strategies, was the primary focus of traditional rhetoric. This understanding apparently has influenced rhetorical scholars through the ages [7]. Keith and Lundberg define rhetoric as “the study of producing discourses and interpreting how, when and why discourses are persuasive...”. McQuail posits that rhetoric has to do with public speaking aimed at persuasion. A comprehensive definition that outlines some of the functions of rhetoric, this study will adopt is that by Crick, who posits that rhetoric is:

The art of addressing public concerns by employing deliberate persuasive strategies before a public audience at a specific occasion to transform some aspects of a problematic situation by encouraging new forms of thought and action... Rhetoric involves us in the social

and political struggle over meaning, hence over power. It is about how people use language and symbols to transform the way society or community thinks, feels and behaves. Rhetoric is ultimately about how people act as agents of social change using whatever symbolic power they can harness to move people from this place to that place.

The sentiment above is reflective of rhetoric viewed from the socio-political standpoint, a legacy handed down from ancient Greece. That it is an 'art' - a skill acquired through study, practice or observation - aimed at solving an issue of national interest, through persuasive means before an audience [8]. As such, employing rhetoric to address issues of national interest, such as sectarian agitations as typified in the Boko Harm insurgency, by politicians, apparently is an example of political rhetoric. This is particularly so since rhetoric is widely acknowledged in the literature as a potent tool deployed by politicians to mobilise support from citizens, as well as handle other pertinent political engagements. For the most part political rhetoric is borne out of political or democratic settings where collective judgements become imperative and are made. It could be in the course of legislative debates, executive deliberations, presidential addresses political town hall meetings or election campaigns, as the case may be.

Heinrich lends credence to this in his observation that without political rhetoric, democracy is impossible [9]. Gill and Whedbee note that the essential activities of rhetoric are usually evident within politics. Central to any discussion of rhetoric in contemporary times, is what has come to be recognised as the rhetorical situation. That is the human experience or exigency that makes the application of rhetoric necessary. Aristotle detailed three functional rhetorical situations or settings based on audience classification or type – deliberative rhetoric (discourse centred on future choices about what is profitable to the audience), epideictic rhetoric (focuses on the moral values and belief system that the audience have in common, it deals with the present) and forensic rhetoric (argument that determines guilt or innocence of parties on past actions) [10]. As observed earlier, rhetorical situations have broadened out from litigation and political processes in ancient Greece and Rome, to virtually all human activity that demands verbal and non-verbal use of language and symbols.

Now there is intrapersonal/ personal rhetoric, public / mediated discourse, the rhetoric of the marketplace or advertising, sports, music, arts, drama, dress/appearance, architecture and rhetoric of the guns or wartime rhetoric. Rhetorical canons are understood to be distinct techniques, comparable to a universally accepted schemata that give order or structure to rhetorical acts. They also serve as benchmarks for evaluating the quality of rhetorical communication in all rhetorical contexts. There are five of them – invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery. The first canon of rhetoric is invention. Griffin posits that “to generate effective enthymemes and examples, the speaker draws on both specialised knowledge about the subject and general lines of reasoning common to all kinds of speeches” [11]. Stemming from Aristotle’s popular definition of rhetoric as the discovery of every available means of persuasion, the concentration here is carrying out extensive research for resources that will be used to create or develop a persuasive speech not only in classical era, but any rhetorical act in contemporary times.

The rhetor draws on specialised and general knowledge about the subject matter because he stands as an authority on the subject for the audience. Invention draws from the works of Cicero cited by Herrick who describes this canon as the “discovery of valid or

seemingly valid arguments” Crick describes invention as “the act of finding something to say that lends support to the speaker’s position”. The second canon of rhetoric is arrangement [12]. This canon entails ordering or structuring the different parts of a speech or other rhetorical act in a sequence that will achieve the desired effect of the rhetor, which ordinarily is persuasion. Esuh describes arrangement thus:

*Covers the philosophy of arrangement and orderly presentation/planning of the idea to be discussed. It assesses the selection of the subject matter into structure, determining or emphasising how each part contributes to the unity and purpose of the speech.*

On his part, Herrick opines that arrangement is a step ahead of discovering materials for speech. The orator must know how to order those materials effectively. Crick adds that after the process of invention, the next stage is arrangement where a speaker must organise the various materials gathered together into a coherent structure that has a beginning, middle and an end. Arrangement here entails three different parts, namely: introduction, body and conclusion [13]. Conventionally, the introduction should arouse audience interest, establish the speaker’s credibility and state clearly the purpose of the speech, while the body contains the thrust of the discourse and the conclusion, a recap of the presentation. He also asserts that “the introduction should capture attention, establish your credibility and make clear the purpose of the speech”.

The next rhetorical canon is referred to as *eleutio* or style. It is the choice of vocabulary that makes the speech striking, leaving a lasting impression on the audience. It is more often than not, the idiosyncratic features associated with a particular speech or text. It is “the particular word and sentence choice at work in a particular rhetorical situation”. In other words, style can be regarded as those grammatical elements or devices that render the rhetorical act distinctive and capable of captivating and enthralling the audience. These word and sentence choices are most of the time not repeated either by the person that uses them or anyone else, on a different rhetorical situation, it is unique to the rhetorical context where it is used by the rhetor [14]. The fourth canon of rhetoric is memory. This canon as posited by Herrick draws from Cicero’s words that “memory is the firm mental grasp of matter and words of speech.” This canon has to do with the rhetor’s ability to internalize the well-crafted and unique piece of rhetoric so that it flows naturally during delivery.

If this is properly done the rhetor will exhibit self-confidence as well as be in control of the presentation, thereby connect easily with the audience. Esuh states that “memory refers to the speaker’s mastery of key elements if not all of his material in sequential order associated with memorisation”. This is in harmony with Griffin who opines that “good speakers are able to draw upon a collection of ideas and phrases stored in the mind”. The expressions above attempt a recourse to ancient times where rhetoric was mainly spoken rather than written. At that time, it was important that speeches were well memorised and adequate preparation put in place in order to guarantee a perfect delivery. Crick substantiates this point as he notes that the art of memory naturally followed style because once a speech was written, an orator in the classical age had to memorise it before delivery [15]. He further asserts that memory refers to the ability to memorise a text and reproduce same in a natural manner. It is the act of absorbing the content and form of speech fully into oneself such that the speech is received as an unforced expression of the speaker’s thoughts.



The essence of memory is further expressed by Herrick who observes that: “because authors delivered long and complex arguments without written notes, a trained memory was essential because an actual public speech might go on for several hours, delivered from memory, students were required to memorise long practised speeches”. This no doubt explains why the rhetorical canon of memory is important down to the present day. Wright avers that memory aids composition and delivery [16]. In effect, it is counter-productive to pay less attention to memory. In this modern era, memory however, has been expanded to capture more than just retention of available material. Pudewa elucidates on this expansion noting that:

*The language and vocabulary, sentence patterns and syntax, imaginative schemes and tropes that we store in our minds through memory - both informal through casual exposure and formal through repetition - are the stuff from which all our thinking, writing and speaking become possible.*

The fifth canon of rhetoric is delivery. According to Burton, “the Greek word for delivery is hypokrisis or acting and rhetoric has borrowed from that art and studied attention to vocal transfer and the use of gestures” Delivery “involves the skill of maximising the vocal elements in relation to the bodily actions to achieve effective delivery”. This is the actual performance or presentation of the rhetorical act. A rhetor’s ability to enact a well-planned speech effectively, will enable achievement of the set goal. Proper diction along with good appearance in terms of appropriate dressing and grooming, the right carriage, gestures, volume and pausing are valuable tools at a rhetor’s disposal, for an effective delivery [17]. A fundamental element that makes for a successful rhetoric is “combining a logical study (logos); a psychological study (pathos) and a sociological study (ethos)... provide the rhetor with sources of proof, that is, of persuasive possibilities ...adaptable to any given situation” Other than illustrate the vital role of the audience as determinants of the outcome of a rhetorical act, rhetorical proofs have proved to be indispensable in offering insights into analysing traditional and contemporary rhetoric.

As a standout persuasive element, ethos has to do with audience’s perception of the rhetor. If the audience have already known and viewed him as a person to be reckoned with, if the rhetor’s manner of delivery and personality strike the audience as a credible person, then the rhetor would have had this available means of persuasion to his own advantage. Conversely if his reputation is questionable, it is needless to say that the audience will hardly be persuaded [18]. But then, if he is meeting the audience for the first time, an impressive delivery coupled with a striking personality, is likely to contribute to a perception of a high ethos. This is possibly why Herrick, posits that “...when people are convinced that a speaker is knowledgeable, trustworthy, and have their best interest at heart, they will be very likely to accept as true what that speaker has to say”. The goal of any rhetor of great repute is to stimulate the emotions of his audience to the point of affecting their judgment on previously held views, while paying attention to establishing and acting on the truthfulness of the exigency that called for the rhetoric. Thus, pathos is a complete psychology of emotions intended to aid an understanding of audiences’ emotional response to the rhetorical situation.

No doubt Arnhart is of the same opinion that there is a strong link between a person’s emotional state and the decisions he makes at a particular time [19]. Herrick advises that a rhetor should not manipulate audience’s emotions while seeking to demonstrate pathos. His

sole objective should be to empathize with whatever emotion prevails at the rhetorical moment, be it melancholic (as is the case with the Chibok School Girls abduction), one of excitement (usually witnessed in the wake of election victories and the inauguration of a new government), or anger, often seen when there is a call for revolutionary action. This way, the audience will have a sense of belonging and naturally respond positively to the rhetor's means of persuasion. This rhetorical proof deals with persuading through making inferences, deductions and sound logical reasoning based on available evidence.

This is achieved by means of simple unequivocal expressions that conform to the rules of grammar so that the audience can understand the message and become persuaded. In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed an upsurge in the extremely violent activities of an Islamic fundamentalist group with a brand of Islam that is fiercely opposed to Western education and the Nigerian government, known as Boko Haram [20]. They operate in some parts of North-Eastern Nigeria (Borno, Yobe, Bauchi, and Adamawa), as well as parts of Northern Cameroon, Chad, and the Niger Republic. Boko Haram is officially designated as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad, al-Wilāyat al-Islāmiyya Gharb Afrīqiyyah, which means "Group of the People of Sunnah for Preaching and Jihad in Islamic State West Africa Province, (ISWAP).

The Late Sheikh Muhammed Yusuf, founded the group which was largely indigenous at its inception in 2002, but later metamorphosed into a terrorist organization with international affiliations. Mohammed Yusuf led the movement until his death at the hands of security forces in 2009. Abubakar Shekau, his second in command succeeded him up to August 2016 when Abu Musab al-Barnawi took over. Apparently, Boko Haram had links with Al-Qaeda until recently when they announced allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The advent of Boko Haram and the nature of its activities is one of the too many instances of religious intolerance that typifies this untoward state of affairs in Northern Nigeria. As a matter of fact, sectarian agitations of this nature are definitely not without dire socio-economic and political consequences, as typified in the States affected by Boko Haram insurgency. Apparently, it stands to reason that Boko Haram came into existence as one of the various political and theological arguments that have found expression in the history of Islam in Nigeria. These arguments, among other factors, have become prominent markers of rapid social changes in most nations globally [21]. The proliferation of Salafi or Islamic Movements across Muslim nations as well as upturns in existing political structures in countries like Nigeria, is an example of social changes contributory to a seeming increase in sectarian agitations exemplified in the Boko Haram insurgency. Langer, Godefroidt and Meuleman confirm the role of religion thus:

Religion has always played a vital and influential role in the Nigerian society regularly manifesting itself as a strong force in the political process ... Boko Haram adds to this debate on the place of religion in governance as it explicitly abhors the secularity and westernization of the government ... Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, the overall balance in political power in Nigeria has largely shifted from the North to the South and from Muslims to Christians causing the disenchantment of many northerners. As a result, Boko Haram militants strive for a strict application of the Sharia law as a societal cleanser ... Therefore, many have argued that Boko Haram is the manifestation of religious commitment and fundamentalist indoctrination embedded in the contemporary global jihadist utopianism of al-Qaeda, the Taliban or ISIL. The idea here affirms that Islamic religion is a key contributing factor to the rise in sectarian agitations such as that of Boko Haram.

## 2. Research Method

This study employs the neo-Aristotelian method of rhetorical criticism as its principal research design. The method is suitable for analyzing persuasive discourse, as it draws upon Aristotle's five rhetorical canons—*invention*, *arrangement*, *style*, *memory*, and *delivery*—alongside rhetorical proofs such as *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. These tools allow for a nuanced exploration of rhetorical strategies within political speeches. The study analyzes two speeches by former President Goodluck Jonathan: the Presidential Media Chat on May 2, 2014, and the Democracy Day Address on May 29, 2014. Both speeches respond to the Chibok schoolgirls' abduction and exemplify rhetorical action in a context of national emergency. As qualitative data, these texts are subjected to constant comparison analysis, a method articulated by Tesch, which involves iterative coding through comparison and contrast to generate interpretive categories.

This process includes identifying rhetorical devices, categorizing emotional and logical appeals, and mapping patterns across speeches. In the first speech, rhetorical invention is evidenced in Jonathan's reference to the religious identity of the victims, while the canon of memory is reflected in his analogy to the Malaysian aircraft disappearance. Pathos is deployed through emotive declarations about national grief. Similarly, the second speech integrates invention through references to global terrorism, and pathos through repetition and assertive statements affirming national unity. Through this layered analytical approach, the study aims to uncover how rhetorical strategy served both persuasive and nation-building functions in the wake of terrorism.

## 3. Result and Discussion

*Research Question One:* What rhetorical canons were deployed by Goodluck Jonathan in respect of the abduction and fight to rescue the Chibok School girls?

Three rhetorical canons featured prominently in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan. The first is *invention*. Invention as a rhetorical canon that provides the rhetor with resources and knowledge of the substance of his speech. A clear example of invention in one of the speeches analysed is "On the list that I saw, 80% of the kidnapped girls in Chibok are Christians". The explicit fact expressed using figures postures the former president as one who had detailed information on the Chibok Girls' abduction imbroglio. Invention is also manifest in this excerpt "There can be no doubt that what we are witnessing in Nigeria today is a manifestation of the same warped and ferocious world view that brought down the Twin Towers in New York...".

The speaker's knowledge of terrorism from a global standpoint is clearly manifest in this excerpt. It is important to link this finding to existing literature reviewed regarding the subject matter [22]. For more clarity, it will be worthwhile to revisit history to identify the place of invention at that time. Crick submits that when Aristotle defined rhetoric as the capacity for discovering available means of persuasion, that definition focused on rhetoric as an *inventional art*. Aristotle undoubtedly placed as much emphasis on invention because it provides the speaker with the resources and knowledge that give any speech the desired substance and value. Aristotle imagined the mind as a storehouse of wisdom or an



informational landscape and referred to it as *topoi*, a Greek term translated as topics or places [23]. Lauer sums up the attempt to trace invention to history thus:

The term invention has historically encompassed strategic acts that provide the discourse with direction, multiple ideas, subject matter, arguments, insights and understanding of the rhetorical situation. Such acts include initiating discourse, exploring alternatives, framing and testing judgments, interpreting texts and analysing audiences.

Away from history, the nature of invention has also been highlighted albeit superficially. In expressing what invention encompasses, Lauer posits that there are diverse views on the nature of invention. In some instances, invention is restricted to an exploratory activity, constructing or finding lines of argument, examining subjects, searching for materials to develop texts, articulating goals etc. In other instances, invention includes the initiation of discourse ranging from posing questions, selecting subjects, formation of probable judgements, focuses, theses and insights [24]. Lauer provides insight into the purpose of invention when he observes that it “leads to judgement, reaches new insights, locates arguments to support existing theses, solves problems, achieves identification, reaches self - actualisation or locates subject matter for texts”.

On the basis of the purpose of invention, the required strategy is put in place to execute it. Crick suggest a repertoire of public memory, maxims, facts, statistics and examples from which a rhetor can resource from. The rhetorical canon of invention, featured prominently in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan as has been highlighted. Arrangement is another rhetorical canon deployed by Goodluck Jonathan in the speeches examined in this paper. Arrangement entails organizing available material in a coherent speech structure with a beginning, middle and conclusion [25]. The introductory part of Goodluck Jonathan’s speech on democracy day captured the challenges international terrorism which has slowly gained momentum in North eastern Nigeria culminating in the abduction of 274 secondary school girls from Chibok, Borno State. The body of the same speech lays emphasis on the use of all means within the law available to rescue the abducted girls. The conclusion of the same speech, plays out a calm reassurance that Boko Haram will be brought to an end. Arrangement as a rhetorical canon was conspicuously deployed here. From the literature reviewed, Herrick opines that arrangement is a step ahead of discovering materials for speech. The orator must know how to order those materials effectively. Crick adds that after the process of invention, the next stage is arrangement where a speaker must organise the various materials gathered together into a coherent structure that has a beginning, middle and an end. Arrangement here entails three different parts, namely: introduction, body and conclusion.

Conventionally, the introduction should arouse audience interest, establish speaker’s credibility and state clearly the purpose of the speech, while the body contains the thrust of the discourse and the conclusion, a recap of the presentation [26]. He also asserts that “the introduction should capture attention, establish your credibility and make clear the purpose of the speech”. However, Crick advocates that strict adherence to the above principle of arrangement results in a “superficially competent but largely barren and uninspiring speeches that put an audience to sleep” Therefore, he suggests that delivering a successful speech is not necessarily about how well the rules of arrangement are followed to the letter, rather “it is how effectively the arrangement captures the attention and interest of the audience”. The points raised here simply suggest that arrangement implies taking into consideration available

material and placing same in orderly manner with the aim of linking every component of the speech to a central purpose [27]. This is done by stringing or sewing together the introduction, body and conclusion. The rhetorical canon of style featured in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan. Style as rhetorical canon refers to the choice of vocabulary that makes a speech striking and that subsequently leaves a lasting impression. In the speeches by Goodluck Jonathan examined in this paper, styled featured prominently in two ways. First, the use of formal speech through declarative and affirmative sentences.

These exuded so much authority and inspired confidence in the ability of Nigerian troops to recover the Chibok School girls. Still in respect to the rhetoric canon of style, figurative use of language also featured. The use of anaphora and imagery also served to provide force and emphasis [28]. To draw some support from the literature Brummet with recourse to history, assert that style has been a part of the classical rhetoric and as a part of the traditional canon, it signified strategic language choice and embellishment of discourse with figures of speech primarily to offer support for an argument. Crick offers further clarification on style, as he identifies two kinds of style, namely: formal and figurative style. "Formal style is the overall tone and feel of a speech in its totality". It is the complete impression left by a speech which offers listeners the opportunity to reflect upon the speech as it becomes memorable or indelible in their minds.

Figurative style, on the other hand, concerns specific language elements that are designed to capture the attention of the audience, in turn engaging them on the speech as well as create the feeling desired by the rhetor. Figurative style employs parts of speech that provide clarity and power to specific ideas or images drawn up by the rhetor. Rhetorical devices in the form of figures of speech are often employed to bring style to bear in what has been invented [29]. The figurative use of language helps the speech to be designed in such a way that the parts of speech adopted, give clarity and force to the message. Some figures of speech often in use are metaphors, alliteration, reduplication, simile, personification, hyperbole, oxymoron, among others. Onomatopoeia and rhyme are used to create a musical effect to enhance memorability. Memory, a rhetorical canon has been extrapolated in the speeches of former president Goodluck Jonathan. In demonstrating this canon, the speaker said "Even the missing Malaysian Aircraft, the world is yet to find, so we are not alone" Though this may be interpreted negatively to imply despair, it is no doubt a reflection of the rhetorical canon of memory [30]. In this modern era, memory however, has been expanded to capture more than just retention of available material. Pudewa elucidates on this expansion noting that:

*The language and vocabulary, sentence patterns and syntax, imaginative schemes and tropes that we store in our minds through memory – both informal through casual exposure and formal through repetition – are the stuff from which all our thinking, writing and speaking become possible.*

The statement above suggests that in contemporary communication, memory is more about using available tools in the archive. It is important in determining what sources are most suitable and how to manage the plethora of information available to the speaker. Brady and Schreiber posit "that memory also acts as an inventory for past events intended as heuristics – as a way to invent content in a new way". This implies that while it is quite unnecessary to store up specific data these days, the ability to remember, make references along with

connections to the rest of the speech, can be a powerful tool to the speaker [31]. Lade also submits that “it is possible to invoke and refill parts of the past for present purposes”. Grant notes that memory:

Is not really about the warehouse of information, rather the ability to discern the type of ideas and material that should be invoked and deployed at the time. Memory serves to enable the speaker to assess the plethora of options and thus apply the most effective and appropriate material for the specific purpose”.

Grant on his part relates memory with the audience. His argument is that memory includes the ability of the audience to retain the material as well. This implies that memory “serves as an analysis of methods a speaker uses so that the idea expressed can be retained by the listeners”.

*Research Question Two:* What rhetorical proofs were predominant in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan in respect to the abduction and rescue of the abducted school girls?

Data obtained reveals that the most dominant rhetorical proof used by Goodluck Jonathan was Pathos [32]. Pathos deals with appealing to the emotions of the audience. Instances abound of the speaker’s use of pathos: “I feel pained anytime I hear one Nigerian is killed by the madness called Boko Haram.” This served to show the empathetic nature of the speaker. Empathy when displayed by the rhetor resonates with the audience [33]. The speeches largely contained empathy as epitomized by the former president who put himself in the position of parents and relatives of the Chibok school girls’ in captivity. Besides empathy, emotional support was also sought by the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan.

The excerpt here demonstrates that. We are trying our best and appreciate the concern of Nigerians over the situation of the country. This sought to ignite the emotions of the audience to constantly provide much support to the speaker as whatever support already provided has been appreciated. From the literature, the goal of any rhetor of great repute is to stimulate the emotions of his audience to the point of affecting their judgment on previously held views, while paying attention to establishing and acting on the truthfulness of the exigency that called for the rhetoric [34], [35].

Thus, pathos is a complete psychology of emotions intended to aid an understanding of audiences’ emotional response to the rhetorical situation. No doubt, Arnhart is of the same opinion that there is a strong link between a person’s emotional state and the decisions he makes at a particular time. Herrick advises that a rhetor should not manipulate audience’s emotions while seeking to demonstrate pathos. His sole objective should be to empathize with whatever emotion prevails at the rhetorical moment, be it melancholic (as is the case with the Chibok School Girls abduction), one of excitement (usually witnessed in the wake of election victories and the inauguration of a new government), or anger, often seen when there is a call for revolutionary action [36], [37], [38]. This way, the audience will have a sense of belonging and naturally respond positively to the rhetor’s means of persuasion. Pathos, can therefore be said to have featured prominently in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan respecting the abduction and fight to rescue the Chibok school girls.[39], [40].

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Political rhetoric can douse tension, curb the menace of sectarian violence and engender the support of citizens from those wielding political power. This paper has established that former president Goodluck Jonathan deployed rhetorical canons in calming nerves and in efforts to rescue the abducted school girls from Chibok, Borno. Of the five rhetorical canons illustrated by Aristotle, four featured significantly in the speeches of Goodluck Jonathan - invention, arrangement, style and memory. Of the three rhetorical proofs outlined by Aristotle, pathos featured significantly as well. The former president sought to appeal to the emotions of citizens. It is recommended that there is need for government to have a robust rhetorical strategy in place that can cater for sectarian agitations and exigencies such as the Boko Haram insurgency.

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