

## ABSTRACT

**THESIS PROPOSAL:** A Rhetorical Critique of John McCain's 2008 Presidential Concession Address

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**PAGES:** 107

This thesis examines Senator John McCain's concession address from the 2008 United States Presidential election campaign. McCain's concession speech was significant because of his come-from-behind victory in the Republican primary, the favorable critical responses to his speech, and his response to the historic nature of a person of color winning the presidential election. This study is also significant because it contributes to the small body of literature that examines concession addresses. This study examined how well McCain's concession speech demonstrated the qualities associated with the genre, if McCain's concession functioned as a model speech, and whether McCain's concession might signal an evolution of the genre. The method used to critique McCain's concession was generic application, using a combined framework of Chesebro and Hamsher's (1974) and Ritter and Howell's (1974) characteristics of the concession genre. This method entailed applying the characteristics of the concession genre to McCain's speech to determine if the artifact constitutes a strong example of the genre. The study found that McCain's speech demonstrated qualities associated with the genre of concession speeches well, functioning as a model because he utilized rhetorical techniques that were uniquely successful for him, and that scholars and practitioners of should be flexible in their application of the genre constraints associated with concession speeches