Isaiah Hoffer

In-class 18: Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.  
Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow— this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here  
highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Rhetorical Situation Analysis:  
• Text (Rhetoric): what advantage does Lincoln’s medium of oral speech have?

The advantage of talking face to face to the people, showed more respect to the fallen heroes and gave his words more meaning

• Author (Rhetor): what evidence (internal and external) is there of Lincoln’s personal context?

* What is his background and personal situation that creates the assumptions he uses to see the world?
* What is his geographic origin, ethnicity, culture, religion, education, socioeconomic, and political  
  beliefs?
* What is his background story—personal experience?
* Audience: to whom is Lincoln directly communicating (intentional, center of the target)?
* How would the audience’s values and situation compare with Lincoln’s?

Most of the audience is mourning a lost one from the war and Lincoln speech told them, we shouldn’t forfeit the war, unless we want the soldiers to die in vain which I think the audience would agree with.

* Who would be his secondary, broader audience and how do their values and situation compare?

The secondary audience is probably those who didn’t lose someone in the war or weren’t at Gettysburg and are a part of the union. I think their value would be to fight for liberty.

* Who are Lincoln’s unintentional audiences?

The unintentional audiences is probably the Confederacy, and maybe someone who fought for the Confederacy didn’t realize they were going against the principles of America or they disagree completely

• Purpose: rhetorical exigence  
o What is Lincoln’s rhetorical exigence—what does he hope his rhetoric will change?  
• Kairos: the moment of the occasion  
o What is the significance of the occasion for Lincoln’s speech?  
o What is the significance of the setting where Lincoln’s speech occurs?  
o What evidence can you find of appropriateness in Lincoln’s language?  
▪ How is he appropriately showing decorum and/or pertinence?  
o Is there evidence of exigency—any urgency in the moment?