

Charles Zhang

8 March 2021

Sara Castro Font

Discussion 1K

### Assignment #5

#### **A1:**

In Merrick Garland's introduction of his family members, he simply lists them out, providing their names and their relation to him. He thanks them, along with some unnamed extended family, then proceeds to move on with his speech.

William Burns also takes time to list out his family members, but provides a little more context. He begins by talking about his parents and how their lives have brought him to where he is. He then continues to address his wife and child, with slightly more detail than Garland uses. Instead of simply listing their name and relation, he also includes a short anecdote for each family member he introduces.

#### **A2:**

In the first transcript, Garland can be seen introducing his family before transitioning to discussing his role as Attorney General. This gives him time to humanize himself and helps him better fit the image of a normal person in the eyes of the listener, similar to how Capps leveraged his introduction of his family in a similar manner.

Burns can also be seen as using the "narrative of belonging" and "present as a natural extension of the past" in his discourse here by using his past to connect him to the position he is running for. These strategies allow him to justify his decisions in a way that falls in line with his

established “existential coherence”, as his past explains his decisions in the present, in the same manner as the US Congress candidates narrated their lives.

### **B1:**

Since Garland only introduces his family members, it seems that he is attributing no agency to them at all. His introductions simply identify himself as the agent.

On the other hand, Burns seems to attribute agency to multiple family members in his statement. He does so to his father when he says, **“I never had to look further than my father, for the best model of non-partisan public service”**. He does so to his mother when he says **“I never had to look further than my mother to find the best imaginable example of selflessness and commitment, and life shaped by faith. family. and hard work”**. Here, his mother and father act as the agents that created his ideal image of a public servant; making them responsible for his actions moving forward. Finally, he attributes agency to his wife and kids when he says, **“their love and support have made everything possible and have enriched my life beyond measure”**. Here, Burns details their contributions toward making his life better, making them agents in regards to improving his life outside his career.

### **B2:**

In attributing agency to his father, Burns’ use of **“my father”** declares his father as the agent and **“the best model of non-partisan public service”** is what his father was displaying for him. At the same time, Burns saying **“I never had to look further”** can also be seen as declaring himself as the agent by using **“I”** as the subject. He is then acting upon the object of **“the best model of non-partisan public service”** and making it his goal to embody the model

his father had set for him. This is made clear by his use of the active verb **“look”**. The same breakdown can apply to Burns’ use of his mother’s example, where his mother may have been the agent in setting the example for Burns, but Burns was the agent in following it for himself.

In the example about his wife and kids, **“their”**, which is in reference to his wife and kids, is obviously the subject of the sentence, declaring them as the agents. He says they had **“made everything possible”** and **“enriched my life”**, using the active verbs **“made”** and **“enriched”** to attribute agency to them. Burns’ life itself is then the object of this agency.