



Communication & Emerging Media

Pomp and Circumstance:
Presidential Rhetoric and
Address Genres

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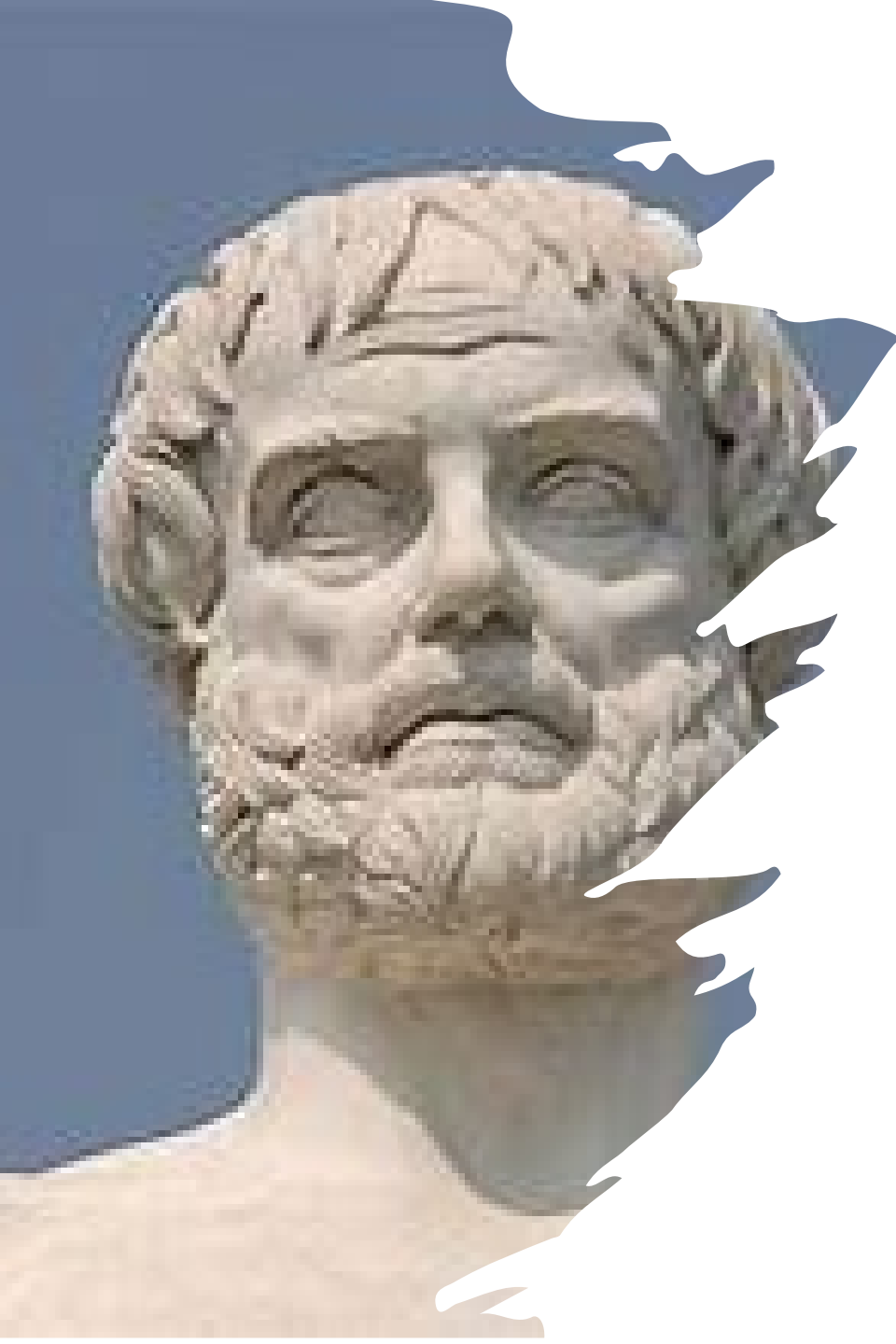
Who said
this?
President
Trump?

“Farewell the
neighing steed and
the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th'ear-
piercing fife,
The royal banner,
and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance
of glorious war!”



What is rhetoric?

- Aristotle—art of persuasion
- Kenneth Burke—identification, terministic screens



What is Presidential Rhetoric and Rhetorical Genre?

- There's the thing called the US Constitution!
- But lots of things not really spelled out.
- Roles and power of different branches are somewhat fluid.
- Presidents use rhetoric to increase their power.
- Through the history of the country, rhetorical types or genres of presidential address have emerged and evolved.
- Now we have expectations!



Presidents

CREATING THE PRESIDENCY

Deeds Done in Words

KARLYN KOHRS CAMPBELL

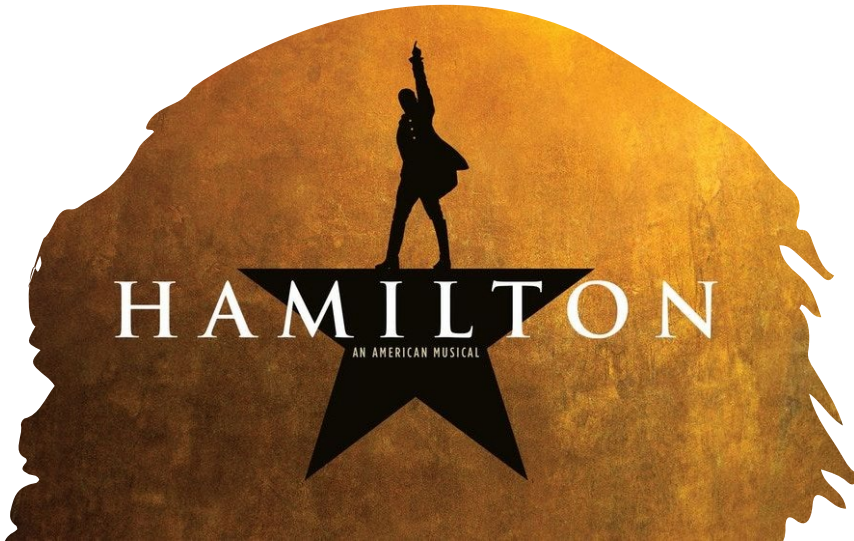
and

KATHLEEN HALL JAMIESON



What is war? What is war rhetoric?

- I guess it depends!
- Declared war only 5 times!
- Federalist no. 23
- A “cooperative process” and thus **WAR RHETORIC!**
- Civil War, not really, couldn't be
- Again, constitution implies a rhetorical process
- War Powers Act of 1973—post Vietnam (Nixon vetoed, but Congress prevailed)
- War Powers Act Resolutions in 2025 regarding Iran—nothing has passed, I don't think



Element 1: **A PRODUCT OF THOUGHTFUL DELIBERATION**

- We're making a rational decision!
- Not making this decision out of emotion!
- Language implies the constitutional mandate for sober cooperation.
- Wilson example, 1917





Element 2:
USE OF NARRATIVE

- Still need a dramatic story to justify war.
- Or justify military intervention generally.
- Clinton Example, 1995



Element 3:
**EXHORTATION TO
UNIFIED ACTION**

- Uses emotionally charged language!
All about pathos!
- Says we're unified as a country, a community of patriots and we will work together to defeat the enemy!
- With the help of God, we will win the day.
- Example, James Madison in 1812



Element 4: **INVESTITURE AS COMMANDER IN CHIEF**

- Power to the POTUS!
- Now is the appropriate time for POTUS to act as Commander in Chief!
- Controversial patterns over time—more power to the POTUS!
- Lincoln example, 1861
- Do you know where Lincoln kept his speech notes? Not in logs.

A black and white photograph of a man in a dark suit and white shirt, pointing his right index finger towards the left. He is looking slightly downwards and to the left. The background is a plain, light color. The image is partially obscured by a white, torn-edge graphic that contains text and a list.

More on *Element 4*

- Presidents basically coerce Congress through political rhetoric.
- America's next top model!
- Yes, Teddy is pointing at you!

Element 5: STRATEGIC MISREPRESENTATION— POLK THEIR EYES OUT

- Spinning and winning.
- Power of political rhetoric to shape and frame political realities!
- Mexican aggressors
- Polk Example
- Remember the Alamo?
Wait... What's that?



A few contextual things...

December 7, 1941.

- Neutrality
- Invasion—only war to result from invasion (except in 1984—Red Dawn)
- Needed to rouse an ill-prepared nation
- War was really foregone conclusion (he says state of war already exists)
- Easy speech to give, but very carefully worded
- Hunt for the elements! They're there—not so much misrepresentation though.

BACK TO THE CONCLUSIONS

1941, a date which will live in ~~infamy~~ ^{infamy}

was ~~suddenly~~ ^{suddenly} and deliberately attacked

the Empire of Japan ~~with out warning~~

at the moment at peace with that nation and was

with its Government and its Emperor looking

peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after,

commenced bombing in ~~the~~ ^{Dahu}



MR. VICE PRESIDENT, AND MR. SPEAKER, AND MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: (TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:)

Yesterday, December 7, 1941 -- a date which will live in infamy -- the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its Government and its Emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific. Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in the American Island of Oahu, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States and his colleague delivered to (the) our Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. And while this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or of armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time the Japanese Government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian Islands has caused severe



This is a huge
speech!

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YhtuMrMVJDk>



The future of presidential rhetoric?

Expect the unexpected!

March
forth/4th!

