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The Art and Importance of Deliberative Rhetoric in Political Communications

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THE ART AND IMPORTANCE OF DELIBERATIVE RHETORIC IN POLITICAL COMMUNICATIONS

By
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ABSTRACT
CAMERON NICOLE SADLER: The Art and Importance of Deliberative Rhetoric in Political Communications
(Under the direction of Dr. Jason Cain)

This project explores the use of deliberative rhetorical appeals in political communications. Seven professionals spanning all levels of politics were interviewed about their work as communications specialists and strategists. Their insights further proved the necessity for attention to rhetoric in messaging.

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INTRODUCTION

> "...I stand here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that, in no other country on earth, is my story even possible. Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy. Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over two hundred years ago, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.'
>
> It's that fundamental belief — I am my brother's keeper, I am my sisters' keeper — that makes this country work. It's what allows us to pursue our individual dreams, yet still come together as a single American family. "E Pluribus unum." Out of many, one…
>
> There's not a liberal America and a conservative America — there's the United States of America. There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America; there's the United States of America. The pundits like to slice-and-dice our country into Red States and Blue States; Red States for Republicans, Blue States for Democrats. But I've got news for them, too. We worship an awesome God in the Blue States, and we don't like federal agents poking around our libraries in the Red States. We coach Little League in the Blue States and have gay friends in the Red States. There are patriots who opposed the war in Iraq and patriots who supported it. We are one people, all of us pledging allegiance to the stars and stripes, all of us defending the United States of America…
>
> It's the hope of slaves sitting around a fire singing freedom songs; the hope of immigrants setting out for distant shores; the hope of a young naval lieutenant bravely patrolling the Mekong Delta; the hope of a mill worker's son who dares to defy the odds; the hope of a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too. The audacity of hope!
>
> In the end, that is God's greatest gift to us, the bedrock of this nation; the belief in things not seen; the belief that there are better days ahead…"(Barack Obama's…).

These excerpts are a part of Obama's keynote address given at the 2004 Democratic National Convention. It is widely acknowledged that this speech launched the young, single-term senator to the forefront of the minds of the politicos of the Democratic party (Heilemann, J.,). Who was this fiery newcomer? Why was he getting attention that achieved, senior politicians were not?

The resonance of Obama's address is not credited to a stroke of luck that the crowd happened related to his message; rather, his speech was thoughtfully drafted, or calculated, to rally an entire party. The speech that spring-boarded Obama toward his path to Presidency was full of rhetorical appeals, which are comments expressed in terms intended to persuade or impress (RHETORICAL..").

During his speech, Obama found common ground with the masses. He shared his story, but he mindfully explained that while his story was unique, it was no more special than anyone else's as it plays a small role in the larger American story. He acknowledged that only in the United States would his story be possible. He erased party lines and gave clear examples to accentuate our similarities despite political affiliation. Finally, he appealed to the idea of hope, providing safety. He belabored the grit behind having hope as he gave example after example of those who had defied odds (2016, April 30). On this list, he included himself. "The hope of a skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him too" (Barack Obama's…). Obama concluded, and the crowd followed in a rage of cheering.

OVERVIEW

Isocrates shares this on the topic of rhetoric:

> "But since we have the ability to persuade one another and to make dear to ourselves what we want, not only do we avoid living like animals, but we have come together, built cities, made laws, and invented arts. Speech is responsible for nearly all our inventions. It legislated in matters of justice and injustice and beauty and baseness, and without these laws, we could not live with one another. By it we refute the bad and praise the good; through it, we educate the ignorant and recognize the intelligent. We regard speaking well to be the clearest sign of a good mind, which it requires, and truthful, lawful, and just speech we consider the image of a good and faithful soul. With speech we fight over contentious matters, and we investigate the unknown. We use the same arguments by which we persuade others in our own deliberations; we call those able to speak in a crowd "rhetorical"; we regard as sound advisers those who debate with themselves most skillfully about public affairs. If one must summarize the power of discourse, we will discover that nothing done prudently occurs without speech, that speech is the leader of all thoughts and actions, and that the most intelligent people use it most of all." (Race).

Communication is the basis from which all things are made possible; it is constitutive. Rhetoric allows us to get what we want using just our words. It is the study of written, spoken, and visual language; it addresses the relationship between the speaker, audience, and the argument. The understanding of this art helps us persuade others to think a certain way, shape norms, increase motivation to spur change, and ultimately, influence outcomes how we desire (How to use...).

Being an effective communicator is essential to leading. "Leading", depending on the situation and audience, may mean encouraging, solving a problem, persuading, or many other things. As my parents often told me as an adolescent, "It is not what you say, it is how you say it."

Studying communication and speech can sound boring or stuffy until it comes time for us to try to get what we want. Again, I think back to the countless times that I, as

a child, tried to sell my parents on an idea: Why "we" should get a dog, which ultimately was an argument for me to get a dog. Including my parents in the deal was a way for me to persuade them, or so I thought. At that moment, I was willing to tell them whatever was necessary to get my way. I would feed the dog. I would bathe it, play with it, and I would even clean up after it.

My trying to convince my parents to buy a dog is no different from a political figure trying to convince constituents for their votes. Without recognition of what we are doing, we all try to use rhetorical devices to our advantage. Humans are inherently selfish as we all try to serve our desires and convince others to think as we do. The art of rhetoric and speech is age-old. While only some of us choose to study these communicative arts and polish our application, it affects everyone as it lingers throughout the atmosphere of daily life. Actions are results of decisions made and each decision made is a result of a previous influence, whether we are cognizant of it or not (Leith).

For this thesis, I will focus on political oration. Through the branch of deliberative rhetoric, or symbouleutikon, and the rhetorical strategies it leverages, I will determine what separates effective communication from that which is ineffective. Deliberative rhetoric is persuasive. It focuses on the future, incites or discourages action, and is the type of speaking that politicians often use. Debates, proposals, campaigns, and presentations are all forms of deliberative rhetoric.

I will begin my research by studying the history of rhetoric and its origins. Next, I will research how rhetorical appeals – ethos, logos, and pathos – are leveraged and what makes each element important along with the rhetorical canons, and how they are connected. Continuing into exploring the art of deliberative rhetoric as it is one of the

three branches of rhetoric. For my research, I will share insight gained from interviews with political communications specialists on the topic. These findings will be synthesized into a comprehensive study to justify what makes deliberative rhetoric an art and indispensable skill, for I believe that those who effectively use rhetoric ultimately have more influence.

CHAPTER I: THE HISTORY OF RHETORIC

At first mention, the term "rhetoric" for many, brings to mind the thought of classical philosophers dressed in robes as they address the masses teaching them a higher way of thinking. Why would emulating a practice so ancient be of any use today? Should we not have advanced beyond classical rhetoric? Due to the advancement of technology, we are possibly in the most argumentative age of history thanks to the internet (Leith).

On a fundamental level, not much about oratory and persuasive writing has changed. While the way that much rhetoric is practiced has changed, the way that rhetoric works is still the same at its core. Although Aristotle never sent a Tweet, he knew how to gain peoples' trust, harness their emotions, and ultimately convince them of his way of thinking. As the necessity for knowledge has increased in the Western world, as has the value of persuasion. "Politicians like to tell us that we live in 'a knowledge economy'" but they might just as well call it a rhetoric economy" (Leith, 17). Some may question if rhetoric is dead; I, however, see rhetoric as an unkillable, adaptable practice.

The infantile stage of rhetoric can be traced back to nearly two and a half thousand years ago on the island of Sicily. As the city-state of Syracuse overcame the grips of tyrant rule, a man named Corax first used rhetoric to rise up after the previous ruler, Hieron, to restore order.

> "...He began to soothe and silence the people and to speak as though telling a story, and after these things to summarize and call to mind concisely what had gone before and to bring before their eyes at a glance what had previously been said."

While Corax's story is shared from many outlets, they all agree that he laid the foundation for rhetoric and the art of persuasion. In addition to this, his name is often

mentioned with another named Tisias. At times, they are used almost interchangeably. However, there is a rough assumption that Tisias was Corax's student.

Their master to pupil relationship intensified and came to a head. According to legend, they entered into the first argument in legal history to end without a winner. "If Tisias won his first case, then he'd pay Corax the agreed fee for his services. If Tisias lost his first case, however, then Corax would waive his fee on the grounds that his instruction had been useless," the story goes. Ultimately, Tisias tried to outsmart his master and never showed up to court. This resulted in both men arguing that they had won; one thought he had won by default, the other thinking he had found a loophole. This turn of events had never happened in the courts, and the judge eventually threw both men out. He exclaimed, ""Kakou korakas kakon oon" which means "Bad crow, bad egg."

This story is the most detailed attribution to Corax and Tisias. Both men are mentioned by later philosophers, but neither are expounded on. The greatest speculation to be made of these men came far later in 1991. Thomas Cole, a scholar, shared in an essay from a commonsensical viewpoint that Corax's name translates to "Crow" and that he had been coined this to associate him and his teaching to the loud racket from birds. Cole presumes that before Corax was known as "Corax" or "crow", he was known as Tisias. "What more appropriate fate for the putative founder of the entire rhetorical tradition, with the centuries-long study of figural speech it incorporates than to be finally revealed as nothing more—or nothing less—than a figure of speech himself?"

Whether this story is that of one man or two men, down the road from Sicily in a neighboring town, Gorgias allegedly learned under Corax. When the Peloponnesian War began, he moved to Athens and began to teach rhetoric. From his teaching in Athens, the

study of rhetoric spring-boarded. Beginning in Athens is the most well-known history of the subject.

There grew to be a class of educated teachers in ancient Greece called, “sophists.” They taught other Athenians how to effectively speak and persuade alongside a class of speechwriters. While their knowledge was in demand, they were not very trustworthy as they were seen to be deceitful. Nonetheless, Athens became the epicenter of rhetoric. The practice was not only becoming industrialized as those who could afford to become more learned in the subject, or paid those who were for their help, but there was an effort to formalize the art.

The aristocrats who realized that their influence was lessening utilized the art of rhetoric to regain their control. As society became more democratic, the use of rhetoric increased. However, as rhetoric began to grow roots, anti-rhetoric began to sprout. Some were skeptical of what Gorgias and the sophists were teaching; as the modern masses are suspicious of the messages shared by politicians, the Athenians grew distrusting of their superiors. There was an undercurrent that begged the question if rhetoric was a way to wrap a weak argument in prettier paper. Neither Plato nor Socrates trusted rhetoric. “Do you know any other effect of rhetoric over and above that of producing persuasion?” Socrates asked. Gorgias conceded, “No: the definition seems to me very fair, Socrates; for persuasion is the chief end of rhetoric.”.

While all of Gorgias’ endeavors were notable, and Plato distrusted rhetoric, his student, Aristotle, was enamored with it. Aristotle’s advances within the subject would become those most highly regarded, for he saw rhetoric as a teachable, practical skill. His work *Rhetoric* serves as both the foundation and cornerstone for the art we study today.

He maps the three branches of rhetoric as well as the three appeals of rhetoric, which will be discussed later. For this work, he is esteemed as the Father of Rhetoric.

"Aristotle sought to rescue rhetoric from its place as a purely instrumental art: the highest rhetorical accomplishment, for Aristotle, was an expression of arête, or virtue. As he put it: 'Character contains almost the strongest proof of all,'" shares Sam Leith author of "Words Like Loaded Pistols". Aristotle provided the "why" behind the study of rhetoric.

CHAPTER II: THE STRUCTURE AND BRANCHES OF RHETORIC

The art of rhetoric is like an onion; it has many layers. The layers are not complex, however. They attach to and build upon one another, thus formulating an argument. It is most beneficial to first dissect rhetoric by its developing tenets. Rhetoric is first divided into five principles, or cannons. The cannons are invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. These parts work as steps, or a map, to crafting an argument. The canons help build a toolkit for authoring and presenting an argument well.

The first cannon, or step, is invention. Cicero defined invention as the "discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments to render one's cause probable." Invention is doing the behind-the-scenes work or formulating a plan.

For example, when I was a child and begged for the dog, I had to do a little digging before I approached my parents. I asked my grandmother if my dad had owned a dog, for if he had, he would surely want me to have the same joy. I asked my friends which of their dogs did not shed because my mom would not want its hair on the couch. Aristotle beckons us to find the facts and learn our audience, then mold those facts into arguments that would appeal to the specific audience.

This brings us to the next, and possibly the most important, sub-layer of building an argument. Once the argument is invented, the argument must find a way to “click”. The author must call to at least one, if not all, of three rhetorical appeals: character- who is talking, logic- the reasonability of the argument, or emotion- the why behind the argument. These appeals are known as ethos, logos, and pathos. In many ways, the three appeals overlap.

Ethos displays credibility. It can show rationality, fairness, or mastery of a subject matter. Why should an audience trust you? An author may share that they have a proven,

tried past, so they should be granted with what is to come. Or, perhaps, an author shares that he or she is one of the audience. They understand because they coexist and empathize.

Logos appeals to logic. Oftentimes logos is displayed by sharing facts, statistics, or history. Logos makes the audience understand; it points to a reason to believe. "If ethos is the ground on which your argument stands, logos is what drives it forward: it is the stuff of your argument, the way one point proceeds to another, as if to show that the conclusion to which you are aiming is not only the right one, but so necessary and reasonable as to be more or less the only one," shares Sam Leith.

Finally, pathos appeals to the emotions of the audience; it shows shared sentiments. Appealing to emotion does not just mean healing sadness or arousing anger. Appealing to emotion explains our falling in love, the shared feeling of patriotism when the National Anthem is played at a sporting event, and even why laughs are shared. Pathos reveals vulnerability, and it allows the audience to see that the speaker is human too.

The second canon to follow the invention of the argument is arrangement. Quintilian shares, "For though all the limbs of a statue be cast, it is not a statue until they are united, and if, in our own bodies or those of any other animals, we were to displace or alter the position of any part, they would be but monsters, though they had the same number of parts," as the reason arrangement must come second. Which parts of the argument are the strongest and deserving of emphasis? How do you tuck in elements to brush over? How do you arrange all of the information you found to invent the argument?

In Cicero's *Ad Herennium* the order of an argument is prescribed:

1. Exordium, the introduction sharing the subject and purpose where the speaker establishes credibility
2. Narratio, the narrative account of the case
3. Partitio, the outline of the argument
4. Confirmatio, the main body of the speech where logical arguments are given
5. Refutatio, the refutation given to any possible arguments that could be given against the case
6. Peroratio, the ending summary where an appeal to pathos is generally made

Once your argument is written and arranged, you have to communicate it. Have you ever told someone, "Now you are speaking my language"? This is the time to speak the audience's language. The third canon of rhetoric is decorum. Decorum is essentially the marketing of your product. Think about it this way: Stylistically, you would speak differently to a close friend than you would to a store manager. Decorum addresses the different elements of your delivery style. The timeliness, tone, appropriate jokes if they are used, and even physical components of you as the speaker such as your dress and gestures. Planning the decorum of your speech is accommodating the audience so that they feel as though you are "speaking their language". The three strict style forms, which are taught by Quintilian, are:

1. Plain style for instructing an audience
2. Middle style for moving an audience

3. Grand style for pleasing an audience

Most great speeches can leverage all of these styles at some point in its delivery.

What good is a plan, however, if you do not execute it well and with confidence? This draws an arrow to the fourth canon which is memory. Delivering an argument should appear to be done with ease. As someone could easily drive through their childhood hometown, the speaker should be able to guide the audience through their argument with confidence and poise. You want your audience to feel like you are speaking to them, rather than at them. Many speakers polish their presentation by reading their argument over and over, speaking it aloud into a mirror, and eventually condensing it into bullet points. If a speech is not learned well for delivery, it is equally awkward for the audience to listen to as the speaker fumbles his or her words and turns red.

The final canon is delivery. "According to Quintilian, when Demosthenes was asked what the most important skill was in the whole art of oratory, he said, 'Delivery.' Asked what came second, he said, 'Delivery.' In third place? 'Delivery.'" When you're on the 10-yard line with a touchdown in sight, there is no option to fumble the ball. The work, research, and polishing have all been done, and it would be a shame to come off incorrectly to your audience. When delivering, style, rhetoric, and memory skills come into play.

Consider inflection. Should something be said louder to raise awareness or softer to show intentionality? When and for how long do you pause? Pauses cause the listener to reflect; they also draw attention as the main speaker has stopped. "Why", the audience will wonder, "it must be important." Not to mention, body language is extremely important. Speakers should appear open, not closed off by standing with hands clasped;

however, they should not walk around noodle-like with their arms and hands always at their sides. Gestures are important, and they should emphasize recited thoughts do not distract from them.

Once again, the five canons of rhetoric serve as an instruction manual to building and presenting a well-thought-out argument. They are not rigid, however, they will help guide your thesis statement from a grain of sand to a mulled-over, developed pearl ready when its time comes. Reflecting back, Aristotle taught that there were three branches of rhetoric: judicial, epideictic, and deliberative. Depending on whether the past, present, or future is being addressed depends on which branch, or path, is taken. By this, follows how each cannon is applied. This thesis studies deliberative rhetoric, so it will be discussed finally and at the greatest length.

Judicial rhetoric discusses the past. It is vindictive. Judicial rhetoric covers the "who, what, where, when, and why" of an occurrence. It sets the score straight. Those who are practicing this form of rhetoric are essentially detectives at the scene of a crime. Today, this branch is primarily leveraged by those in court whether it be a judge or an attorney.

Rhetoric that focuses on the present is epideictic. It is also known as "ceremonial rhetoric." The purpose it serves is to place either blame or praise. A classic example of epideictic rhetoric is a graduation speech. Given the other two branches of rhetoric, epideictic is seen as the lesser of the three. The reason being that it is the branch with the least "heat" if you will. Wedding speeches, obituary notices, and introductions at events do not quite rally the same response as a fiery courtroom defense or the change championed by deliberative rhetoric.

Finally, deliberative rhetoric is forward-focused. Cicero identifies three services of oratory as being to teach, delight and move. Deliberative rhetoric has an end goal to accomplish, it incites change. It is the rhetoric of politicians and activists, but it is also the rhetoric of coaches and salesmen; it is the argument used by those with intentions to lead and convince.

Aristotle taught that there were two lines of attack that deliberative rhetoric could take. The first appeals to the listener's sense of security, and the second appeals to his sense of honor. The logic is this:

> For those who are inclined to value their safety: No virtues can be put to useful good if one is not safe; no intelligent, honorable person would put themselves in a position to be unsafe.
>
> For those who are inclined to value their honor: No person should ever throw his or her honor aside, for that is eternal. The loss, whether of comfort or life, that may come from lack of safety, is more bearable than shame.

Essentially, what this means is that you can share that something is the right thing to do or that it is in the best interest of the listener.

CHAPTER IV: JOHN F. KENNEDY'S "ICH BIN EIN BERLINER"

A great example of this kind of rhetoric and persuasion is John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech. In English, this translates to, "I am a Berliner." In 1963 West Berlin was not secure in their government. The Berlin wall had been constructed two years prior separating capitalism from communism, families, and overall freedom and communication. Kennedy shared this stirring speech to evoke pride and offer the support of the United States.

Being revered as the leader of the free world is certification on Kennedy's authority enough; powerfully and humbly, the President began his speech: "I am proud to come to this city as a guest of your distinguished Mayor, who has symbolized throughout the world the fighting spirit of West Berlin." Kennedy established a rapport through meekness, for he established himself as a guest, not as the President of the United States. He spoke with strength, but he was not speaking at the people, rather, he provided the steadiness in his voice that the people lacked as citizens. He showed, through speech, that America was at their side. He combines ethos and pathos immediately.

He continued by likening the divided nation to Rome, one of, if not the, most powerful empires to ever stand, to Berlin. Kennedy believed that while "civis Romanus sum" was once the highest boast, the title had now been turned over to the men and women of Berlin. "Ich bin ein Berliner", he declared in German. "There are many people in the world who really don't understand, or say they don't, what is the great issue between the free world and the Communist world." He appeals to pathos; while others may not understand, he does. Kennedy then began to rally the crowd. He challenged every negative presumption that others in the world may have about Berlin. "Come to

Berlin," he demonstratively, assertively declared. The President was offering the people confidence and security. West Berlin was the beacon of hope for those oppressed by communism.

"Freedom has many difficulties and democracy is not perfect. But we have never had to put a wall up to keep our people in—to prevent them from leaving us," he explained. He appealed to logos; "logically, understand that my people are happy and knowingly chose to stay", is essentially what he explains to the crowd. "While the wall is the most obvious and vivid demonstration of the failures of the Communist system—for all the world to see—we take no satisfaction in it; for it is, as your Mayor has said, an offense not only against history but an offense against humanity, separating families, dividing husbands and wives and brothers and sisters, and dividing a people who wish to be joined together," the President appeals to logos and pathos before once more appealing to hope.

Despite the insecurity and fear that resulted from the separation of loved ones, Kennedy urges the people, "Lift your eyes beyond the dangers of today, to the hopes of tomorrow…" He declares, "Freedom is indivisible, and when one man is enslaved, all are not free." If those in Berlin are not free, neither is Kennedy, neither are the American citizens overseas. "When all are free, then we look—can look forward to that day when this city will be joined as one and this country and this great Continent of Europe in a peaceful and hopeful globe. When that day finally comes, as it will, the people of West Berlin can take sober satisfaction in the fact that they were in the front lines for almost two decades." Finally, Kennedy takes both deliberative appeals of honor and safety. He admirably declares to the crowd that they can take pride in their efforts to further

democracy, that one day when all of Germany is safe and free, they can claim ownership in their part of the fight.

"And, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words 'Ich bin ein Berliner,'" Kennedy concludes. He declared at the hottest spot of the Cold War his purpose: to show the people of West Berlin that both he, and the citizens of the United States of America, were standing by their side. They were exchanging trust and a partnership over a common movement towards the greatest factor of a nation: self-governance. Kennedy wrote this speech himself after trashing the one his staff had written for him shortly before going on stage. This speech, "Ich bin ein Berliner", stands as one of Kennedy's "moments" in history, and is revered as one of the greatest political speeches given. Like Obama's speech dissected earlier, and this speech of Kennedy's, all politicians strive to have their moment. Presidential speechwriter James Humes shared, "The art of communication is the language of leadership" (Paymar, J., 2012).

CHAPTER V: METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

To better understand the application and use of rhetoric in modern politics, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with men and women who have worked at all levels of government with political communications. Beginning with the Executive Director of Commission of Presidential Debates, to the University of Mississippi's Chancellor, I have inquired about routines, strategies, successes, failures, and personal values that help highlight the necessity of practicing strong rhetoric on political communications.

Each of the seven interviewees selected work in different ways to provide political communications to the masses. They were all contacted through prior and mutual connections. The interviewees were given the option to discuss their careers and work either via email, call, or Zoom meeting. The interviews were conducted based on an IRB-approved set of questions that served as a conversation guide. The following questions serve as a sample of some of the things interviewees were asked:

- What steps do you take when preparing to write a speech / give an address? Are some steps always the same? Do they change under time constraints?
- What external components are considered when communicating with the public?
- What makes for effective deliberative rhetoric? Are there certain things a speaker can do to maximize effect or persuasion?
- What is the most important component of a speech or address? Would you say he/she giving the speech is just as important as the speech that is drafted?

- In what ways do you think technology has affected speech as a whole? Do you prepare speeches/communication differently if the address is to be given over air instead of in-person and over air?
- What element(s) of your consumer base is/are the most important to consider? Do they change?

The group of interviewees, again, amounted to seven. Overall, they spanned all three levels of government. National, state, and local positions were held. Spanning all three levels made the research thorough and fair.

CHAPTER VI: INTERVIEWS

Janet H. Brown

The Commission of Presidential Debates, commonly referred to as the CPD, is a private, not-for-profit, nonpartisan organization. Replacing the League of Women Voters, it launched on February 17, 1987, with a mission to, "organize, manage, produce, publicize and support debates for the candidates for President of the United States." Janet Brown has served as the commission's executive director since its inception ("Commission on…"). Brown shared, "The whole purpose of the debate is to be an educational forum."

John A. Roush, president of CPD, had this to say about Brown, "I was impressed then, and remain so now, at the breadth of insight Janet brings to this significant undertaking. The CDP, under her capable leadership, has helped men and women across this great nation make what is their most important decision as American citizens" ("Janet Brown…").

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After completion of the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts in 2002, the University of Mississippi began taking steps to hold a presidential debate. UM immediately sought a 1.5-million-dollar grant from the Robert M. Hearin Foundation in Jackson, MS. In 2007, the university was contacted and made aware that not only would they be holding a debate, but that they would be holding the first debate of the election year to follow in 2008. Barack Obama, a senator from Illinois, and John McCain, a senator from Arizona were to attend (HigdonCCC-SLP).

On September 26, 2008, the day had come for the debate. “The thing that attached to Ole Miss, that was, or still is a unique experience is that the morning of the debate, it was Friday, and we didn’t know if Senator McCain was coming. He had suspended his campaign because he said he wanted to go to Washington and focus on the fiscal crisis. People didn’t know was if he was going to attend the debate. That made for a very tense, highwire act,” shared Brown. “You have to assume that the debate is going forward.”

“Chancellor Khayat was absolutely amazing because he understood that all we could do was move forward and be ready and wait to see how it would be resolved. That took extraordinary grace and level-headedness which he epitomizes,” noted Brown. It is crucial to understand that a debate may only be held if both candidates are present. If McCain were to not show, CPD was unable to host the debate. The moderator, Jim Lehrer of PBS, under the approval of the university, could only host an interview with Senator Obama if the interview was completely removed from CPD. It could not even take place on the preset stage.

Finally, John McCain contacted CPD at 10 a.m. on the day of the debate confirming he would arrive that evening. This was more than Brown had bargained for; however, she took every step necessary with her team as well as the Secret Service, who brought in security equipment from Memphis, to make sure the debate could begin with even just a moment’s notice.

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“I was between jobs; I was unemployed.” Brown shared upon being asked why she had devoted her life’s work to CPD. She was contacted as a possible candidate for the position by someone familiar with the commission’s purpose as they were trying to build

their staff roster. “I remember coming home to my husband and saying, ‘That sounds kind of horrible.’ and he said, ‘Well, you need a job.’ and I said, ‘Aha! Good point.’”

When asked why our debate system is important and how other countries view it as a model, Brown explained, “In their countries, quite often, they wrestle with who can be a neutral sponsor; especially countries with state-owned media that plays a huge role in what voters, the public, sees. There’s obviously going to be a thumb on the scale when it comes to how they decide what they are going to show.” Brown continued, “Most importantly, they [emerging democracies] don’t have a tradition of the public expecting that political opponents will debate each other in a neutral setting. There is no sense on the part of the public that this is just something that should automatically happen, and that is a big lever in the United States.” She explained that many of these countries that are emerging democracies, recognize the necessity of debate to appear as though they are mature or maturing; however, there is a lot of manipulation behind the scenes to sway the public opinion towards and from the candidates they deem fit.

“There is no law that requires candidates to debate in this country,” Brown explained. “Many believe that if a law were passed requiring debate, that it would be found unconstitutional. There is a difference between free speech and compelled speech. As long as that’s the case, public opinion is your biggest moral suasion tool.”

“You have got to have a record that lets the public, the media, and the campaigns step away at the end of the day and say, ‘The Commission did a professional, fair, and respectful job and did not put a thumb on the scale in any way.”

When asked what her favorite debate or election cycle was, she shared, “They’re all unique. The debates are influenced by the nature of the race. Some years it is really

close, like ‘16, other years like ‘96, the race between Clinton and Dole was never really neck-and-neck. That affects the way that people see the debates and the drama that attaches to the general election.” She continued, “I think the team would agree, we come away from each individual debate with feelings that we just love, and feelings of thinking we could have done better without.”

In closing, I asked what her favorite element was of her work, Brown happily shared, “It’s the teamwork. When I have free time which will probably be in the next century, I am going to write ‘Brown’s Handbook According to Team Sports.’ Every skill that I use in every one of my jobs comes from team sports.” She continued, “It literally is about having each other's back. And that is a phrase that is used all of the time by people who I don’t think even understand what it means. Our team, team CPD, has each other's backs.”

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Paul Begala

From the West Wing to the private sector of politics, Paul Begala has been an influential cog in the machine of many political endeavors. As an expert on policy, politics, and addressing the press, his multi-faceted career hallows him as a communications master. In the earlier years of his career, he and fellow Democratic strategist James Carville started a consulting firm, Carville & Begala, which played a crucial role in the election of President Clinton in 1992. During the election, Begala served as a senior strategist for the campaign. Once Clinton was elected and sworn into office, Begala served as Counselor to the president. He helped define and defend the Administration’s agenda as well as serving as a principal spokesperson. After leaving the

White House, Begala aided in the election of many other officials such as Bob Casey Sr., Harris Wafford, and Zell Miller. He is not currently paid as a consultant for any politicians or candidates for office ("CNN Profiles…").

Now, Begala serves as a professor of public policy at Georgetown University. He contributes as a political strategist to CNN where he appears frequently on The Situation Room, as he previously served as the host of Crossfire, the network's now retired political debate program ("CNN Profiles…"). "Former President Bill Clinton described his longtime friend and former aide as, 'a witty dynamo from Sugar Land, Texas...who brought energy, focus and credibility to our efforts.' ("Paul Begala Speaking…")"

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"Running for president is difficult, but it pales in comparison to running the country," shared Begala when I asked what his transition was like from working on the campaign to in the West Wing. "In a campaign, pretty much the only thing you have are your words. But in government, deeds matter mightily. Clinton believed that, over time, the best policy would be the best politics. So he passed his economic plan, which was not popular at the time but ushered in an economic boom like we have never seen. All the communication skill in the world cannot make up for poor performance – that, I think, is the story of the Trump presidency. He was a TV star, possessed of more experience in front of a camera than any president except maybe Reagan."

He continued, "That is not to say that communications doesn't matter in government. Far from it. One of the President's greatest powers is the power to set the agenda. If a president decides to give a major speech on health care, you can be assured

the whole country will be talking about health care. So choosing which issues to highlight, and how to draw attention to them, is of critical importance."

I asked Begala about his methods and experiences from writing for former President Clinton. I had assumed to write speeches with such magnitude, he had to have a close, observant relationship with Clinton to be able to craft addresses that would emotionally connect with him as a deliverer. He shared, "I traveled with then-Gov. Clinton throughout the campaign. We spent thousands of hours on planes, buses, in vans (later limos). We became very close. I was an experienced speechwriter, and I knew how vital it is to capture someone's voice. Anytime someone said to me, 'I could tell you wrote that; it sounded like you,' I knew I had failed."

In his opinion, I asked what makes for effective deliberative rhetoric. He shared, "Empathy. Being able to put yourself in the position of the listener – and even of your opponents – is in my mind the most important attribute of successful public rhetoric. After that, good rhetoric is original – avoid cliches! It is relevant to the lives of the audience members. It is memorable, which is often accomplished through humor, use of the unexpected, and rhetorical devices such as alliteration, anaphora, contrasting pairs, and groups of three."

Continuing on speechwriting, he shared, "Clinton is a very hands-on speechwriter. He makes detailed changes. His 1992 Democratic convention address took 22 drafts. And then, after all that work, Clinton would invariably riff. I viewed him as a jazz musician. He loved having terrific sheet music, but he was always willing to go off-script if the spirit moved him. I embraced that, and I think he appreciated my flexibility. The State of the Union Address was a remarkable process. Clinton considered that

Address, along with his budget, to be the central organizing documents of his government. So work on the speech began six months before the event. Staff would contact every Cabinet agency and government department to seek their input – everyone wants their priorities highlighted by the president."

I continued by asking Begala about his experience with debates and asked what elements make a good debater. He shared, "A good debater is prepared. She/he must go into the debate knowing what they want the headline to be, then do all they can to make that happen. A good debater creates moments. In the age of the sound bite, a debate is a series of discrete moments, many of which will be digested as memes and soundbites. Knowing how to create such a moment is essential. A good debater listens. Very often your opponent will say something that leaves them vulnerable. A great recent example was when Pres. Trump's lawyer in the impeachment trial over the January 6 insurrection said he had never been treated so poorly in Washington as he had during the trial. Lead House Impeachment Manager Jamie Raskin responded, 'You should have been here on January 6.'"

Finally, I asked him about his personal relationship with the former President, for it is one thing to advise someone professionally on their choices, but to serve the President professionally and personally as a friend, I assumed presented unique challenges. He shared, "Everyone is different, and each of us receives criticism in different ways. My experience with Pres. Clinton was that he leaned on our relationship – which was and remains very close – to give me the freedom and confidence to challenge him when he was wrong. Presidents are often surrounded by sycophants. The highest form of loyalty is not to suck up, but rather to speak up."

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Billy Gribbin

Specializing in writing and messaging, Billy Gribbin is a veteran communications strategist who has worked for many high-profile public figures. Former President Donald J. Trump, Sen. Ted Cruz, Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, Sen. Jim DeMint, are just some of his clients.

In a previous interview with Thomas Aquinas College, his alma mater, he shared this on rhetoric, “At its best, rhetoric can serve as handmaiden to truth, and help our society arrive at the common good through the dialectic,” Mr. Gribbin explains. “At its worst, it can only be what Plato calls ‘the sophist’s art.’ God willing, I hope to deal exclusively in the former” ("Graduate…).

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“I’ve never been a screenwriter, but I imagine it's something similar to being able to write a script to a movie, and see your work up there on the screen,” shared Gribbin when asked what he enjoyed about his job as a speechwriter. “Even if you are not giving the speech, the next best thing is composing it and writing it. It’s basically like you are being able to give the speech yourself.”

“The method comes in for the very obvious steps. Who is the speech being delivered to? Is the audience that is going to be there physically to understand, or sometimes the speech is intended to not be just for them, but once it is recorded or written about elsewhere, is your goal to have pieces of it blow up in the media? There are all of the ‘why, when, how’ questions. Then, once you understand the purpose, what the subject matter is going to be, it also depends on if it is going to be super technical -- which I

don’t particularly like because they are more like lectures – if someone is talking about very minute policy details, I don’t consider that a speech, as much as a lecture or an essay; certainly the ones that are more enjoyable are the ones where you are a little lighter on the policy details and a little heavier on the rhetoric.”

“I believe that writing in someone’s voice is overrated. I believe that any well-written speech should be able to be delivered by anybody. There are limitations, but I write them for me and make the changes necessary so that someone else can deliver it,” shared Gribbin when asked on his methodology when preparing a speech for an individual to deliver. “I am being paid by someone to write things that I consider to be good enough to give them.” “Your job is to make them sound good, and then they do things, which quite frankly, they’re sabotaging themselves,” he later shared. “It’s like ordering a filet mignon and having it ground up for hamburger meat.”

Our conversation evolved to discussing the state of rhetorical understanding today. Gribbin expounded sharing, “Everyone is now forced to speak to the lowest common denominator. The lowest common denominator has fallen. If people sound too brainy, too intellectual, people will think they are a nerd, and can't relate to someone you want to have a beer with. The unfortunate byproduct of that is the inability of our public discourse to be able to be captivated by smart words, by grand thinking, in-depth propositions.”

When I asked which clients had executed his speeches well, in a manner that made him proud, he shared, “When I was writing for the President [Trump] there were several events. In the Fourth of July speech when he was on the National Mall, I did a bunch of the military parts when they were doing the flyovers. When he was reciting the

history of each of the military branches, that was my stuff. That was wonderful." He continued, "When I was writing for Ben Carson, he did a lot of really good ones. More often than not, he used the material very well."

I asked what it was like to see how different clients interpret his different speeches. "Say I, Cameron Sadler, wrote a speech, and I could see two people who were very different in nature deliver my words, but I knew at the end of the day that they came out of my head; meanwhile, they each have their own interpretation of my work..." I pondered. "That's interesting, I have never really thought about the fact that I have written for people who have very different styles." "Each thing is its own mission," he continued, "each job is its own mission, each speech is its own mission."

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Michael Connolly

With a wide breadth of experience, Michael Connolly is a veteran communications specialist. Serving as the Press Secretary for the House Committee on the Judiciary, a speechwriter for FEMA and House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, as well as the Senior Communications Advisor for Sen. Jim DeMint, and serving in different positions for the Joint Economic Committee, Connolly gives a well-rounded master's opinion on the art of communication. He is currently in his eighth year of service in Sen. Mike Lee's office as the Deputy Chief of Staff.

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"These speeches are designed to persuade people, to try to lead the listeners and society at large, to the good, the beautiful, and the true, and that is a noble undertaking even in what is often an ignoble business of politics. I think it is the speechwriter's job to

give the people, the sovereign people, the respect that they deserve to put forth persuasive arguments," confidently shared Connolly. "Part of the responsibility for elevating the debate to the level that it deserves to be is to the people who write it."

"I think a lot of speechwriters get in trouble when they think the speech belongs to them," he added, "and it doesn't." "Speechwriters also have a tendency, like all writers, to get very particular about a sense of ownership about what to write, and that way leads to chaos." Connolly later added, "They try to make people think, 'Hey, that was a great speech!' when instead they should think, 'Hey, that's a really good man.' or 'That's a really good woman'" he explained. "Only a little bit of every speech matters; a speechwriter can protect that as a matter of literature, but everything else really is up to other people."

I asked whether understanding the audience was as important as understanding the policy and he replied, "No question." Connolly continued, "That goes for anything; that goes for political speech writing, to preaching, to stand-up comedy. You have to have a sense of what people believe and don't believe, and what they are expecting, so you know how to frame the argument in a way that is best suited for the occasion and the audience and the occasion to set it up best for success."

On the impact of technology on communication skills, Connolly shared, "Your generation can't write, and the problem is, they have been told that they can write when they can't." He continued, "I am generally anti-technology. I think if you look around at our society today, we have a lot of technology, but we don't have a lot of human connection. We have a lot of education; we don't have a lot of knowledge. We have a lot

of ways to connect, but we are overwhelmed with isolation. I think that technology is as bad for political rhetoric as it is for other things."

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Bailey Martin

Tupelo native, Bailey Martin, was hired in November of 2020, as the press secretary for first-term Republican governor Tate Reeves. She is a graduate of the University of Mississippi where she received her bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism (Honea). She previously worked as a reporter for the radio station SuperTalk, News Mississippi (Vance).

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"No day is the same. It is always different one day to the next and I can honestly say that is what I love most about this job. It keeps me on my toes and always something new so it's never boring," shared Martin when asked about her days in the Governor's office. "I really look up to Kayleigh McEnany. She held the of title Press Secretary flawlessly and I hope that one day people will say the same about me. She was always so prepared and responsive and transparent with the media. Those are qualities that help 1) get you far in life and 2) establish trust.

When I asked if she had a particular standard for the communications she prepared, she shared, "When I was a journalist, I stood firm on ethical reporting and remaining trustworthy. It is so important to be transparent in your work and deliver clear and concise information and I 100% think that translates to this side of things as well."

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Robyn Tannehill

Thirty-three years later, Robyn Tannehill finds herself in the same town she moved to as a freshman in college. After graduating from the University of Mississippi with a degree in art and interior design, she found herself stuck in the velvet ditch. Her steps towards mayor only allowed her to grow deeper roots in the Oxford community. Post-graduation, she worked in the public relations department for OM, then took her skillset to the city and worked as the Director of Tourism. It was Tannehill who was responsible for the birth of the Double Decker Arts Festival.

After the success of Double Decker, Tannehill started her own ad agency, Tannehill Agency, where she did some crisis PR and speech writing; she eventually sold her firm to be a stay-at-home mom. As a mom, she continued to invest in the community. She ran for Alderman to represent Ward 2 and was elected. Once Mayor Patterson shared he would not seek re-election, Tannehill began the steps to campaign for her own race (Gagliano). In an interview with hottytoddy.com she shared, ""It [the office of Mayor} shouldn't be a partisan position. In four years as an Alderman, I haven't voted on anything that has been a partisan issue. I don't think that Republicans or Democrats pick up trash, pave roads or build community centers any differently. I don't believe that partisan politics has a place in municipal government" (Gagliano).

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"I don't think of myself as a politician. I am an artist who loves to do campaigns and branding. And I'm a mom. I get accused a lot of trying to be the mom of the town, but that's just how God made me. That's just who I am. I take that role very seriously," shared Mayor Tannehill with a smile.

"I don't know that I would say I have had any formal training, but I have had a lot of experience [in speechwriting], and I enjoy it. I think today, being in the political world, it is almost a requirement because so many things need to be related to the folks that are supporting us and those who are not. Being a good communicator is critical to being a good leader of a community," shared the Mayor. "People's perception is their reality, and that is the most important thing that I have to remember."

Mayor Tannehill shared that transparent communication was one of her goals in running. "That was one of the things I knew from the beginning; the more transparent you are, the more criticism you get." "It's important to me," she continued, "that people know whether they agree with me or don't agree with me, they know the information that was considered in making those decisions."

As an official who is very active on social media, especially Twitter, she shared, "It has its pros and cons it allows you to get information out there immediately. That I appreciated over the past years; it's not like someone is waiting for the newspaper on Wednesday." She continued, "It allows us to connect and answer questions immediately; it also allows false information to travel just as quickly as real information."

"We are making decisions a lot of the time that we know aren't going to be popular, but we still believe they are the best thing for our community. Then the key is to be able to communicate this is why we did it. You may not agree with it but let me show you all of the moving parts. This is all of the information that we took."

"We have tried very hard to be fair, and compassionate, and use common sense. That is what I have said to everybody."

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Glenn Boyce

Dr. Glenn Boyce, a first-generation college student, has dedicated his entire life to furthering education. After attaining his bachelor's degree in education and a doctorate in education leadership from the University of Mississippi, he currently finds himself pouring his knowledge back into Ole Miss as the university's current chancellor (IHL.)

His work in education spans nearly 40 years. He has served in secondary and post-secondary education. He served as the Institutions of Higher Learning's associate commissioner for academic and student affairs after serving as president of Holmes Community College for over nine years. He has served as a commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Mississippi for three years where he led the state's university system which includes eight public universities and an academic medical center (IHL.).

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"I enjoy speaking and being the face of Ole Miss because I do appreciate and enjoy articulating who we are," shared the Chancellor when I interviewed him in the Lyceum. "I think it's very important that you let the people know that you believe in and you have a passion for your university. The person who can exhibit that the most is the leader of the university"

"I'm not a traditional chancellor," he shared. "I'll reach into every layer of the university and talk with people. It drives my people crazy sometimes, but I am not a big organizational, bureaucratic type of person." He continued, "If I hear about something and it interests me, I am going to talk to the people about it right then. It would be easier, candidly, to operate with that formal structure." He later shared, "If you have issues or problems out there in mass, we need to do everything we can to stop and fix them. The only way to do that is to talk with you [students]."

"The way we have come through the CoronaVirus is by far what I am most proud of because it takes everybody, and it has taken everybody to get through this." He later shared, "We tried to communicate as much as we could. We had to be careful in our communications because we had to know what we were saying when we said it, but we also had to be able to do it when we said it. The last thing is, we were trying to decide what to put out there to give direction, to alleviate fear, so on and so forth, through something we had never done before or experienced."

He proudly shared and reiterated, "The team matters deeply. The people that are next to you, that report directly to you, they matter deeply. They're the ones carrying out your vision and you have to have a successful team, as talented as you can find and as successful as you can find. A team that has great dynamics with each other."

CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

This project researched the importance of deliberative rhetorical appeal in political communications. Current and former professionals involved in all levels of government were interviewed as sources.

While the goals and effects of each office or individual's communication varied, each professional recognized the importance of the methodologies of drafting and delivering information to the public. Whether the end goal was to inform and convince voters of your capabilities as a candidate, address the United States as the President, or share information with college students, each message had to be crafted in a way that appropriately resonated with the audience.

Again, rhetoric allows the speaker to get whatever he or she wants by using just their words (How to use...). An art that began to take form over two and a half thousand years ago is still just as important today. Perhaps, with the influx of messages the masses, especially American masses, are exposed to daily, the art and application of rhetorical appeals are all the more important now, for well-leveraged rhetorical appeals sets apart an effective message from one that is null and does not resonate.

Political rhetoric from the United States is particularly fascinating and important to study. The nation's first guiding document of principles was drafted on a boat harbored in Plymouth, Massachusetts. From that document, over the evolution of time, the Founding Fathers drafted the Declaration of Independence then further the Constitution. The United States Constitution serves as a genius, history-altering, and future-framing manual which guides the longest standing Democracy that time has ever known.

Within the Constitution, listed as the first right afforded to all Americans within the Bill of Rights, is the freedom of speech. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press…" The United States remains the leader of the free world. As Janet H. Brown shared, other nations look to the United States as a model of how to fashion their own democracies. To understand the way that American government officials on all levels communicate is to better understand the ways that other nations communicate. The thoughtfulness of messaging and communications will forever be of the utmost importance in political oratory. Late presidential speechwriter and author James Humes once shared, "the art of communication is the language of leadership" (Paymar, J., 2012).

What makes this research fascinating is that the men and women crafting political communications are no more privileged in their right to speak than I am as an American citizen. The Founding Fathers prioritized that. The owners of thirty-nine signatures on the Constitution signed knowing that their use of influence to speak in this way would only be balanced from that moment forward if those who were governed may do the same. That is what makes President Obama's DNC speech valid. This is why President Kennedy's speech to a then Communist Germany fostered the hope of a free, democratic future. Communications from the United States are valid because that same right is undeniable to every United States citizen. A communications structure, that is really an art form, aged two and a half mellenia, serves as a foundation shaping all that we do.

With more time and resources, this project could be expanded. More interviewees could be involved which would allow for a larger breadth of opinions from different

experiences. Secondly, researchers could study the connections between both the speaker's use and the impact on the listener of rhetorical appeals and educational background.

In closing, I would like to ask the reader if he or she believes that the leverage of rhetorical appeals in communication is fair to apply to the audience receiving the message? Is it semi-natural to attempt persuasion and optimal delivery in communication, or is the use of appeals educated deception? The author believes that the use of rhetorical appeals should be seen as a tool of great responsibility, for they can be used to promote good or to deceive. Their usage depends on the intention and worldview of the speaker. The relationship between the speaker, the audience, and the message will persist in importance for all of time.

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