



Martin J. Medhurst. *World War II and the Cold War: The Rhetoric of Hearts and Minds.* A Rhetorical History of the United States Series. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2018. 556 pp. \$189.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-61186-293-5.

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In 2007, Michigan State University Press started publishing A Rhetorical History of the United States series. The series aims to provide a rhetorical history from colonial America to the present and analyzes significant rhetorical moments in American public discourse. Volume 8, *World War II and the Cold War: The Rhetoric of Hearts and Minds*, seeks to use rhetorical history, especially the “rhetoric of war,” to examine the symbolic means used to influence audiences from the 1930s to the late 1980s (p. xii). In the introduction to this ten-chapter volume, editor Martin J. Medhurst stresses that “matters of rhetoric were at the center of both World War II and the Cold War,” and, in fact, this rhetoric helped create and perpetuate a continual “culture of war,” a culture that privileged military industries; discouraged citizens from fulfilling their democratic responsibilities; and diverted citizens’ attention through a popular culture focused on entertainment, celebrity, and spectatorship (pp. xi, xxiv).

The first two chapters highlight the rhetoric of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In a chapter on the “Great Debate,” the 1930s political dispute concerning the United States’ role in the world, Mary E. Stuckey examines the political rhetoric of Roosevelt and contends that this debate was just as much about involvement in another European

war as it was about American national identity. Although scholars of American foreign policy and World War II will find this conclusion unsurprising, Stuckey’s deep analysis of Roosevelt’s rhetoric shows how the president consistently placed European events within the framework of good versus evil. Framing the issues from a moral standpoint allowed Roosevelt, unlike the isolationists, whose only position was to stay out of war, a flexibility that enabled him to adapt as the situation in Europe deteriorated. Thus, once German forces moved into Eastern and Western Europe, Roosevelt’s moral rhetoric proved to be prescient as the isolationist position crumbled. While Stuckey focuses on Roosevelt’s debate with American isolationists, Randall L. Bytwerk focuses on the rhetorical interaction between Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler, specifically how Hitler and the Nazi-controlled German press responded to Roosevelt’s rhetoric and attempted to convince the United States and the world that Nazi Germany was peaceful. Using American and German sources, Bytwerk demonstrates how the German press and Hitler presented Germany as a peaceful nation and depicted Roosevelt as a president controlled by Jews who was attempting to implement another version of Wilsonian internationalism. Yet, when Roosevelt took Hitler’s claims for peace seri-

ously and called for an end to Nazi Germany's aggressive actions, Hitler, a man devoted to expanding German borders, continued working toward war, indicating that he never had peaceful intentions. Like his interactions with American isolationists, Roosevelt's moral framing demonstrated Hitler's rhetorical inconsistencies, and most Americans were never persuaded by Hitler's claims of peace.

After examining Roosevelt's political rhetoric in the late 1930s, the next two chapters focus on the rhetoric of propaganda during World War II and the Cold War, especially the use of archetypal narratives to persuade and convince. James J. Kimble analyzes American wartime propaganda and asserts that propaganda images, like the war itself, had a beginning, middle, and end, and that looking at propaganda images over time reads like a narrative. Like Roosevelt's rhetoric of good versus evil, Kimble claims, propagandists also portrayed a virtuous America, usually a soldier or soldiers, facing an unknown evil. Moreover, in providing a narrative, propagandists wanted civilians to imagine themselves in the story of the war and to participate in calls for service and self-sacrifice, but, according to Kimble, this propaganda militarized American society for the Cold War. Shawn J. Parry-Giles and David S. Kaufer examine how the Voice of America (VOA) presented the United States to the world. Analyzing seventeen VOA scripts retelling the life of President Abraham Lincoln, the authors show that Lincoln's life perfectly mirrored and reflected how Americans and congressmen, who appropriated funds from the VOA, interpreted the Lincoln narrative. The young Lincoln, with his frontier upbringing and unrequited love, showed a commonness that demonstrated his foibles, a theme supported by Democrats. On the other hand, the adult Lincoln, who goes from frontier lawyer, to congressman, to the president who saved the Union, reflected Lincoln as an uncommon self-made man, a theme that appealed to Republicans. In this regard, the authors conclude that the VOA's Lincoln scripts presented a rounded

view of the United States that demonstrated the nation's complexities and potentials.

The next three chapters stress the rhetoric of the early Cold War. In a chapter on Secretary of State Dean Acheson's Delta Council speech in May 1947, Denise M. Bostdorff delves into the production and content of the speech. She asserts that this speech in the Mississippi Delta acted as a trial balloon for the Marshall Plan and downplayed the Truman Doctrine's combativeness, thus helping to move the country from the Truman Doctrine to the Marshall Plan. Bostdorff's deep investigation traces ideas, words, and phrasing to demonstrate how closely Acheson's speech influenced George C. Marshall's more famous Harvard address and how this often-overlooked speech in fact served to soften the rhetoric of President Harry S. Truman by focusing on humanitarian and economic development, ideas that significantly influenced Marshall's Harvard address. Turning toward Asia, Robert P. Newman considers the Panic of 1950, when alarmist newspaper stories spread fears of an imminent Chinese invasion, and argues that this was the result of American anti-Communist ideology. Newman begins by examining how ideology convinced policymakers to embrace Chiang Kai-shek, even when sober analysis showed his lack of support among Chinese people, fueled the China Lobby's critique of the Truman administration's China White Paper, and gave rise to the National Security Council Paper NSC-68. Newman acknowledges that President Truman found NSC-68 too aggressive, but following China's entrance into the Korean War, Truman approved this more robust approach to the Cold War, one that increased military spending and encouraged American intervention abroad. According to Newman, the blame for this radical change lays at the feet of Paul Nitze, who was then the director of policy planning within the State Department, a man whom Newman asserts willfully misled and lied to have NSC-68 approved. In fact, Newman sees NSC-68 as so damning that he compares it to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1903), suggesting

that NSC-68 fed anti-Communism as the *Protocols* fed antisemitism. The hero for Newman is Nitze's predecessor, George F. Kennan, who warned of a potential Chinese response to American forces moving into North Korea. The contrast between Nitze and Kennan is the main subject of Ned O'Gorman's chapter. Looking at the two architects of the United States' early Cold War grand strategy, O'Gorman deeply analyzes the rhetoric used in several policy documents to identify a developmental history of logic and rhetoric. Comparing Kennan's PPS/38 (created by the Policy Planning Staff and later known as NSC 20/4) with Nitze's NSC-68, O'Gorman claims, unlike Newman, that both men contributed to rhetorics and logics of power that were used to remake the National Security state; however, he does see NSC-68 as moving from Kennan's balance-of-power interpretation of the Cold War contest to one of American globalism and thus a more militarized and aggressive stance in the Cold War. To demonstrate this, O'Gorman provides a deep textual analysis showing how NSC-68 deconstructed the balance-of-power tradition, articulated a global hegemonic contest, and argued for a new wartime effort to confront the Soviet Union on a global scale.

Following these chapters' exploration of the rhetoric used in designing Cold War grand strategy, Gregory A. Olson, George N. Dionisopoulos, and Steven R. Goldzwig look at the rhetoric around the presidential decision-making that slowly, though not inevitably, led the United States to commit ground forces in Vietnam. The authors' conclusions from this rhetorical analysis, an examination going from Truman to Andrew Johnson, are relatively standard: that the United States was obsessively concerned with stopping what they perceived as Moscow-backed Communist aggression and upholding its own prestige on the international stage, a rhetorical logic that inexorably led decisions-makers to commit troops to a ground war in Vietnam.

The final two chapters again return to presidential rhetoric. John M. Murphy focuses on three speeches given by John F. Kennedy in June 1963: the American University speech, the civil rights speech, and the West Berlin speech. He argues that these three speeches collectively sought "to refurbish the terms of the American global commitment" (p. 406). Analyzing the rhetoric of these speeches, Murphy asserts that they all focus on reciprocity, encouraging the listener to see the world from another's perspectives, whether it be African Americans in the Deep South or the Soviet Union. By working to build reciprocity through his speeches, Murphy claims that Kennedy created a new sense of possibility, progress, and change. Jumping to President Ronald Reagan, Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones look into Reagan's role in ending the Cold War, and they reject triumphalist narratives of Reagan's presidency and assertions that Reagan's policy shifted in his second term. Instead, they claim that Reagan's rhetoric exhibited three constants throughout his presidency: that the Soviet Union was evil and a threat, that a strong and powerful military was necessary to negotiate from a position of strength, and that the Cold War was a contest of ideas. It was sticking to these principles, the authors contend, that helped to convince Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that the Soviet Union needed to change. While this rhetorical analysis clearly demonstrates Reagan's consistencies, the focus on Reagan's rhetoric downplays changes in the Soviet Union itself and turns Soviet leadership into passive historical figures.

Collectively, these chapters all demonstrate and highlight important ways that rhetoric was used during World War II and the Cold War, but it remains unclear how these chapters contribute to the "rhetoric of war," a term the editor leaves undefined. Some chapters, like those by Newman, O'Gorman, and Olson, Dionisopoulos, and Goldzwig, show a rhetoric that created and perpetuated both the Cold War and the Vietnam War, but other chapters, like those by Murphy and Bost-

dorff, show less wartime rhetoric and more a rhetoric of humanitarianism and reciprocity. Additionally, the larger scope of the volume hinders its goal of providing a rhetorical history of World War II and the Cold War. The volume has only three chapters on World War II with only one looking at rhetoric during the actual war; moreover, the work suffers from a heavy focus on the early Cold War, with no chapters on the late 1960s or the entirety of the 1970s. While Medhurst admits these omissions and points to available scholarship, this organization creates a large gap between the start of the Cold War and the one chapter on the end of the Cold War, leaving out important issues like the 1968 election, détente, the opening of China, and the significance of human rights. These criticisms aside, the chapters offer deep investigations into rhetoric and the use of language during World War II and the Cold War, frequently bringing out unique and new understandings of documents that historians and international relations scholars typically generalize. In this way, the volume provides perceptive insights into the words, ideas, and policies that shaped the United States during the twentieth century.

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