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Laughing All the Way to Washington: Humor in Presidential Telespots

John S. Nelson *University of Iowa*
G. R. Boynton *University of Iowa*

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Laughing All the Way to Washington

Humor in Presidential Telespots

John S. Nelson and G. R. Boynton

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How do I know you are genuine? — The words you say are important, but they are much less important than the visuals and the vocals.[1]

— Mark Montini, trainer at the Leadership Institute for Young Republicans

1 In the beginning for presidential advertising on television, which is to say, in the 1950s, humor was bountiful. Ike's telespots included a cheerful cartoon parade, and Stevenson's a jaunty spoof of True Love between Eisenhower and Taft, as well as a gentle joke about Adlai's own distraction from everyday life.[2] Half a century later, the main presidential ads that dare to be funny are spots for candidates from third-party wannabes — Nader, Buchanan, Browne — or ads produced for the internet rather than the television. Meanwhile U.S. Senate campaigners turn their modest charms into citizen chuckles and their savage criticisms into grinning satires. The shifting dynamics of humor in these small gems of public address provide superb sites for exploring the ways that laughter helps persuade us.

2 Mostly the earlier humor seems meant to make viewers feel good about their candidates and themselves. Even when it ridicules or satirizes the opposition, as Stevenson's spoof tried to do with Eisenhower, the tone is fairly friendly; and the spots seem designed less to spotlight the troubles with the other side than to display the wit and cheek of the side doing the advertising. This has the presumably unintended consequence that many of these feel-good ads seem silly or otherwise lame to later audiences, but then humor typically depends so much on context that it travels poorly. Overall the earliest era of presidential advertising was one of good humor — which is not necessarily to say, effective humor — whether the spots tried to be funny or not.

3 Then in 1964 Johnson took out after Goldwater with the comedian's barbs as well as the nuclear hammer of the notorious "Daisy Spot." Humphrey followed with a vicious laugh track to ridicule Agnew on Nixon's Republican ticket. The Vietnam War and its domestic upheavals seemed to take the humor out of most national politics for the 1970s. And America moved by the 1980s into the time of "attack ads," with most of the humor biting down to the present day. When reality bites, political ads do too – though we might wonder which leads the way.[3]

4 Or so the standard story might go, if analysts of American politics would ever pause to focus for a few minutes on laughter at the national level of political advertising on television.[4] The trouble with such cavalier claims about the course of history is less that they must be wide of the mark than that they arise too readily from impressions untutored by any detailed account of how humor might work in televised advertising for elections, national or otherwise. How is humor generated in these settings? How does it figure in political persuasion? In fact, is "it" even coherent enough for us to talk in the singular about "humor?"

5 That questions of process have been neglected when it comes to humor in political spots is hardly surprising. There has been little theoretical or experimental consideration of how, in detail, the sights and sounds of any ads might actually persuade viewers.[5] Most of the inquiry mounted so far has been logological, assuming that proper persuasion in political ads happens according to the rules of reasoning available in textbooks on logic or argumentation; anything else is suspect.[6] In the terms of classical rhetoric, dynamics of laughter depend principally on appeals of pathos, a mode of persuasion in disrepute in the logocentric university.[7] In fact, humorous political spots are apt to persuade more through ethos and mythos than through logos of the straightforward verbal sorts favored by academicians.[8] And in any event, fully embodied logics – in electronic media such as film and television – probably do not operate persuasively in the ways scholars have stipulated in and for print.[9]

From Devices to Data

6 The need is to specify paths of public argument that reach beyond university logics into popular realms of persuasion, such as political advertising on television. The need can be met in part by studies in print, yet there also is an urgent requirement for inquiries in multimedia that engage the modes of experiential

persuasion practiced so amply in multimedia politics.[10] Campaign spots that appeal through humor make especially good vehicles for conducting such studies, because they make especially ample use of all modes of communication available via television.

years	ads	sound	music	jingles	effects
1950-1987	87	52	32	7	26
1988-1991	96	71	51	2	37
1992-1994	122	99	67	7	48
1995-2000	38	27	21	1	10
numbers	**343**	**229**	**171**	17	121
portions	**100.o%**	**66.8%**	**49.9%**	**5.0%**	**35.3%**

sound = spots with music, sound effects, or both
music = spots with music
jingles = spots with jingles, a subset of those with music
effects = spots with sound effects aside from music

Many political ads rely exclusively on verbal and visual pitches, but two-thirds of humor spots use musics and sound effects to generate experiential persuasion of the viewers.

years	ads	no voice	on screen	voiceover
1950-1987	87	1	36	50
1988-1991	96	0	39	57
1992-1994	122	2	60	60
1995-2000	38	0	27	11
numbers	**343**	**3**	162	178
portions	**100.0%**	**0.9%**	**47.2%**	**51.9%**

no voice = spots with no words spoken
on screen = spots with a speaker on screen
voiceover = spots with only voiceover for spoken sound
humor ads = no voice + voice inside + voiceover

Here we focus on spots at the national level through the 2000 presidential primaries.

7 Humorous spots also take advantage of diverse voices about half the time, with speakers on screen and often also in voiceover. Spots with sober celebrations or indictments are apt to do rely by contrast on a single voice: either the candidate speaks or an

unseen announcer makes a verbal appeal to the viewers. As elaborated later, the persuasive significance is much the same for the humorous uses of cartoon, caricature, dramatic enactment, vivid illustration, symbolism, and visual juxtaposition. These are prominent in humorous spots, making them especially nice as a group to target for multimedia scholarship. The other obvious grouping of political spots prone to be as full-bodied as possible for television are the horror ads.[11]

8 Here the ambitions are to identify persuasive devices for generating humor in political ads and to analyze their use in persuasive appeals by national telespots in American campaigns. The effort encounters more than a few complications. Analysis of ads untested by experiments with ordinary ranges of viewers can veer toward appreciations of humor central for the analysts but peripheral for most other viewers. Yet experiments uninformed by analysis of devices that might generate laughter can look for the wrong results in the wrong ways. Without specifying processes of possible persuasion, claims about consequent effects remain at most unpersuasive. Moreover they can miss telling practical challenges about how to produce particular outcomes for different campaigns in new situations. With every circumstance somewhat novel, this puts the acuity as well as the use of past correlations in question. So let us begin with an analysis of ads meant to individuate several devices of humor and consider some of their likely appeals in political advertising on television.

9 The analysis selects for intentional rather than unintentional humor. Imputing purposes from telespots or any other culturally interpretable products might not be indisputable, but it is likely to be as reliable as interviewing their producers. Literary theories, like epistemologies, repeatedly make this point about the obstacles and opportunities in reconstructing or merely even reporting intentions.[12] In 1976, Gerald Ford's presidential campaign ran a feel-good spot with a bouncy jingle and lots of happy images. At least since the 1980s, the ad has struck us and our students as ludicrous, and it is hard to recall without a chuckle. Yet we doubt that Ford or his ad-makers meant for the spot to be laughable. It is supposed to induce in viewers a sense of good humor, we take it, but not a sense that they have just seen a humorous ad.

10 To be sure, there are debatable cases. When a 1964 LBJ ad depicts sawing off the Eastern seaboard, we have counted that as an attempt at humor, trying to elicit a little laugh. But we are not confident that this was the intention at the time – all the more

since neither of us remembers seeing it during the 1964 campaign. We do suspect that the device has become more ridiculous as time has moved on, but we infer from the details that it was intended to be laughable even in 1964. Yet we have to admit the possibility that the crude visual of a saw cutting a particle-board map might have been meant instead to give an interesting illustration or that the sawing sound might have been intended as vaguely menacing.

11 On the other side is a Stevenson spot that the *Campaigns and Elections Magazine* includes in its collection of twenty-five humorous spots from elections past. This ad shows a lounge singer who uses the tune of "O Tanenbaum" to compare her candidate to Ike with lyrics on how "Stevenson – civilian, son," will "fight until the battle's won." Yes, there is plenty of unintentional laughter occasioned in retrospect by a preposterous ad made when politicians and advertisers alike were just starting to learn how to use television for campaign appeals. And yes, the spot surely tries to elicit good humor from its viewers. But is the ad's purpose to make them laugh? If so, it would have to be at Stevenson. So we doubt it.

12 Always the hope and – when samples grow large enough – the expectation is that these sorts of debatable cases will even out. This is our hope, too, but we ought to emphasize at the outset that we are analyzing a (fairly large) *collection* of political spots rather than a true *sample* of them at the national level. This leaves the inferences shakier than we would like, but the current availability of political telespots past and even present remains too erratic to pretend otherwise or do better with analysis of the advertisements alone. The emphasis on intentional humor means that we are concentrating on devices of humor that seem from the ads themselves to intended a chuckle or at least a grin. We are not, at the moment, analyzing other devices just intended to provoke good humor: such as the feel-good lyrics, musics, and symbols in the Ford spot for 1976.

13 Reliance on a collection rather than a sample requires particular stress when it comes to analyzing trends in political advertising on television. Ads have been collected by many people for many reasons, and they have been shared haphazardly, without regard for rigors desirable in scholarship. Nevertheless one of the few confident things to say about spots available to us for the national politics of campaigns for the Presidency and the Congress in America's time of television is simply that they over-represent intentional attempts at humor. Spots that provoke laughter stand

out in the profusion of ads for U.S. Senate and U.S. House campaigns. The tape of humorous spots available from *Campaigns and Elections Magazine* is a case in point. This is a reason for the present analysis to concentrate on the distribution of kinds and devices of humor among intentionally humorous spots at the national level.

14 We offer a few observations about the distribution of intentional humor in televised advertising for national politics, but they stay few, and we emphasize how tentative such they must remain on the basis of our evidence. That evidence comes from an archive of some three thousand political spots collected in the past two decades by Nelson and partly made by Boynton into a digital archive at the University of Iowa. Not all the national or even the presidential ads in the collection have been coded yet for their humor, so that evidence for the claims at hand do not encompass most of the 2000 campaigns. This is another respect in which the patterns discussed in these pages remain preliminary and partial.

From Warmth to Hostility

15 The first pattern to emerge is that humorous appeals have been a relatively modest part of campaign spots. Thirty- and sixty-second commercials on television rely overwhelmingly on humor, especially since the 1980s. Yet political spots are far more sober (which is to say, far less lively). This is especially apparent at the presidential level, where humorous appeals manifest a ceiling in the neighborhood of a mere quarter of the telespots produced.

presidential decade	**1950s**	**1960s**	**1970s**	**1980s**	**1990s**
all collected spots	21	85	47	423	1354
presidential spots	17	76	33	209	398
% presidential ads	**81%**	**89%**	**70%**	**49%**	**29%**
humorous spots	5	15	4	109	206
% humorous ads	**24%**	**18%**	**8%**	**26%**	**15%**

From campaign discourse available in conversations and reportage, the two primary reasons for this are fears of falling beneath the dignity of this highest office and worries that attempts at humor are especially prone to backfire. Since the people who make most of the presidential ads have been successful in the industry of commercial advertising, where humor runs rampant, it seems unlikely that any inability or lack of disposition to be funny figures into the caution of presidential spots when it comes to

tapping the political powers of laughter.

16 There are strong reasons to think that promoting political candidates is a lot like selling commercial products.[13] If television advertisers know that humor is among their most potent resources for commercials, the opportunities currently foregone by presidential spots stand to be impressive. Congressional campaigns are far more numerous and various. That gives the candidates for House and Senate seats a good collective position to experiment with different kinds of humorous appeals. By extending our consideration of the devices and dynamics of humorous spot to all elections for national office, we should be able to get a better sense of how humor might contribute more effectively telespot politics even at the presidential level.

17 Let us pause, though, to note that the use of humor in presidential spots in our collection is consistent with the tale that scholars of presidential politics have plenty of additional reasons to tell. In the 1950s, televised ads for Eisenhower and Stevenson use political humor about as much as the spots for any decade since. Theirs might not seem to be particularly good humor; but it was constructed mainly to make viewers feel good about themselves, their candidates, and their polity. In other words, it worked to put viewers in a good humor.

18 Beginning with Johnson's sly and devastating attacks on Goldwater in 1964, presidential spots still invoked humor quite a bit, but mostly to make viewers feel bad about opponents. Depending on your politics and your funny bone, the high — or was it low? — point of 1960s humor in political ads came at the end of the decade in the Humphrey spot that used laughter to ridicule Spiro Agnew without ever saying a word about policy or performance. Logocentrists are apt to find this spot outrageous and dangerous, but we may be forgiven for finding it . . . funny![14]

19 In the 1970s, intentionally humorous spots nearly disappear from presidential politics. The concerns of Vietnam, Watergate, inflation, energy, and environment presumed seemed too serious for even a little levity to prove effective in presidential advertising. The campaigns of Ronald Reagan and his opponents sometimes reach for good humor in their advertising, but seldom for good laughs. Instead these set the stage for the emergence of ad-maker Roger Ailes as the Satirist in Chief for campaigns directed at the Presidency or at the Congress. Ailes now presides over Fox Television; but in 1984, he caught the attention of all

campaigndom with his hound-dog hunt on behalf of Mitch McConnell for a U.S. Senator Dee Huddleston said to be missing from Washington in order to make speeches and collect fees all around the world.

20 In 1988, Ailes masterminded for Bush the Elder some classics of character and policy assassination through humor. "Tank Ride" turned a Dukakis photo opportunity against the diminutive Massachusetts governor. Then it was all down and dirty from there, not only for the Bush campaign but also for advertising humor at the presidential level. From the 1980s onward, the preponderance of humorous appeals at the national level have been accusatory and antagonistic rather than warm and friendly.

From to Friends to Foes

21 The turn toward antagonistic humor is evident in the targets of political advertisements. Among humorous advertisements we have collected at the national level, seven overall targets are apparent. These targets are the specific objects that a spot uses to provoke laughs, smiles, snorts, snickers, grins, and the like. Since even some thirty-second spots have more than one, we have begun by analyzing the spots for their predominant targets, because this yields a sense of the overall effects that each ad may be imputed to pursue.

22 Spots from 1950 through the presidential primaries in 2000 direct their occasional humor less toward the candidates, causes, campaigns, and parties of the ads' own candidates than against the opposing, candidates, causes, campaigns, and parties. This lesson emerges from attention to seven more specific targets that permit the larger, looser grouping.

23 Some spots feature humor that is favorable to politicians in general, ironizing them in a more or less friendly fashion. When candidates appear in their own ads of these kinds, they can benefit from association with what amounts jovial self-deprecation by implication. Other spots directly ironize the candidates themselves, again in a genial way that can enhance their ethoi as electable.

national level	**ads**	**pro pol**	**self**
total numbers	1550	4	27
portions	**100%**	0.3%	**1.7%**
humorous ads	246	4	27
portions	**100%**	**1.6%**	**11.0%**

pro-pol = humor that ironizes politicians in a friendly way
self = humor that effaces or ironizes the candidate personally

Analytically we may consolidate the pro-politician humor (0.3% of all national ads in the collection) and the self-effacing appeals (1.7%) for a sense of self-ironizing humor (2.0%). To date, this kind of humor has made a modest appearance as a proportion of all humorous ads at the national level: 1.6% + 11.0% = 12.6%.

24 The main danger in such humor is that viewers will take the ads to denigrate the candidates or causes that the spots are trying to celebrate. Yet this danger seems small, and the sympathetic portraits of candidates that emerge from them can be eminently worth the risk. These are the sorts of spots run to excellent effect by two successful first-time candidates for the U.S. Senate: Minnesota's Paul Wellstone in 1990 and Wisconsin's Russ Feingold in 1992.[15] Each gained re-election by a similar route, countering the considerable popular cynicism about politicians through targeting themselves for a little light humor. This is a kind of humor missing from the presidential level. Perhaps it takes a relaxed sense of political self-confidence that presidential aspirants and even incumbents seldom manage.

25 Humorous appeals that provoke smiles rather than snickers also target objects aside from the contestants. Cute images of children are ready examples. They warm political spots without even the most subtle of sneers. Thus spots have candidates appear with cute children not only to symbolize a sober concern with the future but also to tap the happiness that springs from the viewer sense that kids do the most amusing things. Even spots that merely name the candidates or their policies sometimes manage to include a child doing something precious. By our definition for the moment, these warming spots reach beyond the diffuse flow of feel-good ads to the amusement that brings a big smile or a little laughter. Warm spots are only 1.4% of all the national ads collected, but this means that they are 8.9% of the specifically humorous ads.

national level	ads	warm	fortify	no humor
total numbers	1550	22	2	1305
portions	**100%**	**1.4%**	**0.1%**	**84.2%**
humorous ads	246	22	2	
portions	**100%**	**8.9%**	**0.8%**	

warm = humor that arises from something cute, clever, or otherwise friendly
fortify = humor that attacks the candidate or cause but turns ironically to support it
none = national telespots in this collection that lack any specific device for humor

26 The other more or less "positive" appeal through humor comes when a humorous attack on the candidate or cause is turned by its presentation into an eventual, ironical reason to laugh with the campaign rather than against it. Sometimes this involves gentle ridicule as much of the viewers or the press as of the candidate or the party sponsoring the ad. In 1968, for Humphrey, an ad for the Democratic Party made a little fun of a familiar challenge from the other side and the political media: "What have the Democrats done for you lately?" Its humor came from the irony of its phrasing and voiceover, which turned this political refrain into a happy boast by the end. Yet the subtlety is considerable, and the demands on viewers are the same, so it is hardly surprising that this fortifying appeal is made in only a tenth of a percent of national ads in the collection. Thus self-fortifying attacks on oneself comprise only 0.8%of the humor in the ad set.

27 As a percentage of humorous political telespots at the national level, humor that targets the side of the sponsors characterizes somewhere between a fourth and a fifth of the collection: 12.6% + 8.9% + 0.8% = 22.3%. Humor that targets the opposition accounts for the rest.

national level	ads	anti-foe	anti-gov't
total numbers	1150	167	24
portions	**100%**	**10.8%**	**1.5%**
humorous ads	246	167	24
portions	**100%**	**67.9%**	**9.8%**

anti-foe = humor that attacks opposing candidates and parties
anti-gov't = humor that attacks government or politicians

This includes humor that targets the opposing candidate, cause,

campaign, or party in particular (67.9%) and humor that attacks the government or politicians in general (9.8%). Antagonistic humor amounts to 77.7% — something like three-fourths or four-fifths — of the collection of spots that make humorous appeals.

From Endearment to Indictment

28 Plaudits and complaints both can be delivered through diverse kinds of humor. Ten kinds of humor can be identified in national spots collected between 1950 and 1987.

kind of humor	key1move	1950-87 ads	portion
folksy delivery	7	87	8.0%
hyperbole	10	87	11.4%
irony	11	87	12.6%
joke	1	87	1.1%
nonverbal	22	87	25.3%
reversal	3	87	3.4%
sarcasm	12	87	13.8%
litotes	1	87	1.1%
whimsy	3	87	3.4%
wordplay	17	87	19.5%

hyperbole = overstatement or other exaggeration
folksy delivery = subcultural accent or idiom
irony = deft tampering with literal meaning
joke = formulaic verbal set-up plus punchline
nonverbal = pictures or sounds without words
reversal = turning expectations around
sarcasm = crude negation of literal meaning
litotes = understatement or other downplaying
whimsy = playful use of peculiar perspective
wordplay = punning, rhyming, alliterating, and the like

Again the endeavor is to treat each telespot as a whole, asking what overall kind of humor it manifests most prominently. Since these are so short, with the preponderance running only thirty seconds, there is little time for humorous appeals on multiple levels. K.I.S.S. is the rule for advertising on television, whether commercial or political. Hence there are likely to be few cases where complicated structures render debatable the classification of each spot as a whole.

29 The remarkable feature of the humorous spots analyzed so far is

the prominence of nonverbal humor. Fully a fourth of these ads depart from relying principally on verbiage to deliver their humor. The verbal kinds of humor follow long-established rosters of tropes in rhetoric and moves in comedy.[16] Yet we need to complement our classifications for verbal kinds of humor with individuations of nonverbal tropes. Here is another reason to insist that studies of political communication, myth, rhetoric, symbolism, and so on become genuinely multimediated. Moreover all the kinds of (partly) verbal humor identified – save wordplay – depend greatly on dynamics of aural delivery. Hyperbole, folksy delivery, irony, litotes, jokes, reversals, sarcasm, and whimsy can be as much or more in the tones of voice for an ad than in the words for its script.

30 Each kind of humor mobilizes verbal, visual, and aural information differently to induce responses from viewers of political telespots. To trace the effects of humorous ads, the need is to specify each of these paths. They proceed through various devices of humor: some verbal, some visual, some aural. In analyzing this national set of humorous ads, we discern at least six or seven distinct devices on the visual level alone.

humor depiction	visual device	1950-87 ads	portion
animal	10	87	11.5%
cartoon	7	87	8.0%
caricature	8	87	9.2%
enactment	27	87	31.0%
illustration	15	87	17.2%
juxtaposition	5	87	5.7%
symbol	8	87	9.2%
none	17	87	19.6%

cartoon = cartoon figure whether animated or not
caricature = exaggeration of characteristics through action
enactment = dramatization and performance of humorous situation
illustration = provision of an example of something humorous
juxtaposition = position objects on the screen to produce humor
symbol = visuals funny by cultural association with no devices above
animal = humorous animal appearance regardless of devices above
none = no visual contribution to humor in this political telespot

Particularly impressive is the portion of humorous spots that

depend principally on visualizing through enactment. The vast majority of political spots to date – even at the national level – feature a candidate on screen talking or clips (moving or still) that illustrate what someone is saying in voiceover. Yet nearly a third of the humorous spots we have analyzed use the screen for people to enact what is at issue. Since cartoons and caricatures also work as enactments, at least through by our definition and strategy of analysis, the overall portion of humorous spots that do not settle for illustrations, juxtapositions, or other symbols is nearly one half.

31 Animal humor probably makes special sense to analyze in political advertising. (Its tally appears on a separated line because its count is for any humorous ad that includes an animal in producing its humor, regardless of the visual device that dominates the spot.) The invocation of talking or otherwise anthropomorphized animals is usually a sign of an especially potent, often devastating, criticism. This parallels with talking-animal stories, which impugn foundations of western civilization, albeit for the most part in a frolicking and laughable fashion.[17] In national campaign spots, animal humor is both prominent enough and unusual enough for it to provide a telling point of entry into the appreciation of political humor.

32 These kinds and devices of humor already identified can be put to various uses. In the ads collected, there seem to be at least six. These are the principal appeals that flow from the attempts to make us viewers laugh.

appeal of humor	**cases**	**1950-87 ads**	**portion**
self-irony	5	87	5.7%
warmth	20	87	23.0%
overall endearment	**25**	**87**	**28.7%**

self-irony = pokes gentle fun at the candidate, cause, or campaign
warmth = smiles at something cute or clever but uncontested
endearment = self-irony + warmth

The appeals to self-irony and warmth persuade through endearing candidates and their causes to viewers. Something on the order of a fourth to a third of our humorous spots at the national level used their humor for the principal purpose of endearment. The use of humor to unsettle viewers, to satirize opponents, to ridicule opponents, or to generate indignation against them can work by

contrast to indict the opposition.

appeal of humor	cases	1950-87 ads	portion
indignation	21	87	24.1%
ridicule	19	87	21.8%
satire	20	87	23.0%
unsettlement	2	87	2.3%
overall indictment	**62**	**87**	**71.3%**

indignation = condemns the opposition for specific moves
ridicule = scorns deficiencies of the opposition
satire = turns the opposition into something laughable
unsettlement = undermines presuppositions to disconcert viewers
indictment = indignation + ridicule + satire + unsettlement

Two-thirds to three-fourths of the humorous ads at the national level pursue a principal purpose of indictment.

33 The larger lesson, however, is that summative uses like "endearment" and "indictment" can obscure more than they clarify about how political ads persuade viewers. Actual dynamics of humor, and therefore actual effects of political advertising, differ greatly from one "positive" appeal to the next. The "negative" spot that "attacks" through indignation typically appeals to different experiences and devices of judgment than the ad that "indicts" through ridicule, satire, or unsettlement. Specific devices and kinds of humor operate tap different cognitive domains and operate through distinct networks of associations.

34 In order to make decent sense of the multimedia persuasion practiced through political advertising on television, we would do well to be more precise about the appeals they make and the processes these encounter in viewers. To comprehend the contribution of campaign spots to political myth, rhetoric, and symbolism, we do well to get more specific. A good way to do this is to learn from practical and scholarly treatments of mythic figures, rhetorical tropes, and symbolic archetypes. They can be building blocks for political humor – and many other dimensions of multimediated politics besides.

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Notes

[1] Quoted in "Tidbits and Outrages," *Washington Monthly*, 33, 7-8, July-August, 2001, p. 43.

[2] Many presidential spots mentioned in this essay are available from the database for political ads maintained by the *Washington Post*: http://projects.washingtonpost.com/politicalads.

[3] See John S. Nelson and G. R. Boynton, "Political Spots as Paradigms of American Politics," *Video Rhetorics*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1997, pp. 1-26.

[4] See Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of President Campaign Advertising*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1984.

[5] See Nelson and Boynton, "How Political Advertising Uses Popular Genres," *Video Rhetorics*, pp. 27-56. Also see Glenn W. Richardson Jr., *Genre and Political Advertising: A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation of Political Information Processing*, Political Science, 1995.

[6] See Stephen Ansolabehere and Shanto Iyengar, *Going Negative: How Political Advertisements Shrink and Polarize the Electorate*, New York, Free Press, 1995; Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Everything You Think You Know about Politics . . . and Why You're Wrong, New York, Basic Books, 2000.

[7] See John S. Nelson, "Turning Ideologies into Myths: A Postmodern Essay in Political and Rhetorical Analysis," *Tropes of Politics*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1998, pp. 135-149.

[8] See John S. Nelson: "Political Mythmaking for Postmoderns," *Spheres of Argument*, Bruce E. Gronbeck, ed., Annandale, VA, Speech Communication Association, 1989, pp. 175-183; "Argument by Mood in War Movies: Postmodern Ethos in Electronic Media," *Argument at Century's End*, Thomas A. Hollihan, ed., Annandale, VA, National Communication Association, 2000, pp. 262-269.

[9] See Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Dirty Politics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992; John S. Nelson and G. R. Boynton, "Making Sound Arguments: Would a Claim by Any Other Sound Mean the Same or Argue So Sweet?" *Argument in a Time of*

Change, James F. Klumpp, ed., Annandale, VA, National Communication Association, 1998, pp. 12-17.

[10] On experiential persuasion, see Nelson and Boynton, "How Myths and Musics in Campaign Spots Orchestrate Elections and Politics in America," *Video Rhetorics*, pp. 195-232; Nelson, "Argument by Mood in War Movies." Also see John S. Nelson and G. R. Boynton, "Arguing War: Global Television against American Cinema," *Proceedings of the Twelfth Summer Conference on Argumentation*, G. Thomas Goodnight, ed., Annandale, VA, National Communication Association, 2002, forthcoming. For exercises in multimedia scholarship on politics, see G. R. Boynton, *The Art of Campaign Advertising*, Chatham, NJ, Chatham House, 1996, cd-rom; G. R. Boynton and John S. Nelson, *Hot Spots*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1997, videotape.

[11] See Nelson and Boynton: "How Popular Genres Become Public Styles of Political Aesthetics for American Politics," *Video Rhetorics*, pp. 57-86; "How Genres and Musics Orchestrate Campaign Spots," pp. 154-194. Also see Boynton and Nelson: "Orchestrating Politics," *Hot Spots*.

[12] See Wayne C. Booth, *Critical Understanding*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979; Steven Mailloux, *Rhetorical Power*, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1989.

[13] See Anne Norton, "The President as Sign," *Republic of Signs*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993, pp. 87-121.

[14] See Jamieson, *Dirty Politics*, pp. 139-140.

[15] See Nelson and Boynton, *Video Rhetorics*, pp. 44-49, 69-70, and 214-215.

[16] See Arthur Quinn, *Figures of Speech*, Salt Lake City, Gibbs M. Smith, 1982; Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetoric Terms*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, second edition, 1991.

[17] See Ursula K. Le Guin, "Introduction," *Buffalo Gals, and Other Animals Presences*, New York, New American Library, 1987, pp. 9-14.