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Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words
(review)

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Office”—the answer will have to come from the people regaining their power and making demands that ultimately check the president and overthrow the logic of presidentialism (182).

In the book's conclusion, Nelson speculates about ways that citizens might reclaim democratic power for ourselves, from experimenting with new technologies and open systems to learning from the wisdom of crowds and leaderless organizations. Most of these solutions are not new; on the contrary, Nelson draws on a rich literature from diverse academic fields attempting to imagine alternative futures for our democracy. But Nelson's point is a provocative one—that far from enabling citizen agency or promoting democracy, presidentialism works to weaken “our capacity to imagine alternatives” (197). It is this capacity that we will need in the coming years if we are to return our democratic culture to health—if citizens can somehow find the will and the courage to unmask the wizard behind the curtain, to kill the king, and to question the father.

Jeremy Engels

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Presidents Creating the Presidency: Deeds Done in Words, 2nd ed. By Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2008; pp. 384. \$63.00 cloth; \$25.00 paper.

It is unusual to review the second edition of a book, but *Deeds Done in Words* was no usual book, and this is no usual second edition. The original book, published in 1990, was an invaluable addition to the literature on presidential studies. In that book, Campbell and Jamieson defined and articulated the various genres of presidential speech. It was comprehensive in scope, simultaneously institutional and rhetorical in orientation, and deeply influential. For years, those of us who do research or teach in the area have been asking for a second edition.

In 2008 that new edition arrived. Like the original, this edition is sweeping in its treatment of the entirety of presidential history. Like the original, this version is primarily focused on the “genres that most clearly illustrate the tie between rhetorical action and the maintenance and development of the presidency” (6). But it is more than an updated version of the old edition. The book has been reorganized, material has been added, and some analyses have been reworked. The result is a revisioning of the original, with an eye toward how the practices of both rhetorical criticism and the executive institution have changed over the last two decades.

The original organization seemed to follow the rhythm of the presidential term: it began with inaugurals, then moved to State of the Union messages and war. Ensuing chapters dealt with more optional presidential communication:

forestalling impeachment, impeachment, pardons, and farewell addresses. The new organization begins with investiture and closes with divestiture, as did the original. The early chapters focus on rhetoric as it is practiced by the president alone: inaugurals, eulogies, pardons. It is followed by rhetoric that focuses on interaction with Congress: State of the Union addresses, vetoes, signing statements, and war rhetoric. The book ends with various means of divestiture: rhetoric revolving around threats of impeachment, impeachment, and farewell addresses. Throughout, the focus is on the presidency as it is embedded in both institutional and communicative contexts.

The additions are both interesting and important, and reveal the authors' attention to and respect for the presidency as an institution. Two chapters have been added: one on the signing statements as a "de facto item veto," and the other on national eulogies. Both of these additions reflect changes in the institutional practices of the presidency. The new chapter on eulogies was added because, increasingly, presidents are expected to offer them; the focus, however, is as much on how these speeches can erode or increase executive power as on the elements of good epideictic address.

The material on signing statements as *de facto* item vetoes, a much less glamorous form of presidential communication, is a particularly welcome addition. Presidential power is often increased through bureaucratic means, and little attention is generally paid by rhetorical scholars to such purely instrumental forms of communication. These authors understand the importance of these signing statements, especially within the context of the George W. Bush administration, and give them special attention as communication that functions to circumscribe legislation (196) and thus to extend, through new means, long-standing claims of presidential prerogative powers.

Finally, new material has been added to existing chapters, leading to some changes in conceptual orientation. The introduction, for instance, has expanded discussions of how presidential rhetoric constitutes the American people as an audience, generic criticism, speechwriting, evaluation of discourse, and most importantly, the conceptual changes that guided the authors in this edition. They have rethought what "genre" means in light of the presidency, and how it might be understood as a window into a complex rhetorical act. For these authors, genre is not merely a convenient heuristic that allows us to sort and categorize speeches, but a subtle tool that provides access to the complexities inherent in public presidential communication. Issues of context and timing now play a larger role in the book, as does the contribution rhetoric makes to the increase in executive power. Importantly, many chapters now have sections that specifically relate particular genres to broader questions rather than restricting them to specific speeches.

This book makes it easy—in fact makes it necessary—to teach political history alongside rhetorical criticism. It requires students to understand that

good criticism includes but goes well beyond a focus on the inherent qualities of a single speech itself, but includes context, timing, institutional setting, and the interaction with external factors such as other institutions and the political system as a whole. It is an interesting and innovative addition to the literature on presidential rhetoric and the rhetorical presidency, and is a useful example of how rhetorical criticism and institutional analyses can be profitably combined.

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Made to Break: Technology and Obsolescence in America. By Giles Slade. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006; pp. 336. \$27.96 cloth.

Giles Slade, a Canadian-born freelance writer and journalist, closes his introductory remarks for *Made to Break: Technology and Obsolescence in America* with a question of cultural legacy: "If human history reserves a privileged place for the Egyptians because of their rich conception of the afterlife, what place will it reserve for a people who, in their seeming worship of convenience and greed, leave behind mountains of electronic debris?" (7). The electronic debris to which he refers is the product of our cultural tendency to discard functioning technology at an unprecedented rate. Slade focuses on the issue of planned obsolescence and the machinations that made it what it is today. Using historical texts and rhetoric from key events and figures in American history, Slade weaves a compelling chronology of planned obsolescence as a phenomenon and its implications for the global environment.

Slade defines planned obsolescence as "the assortment of techniques used to artificially limit the durability of a manufactured good in order to stimulate repetitive consumption" (5). This concept was given a formal name in 1928, but Slade demonstrates that the idea was subtly fostered as early as the late 1800s. Since that time, variations of planned obsolescence have made their mark on the American economy. Slade explores the role of obsolescence in advertising, economic strategies, corporate power struggles, and even Cold War espionage. The chapters chronicle a series of historical events that triggered, defined, and perpetuated this now common practice.

Chapters 1 and 2 link the early development of manufacturing to the concept of repetitive consumption. Slade explains the issues of demand and distribution related to overproduction faced by American manufacturers and retailers, which brought about innovations in branding, advertising, and product development. Hygienic products, such as the disposable razor, broke ground in the United States by planting the seeds of "the cultural acceptance of the throwaway ethic, a necessary accompaniment to planned obsolescence" (23). In