

Running head: DRAMATISM IN AMERICAN POLITICS AND MEDIA

CAMPAIGNS AMID THE STORM: DRAMATISM IN AMERICAN POLITICS AND MEDIA

By

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### **Abstract**

This study uses Kenneth Burke's dramatism theory of communication as a useful tool in the analysis of presidential campaigns, particularly, those held during times of escalating tensions related to domestic racial strife and our nation's war footing, both home and abroad. The primary use of dramatism in this analysis is reinforced by two additional theories to identify the role of an expanding media in our electoral process. The first is dramaturgy, the sociological perspective of Erving Goffman, a social scientist inspired by Burke's work. The second is the elaboration likelihood model (ELM), developed by Richard E. Petty and John Cacioppo, to focus on potential sources and causes of the polarizing effect of political partisanship, as evidenced through the media and public polling.

The foundation of Kenneth Burke's dramatism theory focuses on the concept of human motivation. In other words, the what, where, who, how, and why people make choices that subsequently affect behavior. These five elements form the points of his "pentad," a visualization of interconnecting rhetorical principles. Furthermore, Burke believed that life followed the structure of fictional drama, attempting to understand how motivation generates action and rhetorical discourse.

**KEYWORDS:** Burke, dramatism, pentad, Goffman, dramaturgy, Petty, Cacioppo, elaboration likelihood model, ELM, quadrennial, campaign, debate, media, photography, radio, newsreel, television, social media.

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### **Dedication**

The dedication of this work goes to the two most influential people in my life. First, eternal gratitude goes to Kathryn Burnham-Hull, my accomplished and ever-supportive wife. We met upon “The Broken Road,” and she renewed my passion for living and learning. Our continuing journey together proves to be extraordinary.

Second, to George Wythe (1726-1806), my alter-ego for over a decade. It was an honor and privilege to research and portray this forgotten founding father before tens of thousands of citizens, visitors, and legislators. Mr. Wythe was a teacher of Thomas Jefferson, Virginia’s foremost classical scholar, the nation’s first college professor of law, signer of the Declaration of Independence, a framer of the federal Constitution as a parliamentarian to the convention, and vocal proponent on the importance of the Bill of Rights. His accomplishments are a daily reminder of our founding fathers’ grand intentions for this participatory republic and that, while “it is possible to have responsibilities without rights [that which we call slavery], it is impossible to have rights without responsibilities” (Anonymous).

### **Acknowledgments**

The spring semester of 2020 C.E. proved to be far more challenging than anyone could have predicted for Radford University, the nation, and the world. When choosing the topic for this thesis, our political climate with an expanding and engaged media during times of international and domestic strife, there were no expectations of contemporaneous examples to so strictly reinforce the elections already chosen for analysis. The scope of these challenges often felt biblical in scale. Nevertheless, my thesis committee continued to go above and beyond the call of duty in providing their assistance while simultaneously addressing a deadly pandemic, an economic shutdown, record unemployment that threatens to meet or exceed that of The Great Depression, an outbreak of racial turmoil around the nation and the world, and all while shifting an entire educational system from classroom to online formats in the middle of the term.

First, I wish to acknowledge the advice and guidance of thesis advisor, Dr. Scott W. Dunn. Our conversations and collective brainstorming formed the backbone of this project. Second, to the other committee members, Dr. William Kovarik and Dr. Daniel C. Reed, gratitude is extended for ceding valuable time amid the chaos to read and advise on this content. Finally, profound thanks go to the faculty and staff of the Radford University School of Communication for the foundation that their classes, unity, and experience provided during my graduate school tenure.

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## Introduction

*“Without Freedom of Thought, there can be no such thing as Wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty, without Freedom of Speech”* (Franklin, 1722)

This paper combines Kenneth Burke’s dramatism theory of communication, Erving Goffman’s sociological dramaturgy theory, the dual-process theory of persuasion represented by the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) developed by Richard E. Petty and John Cacioppo, and research methods consistent with the art and practice of strategic communication. The purpose is to identify the root causes and entities that have resulted in a seemingly perpetual lack of civility throughout the history of our political discourse, particularly when viewed with increasing clarity through ever-expanding media. Moreover, at no time is this need for civility more evident than during domestic and international strife periods.

*“Let us tenderly and kindly cherish therefore, the means of knowledge. Let us dare to read, think, speak, and write”* (Adams, 1765).

The germination of my passion for this topic came late in life. I have always been cognizant of the ebb and flow within the American political process. There are vague recollections of the Kennedy/Nixon debates of 1960, but vivid memories of the Watts Riots and the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Images from the Vietnam War, the civil unrest on college campuses that swept the nation from Berkeley to Harvard, the Kent State shootings, and the counter-culture protests emanating from the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco are indelibly etched into my brain. In my personal experience, all of these events, and so many more, have one thing in common. They were made available to me through an expanding and engaged media.

My active participation in the American political process began in 1972, the year of our first presidential election held after 18-year-old citizens gained suffrage. Furthermore, proud to say, I have never missed voting in a presidential or off-year election since. I have even gone so far as to chair a successful school bond campaign and serve on various local political party committees.

My penultimate involvement in the study and understanding of our nation's political process came during a 10-year tenure with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, primarily in the role of George Wythe, a revered and accomplished Founding Father. The study and sharing of primary documents crafted by our founders formed the heart and soul of my research and job performance. This research and engagement as an interpreter of history involved hundreds of thousands of visitors, including citizens, immigrants, educators, and legislators. Combine all of this with over 50 years of performing arts experience, and you have fertile ground for the exploration of Kenneth Burke's dramatism theory.

The initial vision of our founders was to form a representative, republic-based government based upon democratic ideals. The assumption was that, within such a system, all opinions could be voiced, debated, and adopted as amended through consensus without political parties' interference. And those voices could only be heard in a society where freedom of speech was revered and protected. This philosophy found its way into Virginia's Declaration of Rights adopted June 12, 1776. Section 12 reads: "That the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty and can never be restrained but by despotic governments" (Mason et.al.). This philosophy found its way into subsequent writings and became the foundation of the First Amendment to our Constitution. The importance of a free press was reinforced by Thomas Jefferson in his January 1799 correspondence to Eldridge Gerry: "I am...for freedom of the press,



and against all violations of the constitution to silence by force and not by reason the complaints or criticisms, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents.”

Our founders’ substantial fear of governance built upon a party-based system was rooted in an examination and experience of virtually every western civilization up to the Age of Enlightenment. The primary lesson learned from this history was that party affiliation interests tend always to assume a higher priority than societal interests. As a result, majority rule dominates minority interests creating factions and disunity. This warning came from several founders of our new nation. In Federalist Papers No. 10, James Madison wrote, under the pseudonym Publius, “Among the numerous advantages promised by a well-constructed union, none deserves to be more accurately developed, that its tendency to break and control the violence of faction” (1787).

Significant attention will be devoted in this paper to identifying how we moved so quickly away from the concept of governing by consensus toward governing by party interest. Our nation’s first two elections were uncontested and promoted Gen. George Washington to commander in chief, thereby demonstrating that achieving consensus was possible. The germination of change occurred when the partisan divide was breached by societal changes that took place during President Washington’s second term in office.

President Washington echoed Madison’s concern in his farewell address delivered on January 19, 1796:

Let me now warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party. The common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise people to discourage and restrain it. It serves always to distract the public councils and enfeeble the public administration. It agitates the

community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms; kindles the animosity of one part against another. In governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged.

Why compare and contrast the history, nature, and progression of presidential campaigns and elections with today's progeny? It is essential that we perpetually evaluate and reinvent the method and execution of our political discourse in response to societal needs and demands. A breach has continued to expand by way of the organized party-based system built upon special interest and biased philosophical agendas.

There is a growing divide between the poles of the political party spectrum. It has reached a point whereby any proposal that brings civility to our political discourse would be welcome to avoid further societal disintegration and expanding tribalism. Please note that this is not saying a "return" to civil discourse as political discourse has never indeed been civil. Very little has changed during the past two centuries. The lone exception may be the dynamic ebb and flow addressed between the central routes and peripheral routes proposed by the ELM. Foundational attention to previous research and assumptions will address changing trends in political science and societal mores. A comprehensive understanding and implementation of Burke's dramatism theory provide a process to deconstruct and examine the structural nature of our current and historical political discourse within the nation's contested electoral process.

The foundation of Kenneth Burke's *dramatism theory* focuses on the concept of motivation, the "rationale behind why humans do the things they do" (Burke, 1985). In other words, it is the what, where, who, how, and why people make choices. These five elements form the points of his "pentad," a visualization of interconnecting rhetorical principles. Furthermore, Burke proposes that life follows the structure of fictional drama to understand how motivation generates action and rhetorical discourse. This includes action and discourse within our political

and electoral processes. While Burke proposed that life *is* theatre, Goffman is more metaphorical in his view that life is *like* theatre.

This research also considered more than 200 years of expanding media and a growing number of special interest groups that support the political status quo or its demise. All perspectives inject increasing influence and innovation into an ever-expanding free and independent media. The essential role media plays today and throughout the history of our electoral process includes the transition from a growing number of independent journalists in the early years of our republic, to a diminishing number of corporations and individuals who control the vast majority of exponentially expanding media empires, to the growing influence of a burgeoning social media presence. None of these entities of empires attempt to hide their agendas or vested interests.

We are becoming more micro and less macro in our visions and our discourse. It is essential to turn the tide and pursue our society's original intent. By evaluating the narratives of our political past and present, and the forces that drove them to such extremes, we may well identify the numerous and diverse problems inherent in the existing process to hypothesize and implement appropriate and desirable solutions for our future.

No experiment can be more interesting than that we are now trying, and which we trust will end in establishing the fact, that man may be governed by reason and truth. Our first object should therefore be, to leave open to him all the avenues to truth. The most effectual hitherto found, is the freedom of the press. (Jefferson, 1804)

## Chapter 1. Existing Scholarship

*“If action, then drama; if drama, then conflict; if conflict, then victimage.”* (Burke, 1985)

### Preliminary Suppositions and Implications

Hawhee (2006) reflected on several core terms of dramatism and the theory's link to Paget's gesture-speech theory. Paget theorizes that spoken language derives from physical gesticulation. Core terms of Burke's dramatism include “symbolic action, attitude, identification [and] argues for the importance of keeping rhetoric, rhetorical theory, and rhetorical pedagogy” (Hawhee, 2006, p. 331). As such, her work provides succinct definitions and implications for theory-related vocabulary. The reference to, and relationship with, Paget's theory on physicality adds a new dimension to a theory that here-to-fore emphasized the philosophical and psychological. Burke's example illustrates this physical force of attitude: “To build something with a hammer would involve an instrument or ‘agency’; to build with diligence would involve an ‘attitude,’ a ‘how’”(p. 347).

As for measurable results, Hawhee's research primarily provides qualifiable results and virtually no quantifiable ones. This result is inherent to the philosophical nature of dramatism. Her findings, however, imply an apparent validation of Burke's view of the “correspondences” (p. 334) between mind and body and its connection to Paget's notion of “verbal choreography” (p. 347).

Burke's theory has been gaining greater acceptance since the mid-1970s in social sciences outside the world of communication theorists. This acceptance has been slow in coming and hesitantly considered by many sociologists. Those more accepting minds have freely expressed their support with statements such as “‘dramatism’ has been promoted to equal rank with ‘Symbolic Interaction’ and ‘Social Exchange’ in the coverage given to these aspects of

‘Interaction’ in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*” (Overington, 1977, p. 131). Others have acknowledged that Burke’s *Permanence and Change* (1965) “contains more sound substance than any text on social psychology with which the reviewer is familiar” (p. 132). Criticism is often leveled at those who have yet to accept the value and overlap between communication and social theories. “It is long since time for a sociologically interested exposition of Burke’s work to be presented to a broad sociological audience, to hasten an informed recognition” (p. 132).

One of the strongest proponents of dramatism from the field of social psychology is Erving Goffman. Goffman has taken up this challenge and credits Burke and the dramatism theory as the inspiration for his sociologically based dramaturgy theory.

Although Burke, himself, claims his concern to be with the analysis of language and not “reality,” his definition of the dramatism system is “a method of analysis and a corresponding critique of terminology designed to show that the most direct route to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodical inquiry into cycles or clusters of terms and their functions” (p. 132). Burke’s observation presents a sociological-communication connection while acknowledging the dichotomy and tension between ambiguity and the possibility of change.

## Theory History

We must look to timeless philosophical writings (c. 335 B.C.E.) to discover the foundations for Kenneth Burke’s theory of dramatism. Aristotle declares in *Poetics* (Aristotle) the need to have six elements to create drama:

- *Plot (Mythos)*: The organization of incidents
- *Character (Ethos)*: The moral or ethical character of the agents

- *Thought (Dianoia)*: The spoken reasoning of the agents
- *Diction (Lexis)*: The dialogue of the agents
- *Melody (Melos)*: The music-dance exposition of the chorus agents
- *Spectacle (Opsis)*: The visual elements of the play, including sets, costumes, props, etc.

The use of theatre is a heightened form of communication synonymous with the human condition. Moreover, like theatre, politics plays two roles. They should not only celebrate what is best in us, individually and collectively, but also identify and demand we examine that which is in desperate need of change. Theatre, and political discourse, are catalysts in the aid and promotion of change through the ability to communicate our past, present, and potential.

Compare the Aristotelian Principles of Theatre listed above with the five points of Burke's Pentad (*Figure 1*):

- *Act*: What happened?
- *Scene*: Where is it happening?
- *Agent*: Who is involved?
- *Agency*: How do they act?
- *Purpose*: Why do they act?

## Burke's Dramatic Pentad

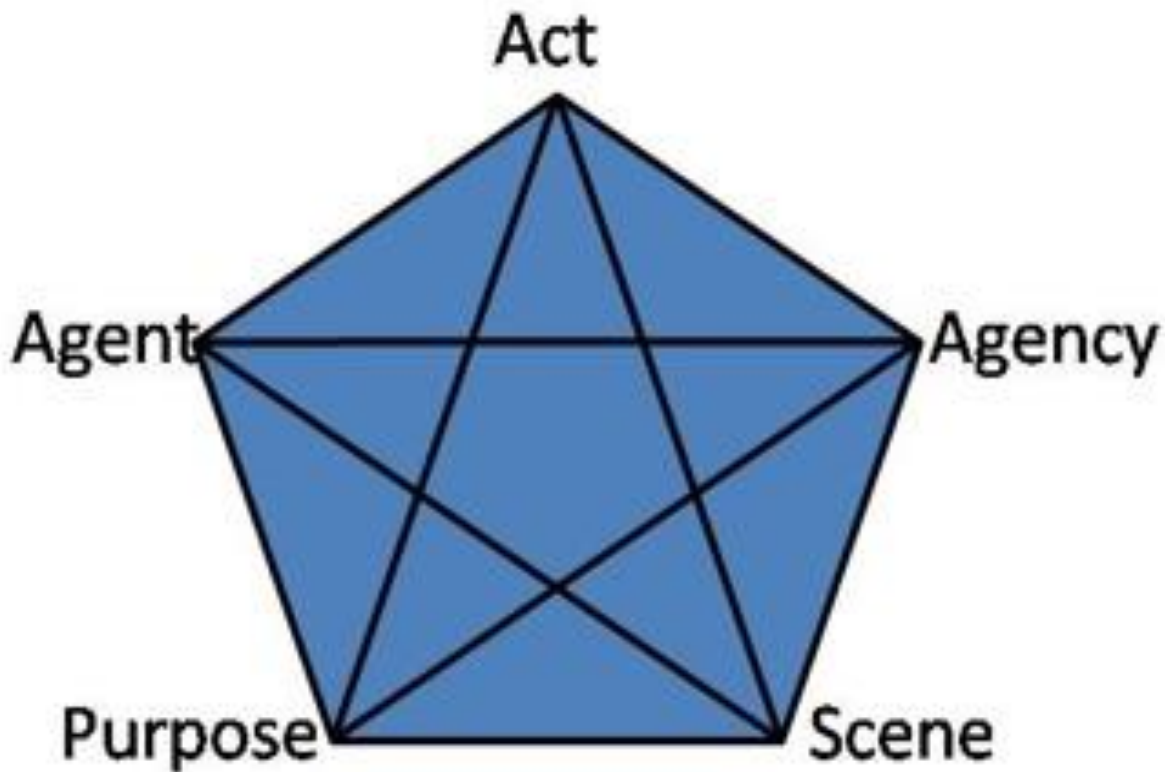


Figure 1. Retrieved from <http://doctor-treat.livejournal.com/66987.html>

Direct correlations between the two structures are apparent as are their linkage to the art of discourse as detailed in Aristotle's other masterpiece, *Rhetoric*. Burke defined rhetoric as the "use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" (1985, p. 89). Considered together, *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* define the foundational structure for all discourse through the ages, including the realm of politics. Dramatism also follows the literary structure and elements of journalism. Each seeks to define the who, what, where, when, how, and why. Within dramatism, Burke's "victimage," the confession of guilt and request for forgiveness, is comparable to Aristotle's concept of "catharsis," an emotional purging. Therefore, the

proposal is that theatre, politics, and communication, through direct contact and the media, are interrelated.

Burke's original 1968 treatise defined dramatism as "a technique for analyzing language as a mode of action in which specialized nomenclatures are recognized, each with particular ends and insights" (p. 89). Burke also addressed logology as "the study of the knowledge acquired by the human being's aptitude for learning communication" (p. 89). In other words, it is the seeking and finding of truth through the study of words.

Burke's roots in dramatism go back well before 1968. All humanity is a result of their personal histories and life experiences for their "conditions of emergence." For Burke, one such condition was the "Second World War, which raged on during the years Burke wrote and rewrote what would become his theory of dramatism" (Weiser, 2007, p. 286). In his cultural and communicative observations, he perceived the war in Europe as "unity in diversity" and the war in America as a "unity of action." Burke's wartime experience provided him with the material necessary to publish his *Tactics of Motivation* in 1943. He argued that neither science nor faith were adequate methodologies for measuring human motivation, and what was needed was a "'god-term' that would adequately capture both measurable and immeasurable aspects of motivation" (Weiser, 2007, p. 293). Burke was clearly in the midst of a theological-secular, symbolic-non-symbolic cosmological battle.

Burke's emphasis on using two terms, dramatism (symbol-using) and logology (non-symbol using motion), to delineate one theory is essential to recognize both the secular and empirical elements of the theory. Burke published an essay in 1985 when he revisited his original work focusing on the theory's implications, the distinction between oration and oratory, and rhetoric in particular versus language in general.



Burke declared his original 1968 essay to be ontological, relating to the nature of being and stressing the human as a “symbol-using animal” (1985, p. 91). In a subsequent essay from 1978, he acknowledges that the non-symbolic use of “language constitute[s] our realm of knowledge, thus being epistemological” (1977, p. 91), relating to the theory of knowledge. To clarify his point’s intent, Burke goes back to Aristotle, Cicero, St. Augustine, Coleridge, Joyce, and their ilk in building the foundation for his subsequent work.

In drawing distinctions between oration and a manual on oratory, Burke invokes Cicero’s “three offices of the orator; to inform, to please, to move or bend” (1977, p. 91). Hence, it is a direct link to political discourse as practiced throughout history. Oration focuses on the devices used by an orator to persuade an audience. Oratory focuses on the structure of the formal art of eloquence in public speaking. As to comparing and contrasting rhetoric in particular to language in general, Burke reminds us that particular rhetoric addresses specific issues, while language, in general, is used to communicate more general matters and knowledge.

Burke intended for his work to be perpetual and theory ever-evolving. He published essays in 1970, 1978, 1983, and 1984 to review and modify, as necessary, his original 1968 work. The pentad became the visual representation of the principle elements of dramatism inter-connecting.

### **Significant Developments in the Theory**

The five points of the pentad show the interrelationships of the principle elements within dramatism: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. “Burke intended the pentad to be a form of rhetorical analysis, a method [that] readers can use to identify the rhetorical nature of any text, group of texts, or statements that explain or represent human motivation” (Nordquist, 2017). The addition of a sixth term later formed a hexad: attitude.

Kneupper (1992) provided a deferential offset to some of the criticism leveled at the dramatism theory in other journals by crossing a line of adoration for Burke's theory. He declared "dramatism as the most fully developed and widely influential modern rhetorical theory" (1992, p. 894). This bold proclamation is an extension of his hypothesis that dramatism is "the only contemporary rhetorical theory which has attracted sufficient adherents and exerted significant interdisciplinary influence to be expected to exert a continuing influence on rhetorical scholarship into the twenty-first century" (1992, p. 894). Kneupper's method of discourse began with an examination of the relationship between dramatism and argument and their related motives. Additionally, he addressed the importance and contributions of the pentadic symbol.

In attempting to quantify dramatism, Kneupper discussed how critical the ratio concept of determinism is to the pentadic analysis of motive. For example, he discussed how critical the ratio concept of determinism is to the pentadic analysis of motive. An integral part of his study included an attempt to understand how a theory that has had such a substantial impact on the practice of rhetorical criticism has had such little impact on argumentation theory and criticism. Kneupper summarized his conclusions with a call for future and continued research.

Unlike Kneupper, Brock (1985) sought to test and articulate shifts in Kenneth Burke's understanding of the social uses of language by comparing Burke's earlier and later discussions. In particular, he reconsidered the flow of "dramatism towards a philosophy" (p. 94), acknowledging dramatism recognizes "act" and not merely the value tension between "action" and "motion." It also takes a more "literal" view of language and links "'reality' to our abstract 'values'" (p. 103). Validation of this hypothesis is through the consideration of Burke's concepts of identification, reality, and terms for order coming together, resulting in a blend of "paradox and metaphor." Brock's research queries and strategies receive support through various

comparisons with paradox and metaphor. For example, “identification as paradox and metaphor,” “the human being as paradox and metaphor,” “reality as paradox and metaphor,” and “order as paradox and metaphor.” He then broke the ontology of dramatism into its essential elements. The principle implication of his research is that this “rhetorical system is still evolving” (p. 93). This article validates that Burke and his dramatism theory are foundational, dynamic, and continue to add to rhetorical practice and its continuing evolution.

### **Criticisms / Revisions**

All communication theories receive perpetual reconsideration and redefinition. Dramatism is no different. King (2001) reviewed various contrary approaches and critical views of Burke’s work. King reviewed whether the principles of dramatism remain viable after nearly half a century of research, application, and criticism. It is not complicated to divine a clear sense of where opposing opinions stand when an article starts with another researcher’s criticism of neo-Aristotelian as “a shallow routine with a meager intellectual payoff” (p. 32). Depth of process seems to be a principle concern of critics with the suggestion that process demands attention. In summation, King asserted that these opposition assaults actually opened the door for a new philosophy, hence the opportunity for Burke’s consideration. Of course, Burke became susceptible to comparable attacks.

Moreover, how did Burke maintain his staying power in the communication theory world? King’s findings are three-fold. First, “Burke’s opponents willfully misunderstood him” (p. 34) for over two decades. Second, “Burke’s opponents did not deliver a knock-out blow” (p. 35). Third, “Burke’s work remains relevant due to its focus on cultural change” (p. 35). Furthermore, he acknowledged that a diversity of opinion should be recognized in research papers as it generates future discussion and perhaps discovery or innovation.

Crable (2000) defended the metaphysical nature of dramatism. His defense responds to those scholars who emphasize the theory as “epistemological and metaphorical” (2000, p. 323). So which consideration is correct? There are two separate claims for the basis of Crable’s hypothesis. First, Burke’s rationale for arguing that dramatism is ontological is primarily due to its definition of language as action. Second, it claims literal status as a comprehensive approach to the theory. The methods incorporated by Crable in preparing his paper targeted the growing discourse among scholars ever since the first significant debate on the subject broke out in 1982.

Those scholarly debates considered Burke’s first claim that dramatism is ontological, rejecting the consideration of language as representational and, instead, proposing language as constitutive action. Critics also considered his second claim that dramatism is literal and distinguishable from metaphor. The latter is the principle difference articulated by Goffman in his sociological approach; life is *like* drama rather than life *is* drama. Over the years, findings of related discussions have found little consensus on many of the conflicts as few, if any, are measurable. They are more philosophical and continue to have implications on contemporary and future evaluations.

The attempt to settle the academic debate and consider the analytical implications, as to whether Kenneth Burke’s dramatism theory is ontological (dealing with the metaphysics of the nature of being) or epistemological (relating with the theory of knowledge and its distinction between justified belief and opinion), was undertaken by Anderson and Prelli (2018). Anderson and Prelli’s hypothesis stated that dramatism is agonistic (combative) due to its simultaneous nature of being both ontological and epistemological. In its derivation from ritualistic drama, it is logical that action and passion conjoin. Applied analytical methods draw on previous and contemporary articles, and research of Burke and his epistemology at the time of publication.

Included were subsequent articles penned by Burke and critical analysis by other researchers. The reviewed research found validity in Anderson and Prelli's argument. As a result, subsequent research applied many of his theory's principle elements, including a 25-year study of television drama. Their article provides a macro-view of Burke's dramatism theory by way of a thoughtful review of its theoretical framework. After careful and diverse analysis, it concluded by pondering the question as to why so many have overlooked Burke's theory of knowledge for so long in attempting to understand dialectic and rhetorical criticism better.

### **Supplemental Theories**

#### **Goffman: Dramaturgy Theory**

*"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages."*

- from *As You Like It*, spoken by Jaques (Shakespeare)

In the performing arts, dramaturgy is the study of dramatic text, composition, and how all elements involved in a full theatrical production are represented before an audience, either live on stage or the screen. In social psychology, dramaturgy is a theory developed by sociologist Erving Goffman based on the metaphor that life is a perpetual drama in which all people are actors. From birth to death, we interact with other actors, perform our everyday lives, and build upon life lessons learned from others and experience. He proposed that everyone has frontstage and backstage lives. For most of our lives, we are performing with and for other actors. When we

are backstage, we are allowed to be our authentic selves, free of judgment by others, yet preparing to return to the spotlight.

Goffman identified seven critical elements related to our performance:

- Belief: Our role is essential and free from judgment by others.
- The Mask: The façade put on to shape audience perception.
- Dramatic Realization: Stressing aspects the performer wants the audience to know.
- Idealization: The need to avoid misrepresentation and meet audience expectations.
- Maintenance of Expressive Control: Staying “in character” to avoid misleading distractions and project correct signals and quies.
- Misrepresentation: Danger of conveying a false message and avoid audience disbelief.
- Mystification: Concealment of information to increase audience interest and avoid divulging damaging information.

### **Petty and Cacioppo: elaboration likelihood model (ELM)**

The elaboration likelihood model builds on the premise that there are two paths to persuasion: a central and a peripheral path. The central path attempts to persuade a receiver with the ability, desire, and motivation to process the message mentally. Elaboration of the received message may result from the person caring about the message and receiving it without distraction. Under these circumstances, the central path is likely to leave a lasting impression and persuade the receiver more effectively.

However, a “boomerang effect” is likely if the message is ambiguous or received unfavorably. If receivers do not initially elaborate the message due to a lack of ability or motivation to mentally process it, peripheral cues may help persuade them as long as it appears

neutral or non-confrontational. The use of peripheral cues often employs strategies that assist the receivers' link to pre-conceived or positively held views on the particular subject or something comparable. If the peripheral cue is not accepted, their previously held attitude or opinion is unlikely to change.

For this study, the ELM central route's use would likely be more successful with thoughtful, non-partisan receivers. The peripheral route is more likely to affect subjects with a strong party identification (PID). From a social psychological view of partisan perception, however, this observation may not be so concrete. There has been a long-running debate on PID as to whether partisan leanings are stable or dynamic in the short-run. Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes theorized that attitudes are "remarkably stable and persistent for many voters" (Campbell et al., 1960) with "meaningful changes occurring only during periods of political instability" (1960).

## Chapter 2. Research Design and Methods

### Design and Methods

This study utilizes a textual analysis approach to research the role played by Burke's dramatism theory, expanding media, and changes in strategic communication within our presidential campaign and election process past, present, and future. Foundational statements or conclusions will derive from previously published studies, analysis, and multimedia content. The ultimate goal is to achieve a reliable and valid study built upon this previous scholarship.

The foundation of Kenneth Burke's dramatism theory is the concept of motive: the reasons why people do the things they do. His theory is that all of life is "drama," and that we may discover people's motives by looking at their actions and discourse. Burke's pentad is the method of illustrating five questions that, when applied to any discourse, could help identify that motive. These questions are comparable to the six news reporter's questions: what, where, who, how, when, and why.

- *Act*: What happened? What is the action? What is going on? What thoughts?
- *Scene*: Where is the act happening? What is the background situation?
- *Agent*: Who is involved in the action? What are their roles?
- *Agency*: How do the agents act? By what means do they act?
- *Purpose*: Why do the agents act? What do they want?

For this study, the pentad is the primary analytical tool utilized to identify the motives of three presidential campaigns and those of the contemporary media.



**Over-arching Research Question**

Can a better understanding and implementation of Burke's dramatism theory help strategically deconstruct, understand, and improve the nature of political discourse in our contested electoral process?

**Specific Research Questions**

- *Act*: What was the campaign event and what new methods were utilized?
- *Scene*: Where did the different elements of the campaign present themselves?
- *Agent*: Who were the candidates and the principle media participants?
- *Agency*: How do the campaigns and participants present themselves?
- *Purpose*: Why do the campaigns and media pursue their motives?

### Chapter 3. Media and Politics

Since the inception of societies, there has been a codependent relationship between politics and the media. The substantial evolution in the process and pacing of our elections has challenged the media to keep pace. From colonial times to the present, methods have advanced in investigating, reporting, and promoting change within and without our political system. The days when local, state, and, eventually, national elections occur within one dawn-to-dusk period are long gone. It is no longer possible to achieve same-day nominating, electioneering, imbibing, and balloting. We reached an era of perpetual campaigning. Time permitting, and in between investigations and official inquiries, administration, legislation, and judicial processes achieve the task of meeting the electorate's needs and demands.

The town crier was on its way out in 1783 when "America's first daily newspaper appeared in Philadelphia [and by] 1800, there were six dailies in Philadelphia, five in New York, three in Baltimore, and two in Charleston" (Schudson, 1998, p.116). "By 1850, there were two thousand papers, including two hundred dailies." By the election of 1860, advances made in the printing process, such as the use of telegraphy, rotary high-speed steam powered presses, and stereotyping, were employed by publishers to mass-produce papers at less expense.

In addition to newspapers, other forms of written communication between the government and its citizenry included circular letters. Sometimes these would be printed on government stationery and at other times were published as pamphlets or broadsides. Print proved specifically invaluable as candidate Abraham Lincoln published the *Lincoln-Douglas Debates* of 1858 in book form as a campaign tool in his run for the presidency (*Figure 2*). In this case, a printed product significantly amplified his oratory value by allowing him to reach a broader audience.

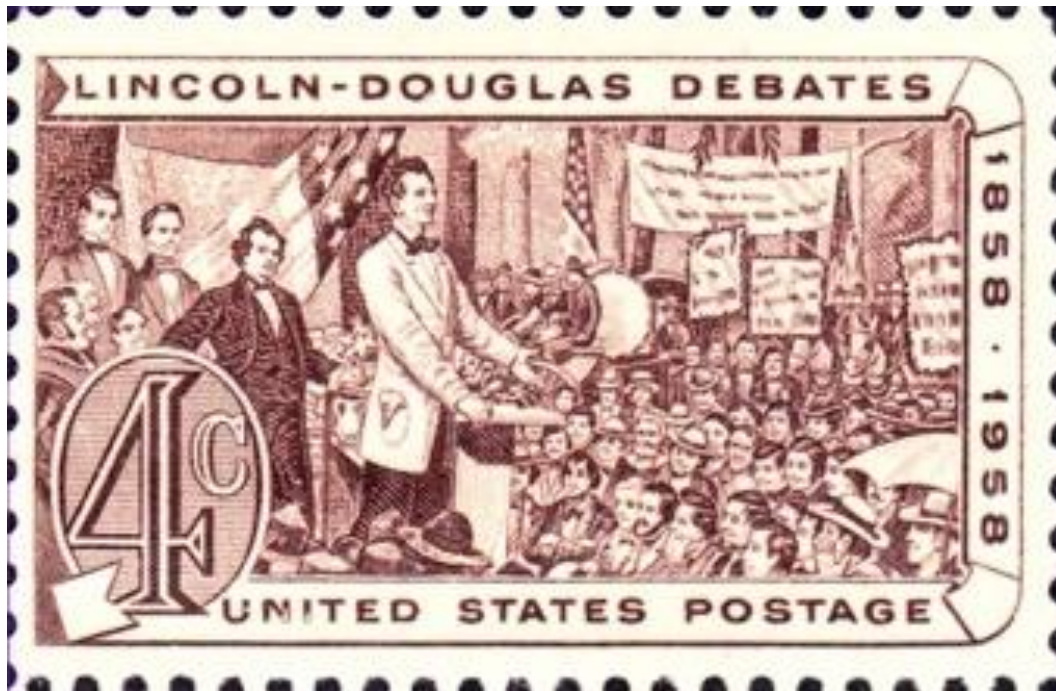


Figure 2. United States Postage. (1858) Lincoln-Douglas Debates Stamp. Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/Px13796FpzATM5XUA>

According to Schudson (1998), “The Lincoln-Douglas debates were a high point of 19th century American political discourse and political participation” (p. 135). However, he is quick to point out four central features and outcomes of the debates and suggests that we should not bemoan the absence of contemporary emulation.

- “No one who listened to Lincoln and Douglas speak voted for them” (p. 135).  
Senators were selected by state legislators and not by popular vote.
- “Politics was entertainment” (p. 136). Audiences were not necessarily there to be swayed. They were there to “cheer, laugh, applaud, and shout out” (p. 136).
- “The debaters did not provide models of high-minded issue-oriented reasoned discourse” (p. 137). The only topic debated was the emotional issue of slavery.

- “*Lincoln’s candidacy represented a failure of antebellum politics*” (p. 141). Lincoln was there as a third-party candidate as an alternative to the “revulsion with politics-as-usual” (p. 141).

### **Media and Democracy**

Schudson (2008) declared that democracy and journalism are not the same. “Democracy does not necessarily produce journalism, nor does journalism necessarily produce democracy” (Schudson, 2013, pp. 343-344). “Journalism is not a perfect vessel of truth. Its coverage of politics is based on unspoken, often unconscious, and sometimes unjustified assumptions” (p. 139). Schudson goes on to list “six functions journalism has frequently assumed in democratic societies” (p. 351):

- *Information* – to provide citizens with full, fair, and informed content.
- *Investigation* – to identify concentrated sources of governmental power.
- *Analysis* – to provide coherent interpretation and thereby improve comprehension.
- *Social Empathy* – to appreciate the viewpoints and lives of others.
- *Public Forum* – to host dialogue among citizens and varied groups in society.
- *Mobilization* – to advocate for particular political perspectives.

Schudson suggests a potential seventh function: *Realization* – to aid in identifying and fulfilling “the will of the people” (p. 600).

With the power of oratory and the foundational role of the print media discussed, the following sections will identify innovation, application, and impact of expanded media in the presidential elections of 1860, 1940, and 1968.

### Enhanced Media in 1860

The utilization of the telegraph, railroad, photography, and type-revolving lightning presses all played a role in changing the practice of journalism. The news was received, rendered, and dispersed in a timelier manner. New print publications included mass circulation of daily newspapers and the publication of *Harper's Weekly*, Gleason's Pictorial, and other national illustrated weekly newspapers, which also included satirical content (*Figure 3*). By 1861, the *New York Herald* would exceed a daily circulation of one hundred thousand. However, there was a substantial disparity in access to like media between the North and the South. The South had less than 10% of the nation's printers and only 70 of the nation's 387 daily newspapers.

The mid-1800s was the era of increased notoriety and influence of editors, publishers, and other journalism practitioners. The likes of Horace Greeley, James Gordon Bennett, and Frank Leslie came to fame. The battlefield reports also came to prominence and built followings as yesterday's battles became today's news.

"Unlike most other technologies, photography was a true overnight sensation" (Kovarik, 2018, p. 151). The French led the way with Louis Daguerre creating a functioning and complete photographic process by 1839, making it a "gift, 'free to the world'" to be refined by others in the decades to follow. The images captured by photographers painted a more graphic picture for the reader than artist renderings. This was true not only on the battlefield but in the portraits of soldiers sent back home to friends and family. It is considered by most that Matthew Brady's portrait of Abraham Lincoln (*Figure 4*) captured in New York's Cooper Union "became the best-known image of the 1860 presidential election" (p. 155) and helped Lincoln become our 16th president and commander in chief.

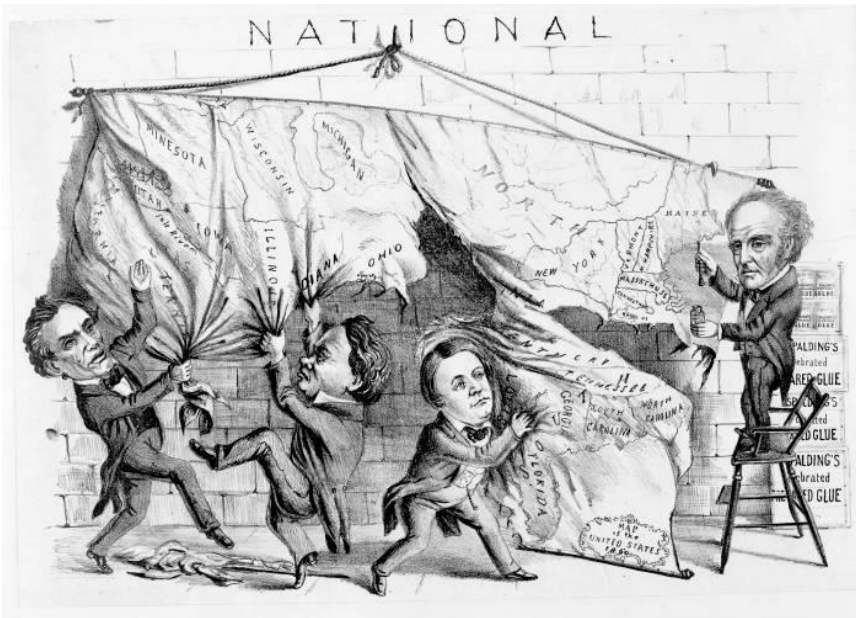


Figure 3. HarpWeek. (1860) [Election Satire Cartoon]. Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/wxHzheCbvFLyxEQE9>.

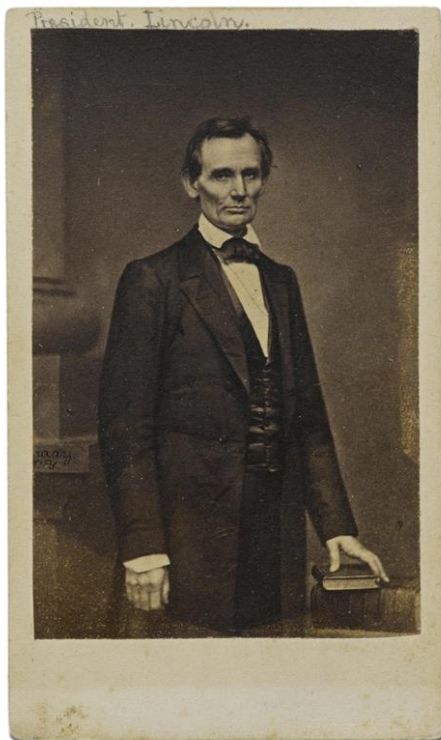


Figure 4. Brady, M. (1860) Lincoln  $\frac{3}{4}$  Portrait. Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lincoln\\_O-17\\_CDV\\_by\\_Brady,\\_1860.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lincoln_O-17_CDV_by_Brady,_1860.jpg)

**Enhanced Media in 1940**

The war effort of the 1940s utilized a more diverse media than had been previously available. Television's debut was at the 1939 World's Fair. Radio and newsreels, produced and screened in movie theaters before the feature films, joined the print media. However, radio soon dominated media as the war had halted the development of television in 1942. The Federal Communications Commission went so far as to deny the creation of new radio and television stations during the war. It was left to newsreels to provide visuals with sound, even though they could not match the economy, immediacy, and radio's scale.

Newspapers still provided essential information, side-by-side with product and service advertisements, while soliciting the purchase of war bonds. Simultaneously, there was growing public concern over the creation of media empires through the consolidation of newspapers, resulting in the dissemination of controlled and standardized news by publishing magnates such as William Randolph Hearst.

The Great Depression and impending war had started the creation and development of a new generation of journalists and media personalities. This was the era of Edward R. Murrow, William Shirer, Eric Sevareid, and Margaret Bourke-White. All of these media professionals were navigators for the path journalism would take during the war effort and the decades to follow.

**Enhanced Media in 1968**

The year 1968 was defined by counterculture movements, urban unrest, anti-war protests, racial strife, presidential elections, and assassinations. On rare occasions, we caught a brief glimpse of what was possible. Furthermore, it was all on television.

Before the internet, television was our window to the world. Much of what we saw during 1968, in particular, was discouraging, bloody, and rarely hopeful. Nowhere was our societal divide more evident than in the media coverage of the escalating war in Viet Nam, the related protests to that war, and the volatile presidential campaigns. In particular, the riots that engulfed the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago are looking strangely familiar in this election year of 2020.

A new generation of media personalities came forward and built on the foundation set in the previous decades by the “Murrow Boys.” They became a generation committed to first-person accounts. Walter Cronkite earned the reputation as “the most trusted journalist in America.” Chet Huntley and David Brinkley became a two-anchor team with which to be reckoned. Female journalists came into their own, including journalists who would soon become legends, Helen Thomas and Barbara Walters.

Technology, both old and new, helped shape our perception of the world, nation, and ourselves. Television, radio, film, theatre, print media, and personal interaction all have and continue to have a lasting effect on our lives. Life is drama, so that is why Kenneth Burke’s dramatism theory and his pentad is a useful tool in the analysis of the 1860, 1940, and 1968 elections. Nowhere does that theory seem more appropriate than when addressing strategic communications during times of war, racial strife, and political discord (*Figure 5*).



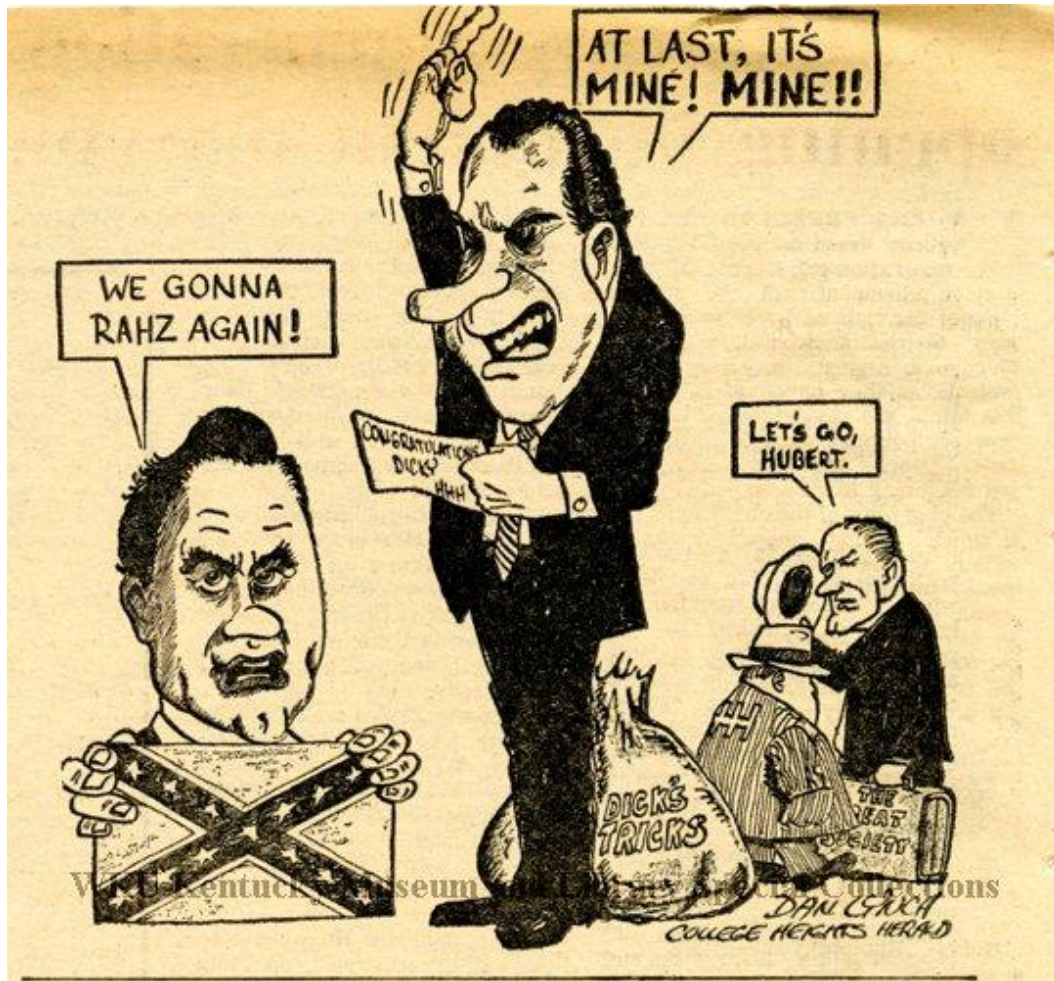


Figure 5. Lynch, D. (1968) [1968 Political Cartoon]. Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/3LnPm4NejZWGtfTU8>

## Chapter 4. Campaigns Amid the Storm

### Election of 1860

The Election of 1860 is one of the most divisive and destructive presidential elections in American history. The recently formed Republican Party, having replaced the defunct Whig Party, stood against a divided Democratic Party, Northern Democrats versus Southern Democrats versus the new Constitutional Union Party made up of former Whigs and Know-Nothings. The principle issues of contention were slavery and states' rights. Even though Lincoln successfully became our nation's 16th president and commander in chief, his election led to a national crisis: The Civil War (as referenced in the North) or The War of Northern Aggression (as referenced in the South).

- **Act:**
  - 19th quadrennial presidential campaign and election.
  - Hotly contested election with pending secession in the background.
  - This was the first election where the original 13 states controlled less than 50% of the total electoral votes.
  - Strong regional sympathies.
  - Voter turnout exceeded 80%.
  - Lincoln won the electoral college but lost the popular vote with only 40%; second-lowest share of the popular "winning" vote in U.S. history.
  - Lincoln won without carrying a single southern state.
  - By inauguration day 1861, seven states had left the Union.

- **Scene:**

- Republican Party Convention convened May 16, 1860, in Chicago, Illinois.
- Northern Democratic Party Convention convened June 18, 1860, in Baltimore, Maryland.
- Southern Democratic Party Convention convened April 23, 1860, in Charleston, South Carolina.
- Constitutional Union Party Convention convened May 9, 1860, in Baltimore, Maryland.
- The election involved 33 states with the recent addition of Minnesota and Oregon.
- Background situation included:
  - Division within the parties;
  - Threats of secession;
  - Sectional disagreements including extending slavery into territories;
  - Dred Scott decision;
  - Missouri Compromise;
  - Republican party replaced the defunct Whig party;
  - Former Whigs and Know-Nothings formed the Constitutional Union Party.

- **Agent:**

- There were four principal candidates - (152 electoral votes needed to win).
  - Abraham Lincoln – Republican (180 electoral votes).
  - John C. Breckinridge – Southern Democratic (72 electoral votes).

- John Bell – Constitutional Union (39 electoral votes).
- Stephen A. Douglas – Northern Democratic (12 electoral votes).
- Each was a regional candidate holding strong allegiances to their individual “states” (*Figure 6*).
- **Agency:**
  - The factionalism of the candidates was more regionally than party-based.
  - There were mixed and diverse views on the inevitability of secession.
  - Campaigns included:
    - Public debates came into their own with the Lincoln-Douglas senatorial debates of 1858;
    - Lincoln publishes Lincoln-Douglass Debates of 1858 as campaign literature;
    - Newspapers and pamphleteering remain active and viable;
    - No standard ballot issued by each state listing all candidates; and
    - Presidential ballots were printed and distributed by the candidates’ agents and political party.



- Infrastructure improvements; and
  - Construction of the Pacific Railroad.
- 1860 Northern Democratic Party Platform consisted of:
  - The belief that Democratic principles are unchangeable.
  - Abiding by Supreme Court decisions upon questions of Constitutional Law regarding:
    - Territorial Legislation;
    - The Powers and Duties of Congress; and
    - The institution of slavery within the Territories.
  - Protection be afforded to all citizens, home or abroad, native or foreign-born.
  - Construction of a railroad to the Pacific coast.
  - Acquiring the island of Cuba.
  - Providing faithful support and execution of the Fugitive Slave Law.
  - Domestic relations law be addressed by Territorial Legislatures.
- 1860 Southern Democratic Party Platform consisted of:
  - All citizens having the equal right to settle in the Territories.
  - Federal Government having the duty to protect the rights of persons and property in the territories.
  - Once an adequate population settles in the Territories, equal opportunity must be afforded for admission to the Union.
  - Acknowledging that attempts by State Legislatures to defeat the Fugitive Slave Law is subversive to the Constitution.

- Protection being afforded to all citizens, home or abroad, native or foreign-born.
- Construction of a railroad to the Pacific coast.
- 1860 Constitutional Union Party Platform.
  - It is a patriotic duty to recognize no political principle other than:
    - The Constitution of the United States;
    - The Union of the States; and
    - The Enforcement of the Laws.

### **Election of 1860 Theory Summary**

How do the theories of dramatism and dramaturgy aid in creating an understandable narrative based on crucial elements of the campaign and election? The pentad identifies a philosophically divided nation during the campaign that resulted in a physically divided nation after the election. Seven states seceded from the Union before Lincoln's inauguration, and Fort Sumter would fall under attack less than six weeks later. Since this was the first election held where the original 13 colonies controlled less than 50% of the electoral votes, strong regional sympathies held by the 20 newer states would logically dominate.

Though the voter turnout of 81.6% (UCSB, 2016) appears extraordinarily high compared to more contemporary turnouts, it is comparable to presidential elections held between 1840 and 1888. Lincoln may have won the Electoral College, but he lost a plurality of the popular vote, garnering only 40%, the second-lowest total in U.S. history. This result is a precursor to more recent elections where the winner of the popular vote lost the electoral vote, and therefore the election. I believe this to be the foundation of a persuasive argument proposing the dissolution of the Electoral College.

Party disaffiliation and reformation played a critical part in the divisive allocation of popular and electoral votes. The Republican Party built upon the remains of the Whig Party, the Democratic Party split between the North and the South, and the Constitutional Party would be a precursor to future disaffiliated, short-lived fringe philosophies beyond the scope of this study. Credence should credit the theory that divisions were more region-based than party-based. The related philosophical differences were principally limited to views on slavery and states' rights. (Read "states' rights" as "slavery.")

The presidential debate concept may have been formed as a result of the well-publicized and published Lincoln-Douglas Senatorial debates of 1858; it would take substantial time before they became commonplace. Lincoln did not debate during this presidential campaign. It would take 15 election cycles before candidates would participate in such public forums.

Credit should be paid, however, to the various party platform committees. The crafted proposals were quite succinct compared to modern platforms. I believe that these predecessors may have been paid for their brevity, while modern counterparts may be paid by the word.

### **Election of 1940**

The election of 1940 was one of the most pivotal in American history. The ravages of the Great Depression were yet to be fully conquered. War was spreading throughout Europe and the battles on our home front were primarily between isolationists and interventionists. This would also be the first time in our nation's history that a candidate pursued a third consecutive term as president. Of course, the perennial differences between the two principle political parties remained. Disagreements ranged over foreign policy, national defense, labor relations, unemployment, relief, Social Security, and finding balance between business and government.



- **Act:**

- 39th quadrennial presidential campaign and election.
- Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) becomes the first and only president elected for a third consecutive term.
- FDR won the election by five million votes.
- His margin of victory represented 54.8% of the popular vote and 84.5% of the electoral college.
- This third (and fourth) consecutive presidential term eventually leads to the passage of the 22nd Amendment in 1947.

- **Scene:**

- Democratic Party Convention convened July 15, 1940, in Chicago, Illinois.
- Republican Party Convention convened June 24, 1940, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- The election involved 48 states.
- Background situation included:
  - A world emerging from the Great Depression.
  - FDR pursuing an unprecedented third consecutive term.
  - World War II expanding in Europe.
  - The domestic populous was split between strong isolationist and interventionist sentiment.
  - The Republican Party was also deeply divided by these views.
  - Wendell Willkie had never run for public office before.
  - Willkie symbolized “Big Business.”

- The British government engaged covert intelligence operations to support Roosevelt, including the planting of false news stories, wiretaps, “October surprises,” and other intelligence activities.
- **Agent (Figure 7):**
  - There were two principal candidates - (266 electoral votes needed to win).
  - Franklin D. Roosevelt – Democrat (449 electoral votes).
  - William Howard Taft – Republican (82 electoral votes).

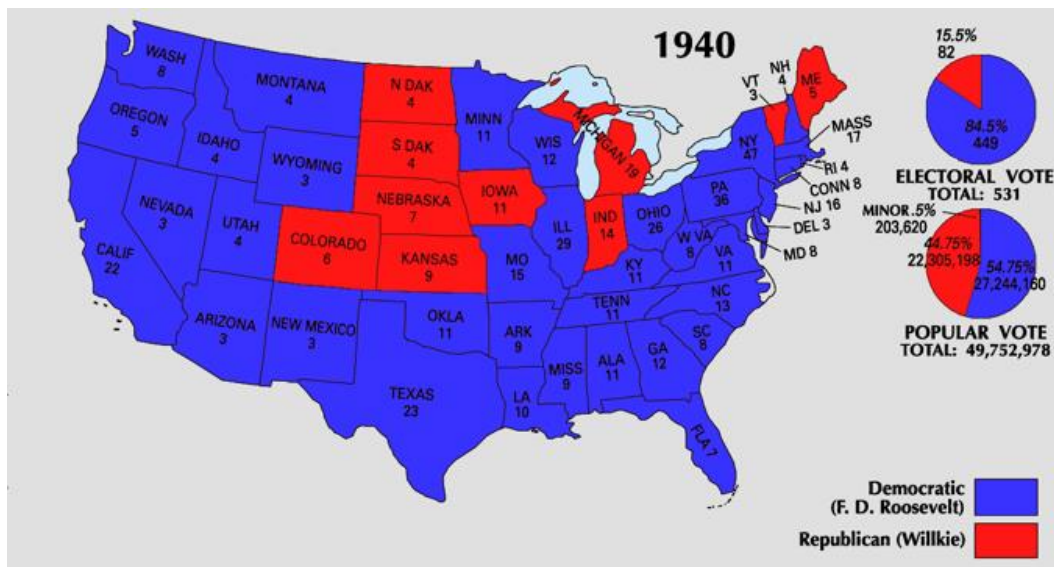


Figure 7. United States Geological Survey. (1940) 1940 Electoral Map. Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1940\\_Electoral\\_Map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1940_Electoral_Map.png)

- **Agency:**
  - Initially FDR did not want to campaign until worsening conditions in Europe forced the issue.
  - Willkie accused FDR of waste and incompetence in the New Deal and secretly wanting to take the country into World War II (WWII).
  - FDR refused Willkie’s challenge to a face-to-face debate. This was the first such occurrence in the 20th century.

- Radio and newsreels were effectively added to the media mix.
  - Use of campaign paraphernalia and broadsides continued.
    - FDR Campaign Poster. (*Figure 8*)
    - Willkie Campaign Poster. (*Figure 9*)
  - Newspapers and pamphleteering remained active and viable.
  - Radio – FDR Campaign Address Audio. (*Figure 10*)
  - Newsreels – Willkie Newsreel Video. (*Figure 11*)

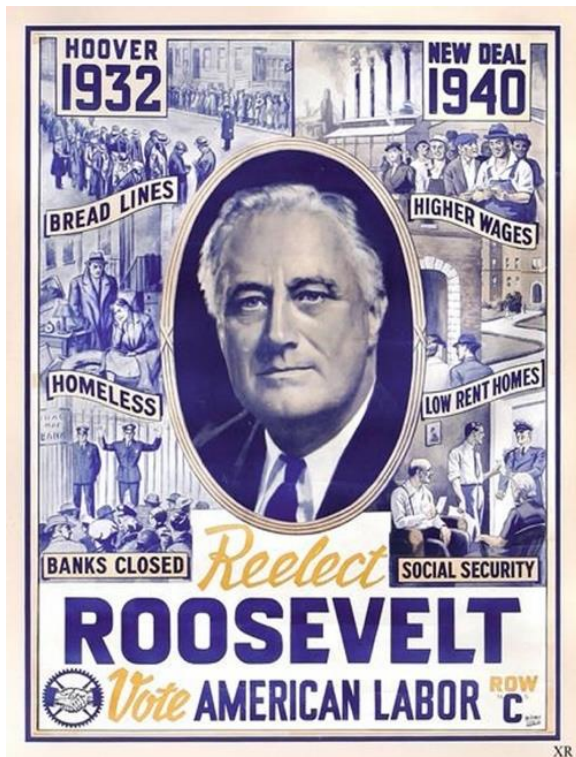


Figure 8. i.etsystatic.com. (1940) Roosevelt Campaign Poster. Retrieved from [https://i.etsystatic.com/13513569/r/il/1776b5/1096958372/il\\_1588xN.1096958372\\_fb2t.jpg](https://i.etsystatic.com/13513569/r/il/1776b5/1096958372/il_1588xN.1096958372_fb2t.jpg)

Figure 10. FDR Campaign Speech: <https://youtu.be/7E6ALpX17jI>

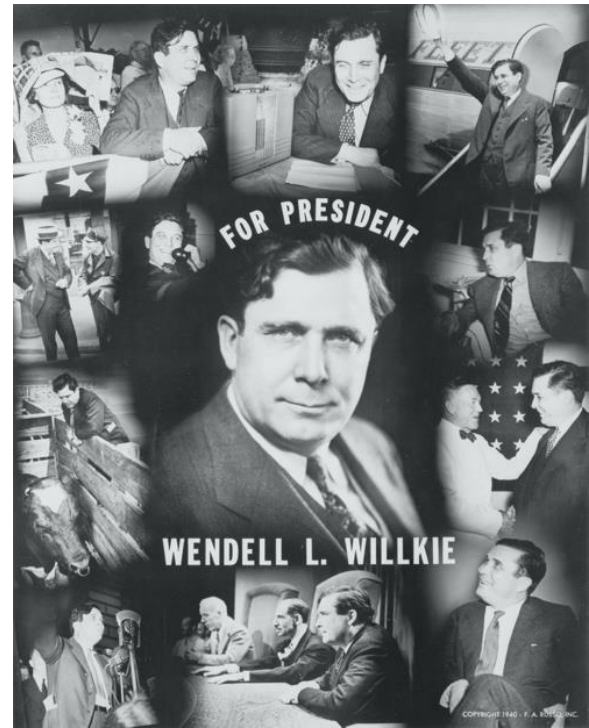


Figure 9. Wikimedia Commons. (1940) Wendell Willkie Campaign Poster. Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/Et9qcjHz9qB7fhFg9>

Figure 11. Willkie Campaign Speech <https://youtu.be/Nm9ft5HXaUw>

- **Purpose:**

- Address public concerns about lagging economy and war footing.
- Address differences over policies as they relate to isolationism and the rise of nationalism in Europe.
- Candidates, as always, support the agendas of their party's platform to achieve victory and philosophical supremacy.
- 1940 Democratic Party Platform positions on:
  - Foreign Policy: Determined to keep WWII away from our shores.

- National Defense: FDR is praised for his foresight and peacetime preparedness.
- Labor Relations: Enforce fair labor standards and expand opportunity through the National Labor Relations Act.
- Unemployment: Existing policies will continue to wage war on unemployment.
- Relief: Supplement private re-employment by private action.
- Social Security: The Democratic party established Social Security and is dedicated to its extension.
- Business and Government: Defend all legitimate businesses.
- The Opposition: Concern over private abuse of public resources.
- 1940 Republican Party Platform positions on:
  - Foreign Policy: Opposed to involvement in foreign war.
  - National Defense: Blamed our lack of preparedness to maintain peace on failures within the New Deal.
  - Labor Relations: Maintain labor's right to freely organize and pursue collective bargaining.
  - Unemployment: Offset perceived failures of the New Deal by engaging with private industry and eliminating needless regulation.
  - Relief: Delegate program administration from the Federal Government to state governments.
  - Social Security: Extend old-age benefits and unemployment compensation on a pay-as-you-go basis and as revenues will permit.

- Business and Government: Grow private enterprise and restrict government activity to essential public services.
- The Opposition: Propose a term of limit for the office of President.

### **Election of 1940 Theory Summary**

Once again, the pentad identifies a challenged nation in 1940 as it did in 1860. The differences this time were not in response to concerns over secession and civil war; they were on continuing fiscal challenges and a foreign war. The United States had not wholly recovered from the ravages of the Great Depression, and a world war was forming in Europe and Asia. There was also new political terrain explored as an incumbent president pursued an unprecedented third consecutive term as our commander in chief.

Though voter turnout in 1940 paled in comparison to that of 1860, 62.5% compared to 81.6% (UCSB, 2016), it was consistent with presidential turnouts for elections held between 1928 and 1968. Roosevelt won re-election by five million votes, a margin of victory that earned him 54.8% of the popular vote, and 84.5% of the electoral vote. Once again, a substantial disparity between the popular and electoral voting results validates concerns over the dominance inflicted by the Electoral College. Roosevelt's third, and eventually fourth, consecutive electoral victory would lead to the eventual passing of the 22nd Amendment in 1947, limiting a president to two consecutive terms.

This time, the philosophical differences voiced in the election pitted strong isolationist and interventionists against one another. There were such internal conflicts within each of the principle parties. These related to domestic as well as international matters. Concerns also surrounded the fact that Willkie was a political novice having never previously run for political office and symbolized "big business."

The presidential debate concept was not adopted until the election of 1948 when Republican primary candidates Dewey and Stassen faced off before a radio audience of 40 to 80 million people. It was the radio that came to dominate campaign communication in 1940. Add to that the visuals presented by newsreels prepared for and viewed in cinemas, and print media begins to play a diminishing, yet still an integral part.

As for party platforms, one can start to see the foundations for the differing political philosophies between the two main parties. On foreign policy and labor relations, both sides generally agreed: Avoid the war and support fair labor standards and the right to organize freely. However, opposing views were present on virtually every other plank. On national defense, the Democrats (D) praised Roosevelt for his preparedness while the Republicans (R) blamed him for lack of preparedness. On unemployment policy, (D) supported existing policies while (R) sought increased private industry engagement. On the issue of relief, (D) was to supplement the programs nationally while the (R) delegate responsibility to the states. On Social Security, which they introduced, (D) wanted to extend the program as it is while (R) wanted to limit it to pay-as-you-go. Finally, on business and government, (D) wanted to defend all legitimate businesses while (R) proposed growing private enterprise and restricting government regulation to public services. The battle lines for future engagements were drawn.

### **Election of 1968**

The election of 1968 was held in the midst of chaos, confrontation, and bloodshed. It was a year dominated by an unpopular foreign war, a domestic war between generations, turmoil amidst racial strife, assassination, and a disruption of the New Deal. The incumbent president chose not to run for re-election and the eventual Democratic nominee garnered the nomination following the assassination of a leading candidate and riots that consumed the town of Chicago

during the Democratic National Convention in what became known as a “week of hate.” And for the first time in American history, a third-party candidate, a segregationist from the deep south, took electoral votes from five states. Terms like “silent majority” and “Southern strategy” were coined and entered our lexicon.

- **Act:**

- 46th quadrennial presidential campaign and election.
- The margin of victory was only 0.7% in the popular vote.
- The difference was only 522,944 out of 63,055,622 votes cast.
- The electoral college margin was much wider at 55.95% with delegate ballot distribution of 301 to 191 to 46 among the three candidates.
- This third electoral total listed went to a segregationist from the deep south.

- **Scene:**

- Democratic Party Convention convened August 26, 1968, in Chicago, Illinois.
- Republican Party Convention convened August 5, 1968, in Miami Beach, Dade County, Florida.
- The American Independent was a creation of the candidate himself.
- The election involved all 50 states and territories.
- Background situation included:
  - First presidential election since passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.
  - Key issues of the campaign included the Vietnam War, racial injustice, and law and order.



- Subsequent and frequent protests on college campuses and in the streets of America responding to these issues.
- Assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy.
- Violent confrontations between anti-war protestors and police at the 1968 Democratic National Convention.
- **Agent:**
  - There were three principal candidates (*Figure 12*) - (270 electoral votes needed to win) (*Figure 13*).
    - Hubert H. Humphrey – Democrat (191 electoral votes).
    - Richard M. Nixon – Republican (301 electoral votes).
    - George C. Wallace – American Independent (46 electoral votes).



Figure 12. Getty Images. (1968) The Democratic, Republican, and American Independent candidates for president in 1968. Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/PfDpASgrLUScAktRA>

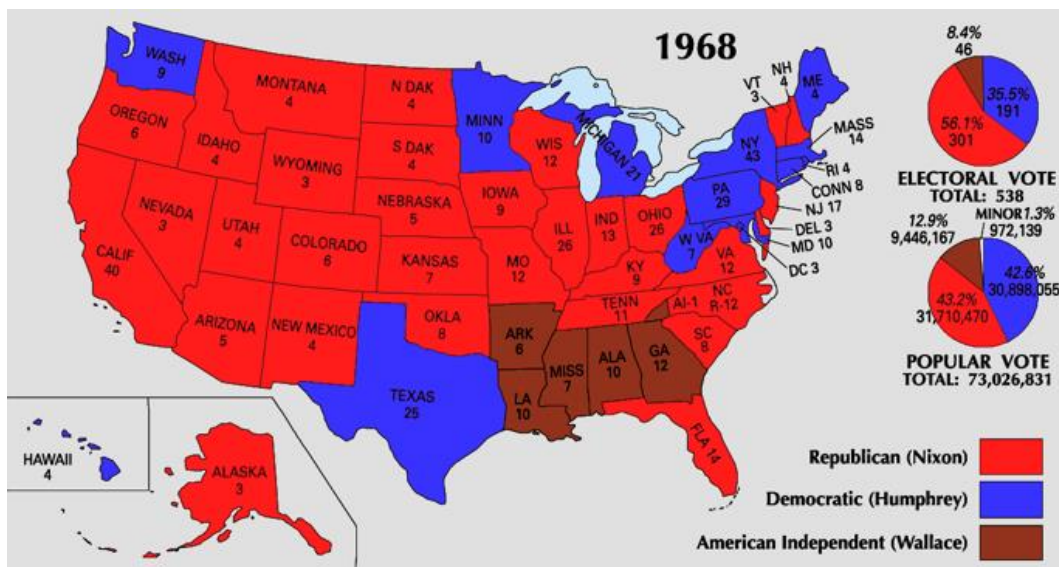


Figure 13. United States Geological Survey. (1968) 1968 Electoral Map. Retrieved from [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1968\\_Electoral\\_Map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1968_Electoral_Map.png)

- **Agency:**
  - New campaign strategies begin to emerge.
    - The “Southern Strategy.”
    - Humphrey’s “October Surprise”
    - Nixon campaign “sabotaging” peace talks.
    - The only public debates were intra-party.

- Opposing parties do not take the debate stage together likely due to Nixon's poor showing in 1960 against John F. Kennedy.
- The role of the media changes drastically.
  - Newsreels diminish as television becomes dominant.
  - Increasing impact of television bringing current events into the home with strong visual and auditory images.
    - Humphrey Television Advertisement Video. (*Figure 14*)
    - Nixon Television Advertisement Video. (*Figure 15*)
    - Wallace Campaign Speech Video. (*Figure 16*)
  - Newspapers and pamphleteering remained active and viable.
  - Use of campaign paraphernalia and broadsides continued.
    - Humphrey Campaign Poster. (*Figure 17*)
    - Nixon Campaign Poster. (*Figure 18*)
    - Wallace Campaign Poster. (*Figure 19*)
- **Purpose:**
  - Address concerns over policies as they relate to Vietnam.
  - Address concerns over policies as they relate to racial injustice.
  - Address concerns over policies as they relate to the nuclear arms race.
  - Address public concerns about chaos in the streets. (*Figure 20*)
  - Candidates, as always, support the agendas of their party's platform to achieve victory and philosophical supremacy.

Figure 14. Humphrey Campaign Advertisement Video: [https://youtu.be/tEval\\_-88SU](https://youtu.be/tEval_-88SU)

Figure 15. Nixon Campaign Advertisement Video: <https://youtu.be/UcgedBioXDQ>

Figure 16. Wallace Campaign Speech: [https://youtu.be/\\_0dnqoQgQio](https://youtu.be/_0dnqoQgQio)



Figure 17. Humphrey Campaign Poster. (1968) HHH. Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/9p3ZUG6D9TTCndNv9>



Figure 18. Nixon Campaign Poster. (1968) Nixon's the One! Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/FqbSUZKbdfGniKUu8>

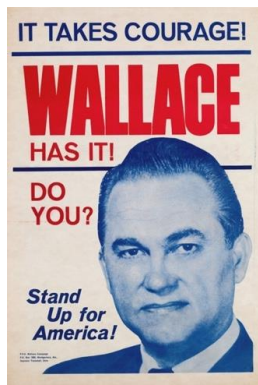


Figure 19. Wallace Campaign Poster. (1968) Wallace has it! Retrieved from <https://images.app.goo.gl/xhZ8f9tUowADbwvb7>

Figure 20. DNC Chicago Riots Video: [https://youtu.be/7\\_9OJnRnZjU](https://youtu.be/7_9OJnRnZjU)

- [1968 Democratic Party Platform positions:](#)
  - America belongs to the people who inhabit it.
  - Saving our cities is a race against time.
  - Stand against foreign aggression against our allies.
  - Honor our treaty obligations.
  - Seek a world of diversity and peaceful change.
  - Call on other nations to pay a fair share of efforts and resources.
  - Maintain a strong and balanced defense establishment.
  - Vigilance calls for defense and arms control.
  - Work towards a lasting peace in the Middle East.
  - End the Vietnam War by an honorable and lasting settlement.
  - Share aspirations for a better life in the developing world.
- 1968 Republican Party Platform positions:
  - Urgently develop a foreign policy that realistically leads toward peace.
  - Work towards a peaceful, reunified America, with opportunity and orderly progress for all.
  - Transform the blighted areas of cities into centers of opportunity and progress, culture and talent.
  - Respect for the law is the cornerstone of a free and well-ordered society.
  - Welfare and poverty programs will be drastically revised to liberate the poor from the debilitating dependence that erodes self-respect and discourages family unity and responsibility.

- Encourage the broadening of private health insurance plans.
- Strengthen the Social Security system and provide automatic cost of living adjustments.
- Vigorous efforts to assure jobs for returning Vietnam War veterans.
- Reduce governmental bureaucracy.
- Restore fiscal integrity and sound monetary policies.
- Endorse organized labor as critical to our national life.

### **Election of 1968 Theory Summary**

For the election of 1968, the pentad examines a nation in conflict primarily over international and domestic affairs, the war in Southeast Asia, and racial strife in our institutions. It was an era of violence and bloodshed on our campuses, and violence and bloodshed in our urban centers. In this election year, the incumbent president chose not to run for election amidst the chaos, and, for the first time in our history, a viable third party, the American Independent Party, took electoral votes away from the two principle parties. This was also the first election since the passing of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which removed barriers to African-American voters. As for debates, once again, none were held as Nixon turned down invitations, perhaps in remembrance of his disastrous television showing against Kennedy in 1960.

Voter turnout in 1968 was comparable to that of 1940, 60.8% compared to 62.5% (UCSB, 2016). The margin of Nixon's victory in the popular vote was a slim 0.7% representing approximately 523,000 votes out of 63 million cast. The electoral vote once again was wider than the popular vote, representing 56% of the delegates. The distribution this cycle was 301 delegates for Nixon, 191 delegates for Humphrey, and 46 delegates for Wallace, a third-party segregationist from the deep south.

The political divides in 1968 were over the Vietnam War, racial injustice, nuclear arms, and law and order. These issues generated subsequent, frequent, and violent protests on our college campuses and in our streets. The 1960s was also a decade of assassinations with the murders of President Kennedy, Senator Kennedy, and Reverend King. All of these events played out vividly on television screens in living rooms across America, as did commercials created and displayed by the competing campaigns. Images of violence and discord found their way into our homes. Moreover, no single event may have been more violent and tragic than the Chicago protests outside of the Democratic National Convention.

Very little changed between the two principle party platforms from the campaigns preceding and after 1968, perhaps save for their length. Neither party's fiscal, social, nor regulatory policies, in particular, changed. The dominant disturbance in policy came from the American Independent Party based on a quote from the 1963 Inaugural Speech delivered by their now presidential candidate, Wallace: "In the name of the greatest people that have ever trod this earth, I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny, and I say segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever" (The Associated Press, 1998).

## Chapter 5. Conclusion

### Future Research

Thames (2007) examined and expressed frustration that so much work and analysis remain unfinished on Burke's concept of dramatism. By extension, Goffman's dramaturgy model leaves additional opportunities for future research of both theories. While Goffman credits his work directly to Burke, Thames' research and analysis rely heavily on a reinterpretation of the research performed by others.

The continuing analysis of Burke's theory remains more qualitative than quantitative. However, the strength in Thames' analysis is due to the dominant nature of his having studied classic influences on 20th-century thought. Thames faithfully addressed Aristotle's theory of catharsis (2007), the purging of emotion, and Burke's interpretation of such, thereby drawing a timeline from the ancient to the contemporary and leaving the future ripe for discovery. This discovery should include ELM to allow central and peripheral route explorations of each theory application as appropriate.

Weiser (2009) proposed there is an identifiable correlation between the social science debates of more contemporary groups such as "Stalinists and Trotskyites" and "Platonists and Aristotelians." According to Weiser, the art and practice of argumentation and debate are as old as society itself. Her essay recognized the "propensity to situate [Burke's] arguments across seeming dichotomies" (2009, p. 134). For example, the author paired "pragmatists and idealists, Marxists and esthetes; urban radicals and agrarian conservatives; psychological and sociological theorists" (p. 134) to make her point. Her persuasion method builds on the observations and writings of international philosophers and psychologists who have viewed and considered Burke's writings ever since their inception. As a result, Weiser finds dramatism to be a "bridge



across dichotomous positions of opponents” in seemingly “deadlocked inaction” (p. 150). The debate will continue concerning the differences between act and action and the contemporary observations mirroring classic foundations, hence the essential need for future research.

In response to a letter from a fellow researcher, Clayton W. Lewis stated:

Burke clearly wants act and agency, along with the other terms of the Pentad, to be related dialectically and dynamically to each other. Professor Kneupper, in his remarks on the act/agency ratio, stresses agency while I [Lewis] stress act; between us, we sustain the dynamic quality Burke intended. (cited in Kneupper, 1985, p. 308)

Seeking clarification is desired here.

### **Implications**

Our national political discourse has a long, rich, and contested history with the power of rhetoric. Myers (2005) and Oglie (2007), respectively, examined the disagreement centered around the separation of church from state during the presidential campaign of 1800, and the role it played in motivating opposing campaigns to utilize primary weapons of exchanged insults and innuendo. In another perspective on this early election, Pasley (2006) reviewed six articles that analyzed this election from various perspectives to provide insight into the events that led up to an intense level of hostility. Religion played a dominant topic role in the political arena as it continues to act in that capacity to this very day.

While the media has always played a critical part in our political and electoral process, the judicial branch maintained its distance from the executive branch’s politics until the 2000 election. Since their appointment of George W. Bush to the presidency, the judiciary’s involvement has become more problematic since the executive branch has the power to appoint judges that create conflicts of interest. Ross (2012) spotlighted the Supreme Court’s role in

elections from 1800 through the 1970s. This will likely expand each category of the pentad if this overlap in constitutional power continues to evolve.

### **Summation**

*“Sooner or later, everything old is new again.”* (King, 2020)

This study examined a century-long political process over which the citizenship and media advanced so far and so fast, proposing an odd question. How has enhanced media failed to affect our electoral process and its results so fundamentally? Perhaps the medium is *not* the message. Perhaps the political process itself is autonomous and reluctant to change. After all, party platforms have remained virtually unchanged. The media’s advanced capabilities have not seemed to dramatically shift the campaigning process save for more efficiently delivering the status quo to the masses.

If this remains the case, then social discourse will not improve until “We the People” demand better from our government and better from our media. I believe that if we continue the historical path of an incestuous relationship between our political entities and the media, continue to turbocharge it with 24-hour media access, and the ability for the professional organizations and an autonomous amateur press with desktop access to the world, there is the potential to hurt, not heal.

To resolve any perceived deficiencies in our societal communications, we must become an engaged populous dedicated to working across party lines and achieve consensus through compromise. This study proposes the possibility of achieving this goal by applying the dramatism theory of communication, the dramaturgy theory of social psychology, and the elaboration likelihood model.

The field of ethics has been challenged by the linguistic and post-structural turns in the humanities and the social sciences (McClure & Skwar, 2015). Additionally, the polarity of meaning in language is a central focus of a study documented by Vasile (2017). It determined that language does matter, perception matters, intentions matter, and the medium of communication matters.

The populous, politicians, and media must work together towards opening paths to honest communication and trust. An analysis of political oratory by Morreale and Shockley-Zalabak (2018) identified “five drivers of trust”:

- Openness and honesty
- Identification
- Concern for others
- Reliability
- Competence

These five points may serve as a trusted compass by which dramatism, dramaturgy, and ELM will navigate us to more civil, unifying, and productive discourse.

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