

WORDS AND RUMORS OF WORDS COMPARATIVE WAR RHETORICS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis surveys how democratic governments convince their people to go to war and to continue fighting unpopular wars by exploring the relationship between contemporary and classical war rhetoric. Focusing on the military campaigns of the War on Terror and the Peloponnesian War, the researcher reviews ways in which those in positions of power wield words to build and maintain great empires. The researcher endeavors to support her hypothesis that there exists a rapport between contemporary American war rhetorics and classical Athenian war rhetorics by employing phenomenological and hermeneutical methodologies in the study of *prima facie* appeals and symbolic appeals, respectively, common to George W. Bush and Pericles. Together, a textual analysis and Burkean dramatist critique answer the researcher's question: To what extent is Bush-ean and Periclean wartime oratory similar? Because there exist both straightforward and emblematic correlations within the rhetorics, the researcher concludes there to be a notable association.