Five Trends in Presidential Rhetoric: An Analysis of Rhetoric from George Washington to Bill Clinton

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Several political scientists have argued that the presidential recourse to public rhetoric as a mode of political influence in the twentieth century represents a significant departure from a pre-twentieth-century institutional norm where "going public" was both rare and frowned upon. This article looks specifically at the changes in the substance of rhetoric that have accompanied this alleged institutional transformation. Applying computer-assisted content analysis to all the inaugural addresses and annual messages delivered between 1789 and 2000, the author identifies and explores five significant changes in twentieth-century presidential rhetoric that would qualifiedly support the thesis of institutional transformation in its rhetorical dimension: presidential rhetoric has become more anti-intellectual, more abstract, more assertive, more democratic, and more conversational. The author argues that these characteristics define the verbal armory of the modern rhetorical president and suggest areas for further research.

Observers of presidential politics have, for a long time now, lamented the declining standards of presidential discourse, which has been variously described as "a linguistic struggle," "rarely an occasion for original thought," like "dogs barking idiotically through endless nights," bordering on "demagogy" and "pontification cum anecdotalism."[1] These observations, while entertaining and widely shared, exemplify aspects of a significant scholarly debate. They parallel the concerns expressed by political scientists writing about a cluster of related developments in the modern presidency, variously referring to the "public presidency," the "personal presidency," the "rhetorical presidency," "the sound of leadership," and "going public" as a strategy of presidential leadership.[2] With moderate qualifications, all

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AUTHOR'S NOTE: I am grateful for helpful comments and suggestions from Professors Roderick P. Hart, David R. Mayhew, and Byron E. Shafer; and from the anonymous reviewers of Presidential Studies Quarterly.

1. Miller (2001, 14) on George W. Bush's speeches; Schlesinger (1965, vi) on presidential inaugural addresses; Mencken (1956, 56) on Warren Harding's rhetoric; Ceaser (1985, 32) on presidential campaign rhetoric; Hart (1987, 195) on contemporary presidential rhetoric.

2. Edwards (1983); Lowi (1985); Ceaser et al. (1981); Ceaser (1985); Tulis (1987, 1996, 1998); Hart (1987); and Kernell (1997).

Presidential Studies Quarterly 32, no. 2 (June)
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of these scholars observe a significant transformation of the presidency at the turn of the twentieth century from a traditional, administrative, and unrhetorical office into a modern, expansive, and stridently rhetorical one in which incumbents routinely speak over the head of Congress and to the public to lead and to govern. This body of literature posits that a transformation[3] of the presidency occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century, from the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, who inaugurated the modern rhetorical presidency, through that of Woodrow Wilson, who legitimated it with a theory of governance that stressed the motive force of the president in American politics (Tulis 1987, 19). If such an institutional transformation has indeed occurred—and the new institutional paradigm has after all been called the *rhetorical* presidency—then it should be minimally evident in the difference in rhetorical styles between the pre- and post-twentieth-century presidents.

This article focuses on identifying the rhetorical manifestations of this posited institutional transformation. While engaging the debate on its rhetorical dimension cannot conclusively settle the larger institutional debate of which it is part, it will help to settle or at least reliably quantify that aspect of the debate that is most visible, most audible, and still clouded by intuition and invective.

The opposing claim, that there has been more rhetorical continuity than change (and in particular *monotonic* change, a point I return to in section I) is not a strawman and has been explicitly posited by several scholars. Smith and Smith (1985, 749) argued that presidential speeches have "exhibited an unusually concordant value system"; Campbell and Jamieson (1990, 8) noted "the fundamental continuity of the inaugural"; Hinckley (1990, 133) found a "striking similarity" in the use of symbols in presidential rhetoric; Fields (1996, 20, emphasis added) argued that the presidential office exemplifies "*a* civil discourse"; Ellis (1998, 2) argued that the transition between the old and the new rhetorical paradigms is "less abrupt . . . than Tulis originally suggested"; and Hoffman (2001, 2) rejected the periodization of rhetorical and nonrhetorical periods and emphasized "significant continuity."[4]

Tellingly, most of the scholars emphasizing rhetorical disjuncture are political scientists coming from the theory-centered rhetorical presidency school of scholarship, and most of those emphasizing continuity are scholars of rhetoric and communication coming from the presidential rhetoric school of scholarship.[5] The former group are more interested in the "underlying doctrines of government" than in the words, which are regarded as mere "reflections" of these doctrines (Tulis 1987, 13), while the latter are more interested in the "study of political language" (Windt 1986, 112) and "the principles and practices of rhetoric" (Medhurst 1996, xiv). One's initial instinct is to go with the judgment of the scholars of rhetoric, since they are the ones that have been in fullest contact with, and possess expert knowledge of, the millions of words that have been recorded in the *Public Papers* of the presidents.

3. The language of significant disjuncture (and not merely of gradual imperceptible change) is evident in the literature. Although Tulis (1987, 7) subtly observes a "tension" between the "old" and the "new" rhetorical paradigms, even he notes "a true transformation of the presidency."

4. Importantly, these positions also parallel and find intellectual sustenance from the writings of those who have emphasized symbolic continuity in the presentation of the presidential persona (Novak 1974; Denton 1982; Hinckley 1990), value continuity in the nation's political culture (Devine 1972; Lipset 1979; Huntington 1981) and, more generally, in the nation's enduring public philosophy (Bellah 1967; Thompson 1981; Germino 1984).

5. This useful distinction between those who study the rhetorical presidency and those who study presidential rhetoric was first clarified in Medhurst (1996, xi), though it was alluded to in Ceaser (1985, 15-17).

Indeed, political scientists who have been concerned with explicating the *theory* of the rhetorical presidency have been consciously more interested in the *act* of rhetoric—the quantity, timing, and location of speeches—rather than its *substance*. To take a prominent example, the only place where Tulis engages in systematic content analysis is in the section "Comparing Rhetoric: Old and New" in chapter 5 of his book, and even there he is only interested in the "structure of presentation" (Tulis 1987, 137-44). No sustained effort is made to scrutinize the substance of rhetoric to differentiate the "old" from the "new" rhetorical paradigms.

To take the objection from the presidential rhetoric school seriously, and to begin to confront the scholarly disagreement between them and the political scientists in the rhetorical presidency school, this empirical gap in the literature needs to be filled. To do this, to paraphrase Ronald Dworkin, we need to take words seriously. Using computer-assisted content analysis, this article looks at the actual substance of rhetoric as it has transpired in the 211 years of presidential rhetorical history from 1789 to 2000 to see if a rhetorical transformation has occurred, and if so, what are some of the specific verbal trappings that define the modern rhetorical president. The core of this article consists in the presentation of this data.

Because computer-assisted content analysis is a relatively new methodology in political science, I spend some time explaining my methods in section I. I elaborate and discuss in sections III through VII the results of the content analysis and explore five transformative trends in presidential rhetoric. In section VIII, I conclude that these results present significant though not conclusive evidence for the rhetorical disjuncture view and that they cumulatively define the verbal armory of the modern rhetorical president.

I. Method

Privileging the claims of the scholars of rhetoric, I look at two genres of rhetoric in which significant change is not expected: the inaugural address and the annual message (or the State of the Union address, as it has been known since 1945).[6] These stand out as principle genres of "obligatory" rhetoric (Smith 2000, 82) that are powerfully constrained by custom and ritual. Still, it might be argued that changes in rhetorical patterns should be expected even in these genres since rhetoric expresses politics, and politics is deliquescent and vicissitudinous. To preempt this charge, this article will identify only those trends across the two centuries that (1) apply across *both* genres, since these trends would have been robust enough to survive the diverging rhetorical imperatives of two distinct rhetorical genres (the one, by Aristotle's schema,[7] epideictic and the other deliberative); and (2) are generally *monotonic* (unidirectional), since such trends would have withstood the oscillating shocks of historical contingency. The requirement of general monotonicity across time sieves out short-term and nonpersistent variations that occur such as due to different governing ideologies or presidential personalities; instead, it helps us to identify long-term and persistent

6. I shall refer to the post-1945 annual messages as the "State of the Union" address. I use "annual message" for collective references to the genre.

7. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, bk. I, chap. 3, 1358b.

shifts across time that cannot be anticipated (even) with the acknowledgement of the deliquescence of politics.

The speeches in these two genres are, of course, important in their own right. They constitute, arguably, the most significant occasions of presidential rhetoric from which we can reliably infer a macroscopic story about presidential rhetoric in the past 211 years. The inaugural address is the first time the president speaks to his country as president, and the annual message stands as the only occasion of presidential rhetoric that is prescribed by the Constitution.[8] Indeed, according to Ragsdale's (1998) classification, inaugurals and annual messages have constituted 50 percent of all the major presidential speeches since Calvin Coolidge (from whom the relevant data begin), where major speeches were defined as "live nationally televised and broadcast addresses to the country that pre-empt all major network programming" (p. 169).

My content analysis is directed at the complete set of 264 inaugurals addresses and annual messages that were delivered between 1789 and 2000, with the individual word as the unit of analysis ($N = 1,832,185$).[9] I use a software program known as the General Inquirer (GI) to identify the occurrence of categories of words as classified mainly by the Harvard IV-4 psychosociological (Stone et al. 1966) and Lasswell value (Namenwirth and Weber 1987) dictionaries. The use of the computer ensures perfect reliability and replicability (insofar as anyone running the data through a computer will obtain identical results), and the use of independently constructed categories relieves me of problems of inferential circularity. This article presents the patterns of occurrence of twenty-seven GI categories. As far as it has been possible, I have defined the categories used in the text of this article, though the reader is directed to section X for a complete description for each category and constitutive examples. The reader is also referred to the GI Web page,[10] which offers a spreadsheet that lists all 11,790 words that the current version of the GI (j1.0) tags as well as the developers' publications (Stone et al. 1966; Kelly and Stone 1975; Stone 1997).

One methodological innovation of this article is that it supplements the use of word *categories* in traditional quantitative content analysis with an analysis of the pattern of occurrence of specific and representative *keywords* for further insight. It is revealing, or at least an interesting fact, for instance, that the word *democracy* appears just twice in the annual messages before 1901 (before the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, the reputed father of the rhetorical presidency[11]) and 189 times between 1901 and 2000. While it may be objected that a focus on keywords obscures the possibility that the same words can be used to convey a variety of meanings (Rodgers 1998), this supplementary method only assumes that lexical patterns tell us at least as much as the semantic permutations of words. Indeed, discerning the pattern of occurrence of keywords facilitates insight because keywords give a quick approximation of the lexical sense of any body of rhetoric (with regard to its degree of assur-

8. "He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information on the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such Measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient" (*Constitution of the United States of America*, Article II, Section 3).

9. There were 53 inaugurals between 1789 and 1997, and 211 annual messages between 1790 and 2000. See Appendixes A and B for a detailed list of the speeches used in this study.

10. Web address at http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/~inquirer/homecat.htm.

11. See Tulis (1987, 19).

ance, optimism, vitriol, etc.). I represent these keywords as percentages of the total number of words in each annual message, in figures interspersed within the text of this article.[12]

I also include, in section X, alongside the full description of the GI categories used, line charts illustrating each of the twenty-seven categorical trends explored in this article. These charts represent the percentage occurrence of each category of words across both genres of rhetoric, by president.

II. Summary of Results

Using Theodore Roosevelt's presidency (the 26th) as a convenient demarcating point between the nineteenth- and twentieth-century presidents, my data demonstrate that presidents in the pre- and post-Roosevelt (inclusive) periods are very significantly differentiated on twenty-three GI categories, with another four categories significantly differentiated on a pre- and post-Ford (inclusive) classification.[13] To the extent that these rhetorical categories validly represent some of the major rhetorical manifestations of the modern (post-Roosevelt) president, the claim of rhetorical disjuncture—qualified, as my data also show that significant change (a second, though a less obvious disjuncture) has occurred in the post-Ford era—stands on very firm ground. Although these trends do not follow rigid trajectories, the data powerfully support the general claim that a significant transformation of presidential rhetoric occurred in the early decades of the twentieth century.

In the following sections, I elaborate on these complex changes to show how modern presidents have become rhetorically very different from their forebears. The analysis attempted in this article is global and longitudinal, and this sets both the limits and value of my findings. There are subtler stories to be told from an analysis of micro-trends that can be observed in the charts in section X, but that is not the aim of this article. Here I am concerned with analyzing in broad strokes five major rhetorical trends that have emerged in presidential rhetoric in the past 211 years. These trends by no means constitute the whole story—that would take a lot more words than the 1.8 million from which my data set is derived—but they do tell five important stories that represent an initial stab into a rich and unexplored territory.

12. I have chosen to represent the keyword trends in the annual messages rather than the inaugurals (which, in any case, tell a similar story as the inaugurals) because as it will become obvious later, the existence of certain rhetorical patterns are particularly significant in the light of the fact that they occur even in the annual messages—a pre-eminently formal, deliberative genre. Conveniently, the annual messages also allow me to generate an annually (as opposed to a quadrennially) intervalled time series across 210 years of annual messages.

13. Using the Student's t-test (two-tailed): *Causal* ($t = -1.969, p = .061$)*, *Know* ($t = -2.231, p = .035$), *Legal* ($t = -3.934, p = .001$), *PowAuth* ($t = -5.570, p = .000$), *Intrj* ($t = 3.423, p = .003$), *Affil* ($t = 4.941, p = .000$), *AffGain* ($t = 3.532, p = .002$), *WlbTot* ($t = 5.372, p = .000$), *WlbPt* ($t = 3.303, p = .004$), *Kin@* ($t = 1.980, p = .062$)*, *NonAdlt* ($t = 3.014, p = .008$), *Our* ($t = 6.982, p = .000$), *Self* ($t = 1.252, p = .220$)*, *You* ($t = 1.043, p = .306$)*, *Say* ($t = 3.289, p = .004$), *Dav* ($t = 4.357, p = .000$), *Abs* ($t = 6.881, p = .000$), *TimeSpc* ($t = 2.670, p = .012$), *NatrPro* ($t = 5.167, p = .000$), *PowGain* ($t = 5.451, p = .000$), *PowDoct* ($t = 4.064, p = .001$), *Submit* ($t = -9.240, p = .000$), *Passive* ($t = -7.568, p = .000$), *Active* ($t = 9.896, p = .000$), *Strong* ($t = 4.023, p = .000$), *Begin* ($t = 3.601, p = .002$), *If* ($t = -4.352, p = .000$). Four categories (*) were found to be more significantly differentiated on a pre- and post-Ford classification: *Causal* ($t = -8.141, p = .000$), *Kin@* ($t = 2.934, p = .042$), *Self* ($t = 3.020, p = .029$), and *You* ($t = 3.164, p = .029$). For referential convenience, I will use the "rhetorical president" and the "modern president" interchangeably to refer to the post-Roosevelt presidents, leaving the "contemporary president" to refer to the post-Ford presidents.

III. Anti-intellectual Rhetoric

The past century has charted the intensified de-intellectualization of American presidential rhetoric, which in its modern mode has exhibited an increased tendency to avoid references to cognitive and evaluative processes and states as well as to substitute formal word choices for more colloquial turns of phrase.[14]

Presidents may not be thinking less, but two significant patterns that emerge from the GI analysis suggest that it has become rare practice to think aloud and in public. References to various cognitive processes and states *(Know)*–awareness or unawareness, similarity or difference, generality or specificity, and presence or absence–have declined sharply since Herbert Hoover (31).[15] Similarly, references to causal processes and inferences *(Causal),* which reached a peak with Theodore Roosevelt (26), have also generally declined in the past century. See, for instance, how the usage of the keyword *effect* (proxying for the analysis thereof) has fallen dramatically over the past two centuries in Figure 1.[16] If Cohen (1995, 87) has showed that presidents do not have to resort to substantive arguments to sway public opinion, my data suggest that presidents of the twentieth century have not tried very hard. Indeed, because the analysis here is not only directed at the inaugurals but at the annual messages–which belong to an archetypically deliberative genre where substantive argumentation is expected–it is likely that the degree of change in presidential rhetoric writ large has been even greater than the data here suggest.

Predictably, presidential rhetoric has also become more informal. References to legal and judicial terms *(Legal)* have taken a sharp fall since around William Howard Taft (27), as have references to the tools and forms of formal power *(PowAuth)*. And casual and slang references *(Intrj)* have increased significantly since Harry Truman (33), suggesting a perception that the pay-offs to anti-intellectualism have increased even further in recent decades. We can reliably infer that recent developments in the postwar period (such as television and the increased usage of direct primaries) have fostered a heightened reverence of the opinion, judgment, and rhetoric of the common man.

Thus, whereas William Henry Harrison likened liberty to "the sovereign balm for every injury which our institutions may receive" in his inaugural address, George Bush simply likened it to a kite: "Freedom is like a beautiful kite that can go higher and higher with the breeze," he proclaimed.[17] Clearly, late-twentieth-century presidents have responded to the Aristotelian dictum that "the duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate

14. The trend is not new, but it has intensified. Among several commentators who have noted American anti-intellectualism, James Bryce (1928, 79) argued that "the American voter . . . does not value originality or profundity," and Frederick Turner (1932, 212) noted that he has "little patience with finely drawn distinctions."

15. To aid the cross-reference to the charts in section X, I will parenthetically note the numerical designation of each president I refer to.

16. See Appendix B for a list of the annual messages and their corresponding numerical designations.

17. To say that presidential rhetoric has become more anti-intellectual is also to say that it has succumbed to the aggressive egalitarianism of American life. This rhetorical egalitarianism will become even more evident when we come to sections VI and VII.

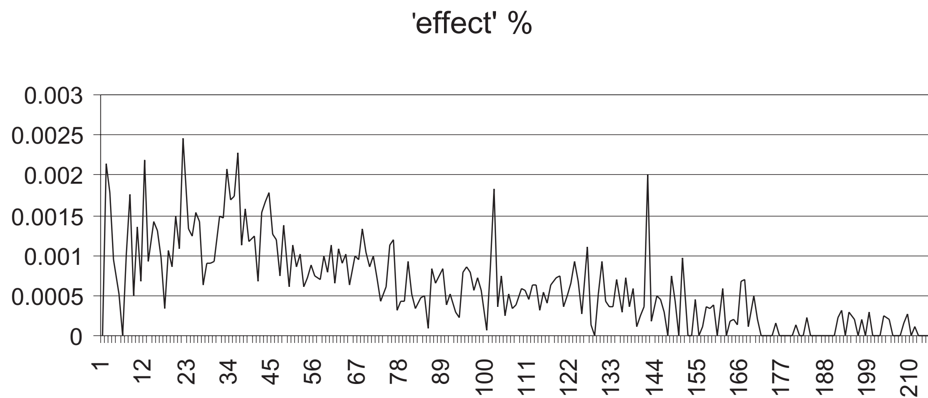


FIGURE 1. Occurrence of *Effect* by Annual Message.

upon . . . in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long chain of reasoning."[18]

IV. Abstract Rhetoric

The anti-intellectualism in modern presidential rhetoric is curiously accompanied by a certain penchant for abstraction: an expansive rhetoric that makes religious, poetic, and idealistic references.[19]

Certainly, abstract rhetoric has always figured in American presidential discourse: the Declaration of Independence, for instance, promulgated the inalienable rights of "life, liberty," and, not as Locke would have had it, mere property, but the altogether loftier purpose of "the pursuit of happiness." As rhetoricians through the ages have realized, abstract rhetoric has great political value. Its focus on elemental ideas and concepts easily engenders feel-

18. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, bk. I, chap. 2, 1357b. Just one section before (1356a), Aristotle identified three artistic "proofs" of rhetoric : (1) the speaker's power of evincing a personal character that will make his speech credible (ethos), (2) his power of stirring the emotions of his hearers (pathos), and (3) his power of proving a truth (or an apparent truth) by means of analytical arguments (logos). The results here suggest that logos has fallen on hard times.

19. The combination is curious because rhetorical abstraction (the making of religious, poetic, and idealistic references) invites theorizing and explanation: practices that characterize intellectual rhetoric. Yet rhetorical abstraction is seldom a prelude to substantive argument in modern presidential rhetoric, and the effect is pontification without explanation. The awkward coexistence of rhetorical abstraction and anti-intellectualism has understandably led some scholars to highlight the embarrassing vacuousness of modern presidential rhetoric. It might be useful to quote Schlesinger (1965), who was already mentioned earlier, at greater length here. He had this to say about the inaugurals: "the inaugural address is an inferior art form. It is rarely an occasion for original thought or stimulating reflection. The platitude quotient tends to be high, the rhetoric stately and self-serving, the ritual obsessive, and the surprises few" (pp. vi-vii).

ings of approbation, facilitating what contemporary scholars have called a "spacious" (Weaver 1965) discourse or a "rhetoric of assent" (Booth 1974).[20]

However, if, as Theodore Roosevelt noted in his inaugural, "modern life is both complex and intense," my data suggest that the challenges of modernity have motivated twentieth- (and twenty-first-) century presidents to reach even more energetically for the abstract. This pattern of increasing rhetorical abstraction can be observed in many ways. References to religious words, which followed a downward trend for most of the nineteenth century, have increased in the twentieth. For example, the invocation of *God* has become very popular in the twentieth century, and particularly during the Reagan years, as shown in Figure 2. And as modern presidential rhetoric has exhibited greater religiosity, it has also become more poetic, with references to expansive rhetorical categories such as time and space *(TimeSpc)* and nature and its processes *(NatrPro)* increasing gradually over the past century and thereby contributing to the "spaciousness" that is the hallmark of rhetorical abstraction.

The trend toward greater abstraction is most obvious when we observe that references to a large GI category of idealistic words and lofty concepts *(Abs)* have increased dramatically since Herbert Hoover (31). See, for instance, in Figure 3, how the keyword *ideal* tentatively emerges in the 106th annual message and has recurred in almost every annual message since Theodore Roosevelt (since the 113th annual message).

The rhetorical fortunes of another keyword are worth mentioning, not least because it is a word that one would not normally expect to hear in as serious or as deliberative a genre as the annual message. The word *dream* appears barely fourteen times in the 220 speeches before 1964; and it has appeared one hundred times in the 44 speeches since.[21] That the pattern of verbal abstraction has infected even the annual messages—a genre that has hitherto been more concerned with the duller matters of day-to-day governance than in the ceremonial rhetoric that is understandably expected in the inaugurals—reveals a significant transformation in presidential rhetoric.

V. Assertive Rhetoric

A significant change in modern presidential rhetoric is that it has, since the nineteenth century, become much more assertive: it has become activist, "realist," and confident. Compare the following extracts from the first annual messages of Andrew Johnson and Lyndon Johnson, both of whom inherited a situation that demanded great governmental responsibility and activism:

20. For an example of a rhetoric of perfect assent that has become commonplace in contemporary presidential rhetoric, consider George W. Bush's words in his inaugural: "America has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests and teach us what it means to be citizens." These words may not seem very full of content, but they do make their speaker utterly unassailable.

21. The choice of 1964 as a cutoff date is not accidental either. While the intensification of rhetorical abstraction in the annual messages begun in the early part of the twentieth century (partly as a result of Woodrow Wilson's decision to deliver the message in person and effecting the subsequent ceremonialization of a hitherto purely deliberative genre), the word counts clearly show that the "American dream," a verbal icon of contemporary presidential rhetoric, emerged in the 1960s and was very probably popularized by Martin Luther King's canonization of the word in 1963.

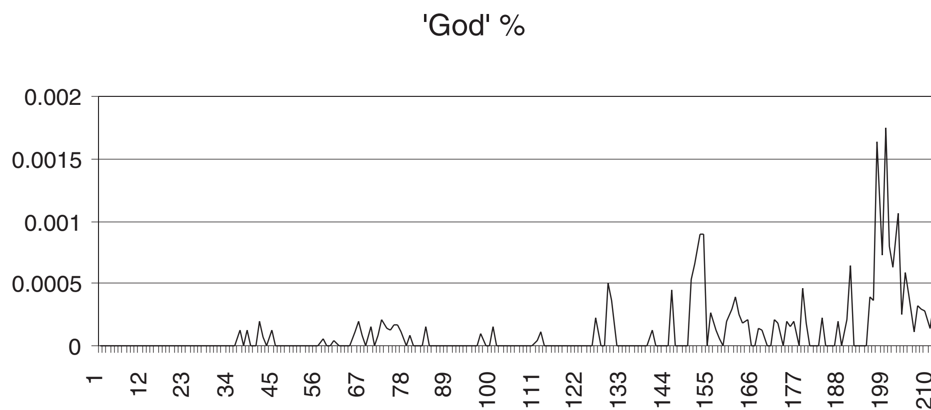


FIGURE 2. Occurrence of *God* by Annual Message.

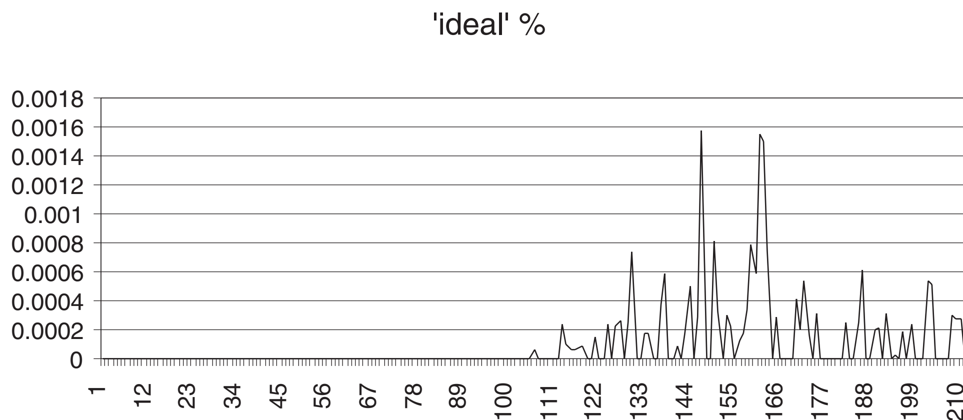


FIGURE 3. Occurrence of *Ideal* by Annual Message.

> To fulfill my trust I need the support and confidence of all who are associated with me in the various departments of Government and the support and confidence of the people. There is but one way in which I can hope to gain their necessary aid. It is to state with frankness the principles which guide my conduct, and their application to the present state of affairs, well aware that the efficiency of my labors will in a great measure depend on your and their undivided approbation.

> Let us work together to make this year's session the best in the Nation's history. Let this session of Congress be known as the session which did more for civil rights than the last hundred sessions combined; as the session which . . . ; as the session which . . . ; as the session which . . . ; as the session which . . . ; as the session which . . . ; and as the session which helped to build more homes, more schools, more libraries, and more hospitals than any single session of Congress in the history of our Republic. All this and more can and must be done.

The data bear out what we observe with traditional content analysis. There has been a dramatic rise in the occurrence of words implying an active orientation *(Active)* and (though the increase seems to have abated more recently) references to strength *(Strong)* since around William McKinley (25). Conversely, there has been an almost symmetric decline in words indicating a passive orientation *(Passive)* and in words connoting submission to authority or power *(Submit)* since the late nineteenth century. Unsurprisingly, presidential rhetoric has also become more preoccupied with the realist language of power, with references to increased power and influence *(PowGain)* climbing steadily since George Washington (1) and appeals to recognized power relations and practices *(PowDoct)* increasing markedly from around Franklin Roosevelt (32).[22]

The data also show that presidential rhetoric has become more confident, easily exemplified by the familiar can-doism succinctly expressed in Clinton's first inaugural: "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured with what is right with America." References to commencement and renewal *(Begin)* have steadily climbed from about Woodrow Wilson (28) onward, as have the usage of relevant keywords reflecting governmental energy such as *competition, goal*, and *reform*. Figure 4 shows the increased usage of the word *reform*, especially in the past three decades, in the annual messages. Conversely, there has been a decline in the occurrence of words denoting feelings of uncertainty and vagueness *(If)*. While keywords such as *begin, hope*, and *ideal* now occur more frequently, references to *providence* and *fate* have become conspicuously absent in recent rhetoric. Figure 5 shows how the two words have all but disappeared in twentieth-century presidential rhetoric.

There is, to be sure, a dark side to this story of increasing rhetorical assertiveness. While these rhetorical patterns have no doubt arisen because of the economic and technological progress of the nation and the emergence of the United States as a global power (the first subheading of Lyndon Johnson's second State of the Union was titled the "State of the World"), they have also emerged because of the institutional strengthening of the presidency vis-à-vis the other branches of government. More seriously, the increased confidence of presidential rhetoric reveals an increasing lack of humility in its rhetors, a point I elaborate on in the next section. In their first inaugurals, Martin Van Buren disclosed his fear of his "inability adequately to discharge the duties of an office so difficult," James Polk revealed "the apprehensions of one so much younger and less endowed," and Franklin Pierce lamented that he was "born to a position so suitable for others rather than for myself." But Franklin Roosevelt declared triumphantly that "with this pledge taken, I assume unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people"; instead of offering a genuine and direct statement of appreciation to his voters, Ronald Reagan chose to "thank you and your people for all your help in maintaining the continuity which is the bulwark of our Republic"; and Clinton declared rather disingenuously that "you have raised your voices in an unmistakable chorus. You have cast your votes in historic numbers."

22. Some scholars have argued that states struggling for survival in the international milieu tend to be driven by realist concerns; conversely, those enjoying relative strength and security are more likely to speak the postrealist, Grotian language of international society. My data present initial evidence against this argument. The chief foreign policy spokesmen of the United States have become more, not less rhetorically occupied with realist concerns even as the country has become militarily more superior.

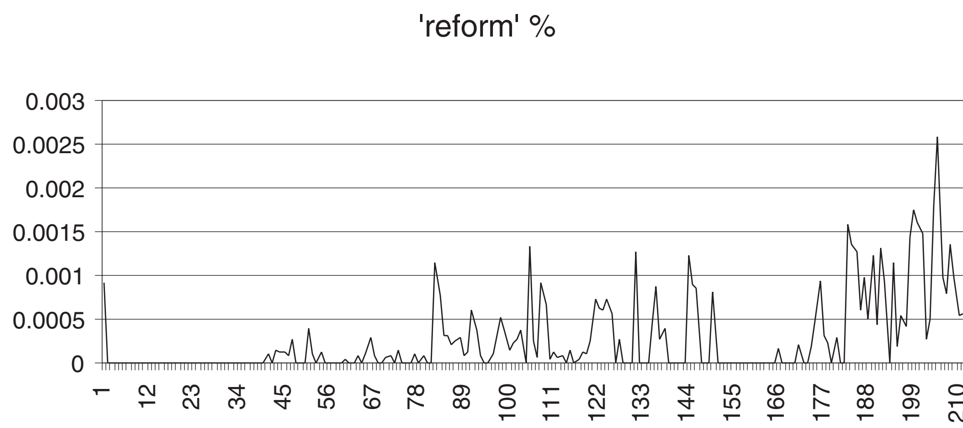


FIGURE 4. Occurrence of *Reform* by Annual Message.

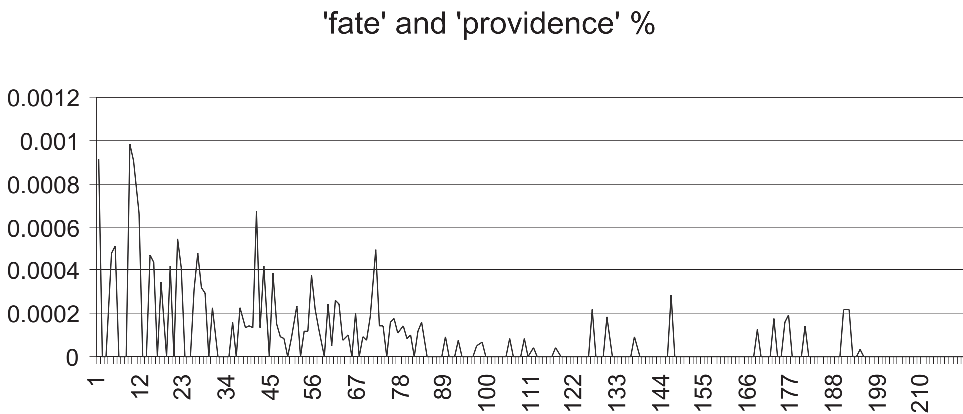


FIGURE 5. Occurrence of *Fate* and *Providence* by Annual Message.

VI. Democratic Rhetoric

As Ellis (1998, 13-14) notes, "the story of the rhetorical presidency is also the story of the democratization of the presidency." My data provide quantitative evidence for this claim. Presidential rhetoric has also moved away from the sometime model of republican rhetoric toward a certain democratic chattiness: a rhetoric that honors the people (and their visionary leader), is compassionate, inclusive, and egalitarian.

Presidential rhetoric has become more people-oriented in the past century and especially in the past three decades. The subtle change in salutations is illuminating. Whereas

Theodore Roosevelt addressed his annual message "To the Senate and House of Representatives," and even Woodrow Wilson (who reintroduced the tradition of personally delivering the annual message before Congress) addressed his annual message to the "Gentlemen of the Congress," Ronald Reagan appended the telling "and fellow citizens" to his introductory salutations, and Bill Clinton added "my fellow Americans." Indeed, so anxious was Franklin Roosevelt that the American people hear his eleventh annual message that he repeated it again in an evening radio address, saying, "I am very anxious that the American people be given the opportunity to hear what I have recommended to Congress for this fateful year in our history. . . . This is what I said."[23]

The increasing people-orientation in presidential rhetoric can be observed in other ways as well. Words denoting kinship *(Kin@)* have become more popular since Franklin Roosevelt (32) and extremely popular since Jimmy Carter (39), from whom references to infants and adolescents *(NonAdlt)* have also increased exponentially.[24] These patterns suggest that contemporary presidents have discovered the endearing effect that familial references have on their auditors. Whereas George Washington's only reference to children was a matter-of-fact denouncement of "the frequent destruction of innocent women and children" in his seventh State of the Union address, Presidents Carter, Reagan, Bush, and Clinton made 260 of the 508 references to children in the entire speech database, invoking the government's responsibility to and concern for children in practically every public policy area. Clinton for instance, was not content with naming children as the deserved beneficiaries of his education, health, and law-enforcement programs, he also had to make a (substantially, though not rhetorically) gratuitous reference to children in his second annual message when he declared that "this is the first State of the Union address ever delivered since the beginning of the Cold War when not a single Russian missile is pointed at the children of America."

As modern presidents have rhetorically represented themselves increasingly as protectors and defenders of the people, their rhetoric has also tended to aggrandize their status within the governmental system. I tested the claim that modern presidents have become less (verbally) concerned with the other branches of government—a concern that is the hallmark of idealized republican government. The data support this hypothesis. References to *legislature, House* (of Representatives), *Senate*, and the (Supreme) *court* in the annual messages have decreased noticeably over time.[25] Figure 6 shows the pattern of occurrence of *legislature* in the annual messages. As Tulis (1987, 143) has previously observed, my data, represented in Figure 7, also confirm that references to (and hence concern for) the *constitution* and *constitutional* in the annual messages have declined. By contrast, references to the *president*, the first-personal self *(Self)*, and the inclusive self *(Our)* have increased significantly since Woodrow Wilson (28), who once said that the president's "is the only national voice in our

23. Radio address to the nation on January 11, 1944.

24. Hart (2000, 49) suggests that "human interest language" in campaign rhetoric has remained relatively stable from 1952 to 1996. The longer time series of my data set allows me to show that the preoccupation with human interest language in presidential rhetoric is a twentieth-century phenomenon and a distinctly post-Ford phenomenon.

25. The General Inquirer discriminates between five major senses of the word *house*, and the *House of Representatives* is identified with *house#2*. It discriminates between three major senses of the word *court*, and the *Supreme Court* is identified with *court#1*.

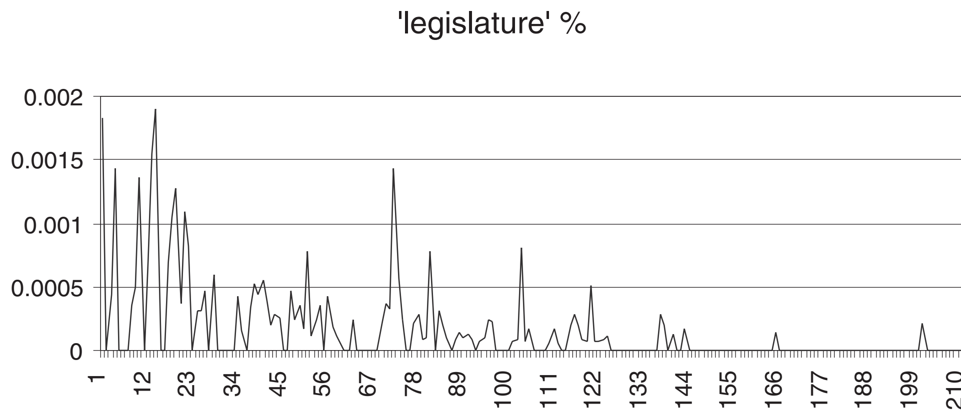


FIGURE 6. Occurrence of *Legislature* by Annual Message.

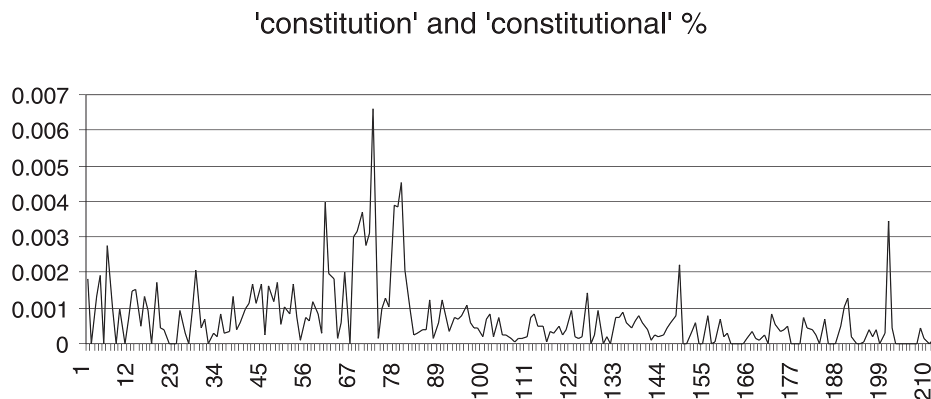


FIGURE 7. Occurrence of *Constitution* and *Constitutional* by Annual Message.

affairs" (Link 1974, vol. 18, 114). The data lend credence to Barbara Hinckley's (1990, 15) claim that the modern president tends to depict himself as a sole spokesman for the nation and to underplay the fact that the American system of government is a system of separated power.

Other keywords of typical republican rhetoric have become unpopular, with references to the once honored words like *republic, citizen, character, duty*, and *virtuous* falling significantly. The word *virtuous*, for instance, appeared 30 times in both genres before 1913, but has since disappeared altogether. In contrast, references to *leader, people* (see Figure 8), and *democracy* have increased dramatically over time. The emergence of *democracy* into the presidential rhetorical lexicon starkly represents the transformation that has occurred, with the word appearing 189 times in the annual messages from 1901 to 2000 but only appearing

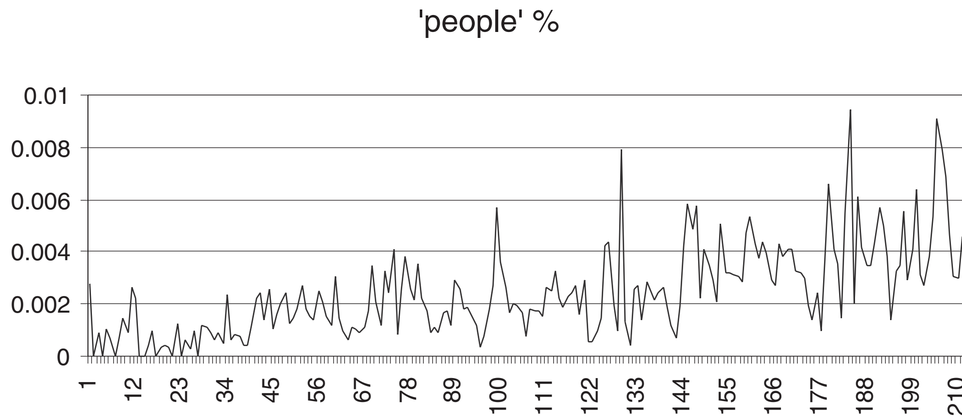


FIGURE 8. Occurrence of *People* by Annual Message.

twice in all the annual messages before. (The numbers for the inaugurals occurring within the same period are 52 and 5, respectively.) Franklin Roosevelt was blatantly wrong when he claimed in his third inaugural that "democratic aspiration is no mere recent phrase in human history."

Presidential rhetoric has become more compassionate and emotive ("kinder and gentler") since the Civil War and especially in the past three decades, suggesting an increased use of emotional appeals, or pathos, and a transformation of the president-public relationship from one of authority to comradeship. The data reveal that the number of words indicating affiliation or supportiveness *(Affil)* used in both genres has increased relentlessly since Abraham Lincoln (16). Words referring to reaping affect *(AffGain)* have increased gradually since the late nineteenth century and have increased dramatically from Gerald Ford (38) onwards. Words that evoke a general concern for well-being *(WlbTot)* also show a gradual increase, with a marked uptake specifically for the words evoking a concern for the well-being of persons or participants *(WlbPt)* from Jimmy Carter (39) onward.

Presidential rhetoric has also become more inclusive, with references to the inclusive self *(Our)*, as mentioned earlier, increasing exponentially from Woodrow Wilson (28) onward. In fact, contemporary presidential rhetoric contains fives times as many references to the inclusive self than the rhetoric of the patrician presidents. However, one important unit of collective self-reference that has changed is worth noting. As illustrated in Figures 9 and 10, whereas pre-twentieth-century presidents preferred the use of the *United States*[26] in their annual messages, twentieth-century presidents after Woodrow Wilson and especially those after Richard Nixon (from the 183rd annual message) have preferred the use of *America*, suggesting, among other things, the changing dynamics of American pluralism such that presidents have found an increasing need to verbally express a point of commonality

26. The General Inquirer discriminates between five major senses of the word *unite*; the *United States* is identified with *Unite#2*.

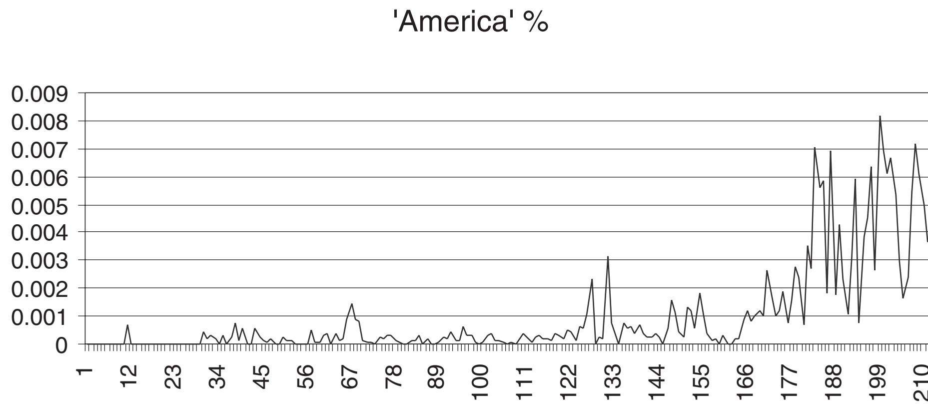


FIGURE 9. Occurrence of *America* by Annual Message.

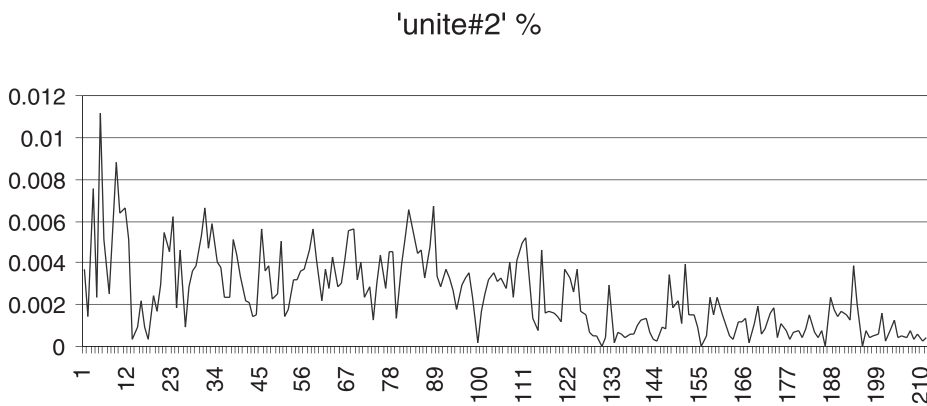


FIGURE 10. Occurrence of *Unite#2* by Annual Message.

between other units–parties, races, communities, and individuals–rather than, as before, between states.[27]

One clearly positive result my data reveal is that even as rhetoric has become more people-oriented, compassionate, and inclusive, it has also been shaped into a more egalitarian, redistributive cast beginning in the post–Civil War period and especially in the

27. Contra Fields (1996, 5), I find no evidence that in the pre–Civil War period, presidents referred to the country in the plural ("the United States are"). Rather, I find that the use of "the United States" and "America" offers a better rhetorical discrimination of the two periods. My data do, however, support his adjacent claim that presidents have been faced with the task of "building affection . . . for one another and the Union itself" (p. 228).

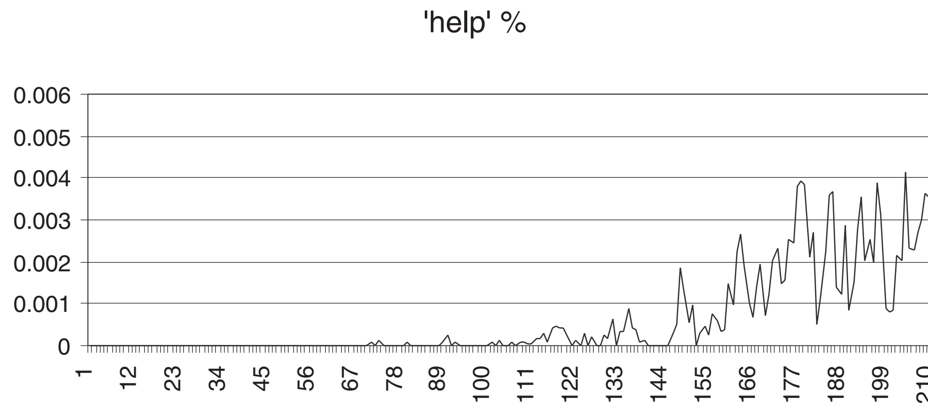


FIGURE 11. Occurrence of *Help* by Annual Message.

post–New Deal period. The word *poverty*, for instance, appeared only 17 times between 1789 and 1932, and it has appeared 95 times since 1933 in the two genres. The word *help* does not appear in the annual message until 1859 (see Figure 11), and does not appear in the inaugural until 1889. It appears 110 times in the two genres between 1859 and 1932, and 784 times after. While it cannot be said that the country has become more egalitarian, one can claim with some evidence that a concern for the less fortunate has come into the rhetorical agenda of the presidents in a way that it had never been in the pre–Civil War period. (One thinks of Lincoln's words in his second inaugural, "With malice toward none; with charity for all.") Rhetorical concern does not imply actual concern, much less policy actualization; but paying lip service to certain ideals (and words) is an important first step to honoring them.

VII. Conversational Rhetoric

ANTONY. Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?
ALL. Come down.
SECOND CITIZEN. Descend. [*He comes down from the pulpit.*]
THIRD CITIZEN. You shall have leave.

–Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Presidential rhetoric has become more conversational: it has become more intimate, it has focused increasingly on the trustworthiness of the rhetor, and it has become more anecdotal.

Several scholars have pointed to the increasing self-referentiality of presidential rhetoric.[28] My data confirm their findings, but not the explanations offered. While, as previously

28. See, for instance, Hart (2000). However, as far as I can tell, none have acknowledged that today's presidents are no more self-referential than the patrician presidents.

shown, it is true that presidents since Woodrow Wilson have used more singular pronouns directed at the self *(Self)*, what has not been acknowledged is that the number of singular pronouns directed to the other *(You)* has also increased since John Kennedy (35). When the number of *you*s matches the increased number of *I*s, we have evidence not so much of an increasing distance between the president and his audience (Sigelman 1996, 86) or presidential self-absorption (Hart 2000, 70) but, rather, an intimacy between the president and his audience and a certain chattiness. "Before we leave this city," Reagan entreated in his fifth State of the Union message, "let's you and I work together to fix it." While it can be said that the language of you-and-I can emphasize the distance between the rhetor and his interlocutor, it is more likely that it helps to cultivate a sense of affiliation between the two. (See also *AffGain* and *WlbPt*, two relevant trends mentioned in the previous section.)

As rhetoric becomes more self-referential, it becomes incumbent on and rewarding for the rhetor to find ways to increase his audience's perception of his trustworthiness. Correspondingly, the data reveal a novel (re)turn in the twentieth century to appeals from the character of the speaker, or ethos, the second of the three artistic rhetorical proofs that Aristotle recommended and George Washington employed with aplomb. The use of ethos is readily identified in the rhetor's efforts to prove his trustworthiness, very much like the way in which Jesus preceded many of his parables with "I tell you the truth" and "Verily I say unto you." Figure 12 shows the rhetorical concern for the "truth" in the annual messages. What emerges from the picture is that presidents since Franklin Roosevelt (from the 145th annual message) have been significantly more preoccupied with the "truth" than presidents in the nineteenth century, and that the usage patterns of *truth* in the contemporary period has not been dissimilar to the patterns observed in the messages of the patrician presidents. I do not suggest that presidents have sought or promulgated the ontological truth, only that presidents have rediscovered the value of appearing to do so. By affirming the veracity of their words, presidents have sought to bolster perceptions of their trustworthiness and their chances of rhetorical success.

Finally, my data reveal that presidential rhetoric has become more anecdotal in recent decades. As Nixon was reputed to have instructed his speechwriters, "Never give me a naked quote. Put it in a little story."[29] Clinton's seventh State of the Union message reflected this advise, as he made specific references to nine political figures and shared the story of five American citizens: Carlos Rosas, a beneficiary of child support collections; Daniel Mauser, a victim of the Columbine shootings, and his father, Tom; Captain John Cherrey, who participated in the Kosovo operation; and baseball star Hank Aaron. Several indicators reveal this movement toward anecdotalism, with number of words for *say* and *tell (Say)*–the kind of words a storyteller regularly employs–and descriptive verbs of an action *(Dav)* increasing exponentially from Jimmy Carter (39). The increased use of anecdotes represents an important change in presidential rhetoric: whereas Lincoln frequently appropriated the wisdom of the bible (from his second inaugural, "Let us judge not, that we be not judged"), modern-day presidents have preferred to pay reverence instead to the wisdom and experiences of the American people.

29. Quoted in Safire (1997, 23).

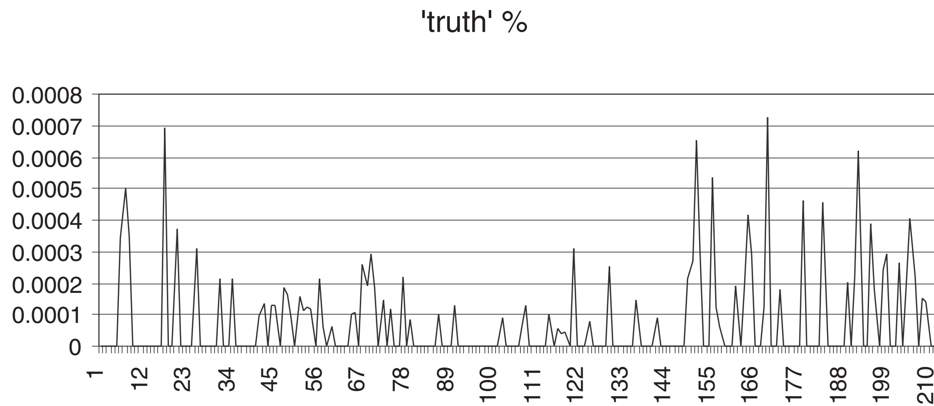


FIGURE 12. Occurrence of *Truth* by Annual Message.

The trends reported here and in section VI cumulatively suggest that the rhetorical strategy of modern presidents no longer reflects the harsh and uncompromising tactics conjured by the image of the "bully pulpit," an increasingly outdated phrase first coined by Theodore Roosevelt but still widely used in the literature (Tulis 1987, 108; Gelderman 1997; Genovese 2001, 109; Andrade 2001, 18). The nature of presidential rhetoric has come a long way since the time of George Washington, but it has also endured significant transformations since the time of Theodore Roosevelt. The contemporary president has decidedly descended from the pulpit; today, his rhetoric bears less resemblance to the abrasive chidings of a pontificating preacher than an amiable conversation conducted among equals.

VIII. Defining the Rhetoric of the Rhetorical President

The results here demonstrate a clear distinction between pre- and post-twentieth-century presidential rhetoric in five dimensions that would qualifiedly support the thesis of institutional transformation posited in the rhetorical presidency literature. The qualification is important: in two aspects, in the increasingly democratic and conversational style of presidential rhetoric discussed in sections VI and VII (the first in degree and the second more in kind), there has been significant change even from the time of Theodore Roosevelt. Presidential rhetoric in the past thirty years has become dramatically more people-oriented and compassionate, more intimate, more focused on the trustworthiness of the rhetor, and more anecdotal. These are developments that proponents of the dual rhetorical paradigm school will need to acknowledge and incorporate in their analyses.

The uneven historical origins and trajectories of the five trends and several patterns within them do not invalidate the larger story they tell, but they do invite us to be clearer than we have been when we talk about the rhetorical president.

Indeed, what is the rhetorical president? It is a significant scholarly omission that up till now, he has been defined by only his actions—as the president that routinely takes his case to the public—and not also by his words. While the rhetorical president can and must be defined by more than the patterns of his rhetoric, this fundamental clarification of who he is and what are the tools of his trade have not been offered. This article concludes that he can be identified by five hallmarks of his oratorical method. The rhetoric of the rhetorical president is

- *anti-intellectual:* it makes few references to cognitive and evaluative processes and states and eschews formal word choices for more colloquial ones;
- *abstract*: it relies significantly on religious, poetic, and idealistic references;
- *assertive:* it is activist, it adopts a "realist" preoccupation with the language of power and is very confident;
- *democratic:* it is enthusiastically people-oriented, compassionate, inclusive, and egalitarian; and
- *conversational:* it uses a language that engenders an intimacy between the rhetor and his audience, focuses on the trustworthiness of the rhetor, and is highly anecdotal.

Certainly, isolated counterexamples from before the twentieth century to aspects of this definition exist. So indeed, Andrew Jackson regularly employed the "plowman's" rhetoric to deride the "professor" (John Quincy Adams was in fact the first Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard); Abraham Lincoln appropriated the abstract verses of the Bible; Andrew Johnson faced impeachment charges partly because of his rhetorical assertiveness (as the Tenth Article of Impeachment charged that he did "make and deliver with a loud voice" certain "inflammatory" remarks against Congress); even Jefferson regularly invoked the democratic "will of the people" (for instance, in his sixth annual message) to justify the expansion of federal and presidential prerogative; and James Polk ("Young Hickory") frequently delivered folksy and conversational rhetoric. But the exceptions prove the rule. None of these presidents were as uniformly and as intensely anti-intellectual, abstract, assertive, democratic, and conversational as most of the twentieth-century presidents.

IX. Coda

The trends identified in this article have implications not only on the claims of institutional transformation made in the rhetorical presidency literature but also on the larger questions of presidential leadership of which this debate is a part. Let me now shift gears to suggest two areas, the first theoretical, and the second normative, where further thinking is required.

The first and obvious theoretical question that the data pose is whether the observation of rhetorical change in modern presidents is evidence of a wider institutional transformation. The answer to this question must be in the affirmative. My critics can quarrel with me only on the point of degree, arguing that rhetoric is ephemeral and epiphenomenal and hence that the transformation that is undeniable at the rhetorical dimension cannot be reli-

ably extrapolated to the institution as a whole. In other words, they will suggest that only the words have changed and nothing else. This radical underestimation of the facts is intellectually myopic. If historians turn to speeches and rhetoric as primary sources with which they reconstruct the past; if politicians are held accountable, assessed, and remembered for what they say (as the engraved walls of the presidential monuments in Washington amply reveal); and if the president of the United States is first and foremost a *public* figure who monopolizes the public space (Miroff 1982; Edwards 1983), then rhetoric is more than epiphenomena.

The legitimate intellectual question turns instead on the perennial question of the *extent* to which surface manifestations reflect reality. If we accept the minimalist claim that changes in rhetoric style do matter, then we need to offer explanations for why rhetorical imperatives have changed. The general direction of further research is simple enough: an understanding of context is necessary in order that we might be able to specify the complex imperatives that have shaped the presidents' rhetorical posture (Bryant 1974, 207; Windt 1986, 106; Medhurst 1996, 198; Hargrove 1998, 43; Medhurst 2000, 13); less simple is the task of explaining presidential responses to these imperatives. For it should not be difficult to see that the rhetoric of the rhetorical president is a curious thing beyond the reach of easy explanations, reflecting the paradoxical demands on modern presidential leadership: it is anti-intellectual yet highly abstract; and it is democratic and conversational while also very assertive. The patterns are unmistakably there; now we need an explanatory theory to supplement that which has only been cursorily and indirectly supplied by Tulis (1987) and others.

Finally, if this article has been concerned thus far with the *empirical* claims of the rhetorical disjuncture/continuity debate, I return now, briefly, to the *normative* claims with which this article was introduced. For Tulis (1987) and others argue not only that change has occurred but, as the remarks by Miller (2001) and others at the beginning of the article register, there is an endemic sentiment that this change (in its five identified modes) is lamentable. It is important to see that the empirical and the normative claims are entirely distinct. Although facts are important for the definition and clarification of normative claims (a crucial premise that has fueled the research of this article), facts by themselves do not establish a normative claim: there is no obvious reason why anti-intellectual rhetoric, for instance, is morally regrettable.

Suspending my own judgment for now, I offer some cautionary remarks to those who would decry the state of contemporary presidential rhetoric.

1. If anti-intellectual rhetoric is linguistically inferior and susceptible to gross oversimplification, then it must be equally admitted that *logos* is no solution against rhetorical manipulation. Hitler's most persuasive and rousing anti-Semitic speeches, as it is well documented, were based unapologetically on biological "fact" (Kershaw 1999, 125).
2. If abstract language is hopelessly platitudinous and regarded as "hardly an occasion for original thought," it is not clear that concrete language will be more unequivocal and meaningful. "No language," James Madison wrote in the thirty-

seventh *Federalist Paper*, "is so copious as to supply words and phrases for every complex idea, or so correct as not to include many equivocally denoting different ideas."[30]

3. If presidential rhetoric has become cantankerous and arrogant, it is also because the responsibilities and expectations that now accompany the office that bears the imprint and shadow of Franklin Roosevelt have surged (Leuchtenburg 1993). If the modern president is forced to lead, he is also forced by custom and expectations to do so "with a loud voice."
4. If democratic rhetoric shows that the presidential rhetor has become more demagogic, my analysis shows that it has also made him more people-oriented, compassionate, inclusive, and egalitarian.
5. Contemporary presidential rhetoric may have become conversational and anecdotal, but it has brought the orator down from the pulpit to a closer intellectual and emotional rapport with his audience.

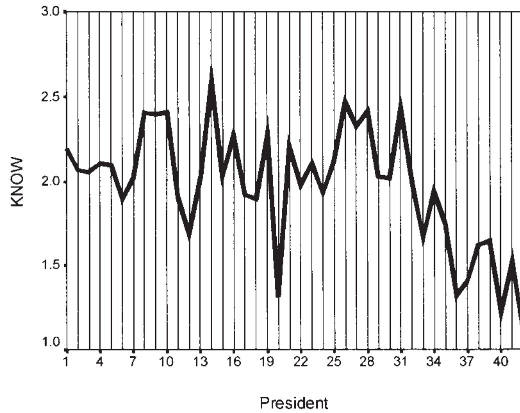
The normative debate here is important, and much remains to be said. But it is important to note that one principle sets inelastic limits to the value of our musings: the rhetor must needs speak the language of his audience. If American presidential rhetoric in the last century has become comprehensively more anti-intellectual, abstract, assertive, democratic, and conversational; and if, as Cicero once wrote, "the masses want it; custom permits it; humanity tolerates it";[31] it is unlikely that the normative arguments we scrupulously construct or examine will significantly alter the course of these rhetorical trends one way or the other. If this is true, then it is not that we should not obey Plato's injunction to expel the rhetors (together with the minstrels and poets), it is that we cannot. It is fitting, then, that my final reflection be posed in the form of a rhetorical question—perhaps what is politically inevitable is also morally permissible?

30. Hamilton, Madison, and Jay (1948, 180).
31. Cicero, *De officiis*, bk. 2, xiv.

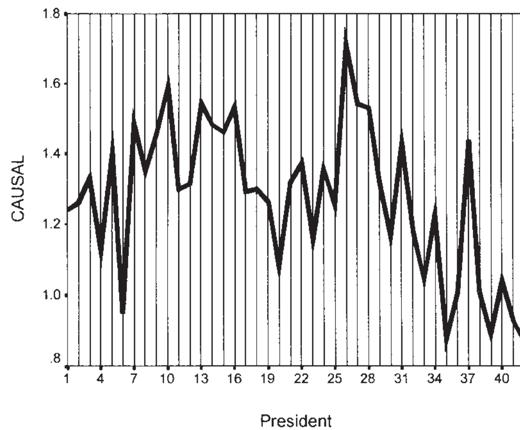
X. Charts Representing Percentage Occurrence of *General Inquirer* Categories by President

The charts appear in the same order of appearance as they do in the text of this article. To make for more concise labeling in the charts, each president is numbered 1 through 42 as follows:

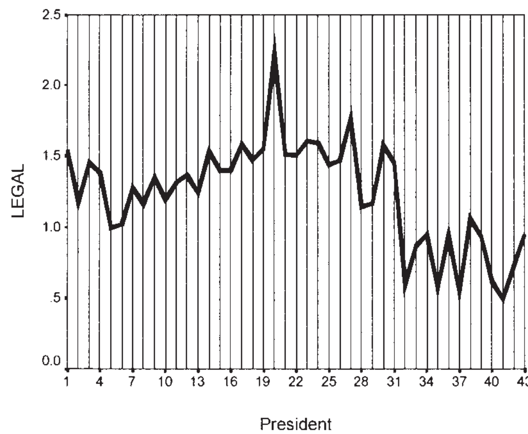
1. George Washington	1789-97
2. John Adams	1797-1801
3. Thomas Jefferson	1801-9
4. James Madison	1809-17
5. James Monroe	1817-25
6. John Quincy Adams	1825-29
7. Andrew Jackson	1829-37
8. Martin van Buren	1837-41
9. William Henry Harrison	1841
10. John Tyler	1841-45
11. James Polk	1845-49
12. Zachary Taylor	1849-50
13. Millard Fillmore	1850-53
14. Franklin Pierce	1853-57
15. James Buchanan	1857-61
16. Abraham Lincoln	1861-65
17. Andrew Johnson	1865-69
18. Ulysses S. Grant	1869-77
19. Rutherford Hayes	1877-81
20. James Garfield	1881
21. Chester Arthur	1881-85
22. Grover Cleveland	1885-89
23. Benjamin Harrison	1889-93
24. Grover Cleveland	1893-97
25. William McKinley	1897-1901
26. Theodore Roosevelt	1901-9
27. William Howard Taft	1909-13
28. Woodrow Wilson	1913-21
29. Warren Harding	1921-23
30. Calvin Coolidge	1923-29
31. Herbert Hoover	1929-33
32. Franklin Roosevelt	1933-45
33. Harry Truman	1945-53
34. Dwight Eisenhower	1953-61
35. John Kennedy	1961-63
36. Lyndon Johnson	1963-69
37. Richard Nixon	1969-74
38. Gerald Ford	1974-77
39. Jimmy Carter	1977-81
40. Ronald Reagan	1981-89
41. George Bush	1989-93
42. Bill Clinton	1994-2001



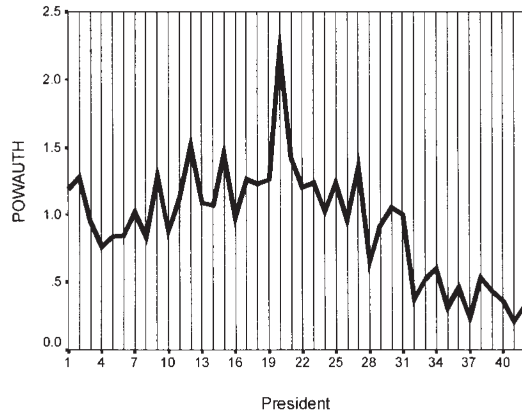
Know 348 words indicating awareness or unawareness, certainty or uncertainty, similarity or difference, generality or specificity, importance or unimportance, presence or absence, as well as components of mental classes, concepts or ideas. (Eg. 'analysis', 'calculation', 'definition', 'inference', 'subjective'.)



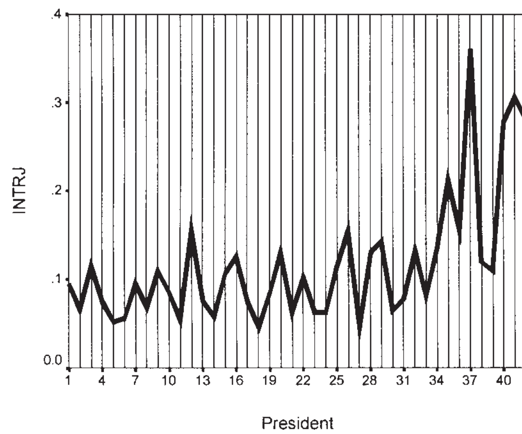
Causal 112 words denoting presumption that occurrence of one phenomenon is necessarily preceded, accompanied or followed by the occurrence of another. (Eg. 'consequence', 'depend', 'premise', 'result', unlikely'.)



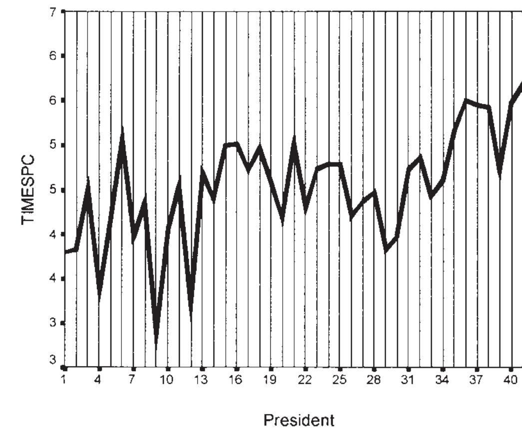
Legal 192 words relating to legal, judicial, or police matters. (Eg. 'authority', 'certify', 'evidence', 'legislation', 'official'.)



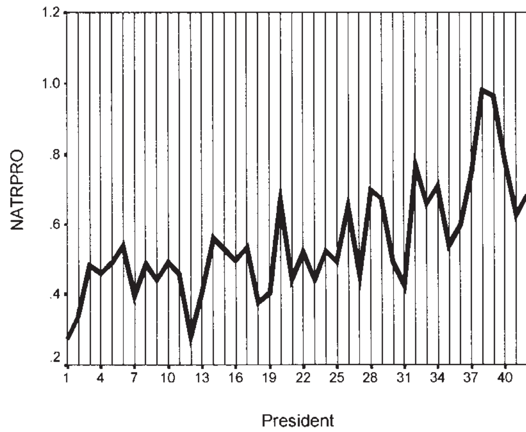
PowAuth 79 words concerned with tools or forms of invoking formal power. (Eg. 'administration', 'constitution', 'enact', 'govern', 'lawful'.)



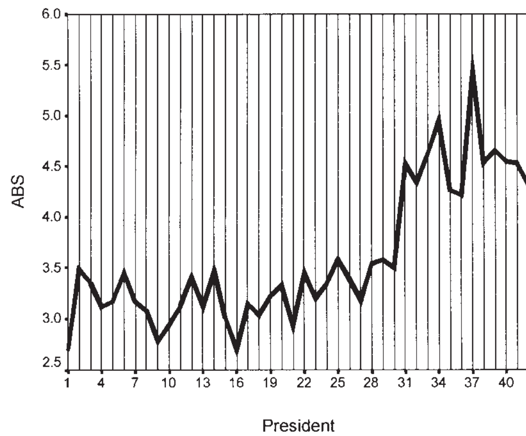
Intrj 42 words including exclamations as well as casual and slang references. (Eg. 'alright', 'darn'. 'goodbye', 'nope', 'nuts'.)



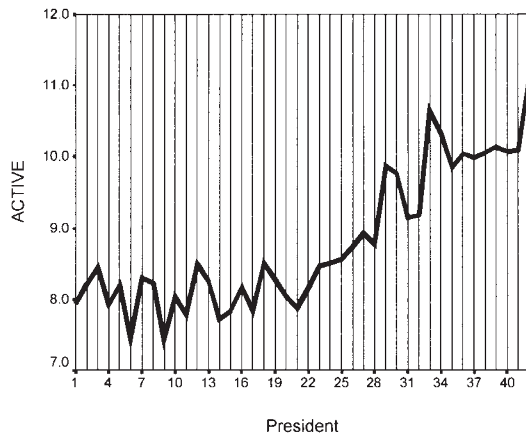
TimeSpc 428 words indicating general references to time and space. (Eg. 'ancient', 'cycle', 'eastern', 'evening', 'surround'.)



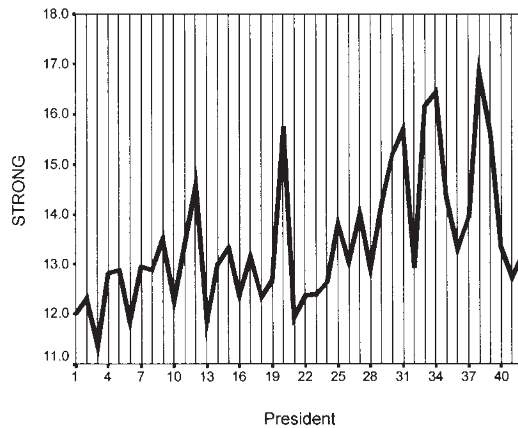
NatrPro 217 words for processes found in nature, from birth to death. (Eg. 'born', 'gravity', 'instinct', 'nature', 'snow'.)



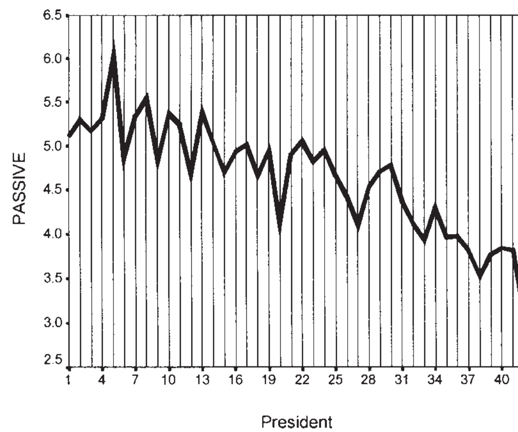
Abs 276 words reflecting tendency to use abstract vocabulary. (Eg. 'beauty', 'democracy', destiny', 'faith', 'freedom'.)



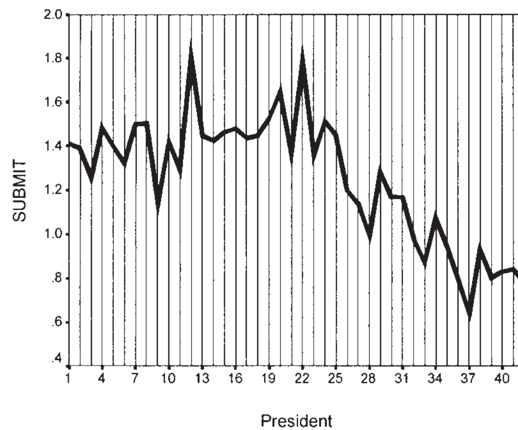
Active 2045 words implying an active orientation. (Eg. 'achieve', 'construct', 'intervene', 'overcome', 'pursue'.)



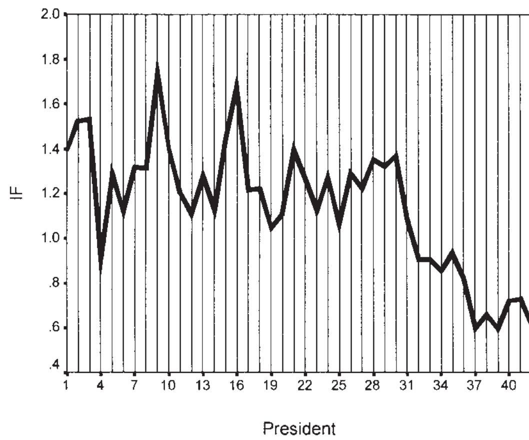
Strong 1902 words implying strength. (Eg. 'affirm', 'determination', 'expand', leadership', 'mission'.)



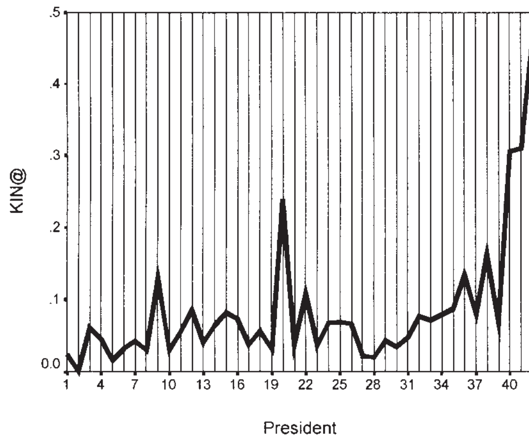
Passive 911 words indicating a passive orientation. (Eg. 'avoid', 'doubt', 'failure', 'hesitate', 'patient'.)



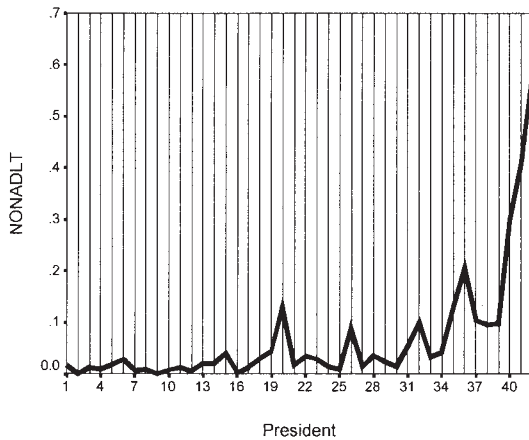
Submit 284 words connoting submission to authority or power, dependence on others, vulnerability to others, or withdrawal. (Eg. 'apologetic', 'concede', helpless', 'modest', relinquish'.)



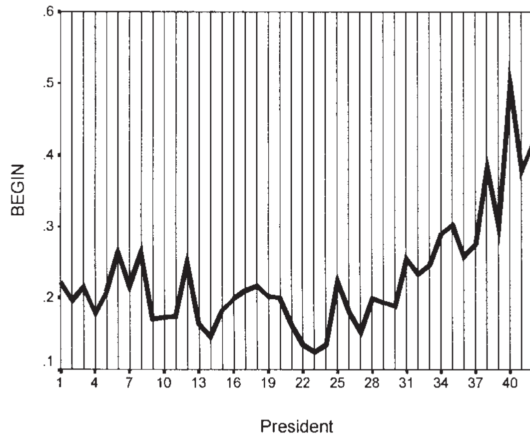
If 132 words denoting feelings of uncertainty, doubt and vagueness. (Eg. 'ambiguous', 'maybe', 'perhaps', 'seem', 'unsure'.)



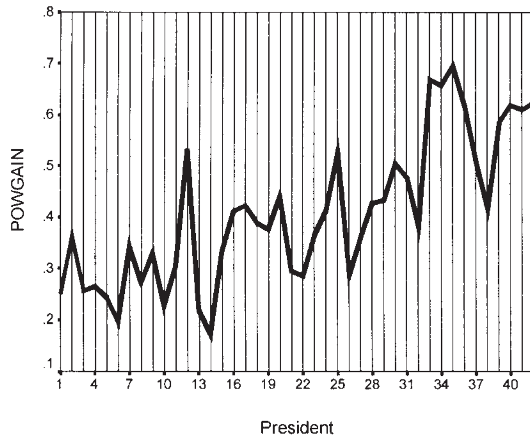
Kin@ 50 terms denoting kinship. (Eg. 'aunt', 'brother', 'family', 'parent', 'relative'.)



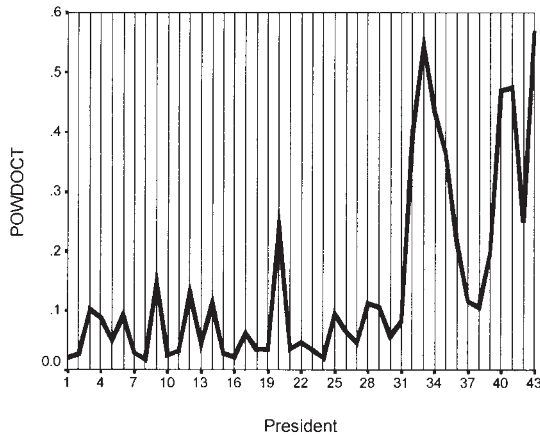
NonAdlt 25 words associated with infants through adolescents. (Eg. 'baby', 'children', 'girl', 'grandchild', 'teenager'.)



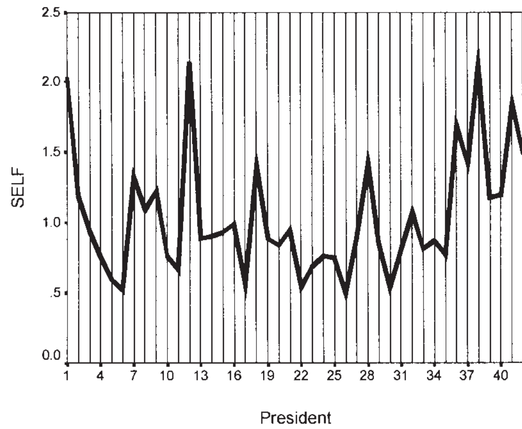
Begin 56 words denoting commencement. (Eg. 'advent', 'convene', 'create', 'initiate', 'start'.)



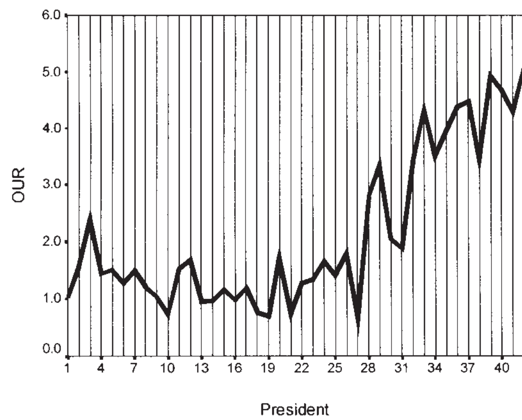
PowGain 65 words about power increasing. (Eg. 'ascendant', 'fortify', 'restore', safeguard', 'won'.)



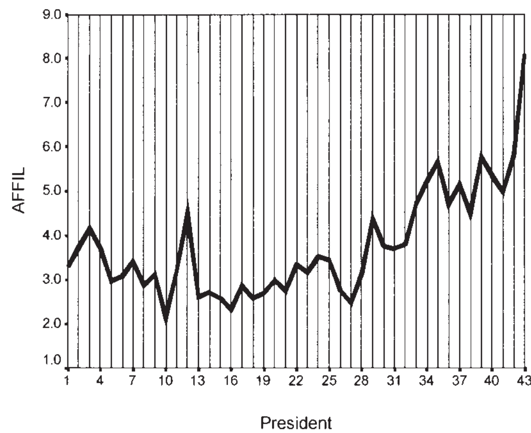
PowDoct 42 words for recognized ideas about power relations and practices. (Eg. 'communism', 'elitism', 'ideology', 'imperialism', 'nationalism'.)



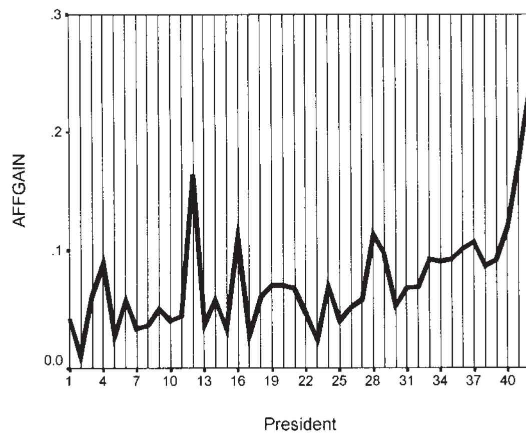
Self 7 pronouns referring to the singular self. (Eg. 'I', 'me', 'mine', 'my', 'myself'.)



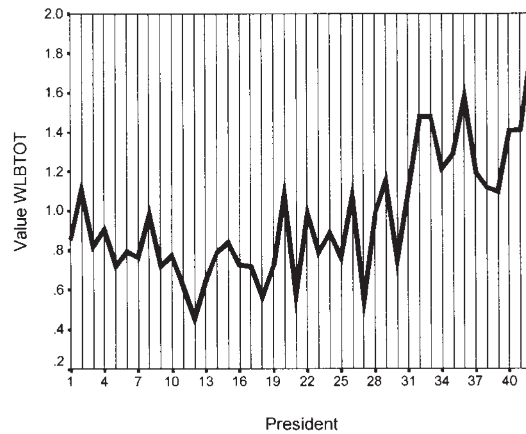
Our 6 pronouns referring to the inclusive self. (Eg. 'our', 'ours', 'ourselves', 'us', 'we'.)



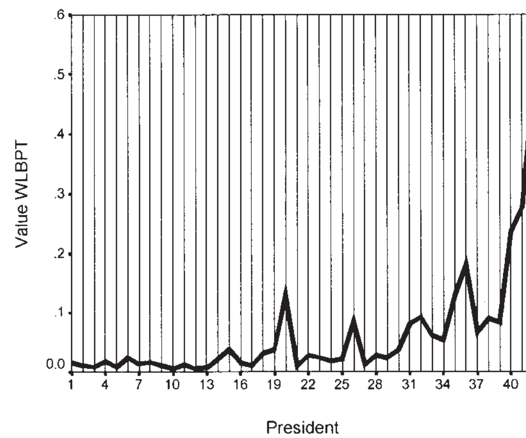
Affil 557 words are also indicating affiliation or supportiveness. (Eg. 'agreement', 'brotherly', 'friendship', 'support', 'trust'.)



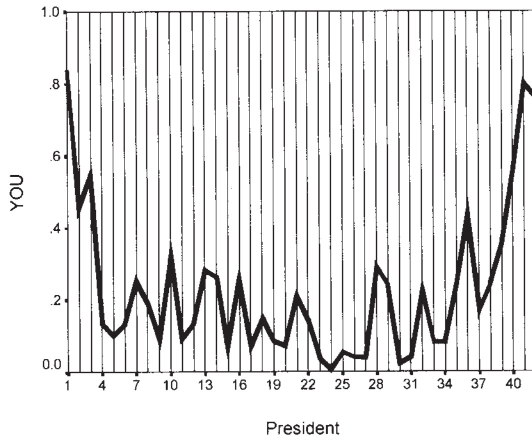
AffGain 35 words for reaping affect. (Eg. 'care', 'devote', 'heart', 'like', 'love'.)



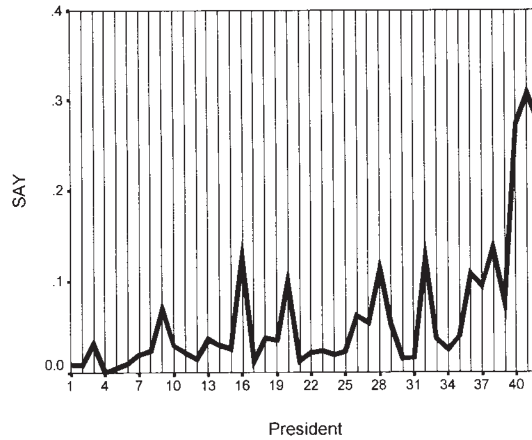
WlbTot 487 words that concern well-being. (Eg. 'emotion', 'food', 'happiness', 'vacation', 'welfare'.)



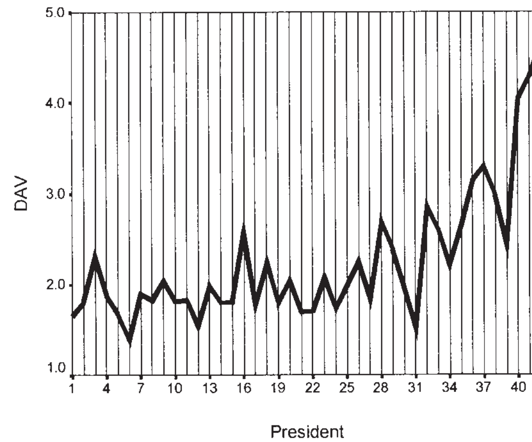
WlbPt 27 roles that evoke a concern for well-being. (Eg. 'alcoholic', 'counselor', dentist', 'patient', 'victim'.)



You 9 pronouns indicating another person is being addressed directly. (Eg. 'thou', 'you', 'your', 'yours', 'yourself'.)



Say 4 words indicating direct verbal communication : 'said', 'say', 'tell' and 'told'.



Dav 540 straight descriptive verbs of an action or feature of an action. (Eg. 'call', 'gasp', 'huddle', 'murder', 'scream'.)

Appendix A
Inaugural Addresses from George Washington to Bill Clinton

President	*Inaugural*	*Date*
1. George Washington	1st	30.03.1789
	2nd	04.03.1793
2. John Adams	1st	04.03.1797
3. Thomas Jefferson	1st	04.03.1801
	2nd	04.03.1805
4. James Madison	1st	04.03.1809
	2nd	04.03.1813
5. James Monroe	1st	04.03.1817
	2nd	05.03.1821
6. John Quincy Adams	1st	04.03.1825
7. Andrew Jackson	1st	04.03.1829
	2nd	04.03.1833
8. Martin Van Buren	1st	04.03.1837
9. William Henry Harrison	1st	04.03.1841
11. James Polk	1st	04.03.1845
12. Zachary Taylor	1st	05.03.1849
14. Franklin Pierce	1st	04.03.1853
15. James Buchanan	1st	04.03.1857
16. Abraham Lincoln	1st	04.03.1861
	2nd	04.03.1865
18. Ulysses S. Grant	1st	04.03.1869
	2nd	04.03.1873
19. Rutherford Hayes	1st	05.03.1877
20. James Garfield	1st	04.03.1881
22. Grover Cleveland	1st	04.03.1885
23. Benjamin Harrison	1st	04.03.1889
24. Grover Cleveland	1st	04.03.1893
25. William McKinley	1st	04.03.1897
	2nd	04.03.1901
26. Theodore Roosevelt	1st	04.03.1905
27. William Taft	1st	04.03.1909
28. Woodrow Wilson	1st	04.03.1913
	2nd	05.03.1917
29. Warren Harding	1st	04.03.1921
30. Calvin Coolidge	1st	04.03.1925
31. Herbert Hoover	1st	04.03.1929
32. Franklin Roosevelt	1st	04.03.1933
	2nd	20.01.1937
	3rd	20.01.1941
	4th	20.01.1945
33. Harry Truman	1st	20.01.1949
34. Dwight Eisenhower	1st	20.01.1953
	2nd	21.01.1957
35. John Kennedy	1st	20.01.1961
36. Lyndon Johnson	1st	20.01.1965

(continued)

Appendix A Continued

President	*Inaugural*	*Date*
37. Richard Nixon	1st	20.01.1969
	2nd	20.01.1973
39. Jimmy Carter	1st	20.01.1977
40. Ronald Reagan	1st	20.01.1981
	2nd	21.01.1985
41. George Bush	1st	20.01.1989
42. Bill Clinton	1st	21.01.1993
	2nd	20.01.1997

Source: All the speeches delivered by the presidents until William Howard Taft can be found in Richardson (1896-1899) and the rest in the *Public Papers* of each president.
Note: Five presidents did not deliver any inaugural addresses: John Tyler, Millard Fillmore, Andrew Johnson, Chester Arthur, and Gerald Ford. I do not include their acceptance speeches upon taking oath of office because these speeches are delivered under exceptional circumstances and do not fit comfortably into the inaugural genre. Also, I do not include George W. Bush's inaugural in the (quantitative) analysis because we cannot assume that his first inaugural would be the only relevant speech that he will give (as we know for a fact was the case for William Harrison and James Garfield). To do so would be to introduce right-censored data into this analysis and to overstate the effect of one speech on the general patterns of Bush's rhetoric.

Appendix B
Annual Messages from George Washington to Bill Clinton

President	*Number*	*Annual Message*	*Date*
1. George Washington	1	1st	08.01.1790
	2	2nd	08.12.1790
	3	3rd	25.10.1791
	4	4th	06.11.1792
	5	5th	03.12.1793
	6	6th	19.11.1794
	7	7th	08.12.1795
	8	8th	07.12.1796
2. John Adams	9	1st	23.11.1797
	10	2nd	08.12.1798
	11	3rd	03.12.1799
	12	4th	22.11.1800
3. Thomas Jefferson	13	1st	08.12.1801
	14	2nd	15.12.1802
	15	3rd	17.11.1803
	16	4th	08.11.1804
	17	5th	03.12.1805
	18	6th	02.12.1806
	19	7th	27.10.1807
	20	8th	08.11.1808
4. James Madison	21	1st	29.11.1809
	22	2nd	05.12.1810

President	*Number*	*Annual Message*	*Date*
	23	3rd	05.11.1811
	24	4th	04.11.1812
	25	5th	07.12.1813
	26	6th	20.09.1814
	27	7th	05.12.1815
	28	8th	03.12.1816
5. James Monroe	29	1st	04.12.1817
	30	2nd	16.11.1818
	31	3rd	07.12.1819
	32	4th	14.11.1820
	33	5th	03.12.1821
	34	6th	03.12.1822
	35	7th	02.12.1823
	36	8th	07.12.1824
6. John Quincy Adams	37	1st	06.12.1825
	38	2nd	05.12.1826
	39	3rd	04.12.1827
	40	4th	07.12.1828
7. Andrew Jackson	41	1st	08.12.1829
	42	2nd	06.12.1830
	43	3rd	06.12.1831
	44	4th	04.12.1832
	45	5th	03.12.1833
	46	6th	01.12.1834
	47	7th	07.12.1835
	48	8th	05.12.1836
8. Martin Van Buren	49	1st	05.12.1837
	50	2nd	03.12.1838
	51	3rd	02.12.1839
	52	4th	05.12.1840
10. John Tyler	53	1st	07.12.1841
	54	2nd	06.12.1842
	55	3rd	?? .12.1843[a]
	56	4th	03.12.1844
11. James Polk	57	1st	02.12.1845
	58	2nd	08.12.1846
	59	3rd	07.12.1847
	60	4th	05.12.1848
12. Zachary Taylor	61	1st	04.12.1849
13. Millard Fillmore	62	1st	02.12.1850
	63	2nd	02.12.1851
	64	3rd	06.12.1852
14. Franklin Pierce	65	1st	05.12.1853
	66	2nd	04.12.1854
	67	3rd	31.12.1855
	68	4th	02.12.1856
15. James Buchanan	69	1st	08.12.1857
	70	2nd	06.12.1858
	71	3rd	19.12.1859
	72	4th	03.12.1860

(continued)

Appendix B Continued

President	*Number*	*Annual Message*	*Date*
16. Abraham Lincoln	73	1st	03.12.1861
	74	2nd	01.12.1862
	75	3rd	08.12.1863
	76	4th	06.12.1864
17. Andrew Johnson	77	1st	04.12.1865
	78	2nd	03.12.1866
	79	3rd	03.12.1867
	80	4th	09.12.1868
18. Ulysses S. Grant	81	1st	06.12.1869
	82	2nd	05.12.1870
	83	3rd	04.12.1871
	84	4th	02.12.1872
	85	5th	01.12.1873
	86	6th	07.12.1874
	87	7th	07.12.1875
	88	8th	05.12.1876
19. Rutherford Hayes	89	1st	03.12.1877
	90	2nd	02.12.1878
	91	3rd	01.12.1879
	92	4th	06.12.1880
20. Chester Arthur	93	1st	06.12.1881
	94	2nd	04.12.1882
	95	3rd	04.12.1883
	96	4th	01.12.1884
22. Grover Cleveland	97	1st	08.12.1885
	98	2nd	06.12.1886
	99	3rd	06.12.1887
	100	4th	03.12.1888
23. Benjamin Harrison	101	1st	03.12.1889
	102	2nd	01.12.1890
	103	3rd	09.12.1891
	104	4th	06.12.1892
24. Grover Cleveland	105	1st	04.12.1893
	106	2nd	03.12.1894
	107	3rd	02.12.1895
	108	4th	07.12.1896
25. William McKinley	109	1st	06.12.1897
	110	2nd	05.12.1898
	111	3rd	05.12.1899
	112	4th	03.12.1900
26. Theodore Roosevelt	113	1st	03.12.1901
	114	2nd	02.12.1902
	115	3rd	07.12.1903
	116	4th	06.12.1904
	117	5th	05.12.1905
	118	6th	03.12.1906
	119	7th	03.12.1907
	120	8th	08.12.1908

President	*Number*	*Annual Message*	*Date*
27. William Taft	121	1st	07.12.1909
	122	2nd	08.12.1910
	123	3rd	05.12.1911
	124	4th	03.12.1912
28. Woodrow Wilson	125	1st	02.12.1913
	126	2nd	08.12.1914
	127	3rd	07.12.1915
	128	4th	05.12.1916
	129	5th	04.12.1917
	130	6th	02.12.1918
	131	7th	02.12.1919
	132	8th	07.12.1920
29. Warren Harding	133	1st	06.12.1921
	134	2nd	08.12.1922
30. Calvin Coolidge	135	1st	06.12.1923
	136	2nd	03.12.1924
	137	3rd	08.12.1925
	138	4th	07.12.1926
	139	5th	06.12.1927
	140	6th	04.12.1928
31. Herbert Hoover	141	1st	03.12.1929
	142	2nd	02.12.1930
	143	3rd	08.12.1931
	144	4th	06.12.1932
32. Franklin Roosevelt	145	1st	03.01.1934
	146	2nd	04.01.1935
	147	3rd	03.01.1936
	148	4th	06.01.1937
	149	5th	03.01.1938
	150	6th	04.01.1939
	151	7th	03.01.1940
	152	8th	06.01.1941
	153	9th	06.01.1942
	154	10th	07.01.1943
	155	11th	11.01.1944
	156	12th	06.01.1945
33. Harry Truman	157	1st	14.01.1946
	158	2nd	06.01.1947
	159	3rd	07.01.1948
	160	4th	05.01.1949
	161	5th	04.01.1950
	162	6th	08.01.1951
	163	7th	09.01.1952
	164	8th	07.01.1953
34. Dwight Eisenhower	165	1st	02.02.1953
	166	2nd	07.01.1954
	167	3rd	06.01.1955
	168	4th	05.01.1956
	169	5th	10.01.1957
	170	6th	09.01.1958

(continued)

Appendix B Continued

President	*Number*	*Annual Message*	*Date*
	171	7th	09.01.1959
	172	8th	07.01.1960
	173	9th	12.01.1961
35. John Kennedy	174	1st	30.01.1961
	175	2nd	11.01.1962
	176	3rd	14.01.1963
36. Lyndon Johnson	177	1st	08.01.1964
	178	2nd	04.01.1965
	179	3rd	12.01.1966
	180	4th	10.01.1967
	181	5th	17.01.1968
	182	6th	14.01.1969
37. Richard Nixon	183	1st	22.01.1970
	184	2nd	22.01.1971
	185	3rd	20.01.1972
	186	4th	22.02.1973[b]
	187	5th	30.01.1974
38. Gerald Ford	188	1st	15.01.1975
	189	2nd	19.01.1976
	190	3rd	12.01.1977
39. Jimmy Carter	191	1st	19.01.1978
	192	2nd	23.01.1979
	193	3rd	23.01.1980
	194	4th	16.01.1981
40. Ronald Reagan	195	1st	26.01.1982
	196	2nd	25.01.1983
	197	3rd	25.01.1984
	198	4th	06.02.1985
	199	5th	04.02.1986
	200	6th	27.01.1987
	201	7th	25.01.1988
41. George Bush	202	1st	31.01.1990
	203	2nd	29.01.1991
	204	3rd	28.01.1992
42. Bill Clinton	205	1st	25.01.1994
	206	2nd	24.01.1995
	207	3rd	30.01.1996
	208	4th	04.02.1997
	209	5th	27.01.1998
	210	6th	19.01.1999
	211	7th	27.01.2000

Source: All the speeches delivered by the presidents until William Howard Taft can be found in Richardson (1896-1899) and the rest in the *Public Papers* of each president.

Note: Two presidents did not deliver any annual messages at all: William Henry Harrison died of pneumonia a month after his inauguration, and James Garfield was assassinated two hundred days after his.

a. Specific day not recorded in the *Messages and Papers of John Tyler*.

b. Nixon presented his fourth State of the Union in six written parts to Congress. The date here indicates the date of submission of Part III.

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