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### **Military Masculinities, Tactical Femininities, and the ‘Third Gender’ in Ashley’s War”**

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“Military Masculinities, Tactical Femininities,  
and the ‘Third Gender’ in *Ashley’s War*”

MAJ Lauren Ward, USA

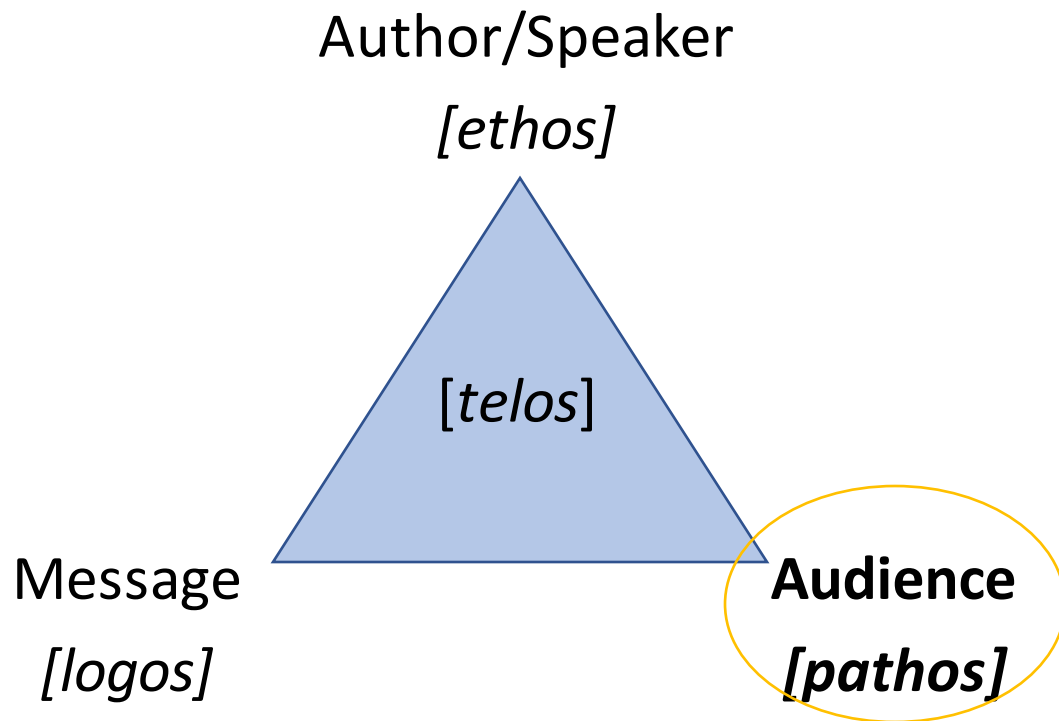
United States Military Academy

Women, Peace, and Security Symposium

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*The views in this presentation are those of the author and do not represent the views of the Department of Defense, the Department of the Army, or the United States Military Academy.*

# Rhetoric and the Audience of *Ashley's War*



“A speech [text] consists of three things: a speaker [*ethos*] and a subject on which he speaks [*logos*] and someone addressed [*pathos*], and the objective [*telos*] of the speech relates to the last.”<sup>1</sup>

I argue that despite the celebratory nature of author Gayle Tzemach Lemmon’s appeal to a public audience, the rhetoric of her book *Ashley’s War* continues to instrumentalize women’s bodies and stories, relying on many of the misogynistic tropes that contribute to the continued marginalization of women in male-dominated spaces such as combat.

1. Aristotle, from *On Rhetoric*, in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, 3rd ed., ed. Vincent B. Leitch, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2018), 128.

# “Tactical Femininities” Calls For:

- A reclamation of the ownership of the strategic aims of femininity.
- A view of women in the military as free to choose their own presentation of masculinity or femininity.
- A careful examination of the language we use to tell the stories of women in combat to varied audiences.
- A more nuanced navigation of the use of misogynistic tropes and an awareness of their presence in our common storytelling practices.



Gayle Tzemach Lemmon   
@gaylelemmon



A note I just received from a reader of “Ashley’s War” — and a humbling, beautiful reminder of why stories matter.

It just took your book to give me the courage to get here.

So, I would like to say “thank you” - for speaking truth to power and honoring those women - and inspiring all this who came after them, in whatever capacity that might be.

12:26 AM · Aug 10, 2019

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