A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SPEAKER CREDIBILITY IN THE 1972 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF GEORGE S. McGOVERN

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ROBERT DUANE NORDYKE

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Harold J. Nichols
Major Professor

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Preface

The 1972 Presidential election, on the face of it, offered the promise of an exciting race. The glaring ideological differences between the candidacies of Richard M. Nixon and George S. McGovern could have generated a great deal of controversy, but in fact neither candidate generated much real enthusiasm and Nixon won the office by a large margin in an election where less than 54% of those eligible to vote went to the polls.

This study will deal with representative campaign speeches by one of the candidates, Senator George S. McGovern of South Dakota, who challenged an incumbent President, Richard M. Nixon of California. George McGovern faced a difficult struggle; he had the challenge not only of evicting an incumbent President, but also of overcoming a largely negative public image of himself that was primarily based on his criticism of the Vietnam War and his advocacy of "radical" social programs. His task in the campaign was to broaden the scope of his clash with the incumbent, to become more than a one-issue candidate, and to build an image of himself as a credible, serious candidate for the highest office in the land.

The speeches analyzed here will indicate by their choice of subject matter that McGovern indicted the Nixon Administration on a number of issues, thus attempting to meet one of his

goals. The second task, that of strengthening his credibility as a candidate, is the one with which I will primarily concern myself in this paper. Eleven speeches given in the course of the Presidential campaign will be considered in order to determine how Senator McGovern went about the task of strengthening his credibility as a candidate via his public speeches. The period with which I will concern myself is Senator McGovern's campaign as the Democratic nominee, beginning with his acceptance speech on July 14, 1972, and ending with his concession speech on November 7, 1972.

The contents will be as follows: Chapter one will be concerned with Senator McGovern's life and his involvement in Presidential politics, culminating in the winning of his party's nomination. Chapter two will outline the procedures to be used in analyzing the speeches. Chapter three will be concerned with three speeches which went into the determination of the Democratic ticket: the speech with which McGovern accepted the nomination, the speech with which he announced Senator Eagleton's resignation, and the speech with which he nominated Sargeant Shriver to replace Senator Eagleton. Chapters four through six will deal with representative speeches on three of the major issues of the campaign: national defense, economic policy, and corruption in the Nixon Administration. Chapter seven will consist of an analysis of the speech with which he conceded the election to President Nixon, and chapter eight will consist of a summary of and conclusions from the results of the preceding chapters.

George S. McGovern: The Man and the Candidate

On June 5, 1968, the day of the South Dakota and California Presidential primaries, George S. McGovern was in South Dakota relaying the results to his close friend and Senate colleague Robert F. Kennedy. McGovern phoned first Ted Kennedy in San Francisco and then Bobby Kennedy in Los Angeles with news of the South Dakota win, the biggest victory of the Kennedy campaign. McGovern and Robert Kennedy talked together briefly before Bobby had to break away to acknowledge his California victory with a speech at the Ambassador Hotel ballroom in Los Angeles. A few hours later, McGovern was roused from sleep by an aide bringing the news that Bobby Kennedy had been shot.

The shock that George McGovern felt at the death of his friend was aggravated by the belief that Kennedy's death was, to some extent, due to McGovern's own reluctance to take the field against Lyndon Johnson. When Allard Lowenstein had approached Bobby Kennedy with a "dump Johnson" proposal in August of 1967, Bobby had referred him to McGovern. George McGovern had given serious thought to the proposal and, in the end, had taken the advice of his staff, friends and co-workers and turned it down, despite his personal inclinations. Because McGovern was up for reelection in South Dakota and had won by only five hundred votes in the previous election, he submitted to the political realities of the situation and suggested that

Lowenstein try Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota or Lee Metcalf of Montana who were "peripheral doves" and not up for reelection. "Try those two and if they won't do it, come back to me again."[1]

McCarthy accepted the proposal and to everyone's amazement proceeded to bring down Lyndon Johnson's house of cards. Bobby Kennedy, who had little faith in Gene McCarthy's ability to win the election, much less run the country, then issued his own challenge and formally entered the race on March 16, 1968, four days after the McCarthy upset of Johnson in the New Hampshire primary.

Kennedy was later to tell friends that if McGovern had been the anti-war candidate rather than McCarthy, he would never have entered the race. He respected George McGovern as he never would Eugene McCarthy:

> I just don't believe Gene McCarthy would be a good President. If it had been George McGovern who had run in New Hampshire, I wouldn't have gotten into it. But what has McCarthy ever done for the ghettos or the poor? [2]

McGovern was quick to recognize that had he accepted Lowenstein's proposal Kennedy would not have been in California for the rendezvous with Sirhan Sirhan. His doubts were echoed by Theodore White of Making of the President fame, who said to him at the 1968 Democratic convention:

> If you had run, Bobby would never have gotten into it. Johnson would still have withdrawn. Humphrey would have been no more electable than he is today. And so the convention would have turned to you, because, unlike McCarthy, you were respectable to the regulars. And if you rather than Humphrey were the nominee, with Bob Kennedy alive and campaigning for you, then . . . .[3]

White's scenario may have been far-fetched, but certainly these thoughts must have been in George McGovern's mind when he was approached on the Kennedy funeral train about taking up Bobby Kennedy's standard. Kennedy men like Bill Dougherty (elected governor of South Dakota in 1970); Jess Unruh, leader of the California delegation; Frank Mankiewicz, Bobby Kennedy's press secretary; and others pressed the proposal on him on that afternoon and during the days that followed. Momentum for his candidacy slowly gathered, and on July 13, South Dakota Democrats announced that their delegation was committed to George McGovern as a favorite son. On August 10, sixteen days before the convention was to convene, he announced his candicacy in the Senate caucus room, where Robert Kennedy had challenged Johnson less than five months before.

McGovern's candidacy in 1968 was a low-keyed one. There was little hope of securing the nomination; about the best the McGovern-Kennedy forces could hope for was a voice in writing the platform and in selecting the nominee for the second spot on the ticket. Unfortunately for them, the Humphrey-Johnson forces had the convention locked-up, and they were to have little or no influence within the convention. Confrontations in the streets between demonstrators and police and on the floor of the convention between the pro-Administration and anti-Administration delegates led to a debacle and produced a party split that in all probability cost Humphrey the Presidency.

The Chicago convention created doubts too regarding McGovern's

reelection in South Dakota. It was feared that he would be linked to radical elements in a way that would hurt him in a basically conservative Republican state. That was to be the main tactic of his senatorial opponent Archie Gubbrud, a former Governor of South Dakota. In addition, polls taken after the convention showed McGovern's popularity in South Dakota, which had stood at 70% at one point in the winter of 1967-68, dropping to 48%, just two points above Gubbrud.[4]

Nonetheless, McGovern launched himself into the campaign with typical energy and enthusiasn. He ran the same kind of person-to-person campaign he had always run, supplemented with more money, greater use of media, and greater organization than in previous campaigns. His opponent conducted a more leisurely campaign with less personal contact with the voters. By election day, the polls showed McGovern over 50% again, and he won handily with 57% of the vote. It was the highest percentage of the vote won by a Democrat in a major South Dakota race since Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932 and Governor Tom Berry in 1934.[5]

Secure in his Senate seat, George McGovern turned his eyes to the Presidential nomination, which he felt he could have had in 1968 if he had followed his instincts. Those instincts had proven themselves trustworthy before, and the thought lingered that hesitation might have cost him dearly.

At this point in his life, George McGovern was a long way from his humble beginnings; but in those beginnings were the

roots of the man that would be a Presidential candidate and perhaps the keys to understanding the man who would contend with Richard Nixon in 1972 for the Presidency of the United States. George McGovern was born on July 19, 1922, in Avon, South Dakota, a small town about one hundred miles from Sioux Falls. His father, Joseph, was an ordained minister of Wesleyan Methodism, a rather fundamentalist faction of the Methodist Church. His mother, Frances, was a quiet, shy woman who deferred almost entirely to her husband. From his father, George inherited a love for the Bible and a deep concern for his fellow man. When asked by a professor at Northwestern University what made him tick, George replied that it was his father's philosophy as expressed in St. Matthew: "Whosoever shall save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it."[6] From his mother, he inherited an unassuming nature, the lack of charisma that has plagued him periodically.

As a youth in Mitchell, George was perhaps a typical minister's son. His father was remarkably liberal for a fundamentalist preacher, or at least what we think of as a fundamentalist preacher. Although the upbringing of the McGovern children was strict, it was not oppressive, and Joseph McGovern was not a fire and brimstone type of preacher.

George's introduction to more liberal thoughts probably came when he was initiated into debate and speech as a high school sophomore. As a debater, he was exposed to a wider point of view and to a larger world than that he had known

until then. George displayed a natural talent for debate, not that he was the most skilled speaker, but he had a rare ability to pick out illogical arguments and inconsistencies and to marshall facts and express them effectively in an organized manner. "In that sense," said his high school debate coach, Bob Pearson, "George was the best debater on the team."[7]

A highly successful high school debater, McGovern won a forensic scholarship to Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell, where debate contributed to another success in his life: winning the hand of Eleanor Stegeberg. He first met the Stegeberg twins, Eleanor and Ila, at a high school debate tournament in Woonsocket, South Dakota, where the only round he and his partner lost was to the twins. They met often in debate circles during high school, and later the twins were also to attend Dakota Wesleyan, where, as freshmen, Eleanor and George began dating.

Continuing his success in speech and debate at Dakota Wesleyan, George won the South Dakota Peace Oratory Contest with a speech that was later judged one of the twelve best in the United States in 1942, and he and his colleague, the son of Dakota Wesleyan's president, were highly ranked in national debate circles. In February 1943, George had just been named "best debater" in a five-state tournament and his colleague had come in second, when he received his induction notice. He had hoped to complete at least his junior year before entering the service, but the call came at mid-term, and he was on his

way to Muskogee, Oklahoma, for flight training.

On his first leave, he and Eleanor were married. In February 1944, he was on his way to Europe where he flew B-24s and distinguished himself twice by bringing in crippled planes under almost impossible conditions. He was awarded an Air Medal and one of the nation's highest medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross.

On his return from the war, he enrolled at Dakota Wesleyan under the G.I. Bill, continuing his studies in history. Before his senior year was out, however, he opted for the ministry as the best way of spreading the social gospel that he had gradually formulated. At the same time, he kept up with his speech activities, placing first in the state Peace Oratory Contest with a speech indicting abuses of American power and advocating a return to "the applied idealism of Christianity," a philosophy that Robert Anson, author of the authorized McGovern biography, compares to Wilson idealism.[8]

Upon graduation, he began his studies at Garrett Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. In conjunction with his studies, he was appointed to a position as student minister at Diamond lake, a resort and retirement community located thirty miles northwest of Chicago. The position did not demand a great deal of his time and provided a measure of security for his family which then included two daughters, Ann and Susan.

McGovern was soon disillusioned with the ministry. Diamond Lake was not an appropriate setting for the promotion of his

social gospel. He was unable, or unwilling, to cope with church bureaucracy, and in 1947 he resigned his position and resumed his history studies, this time at Northwestern University. Teaching, he thought, might provide a better forum for the spread of his social message. The family was in tight straits monetarily with the loss of the income from the Diamond Lake position, but the situation eased when he secured a teaching fellowship in his second year and a Hearst fellowship in his third.

At Northwestern, his liberal tendencies received further stimulation. Many of his fellow students were, like himself, veterans who had seen the horrors of war and wished to further the cause of world peace. The evolution in his thinking is perhaps best evidenced by the turnabout in his feeling toward labor unions. In the early 1940s, he had warned Eleanor about the dangers of radical organizations like the CIO; less than ten years later, he submitted for his doctoral dissertation a highly sympathetic study of the bloody Colorado coal strikes of 1913 and 1914, which culminated in the Ludlow Massacre of April 20, 1914.

Also while at Northwestern, McGovern, along with some of his fellow students and members of the history faculty, became actively engaged in the Presidential candidacy of Henry Wallace. McGovern's support consisted largely of turning out leaflets on an ancient mimeograph machine and of writing letters of endorsement to newspapers. He was also a member of the Illinois delegation to the Progressive Party convention; however, prior to

election day McGovern became disillusioned with the people closest to Wallace and did not go to the polls to vote.

It was this connection with Wallace that was to be used against him in campaign propaganda in later years along with other liberal activities including the production of leaflets opposing the Mundt-Nixon bill, one of the first legislative attempts to register "Communist" organizations.

His dissertation well under way, George went back to Dakota Wesleyan as a member of the history faculty and as debate coach. He created a bit of controversy in the community because of some of the political positions he expressed from time to time in letters to the editor of the Mitchell Daily Republic, including such radical (for that time) ideas as recognition of Red China and a cease-fire in Korea. For some reason, perhaps because he was a hometown boy, Dakota Wesleyan's ultraconservative board did not fire him, although they were quick to oust a president of the school, Samuel Hilburn, who came under fire from the local American Legion post for expressing similar ideas. When McGovern left Dakota Wesleyan it was the result of his decision to accept a position with the state Democratic party.

After the 1952 campaign, Ward Clark, the state Democratic chairman, had asked McGovern to serve as executive secretary for the state party and as full-time organizer to establish party organizations at the county and municipal levels. Once again, as he had in selecting the ministry and then the teaching profession, McGovern followed his instincts rather than the

well-intentioned advice of his friends. The job offered no security, he would have to raise his salary from contributions, and he was faced with a task that many regarded as hopeless. Nevertheless, he accepted Clark's offer.

George McGovern was not being entirely selfless in undertaking the project. He had in mind from the beginning his own political career. Politics would be another step in achieving the goals of his social philosophy and in order for him to be elected, the Democratic Party in South Dakota had to be revitalized. He spent much of his time on the road, erecting the beginnings of a party structure. In each county, he searched out party leaders or possible leaders and set up the nucleus of an organization which he recorded on 3 X 5 cards. Results were apparent by the 1954 elections in which Democratic representation in the state legislature increased from two to twenty-five seats. Although old party wheel-horses complained that what he was building was not the Democratic Party but the McGovern party, he accomplished what he was asked to do and the two-party system was reestablished in South Dakota.

In the spring of 1965, McGovern was ready to run for office himself. A Senate seat looked vulnerable, but a friend, Ken Holum, who had run unsuccessfully against Karl Mundt in 1954 deserved a shot at that. Since McGovern did not want to be Governor, that left the House. His opponent was a four-term incumbent who had no great sins, or credits for that matter, to his record. It looked like another lost cause.

McGovern conducted a person-to-person campaign, driving

from town to town in a red and white Rambler station wagon talking to voters and shaking hands. His opponent, Harold Lovre, made the mistake of taking the voters for granted until September when the polls showed them running neck and neck. Until that time, Lovre had dismissed McGovern as "that school-teacher." From that time onward, Lovre and his supporters waged an all-out attack on McGovern in an attempt to portray him a Communist sympathizer. The smears had their effect, for the next poll showed McGovern slipping. For a time, McGovern went on the defensive, but he soon returned to the offense, hammering away at Lovre's record and his tactics. The farm issue (Ezra Taft Benson, Secretary of Agriculture, was one of the most hated public figures in South Dakota) was especially telling. As a result, South Dakota elected George McGovern its first Democratic Congressman in twenty years by a margin of 12,000 votes.

McGovern's stay in the House was a creditable one. Determined to be more than a one-term Congressman, he obtained an appointment to the House Education and Labor Committee, authored a successful bill providing federal grants to educate teachers of the mentally retarded, and sponsored an amendment calling for 90% parity for the farmers. He also made a point of maintaining contact with his constituents, and it became a firm rule that every letter from South Dakota was to receive an answer within twenty-four hours. His office churned out as many as 150 letters a day.

Although McGovern had acquitted himself well in his first

term, his reelection was not certain. In 1958, his opponent was a tough one: Joe Foss was the incumbent Governor and a Medal of Honor winner. The tactics were the same: the Republicans tried to smear McGovern again with charges of Communism, but McGovern dug Foss's political grave with the farm policies of the Eisenhower administration. Foss and McGovern met several times in public debate, and Foss, who was not known for his intellect, came out noticeably the worse for it. McGovern won the election by 15,000 votes.

George McGovern acquitted himself well again in the House and in 1960 felt himself ready to tackle Senator Karl Mundt, who stood for what he considered "the worst kind of holdover from the McCarthy days."[9] McGovern's campaign was a moral crusade against a man whose policies he had abhorred since his student days at Northwestern. For once in his life, he was to make charges against an opponent that he had not carefully checked for accuracy. His hatred for Mundt and what Mundt stood for colored his judgement and made him make mistakes which he otherwise might not have committed. Another serious problem occurred because he was linked with the Kennedys in a state that was virulently anti-Catholic. Mundt, well-known for his anti-Communist stands, raised the familiar charges, labeling McGovern a Communist sympathizer. Mundt won the election by 15,000 votes.

Because John and Bobby Kennedy felt partially responsible for McGovern's defeat, they offered him a job as director of the Food for Peace program, after first considering him for Secretary

of Agriculture. Under George McGovern the Food for Peace program, which had accomplished little under Eisenhower, made great strides toward feeding the poor of the United States and the world and toward reducing the farm surpluses which were burdening the farm program with huge storage costs. Arthur Schlesinger termed McGovern's work "the greatest unseen weapon of Kennedy's third-world policy." Humphrey called it "a twentieth century form of alchemy."[10] George McGovern had taken a fumbling, inefficient program and transformed it into a program which worked wonders.

By 1962, the Food for Peace program had achieved enough of its purposes that McGovern was ready to move on, to try for the Senate again. Francis Case, the incumbent, died of a heart attack in June. After twenty ballots the state Republican convention named Joe Bottum, the state's Lieutenant Governor and the party's "hatchet man," as the Republican nominee. McGovern ran on his record; Bottum responded with charges that the Kennedys were trying to buy South Dakota "through their man McGovern" and with the ever-present charge that George McGovern would "sell out" to the Communists. During the campaign, George was hospitalized with a recurrence of the hepatitis he had picked up as Director of Food for Peace. Eleanor ran the campaign for the two weeks he was out of action and proved an able campaigner.

One of the most effective devices of the McGovern campaign was a Charles Guggenheim film called A Dakota Story, which was

a masterpiece of visual propaganda. It was a documentary portraying McGovern as a man of courage, faith, learning, and patriotism, with scenes of McGovern talking to farmers and sitting in an easy chair with a picture of Mount Rushmore at his elbow.[11]

Back on his feet ten days before the election, McGovern traveled in his station wagon by now equipped with a mattress so that he could rest before and after his rare public appearances. The election was close: McGovern won by 100 votes. After a recount was initiated and carried out, the margin was increased to 504.

McGovern took several months to acclimate himself to the Senate, but he readied himself more rapidly than most would have imagined possible. He asked for and received appointments to the Agriculture and Interior committees, where his work would be most visible to his constituents. His maiden Senate speech was delivered in March 1963. It blasted U.S.-Latin American policy, especially for its fixation on international communism, which he felt was an effect rather than the cause of Latin American problems. The real problems, he said, were issues like population pressures, land reform, hunger, disease, and so on. He was especially contemptuous of the Bay of Pigs fiasco.

Another issue he raised in the first year of his term was military spending. In August, he introduced an amendment to cut $5 billion from the projected military budget for 1964. His speech was praised by his colleagues in the Senate for its

eloquence, but the amendment was defeated.

In October 1963, he introduced a pet proposal that he was to periodically reintroduce during the following years, including the Presidential campaign year of 1972. It was an economic conversion proposal which was designed to convert defense spending into civilian channels and to provide jobs for those ousted from defense-oriented occupations. He was unable to get enough support for his bill. Nonetheless he voted for percentage reductions or ceilings on defense spending in 1963, 1964, 1966, 1968, and 1970. In 1969 and 1970, he voted against procurement authorizations altogether.

Agriculture was another strong issue for McGovern. In 1964, he led the successful drive to place controls on the importation of beef, the largest cash product of South Dakota. He opposed the compulsory aspects of Secretary Freeman's wheat certification program and succeeded in getting it made voluntary. He also led a movement in 1966 to direct Freeman to cease his policy of releasing farm surpluses on the open market, which was keeping farm prices down. The resolution passed the Senate unanimously. The farm issue, always one of his strongest, practically made him invulnerable in South Dakota after that.

He continued to support the Food for Peace program. In 1964 he published War Against Want, a 148-page brief calling for the expansion of the program. The Johnson administration eventually pushed through a bill giving the program nearly all the money McGovern had requested.

Among other issues, he opposed the draft and the space

program. He supported urban renewal, housing, mass transit, model cities programs, federal aid to education, federal support to medical schools and students, better care for the mentally retarded, and reduced penalties for use of marijuana. He also supported job training for the unemployed and various other poverty programs. His stand on gun control, which he had previously opposed, became one of strong support after the assassination of Bobby Kennedy.

The issue for which he was best know nationally was, of course, his opposition to the Vietnam War. He became the first of the doves to speak out when, in September 1963, he delivered a speech on the Senate floor denouncing the military spending policy of the United States. The speech included five paragraphs on the failure of the Vietnam policy.

He was silent on Vietnam from then until the day after the vote on the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (which he voted for), when he rose to explain that his vote was not an endorsement of U.S. policy and that he felt that the U.S. was courting disaster.

Five months later, McGovern was completely dissatisfied with President Johnson's reactions to the problem, and from then on, he was to harrass the Administration continually on their handling of Vietnam. In 1965 he put forward his own plan for settling the problem, which called for (1) "a close federation or association" between North and South Vietnam, although both would be autonomous, (2) trade and rail links between the two Vietnams, (3) development of the Mekong River to benefit both, (4) a neutralization of the two countries, with complete U.S. withdrawal,

and (5) a UN presence to guarantee peace.[12]

Johnson repeatedly tried to win over McGovern and the other doves, inviting them to conferences at the White House. The only thing Johnson was able to convince them of was that he was completely under the influence of his generals.

As the situation worsened, McGovern became convinced that the only way to end the war was to get out. This was the essence of his proposal to the Democratic convention platform committee in August 1968. He proposed the immediate withdrawal of 300,000 troops and the movement of the other 250,000 to coastal enclaves for further withdrawals.

After the convention and after his reelection to the Senate, McGovern faced an unasked-for task in addition to his Senate duties. The 1968 Democratic convention had voted to reform the delegate selection process, largely at the urging of people like Senator Harold Hughes of Iowa. Hughes would have been a likely choice to head the reform commission, but he had refused to support Humphrey and was out of favor. Humphrey wanted McGovern. McGovern saw the task as a thankless one which could only earn him enemies, but he finally relented and accepted the job, with the proviso that Hughes should be named vice chairman.

The commission held hearings across the nation, but these were poorly attended. Organized labor, although adequately represented on the original membership of the commission, boycotted the meetings and, with the exception of the United Auto Workers, was uniformly hostile. Nevertheless, McGovern pledged $15,000

of his own money to the support of the commission and vowed that there would never again be a convention like the one in Chicago. Eventually, the committee came up with guidelines for state organizations. The guidelines were tough, and this they owed to McGovern. If they were going to reform the party, they were not going to stop with half-way measures. He observed that "there has never been a political party which, when confronted with the choice of reform or death, has chosen reform."[13] He meant the Democratic Party to be the first.

The commission did not make McGovern a popular member of the Party; nevertheless, the eventual results surprised the party regulars. A surprising number of states met the eighteen official guidelines for choosing delegates, and although there was some protest about quotas, the 1972 convention appeared to be very representative. Surprisingly enough, the states who had the furthest to go made the quickest adjustment to the new rules, Alabama, North Carolina, Colorado, and New Mexico, for instance. However, half-way measures which went unchallenged, like those of California whose primary was still to be a winner-take-all, would cause trouble later on.

Meanwhile, McGovern had not neglected his Senate duties. Realizing before Nixon had taken office that there would be no real change in Vietnam policies, nevertheless he had given the new President time to act before he openly criticized his policies. He was to be a constant critic of Nixon Vietnam policies, just as he had been of Johnson policies.

Another issue on which he came into conflict with the Nixon administration was that of hunger in America. McGovern, as former head of Food for Peace, had considerable expertise in the field, as well as the respect of his Senate colleagues, and pushed through the Senate a resolution creating the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs which he later headed. The committee revealed the existence of far more hunger than had previously been recognized. Spurred to action, the Nixon administration promised to launch an all-out attack "to put an end to hunger in America for all time."[14] In reality, however, Nixon's actions fell far short of his promises. The administration first promised $100 million over a four-year period (a figure McGovern termed far short of what was needed). That figure was first reduced and then shelved entirely. White House spokesmen denied the evidence of real hunger and denied evidence linking brain damage in children to hunger. Nixon did propose a food stamp program, as did McGovern, but there was a difference of $384 million in the two programs. The McGovern program passed the Senate intact, but was reduced considerably in the House.

The Nixon administration also attempted to under-fund the school lunch program which Nixon had promised would be made available to every poor American child by Thanksgiving of 1970. The funds budgeted were less than half Congress had authorized, and at that rate, McGovern suggested, it might be 1980 before every child were covered. Under fire from McGovern and other

critics, the funds were eventually restored.

Although McGovern himself lacked a full understanding of economics and had to rely heavily on his advisors, he attacked the economic policies of the Nixon administration, too. He continued to push his economic conversion plan as a means of converting from a defense-oriented economy to a peace-time economy with full employment.

The Nixon administration proved also to be rather lax about enforcing bans on racial discrimination, particularly in regard to school desegregation and busing. As part of the Nixon administration's "Southern strategy," a policy was initiated toward racial problems which Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a Presidential advisor, termed "benign neglect."[15] This, too, came under fire from McGovern and the other Senate liberals, who charged that Nixon was undermining the accomplishments that had been made in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations.

The Democratic Party reform commission's work was almost complete when George McGovern announced his candidacy for the party's nomination in 1972. His announcement, delivered from the Sioux Falls studios of KELO-TV on the evening of January 18, 1971, was the first of the campaign and one of the earliest in history. McGovern's campaign had actually begun much earlier than the formal announcement. He actually launched it as early as two years prior to that. He bolstered his staff to handle additional duties almost immediately after the 1968 election and secured an agent to book his speaking engagements. In 1969

alone, he collected nearly $70,000 in speaking fees.[16] Taking the advice of the old Kennedy hands on his staff, he hired an advisor to map out a strategy for the election then, three-and-a-half years prior to the 1972 general election. The man he chose for the position was Richard Leone, a member of the Bobby Kennedy staff in 1968. Leone did not work out because there was too great a personality clash with the McGovern regulars, and he eventually quit. His replacement was Gary Hart, a Denver lawyer who had worked for Bobby Kennedy in 1968. Hart was temperamentally better suited to McGovern and fitted in with the other staff members better. Along the way, Frank Mankiewicz, who had been Bobby Kennedy's press secretary in the 1968 campaign, joined the staff.

The staff reorganized and revitalized, McGovern and his advisors decided to concentrate on twenty-four states where he could figure on picking up delegates to the national convention with a reasonable amount of effort. These included some but not all of the primary states. He eventually entered eighteen primaries, including some where he did not figure to do well, but which he could not avoid. Their scenario called for him to do moderately well in the early primaries of New Hampshire, Florida Massachusetts, and West Virginia. The crucial test was to be Wisconsin, which came midway in the first half of the primary season. He had to win in Wisconsin and do well from there on in if he wanted the nomination.

The first test was New Hampshire on March 7. In finishing

second to Muskie, McGovern surprised his detractors by garnering 37% of the vote and winning a moral victory. Muskie, who was expected to get more than 50% of the vote, got only 48%. It was the beginning of the end for Muskie, whose campaign was predicated on the premise that he could sweep the first eight primaries and eliminate all others from contention. The Maine Senator spread himself so thin trying to campaign in eight states at one time that he could not be effective in any one of them.

Florida, one of the states that McGovern had elected to bypass, came next, one week after New Hampshire. McGovern's name was on the ballot, but he chose to campaign on a limited level, concentrating his time and money on states where he stood a better chance of gathering delegates. His efforts in Florida were primarily directed toward the Jewish and Black votes. But the big issue in Florida was busing, and the big winner was Wallace, who picked up 42% of the vote. Humphrey was a distant second with 18.6%, and Muskie was fourth, behind Senator Jackson of Washington. McGovern did find some consolation in the Florida vote, saying that people "cast a vote for Governor Wallace believing that it was a way to register a protest against things as they are."[17]

The third primary took place on March 21, in Illinois. This primary also was slighted by the McGovern people, for two reasons: it occurred too soon with respect to Wisconsin, and it would cost too much ($750,000) to make McGovern a viable candidate.[18]

He did have a full slate of delegates, however, and his people and McCarthy people worked together to get out the peace vote in precincts where McCarthy had no slate running. McGovern eventually picked up thirteen of Illinois' one hundred and seventy delegates for his relatively minor efforts in that state.

Wisconsin, the crucial primary for McGovern, took place on April 4. Wisconsin had only sixty-seven delegates to the national convention, but it was a state where McGovern's strengths lay. Wisconsin had a deep-rooted Populist tradition, a sizeable liberal-intellectual community, and a large farm population, all of which were encouraging to a candidate of McGovern's background. If he couldn't win there, critics said, he couldn't win anywhere. Humphrey complicated things in Wisconsin (as he originally had not planned on entering) and made inroads on both McGovern and Muskie support. McGovern's efforts in Wisconsin were directed to reach the mainstream of voters. One of the issues with which he was to do this effectively was tax reform. He held a press conference at the home of a Polish laborer who couldn't meet the property taxes on a $7,000 home and drew quite a bit of support for the tax reform issue.[19]

At the last moment another George made his presence felt, as Wallace's entry in Wisconsin had everybody scrambling. However, McGovern swept seven of the nine districts, picking up 30% of the Democratic vote to 21% for Wallace, who finished second. The McGovern win was largely due to a factor which was

to become a trademark of his campaign in the primaries, what The New Republic called the "best organization ever seen in a primary state."[20] The Wisconsin vote added fifty-four delegates to his total and established him as a candidate to be reckoned with. With this victory, there remained only three candidates with a real chance at the nomination: Humphrey, Muskie, and McGovern. Muskie's fourth place finish in Wisconsin had him on the ropes, so Humphrey was rated by the press as the favorite.

McGovern was faced with two primaries on April 25, and he elected to focus on Massachusetts, leaving Pennsylvania to Muskie and Humphrey. McGovern spent only four or five days in Pennsylvania, where he concentrated on suburban and academic areas, hoping to pick up perhaps twenty or thirty delegates. Above all, his strategy was to avoid spreading his time, money, and manpower too thin, as Muskie had done. McGovern went into Massachusetts eight and one-half days before the polls were to open and campaigned heavily, devoting much of his energy to the peace vote. McGovern won Massachusetts and all one hundred and two of its delegates.

By the Pennsylvania primary, Muskie's campaign was in deep trouble. He had planned on winning both Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, but he was trounced in both and withdrew from the race. Humphrey won the Pennsylvania popular vote and fifty-seven delegates, Wallace was second in the popular vote but picked up only two delegates, McGovern was third and garnered thirty-seven delegates, and Muskie was fourth and collected twenty-nine delegates. McGovern's showings in both primaries

enabled him to take a small lead over Humphrey in the race for the nomination.

Five primaries were scheduled for May 2 (Alabama, the District of Columbia, Indiana, North Carolina, and Ohio), and Tennessee followed two days later, but Ohio was the main event. McGovern had originally planned to skip Ohio, but evidence of blue collar support in Wisconsin and Massachusetts encouraged him to try a one-week blitz in Ohio. Humphrey won Ohio with 41% to McGovern's 30% of the vote, far better than McGovern's earlier estimates of his chances. Ohio gave him another fifty-six delegates. Of the other five primaries, Wallace won three: Alabama, North Carolina, and Tennessee; Humphrey won Indiana; and Walter Fauntleroy, former aide to Martin Luther King, picked up the District of Columbia's delegation as a favorite son. McGovern gained another delegate in Alabama, for a total for the week of fifty-seven, to retain a slight lead over Humphrey.

Nebraska and West Virginia were the next two stops in the primary campaign, both scheduled for May 9. McGovern left West Virginia for Wallace and Humphrey to fight over and concentrated on Nebraska. In Nebraska he again faced Humphrey and also what The New Republic called "the first organized smear campaign"[21] of the primaries. The smear involved a distortion of McGovern's stands on abortion and the legalization of marijuana. McGovern countered it through the endorsement of ex-Governor Frank Morrison, a popular Democrat who told the voters that Frank Morrison "wouldn't be out there supporting some radical.'"[22] McGovern snared 41% of the vote to Humphrey's 35% and sixteen

of the twenty-two delegates. Meanwhile, Humphrey beat Wallace by a two-to-one margin in West Virginia.

One week later were the Maryland and Michigan primaries. On the day before the primaries, May 15, Wallace was wounded by an attempted assassin, Arthur Bremer. Wallace might have won both primaries anyway, but the shooting could have stimulated a sizeable sympathy vote. In Michigan, where busing was almost as big an issue as it had been in Florida, Wallace captured 51% of the vote to McGovern's 20% and Humphrey's 16%. In Maryland, Wallace won with 39% to Humphrey's 27% and McGovern's 22%. McGovern collected thirty-nine more delegates in Michigan and six in Maryland to add to his total.

The following week, McGovern's victories in Rhode Island and Oregon, coupled with Humphrey's third place finish in both races, raised the question of whether McGovern could be stopped. The twin victories added fifty-six delegates to his total, and no less an authority than John Mitchell, campaign manager for President Nixon, stated that "It's going to be difficult for them to stop Mr. McGovern."[23] Going into the California primary, McGovern had the momentum that, unless he were stopped there, would carry him to the nomination.

There were three other campaigns on June 6 (New Jersey, New Mexico, and South Dakota), but California was obviously the key because it had two hundred and seventy-one delegates to the convention and was a winner-take-all. Despite the fact that this was a technical violation of the reform rules, both candidates publicly stated before the vote that they would

accept the results. Humphrey concentrated on labor and the aerospace industry, attacking mcGovern's stands on military spending, welfare reform, economic conversion, and the Vietnam War. He also brought out McGovern's 1966 vote against closing a right-to-work filibuster, a vote that had won for McGovern George Meany's opposition. McGovern responded with his usual campaign, well organized and with a huge monetary advantage. In addition, McGovern beat Humphrey into the field: his TV spots beat Humphrey's to the air by four weeks.[24] The polls reflected such a big lead that McGovern coasted the last few days before the primary. He swept all four June 6 primaries and appeared to have the nomination sewed up. Unfortunately for party harmony, his opposition was not about to let him have the nomination easily. Although the regulars denied the existence of a "Stop McGovern" movement, Humphrey and Muskie were not about to step aside. Six days after the California primary, Humphrey organizers challenged the California delegation because it did not conform to the reform rules.

Deeply embittered by what they viewed as an attempt to steal rightfully won delegates, McGovern forces moved on to the last big primary, in New York on June 20. New York was Kennedy territory, and McGovern had no trouble securing a minimum of two hundred and twenty-five, with a possibility of picking up a few more, of the two hundred and seventy-eight New York delegates.

In the meantime, McGovern had collected his share and more

in the non-primary states. Organization, a big plus in the primaries, had paid off in states like Missouri where grass roots organization and heavy telephone canvassing scored heavily. Despite the face the Governor Warren E. Hearnes and Senators Stuart Symington and Thomas Eagleton had staked out Missouri as Muskie territory as early as October 1971, Missouri went to the national convention largely uncommitted, but with ten to fifteen McGovern delegates. Virtually the same tactics worked in most of the non-primary states. In Texas, for instance, McGovern forces took advantage of their organization and their knowledge of procedure and the reform rules to control as much as one-third of the largest delegation to be chosen by the convention process in 1972.

Despite the large number of votes he had collected elsewhere, the nomination hinged on the status of the California delegation. The proposal pushed by Humphrey forces was proportional allocation to the candidates according to the percentage of the vote each had won in California. This meant that one hundred and twenty of the McGovern California delegation were his regardless. The issue was to be decided on the convention floor. McGovern forces won two breaks on the voting procedures: the uncontested one hundred and twenty delegates would be allowed to vote, and the necessary vote would be a majority of the uncontested delegates rather than the total number of delegates. Muskie delegates defected to McGovern in large numbers on the issue, and McGovern won the California vote easily. With California in his pocket, he won the nomination

on the first ballot.

It was not all joy in the McGovern camp: Mayor Daley's Illinois delegation was ousted from the convention for ignoring the reform rules and replaced with a delegation that also fell short of meeting the requirements set forth by the reform commission; organized labor, particularly Meany and the AFL-CIO, had opposed McGovern from the start and refused to endorse him; and the conservative wing of the party promised to "sit this one out."

McGovern still had a long was to go before November. The party was perhaps as divided as it had been four years earlier. He would have to try to pull it together.

Footnotes

[1] Robert Sam Anson, McGovern: A Biography (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 8.

[2] Jack Newfield, Robert Kennedy: A Memoir (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1969), p. 225.

[3] Robert Sam Anson, pp. 9-10.

[4] Alan L. Clem, "The 1968 Election in South Dakota," Public Affairs, No. 36 (Vermillion, South Dakota: Governmental Research Bureau, University of South Dakota, February 15, 1969), p. 5.

[5] Clem, p. 1.

[6] Robert Sam Anson, p. 63.

[7] Anson, p. 29.

[8] Anson, p. 52.

[9] Anson, p. 92.

[10] Anson, p. 112.

[11] Anson, p. 126.

[12] Anson, pp. 155-156.

[13] John S. Saloma III and Frederick H. Sontag, Parties: The Real Opportunity for Effective Citizen Politics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 16.

[14] Robert Sam Anson, p. 232.

[15] "Moynihan Memo: Negroes Are Making Great Progress, But--" United States News and World Report, March 16, 1970, p. 58.

[16] Robert Sam Anson, p. 244.

[17] "Where Can Wallace Go From Here?" The New Republic, March 25, 1972, p. 3.

[18] "Illinois Twosome," The New Republic, January 22, 1972, p. 12.

[19] Paul R. Wieck, "Humphrey's Chance to Pull Ahead," The New Republic, April 1, 1972, p. 12.

[20] "George Does It," The New Republic, April 15, 1972, p. 10.

[21] "Surviving the Smear," The New Republic, May 20, 1972, p. 8.

[22] "Surviving the Smear," p. 8.

[23] "Does McGovern Have It Made?" Newsweek, June 5, 1972, p. 33.

[24] "California: Last Big Stop Before Miami," Newsweek, June 5, 1972, p. 34.

Methodology

Through the ages one of the questions that has concerned rhetorical critics is the part played in the total effect of the speech by the esteem, or lack of esteem with which the speaker is held and how the speaker builds upon that esteem or tries to remedy the lack thereof. Aristotle numbered among his artistic proofs ethos, which he defined as the means of persuasion which "reside in the character of the speaker,"[1] and termed this ethos "the most potent of all the means to persuasion."[2] A further demonstration of the respect which classical rhetoric had for the part ethos plays in persuasion is the insistence of Cicero and Quintillian on the orator being defined as "the good man speaking [well]."[3]

Modern rhetoric, with its attempts to quantify the effects of the variables that make up the speaking process, has reached a similar conclusion. The terms that are used to describe the process vary (speaker credibility, ethos, image, charisma), but the consensus seems to be that it is highly important to public speaking. More relevant to the purposes of this paper, it seems to be highly important to Presidential contenders. As Janowitz and Marvick point out:

> Much of the meaningful deliberation of the electorate involves weighing the merits of the rival candidates. Since national presidential elections occur only every four years, the citizens' estimates of the personal stature of the presidential candidates are

> in some respects more crucial than are their views on party promises and proposals which are certain to require modification under the impact of emerging events.[4]

In the course of this paper, examples of campaign oratory as delivered by Senator George S. McGovern will be examined for the purpose of analyzing Senator McGovern's attempts to reinforce favorable impressions on the part of his hearers and to alter unfavorable ones. In this chapter, the question of what ethos is and how it can be used as a means of proof will be considered as a basis for that analysis. Already mentioned in this chapter have been Aristotle's reference to the term and some related terms and synonyms. Perhaps another definition, this time from the point of view of communication theory, would be helpful. Kenneth Anderson defines ethos as "the image of the source held in the minds of the receiver(s). Fully operationalized, ethos is the total of the receiver's(s') responses to all possible questions about the source."[5] Obviously then, ethos is a two-party process and will be treated as such in this paper; both the speaker and the rhetorical critic must be fully aware of the audience at all times. Ethos is, more or less, the opinion of the speaker as held by the audience which, of course, may vary from person to person and from time to time. Despite the fact that ethos is determined primarily by the audience, the speaker is not totally powerless in this respect, since he can act to modify his image. Hopefully, in this chapter some of the actions he can take will be discussed in sufficient detail that they may be helpful to the

reader.

In a broad overview, ethos can be said to be of two general types: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic ethos can be defined, on a very basic level, as the image of the source, held by the receiver prior to the speaking situation. Intrinsic ethos, then, applies to the image of the source created during the speaking situation.

Extrinsic ethos, the image that the speaker brings with him to the speech, is a product of a number of things. Anderson lists four categories of information which contribute to the image of the speaker prior to the speech: "experiences with the source, either direct or vicarious; facts known about the source, particularly those that provide indication of referential class memberships; endorsements of the source offered by others; and immediate stimuli leading to the actual communication."[6]

The first category, experiences with the source, is an important one. Rarely do we hear a speaker with whom we have had no interaction previously. The interaction may be through secondary sources, but it is interaction nonetheless. We may read, see, or hear him through any one of a number of media. From these interactions, we form opinions. These opinions, in turn, are partially responsible for the ethos that the speaker has for us.

Facts known about the source are also highly important. Presumably these facts are true, but it is only necessary that

they be assumed to be true. These facts may be such things as vital statistics, education, family background, religious affiliations, positions on questions of public policy, and so on. These facts assume their primary importance in that they determine reference group membership. We may say of Senator Morse of Oregon that his positions on the Vietnam War reveal him to be a dove and a liberal. Our opinion of Senator Morse will, in turn, be colored by how we feel about doves and liberals. If we are members of an organization like the John Birch Society, Senator Morse will have little credibility for us. If, on the other hand, we ourselves identify with doves and liberals, his credibility is likely to be high. We stereotype people according to the reference groups they belong to, and despite our pretensions to judging people on merit, these stereotypes affect our opinions and thus the speaker's ethos.

Empirical research tends to bear out the contention that endorsements of the source by prominent individuals affect our perceptions of the source. Studies such as that conducted by Harvey[7] indicate that the ethos of the introducer affects the ethos of the person being introduced. Politicians have long recognized this. In every major election, candidates in trouble are endorsed by better known members of their party who venture forth to campaign for them. The most common example of this occurs when the President, the Vice President, or a Congressional leader visits a state to lend support to a candidate for the United States Senate or House of Representatives. Endorse-

ments can have a negative effect, however. Endorsement by someone with a negative image can be detrimental to the speaker's image. This is why local candidates may try to divorce their candidacy from the national one if they feel the Presidential contender is not locally popular. However, the positive endorsement by a popular figure can have a favorable impact on the ethos of the speaker.

Stimuli relative to the immediate presentation of the speech may also affect the status of the speaker. If, for instance, the speech is presented on television, that fact alone, that the speech is important enough to be televised, may be enough to confer status on the speaker. His dress and manner may also contribute strongly to the image his listeners construct of him.

Experiences with the source, facts known about the source, endorsements by others, and immediate stimuli all contribute to extrinsic ethos. It is the image that results from these things that the speaker must either reinforce or alter in his speech, and it is the image established by what he does in his speech that is called intrinsic ethos.

Many times in public speaking courses, students are told that in order to be persuasive the speaker must be a good person, be sincere, and work for the best interests of his audience. As Anderson points out, this is not always enough. There is always the chance that what the speaker thinks he is doing is not getting through to his audience. "To create a favorable ethos one must not only be a good person but also be able to

communicate this to his audience through behavior that leads the audience to draw that inference."[8]

The image that the speaker brings to the speech will, of course, have an effect on the intrinsic aspects of the speaker's ethos, largely because members of the audience will tend to interpret what the speaker says in relation to the way they already feel about him. Needless to say, this constitutes a difficult problem for the speaker who is trying to overcome a largely negative image.

The speaker who makes an effort to emphasize ethos in speaking can approach the problem by seeking to establish some of the factors which make up extrinsic ethos, in a manner which will win favor with his immediate audience. He can emphasize past experiences in which he has related to the the people in his audience. For example, a speaker can refer to a speech he has previously made that his audience will be familiar with, especially if he took a stand that his audience will support. Also, he can present new facts or emphasize known facts about himself that may place him in referential groups that his audience will identify with. A speaker who is addressing a rural audience might well emphasize a boyhood spent on a farm. Another tactic is to offer endorsements from people who are popular with his audience. A congressional candidate might well say: "You know, I met with the President last week, and he said to me, 'Joe you'd better beat that so-and-so. We need you in Congress.'"

In addition to these factors, there are numerous others which

should be considered. The first is the topic chosen for the speech. The audience will apply the attitudes which they have toward that topic to the speaker. If he associates himself with a subject to which the audience is positively oriented, his ethos will rise, or remain stable if it is already high. If he associates himself with a subject to which the audience is negatively oriented, his ethos will sink, or remain stable if it is already low.

The topic is important in another sense in that the speaker whose competency is open to question is likely to lose face, especially if there are people in his audience who have some knowledge of the field he is addressing.

Ethos is affected, too, by the manner in which the speaker handles logical and emotional proofs. The speaker who presents a logically constructed speech which is well-supported with reasoning, statistics, and examples may very well impress his audience as a rational, intelligent person. The speaker who fails to do these things, especially if addressing an educated audience, may well reveal himself to be poorly prepared and uninformed about his topic.

The speaker who uses emotional appeals to motivate his audience without trying to manipulate them is more likely to be believed than the speaker who is obviously relying heavily on emotional appeals in order to sell the audience on some project. As Robert Oliver points out, people "tend to be somewhat suspicious of 'emotional speaking.'"[9] No matter how gullible an audience may seem to be, they resent someone

"trying to sell them a bill of goods."

Language and style also affect the image of the speaker. An audience can be expected to react to the speaker according to the type of language he uses. An audience which feels the speaker is speaking over their heads may label the speaker an egghead and react negatively. On the other hand the speaker who over-adapts his style and language to his audience may be perceived as talking down to them. Needless to say, the effects of this approach are also likely to be deleterious to the image of the speaker.

Another factor may be the speaker's delivery. Several studies cited by Anderson indicate that "excessive vocalized pauses, malfluencies, or other problems in delivery may inhibit the formation of a positive image."[10] The converse would also seem to be true for the most part: McCroskey, in his studies on the effects of evidence on persuasion, conducted an experiment in which he combined the use of good and bad delivery with evidence in persuasive speeches. He concluded, "Greater attitude change and higher perceived credibility were produced by the condition including evidence and good delivery than any of the other three conditions [no evidence-good delivery, no evidence-bad delivery, evidence-bad delivery]."[11] A smooth, fluent delivery could be expected to heighten the formation of a positive image. An exception might be if the extrinsic ethos of the speaker pictured him as a smooth-talking "flim-flam" man. In such a case, smooth delivery might reinforce a negative image, and a slightly flawed delivery might create

an image of a "just folks" type of person. Such concepts as sincerity and enthusiasm also contribute to the ethos dimension of delivery. Even a somewhat flawed delivery, in respect to smoothness, can be effective if the speaker communicates a sincerity and enthusiasm for his topic.

The occasion, too, possesses an ethical dimension. A Fourth of July speaker's image may be enhanced by the fact that he was chosen to make the main address, by the patriotic sentiments associated with the day, by other notables who share the platform, and so on.

Audience reaction is a sometimes neglected phenomena. Theatre and music have long appreciated the effect of an enthusiastic audience response. It was fairly common at one time to hire people to applaud and cheer performances in order to insure an appropriate reception. These "claques" worked on the premise that an audience would be swayed by a few people who reacted enthusiastically to a performance, a sort of "bandwagon" effect. This has been a part of political oratory too. Perhaps the Wilkie candidacy is an example of the positive use of this effect. The galleries of the 1940 Republican national convention were liberally laced with Wilkie admirers who demonstrated their support for him so enthusiastically that the delegates eventually gave him the nomination.

An example of the negative use of this tactic has been the harassing of candidates by radicals who have disrupted speeches by booing, chanting, and generally preventing speakers from being heard. Hubert Humphrey was a target of such tactics

in 1968. His inability to deal effectively with those tactics may have lost him much of his liberal support in that election.

Attempts to manipulate audience response can backfire on the manipulators. Mayor Daley's packing of the galleries in the 1968 Democratic convention in his attempt to counter the effects of the street riots certainly reflected harshly on him. The disruptive tactics of radicals has also backlashed in that it has created sympathy for those at whom these tactics have been directed.

These various factors, then, make up what is called intrinsic ethos. In the following chapters, both the extrinsic and intrinsic aspects of the ethos that George McGovern displayed in representative speeches of the 1972 Presidential campaign will be investigated, establishing, first, the image each audience had of him prior to the speech and, second, how he attempted to manipulate that image through the various factors that make up intrinsic ethos.

Ethos is a complex and important part of the communicative process. Wilson and Arnold put it must aptly:

> It is not reputation alone that makes or mars a speaker's prestige. Everything revealed by the speech--knowledge, analytical power, organizing ability, verbal skill, delivery--plays a part in maintaining, strengthening, or weakening a listener's confidence in what is said. Each speaker shapes his prestige by every choice he makes or leaves unmade in research, composition, and delivery.[12]

Footnotes

[1] Aristotle, The Rhetoric, translated by Lane Cooper (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1932), p. 8.

[2] Aristotle, p. 9.

[3] Edward P. J. Corbett, Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 86.

[4] Morris Janowitz and Dwaine Marvick, "Competitive Pressure and Democratic Consent," The Public Opinion Quarterly, XIX (Winter 1955-56), p. 391.

[5] Kenneth E. Anderson, Persuasion: Theory and Practice (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1971), p. 218.

[6] Anderson, p. 224.

[7] Ivan G. Harvey, "An Experimental Study of the Influence of the Ethos of the Introducer as it Affects the Ethos and the Persuasiveness of the Speaker," Unpubl. diss. (Michigan, 1968), cited by Kenneth E. Anderson, p. 225.

[8] Kenneth E. Anderson, p. 227.

[9] Robert T. Oliver, The Psychology of Persuasive Speech (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), p. 248.

[10] Kenneth E. Anderson, p. 230.

[11] James C. McCroskey, "A Summary of Experimental Research on the Effects of Evidence in Persuasive Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LV (April 1969), p. 173.

[12] John F. Wilson and Carroll C. Arnold, Public Speaking as a Liberal Art (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1968), p. 163.

The Democratic Ticket

Although the nominee's acceptance speech had been scheduled to reach prime time television audiences, it was well past that hour when George McGovern rose to address the Democratic national convention in Miami. The delay was the result of what some observers called " . . . a comic interlude, a burst of silliness on the part of delegates whose taut bonds of decorum and discipline seemed suddenly to snap now that it finally didn't make any difference."[1] The occasion for the display was the balloting for the Vice Presidential nominee. Although McGovern's choice had been announced as Thomas Eagleton, Senator from Missouri, the delegates staged a mild revolt and some eighty names received votes. Eagleton was confirmed on the first ballot, but the roll call took so much time that it was 2:45 A.M. before McGovern finally spoke to the convention and those few die-hards still watching television at that late hour.

McGovern's audience was much smaller than it might have been if the speech had occurred as scheduled, with a prime time television audience available. Most of those people who were either neutral or opposed to McGovern's candidacy can be presumed to have become bored with the delay and gone to bed, leaving an audience largely composed of the pro-McGovern Democrats for whom the speech would be the high point of the convention. Labor, in particular, or at least labor leaders

like George Meany, had called it quits half-way through the previous night's roll call when it became apparent that McGovern had the nomination. Meany was quoted as saying, "that's it. I'm going to bed." His aides added, "McGovern said he could win without labor bosses. Now let's see." and "We are going to sit this one out."[2]

The audience inside the convention hall was more pro-McGovern than anti, but did include many of those Humphrey, Muskie, Jackson, and Wallace delegates who had tried to block the McGovern nomination. Although Humphrey, Jackson, Muskie, and Chisholm joined McGovern and Eagleton on the speaker's platform in a show of party unity, things were less optimistic among party regulars on the convention floor. Many felt not only that McGovern could not win in November, but also that his nomination would hurt other candidates. Governor Robert W. Scott of North Carolina summed up the feelings of many southern political leaders when he said, "The concern we Southern Governors have is not about McGovern as a candidate for President, but for State, local and congressional offices."[3]

Most of the audience, then, was pro-McGovern, but there were doubters. One of the purposes of the three addresses given that night was to ease those doubts and to build enthusiasm for the McGovern-Eagleton ticket. Eagleton led off and was followed by Ted Kennedy in what seemed to be a master stroke of strategy. The use of the Kennedy name to introduce McGovern would add prestige and the glamour that McGovern himself lacked. When McGovern finally took the podium, he faced an audience

which was readied by two extremely able speakers. Indeed, the thought may have occurred to many viewers after Kennedy's speech, "How can McGovern top that?" The query was answered by the time Senator McGovern concluded.

He began, much as one might when accepting an award, by recognizing those who had supported him and by praising their efforts:

> My nomination is all the more precious in that it is the gift of the most open political process in our national history. It is the sweet harvest cultivated by tens of thousands of tireless volunteers--old and young--and funded by literally hundreds of thousands of small contributors.[4]

This served his ethos in several ways. First, it demonstrated his magnanimity. He assured them that he did not win the nomination by himself and that the real credit belonged to those who worked for him. Second, he thus reminded those who worked for him of a pleasurable interaction with him, working for a winning candidate who represented the issues the way they themselves viewed them.

From there, McGovern acted to reassure those who had doubts as to his patriotism:

> This is a nomination of the people, and I hereby dedicate this campaign to the people. And next January we will restore the government to the people.[5]

His references to the democratic principle of government by the people and his subsequent references to Jefferson, Jackson, and Franklin Roosevelt should have countered to some extent, the allegations that McGovern was a radical and soft on Communism.

His next appeals focused on party unity, and he built his

own credibility in several ways. First, he complimented all those who opposed his nomination, saying that the nomination came "after vigorous competition with the ablest men and women our party can offer."[6] This gesture of conciliation may have eased a few bruised egos. Second, he made a non-partisan appeal for help in the coming election, saying, " . . . I covet the help of every Democrat and every Republican and independent who wants America to be the great and good land it can be."[7] By making the appeal for the help of all Americans rather than just those who belonged to his party, McGovern made it appear that his candicacy had patriotic rather than political ends. Third, he referred to the state of Ohio, its chairman Frank King, and its Governor Gilligan. This reference served not only to remind his audience of an experience they had shared (that of hearing chairman King step to the microphone and announce innumerable times that Ohio passes.") but to attempt to build support in Ohio, a key state in the November election. Perhaps the mention of the state, Frank King, and Governor Gilligan on national television would impress Ohio voters with his good intentions toward them. Fourth, he referred to the common enemy, Richard Nixon, and sought to build his own image by contrasting it with Nixon's, saying in effect: "I'm not such a bad guy when compared with that other so-and-so." Fifth, he referred to each of the eight major contenders for the nomination in complimentary terms. This might prove to boost his image in the eyes of the followers of Humphrey, Muskie, Jackson, Chisholm, Mills, Sanford, McCarthy and Wallace, by arousing the thought

that "McGovern's not so bad if he thinks so well of my candidate."

The next brief section contrasted McGovern campaign policies with those of the Republican party. By contrast, McGovern's would appear more open and honest:

> Let the opposition collect their $10-million in secret money from the privileged. And let us find one million ordinary Americans who will contribute $25 to this campaign--a McGovern "million-member club" with members who will expect not special favors for themselves but a better land for us all.[8]

In other words, where Nixon was the candidate of the wealthy and self-seeking, McGovern was the candicate of the average American who wants nothing more than what is best for the country. Nixon's methods were secret; McGovern's were open to public view.

Much of the rest of the speech was concerned with McGovern's stand on the issues. He was against war, especially the Vietnam War. He was for maintaining national defense capabilities, but was for better utilizing tax dollars for domestic problems like education and pollution. He was for providing jobs for the unemployed, and he was for tax reform. Assuming that many in the audience felt the same way about these issues, his image should have benefitted from his position on them.

His conclusion was highly patriotic and asked his audience to "call America home to the founding ideals that nourished us in the beginning,"[9] thus linking his candidacy with the ideals on which the country was founded. His appeal, "Come home, America," should have been especially effective on those who have denounced modern life for its perversion of democratic ideals.

There were other prominent linkages in the speech which should be mentioned. There was a religious one: he quoted from the Bible about half-way through the speech: "To everything there is a season. . . ."[10] and he invoked God's blessings in his concluding statement: "May God grant us the wisdom to cherish this good land to meet the great challenge that beckons us home."[11] He also quoted from the romantic poet, Yeats, from Woodrow Wilson, and from a popular patriotic song, "This Land Is Your Land," by Woody Guthrie.

The total effect of the speech should have portrayed George McGovern as a pious and learned patriot, who had the best interests of the country at heart. If the speech were successful, he would be regarded as a man who was honest about his intentions and who intended to steer America away from policies which "have permitted our own house to fall into disarray."[12]

The acceptance speech impressed many observers with McGovern's eloquence. One, Norman Mailer, described it as "strong and tender" and "the best he had ever heard him [McGovern] give."[13] But no one was foolish enough to believe that McGovern would have an easy time catching Richard Nixon, who led McGovern in the polls by nineteen points immediately after the convention.[14]

The task was to become even more difficult. Almost immediately after Eagleton became the nominee for Vice President, it was revealed that he had been treated in a mental hospital three times for depression. The damage was compounded by a Jack Anderson story, later retracted, that Eagleton had a record of

arrest for drunken driving. McGovern asserted that he was "behind Eagleton 1000 percent," and Eagleton swore not to resign from the ticket. Under increasing pressure both to retain and to oust Eagleton from the ticket, McGovern faced the kind of situation in which he was the loser no matter how he acted. To continue with Eagleton on the ticket meant running with a man whose fitness for the office was under suspicion and who had been less than candid with McGovern. To drop him from the ticket meant putting both McGovern and the party through the embarrassment of selecting another man to replace Eagleton. McGovern finally chose the second course, although he took almost two weeks to decide to do it.

On July 31, two weeks after the close of the convention, McGovern and Eagleton held a joint news conference in Washington, D.C., in which they each read a brief statement.[15] The immediate audience for that brief joint statement was the press, but would eventually encompass the entire electorate. McGovern did his best to cushion the blow to his candidacy that the furor had caused. In an attempt to soothe those who had urged that Eagleton be retained, he stated that in his own mind he was satisfied that Eagleton was capable of fulfilling the needs of the Vice Presidency. Then he presented two reasons for the action they were taking: one, attention was being diverted from the important issues of the day and two, the matter was causing dissension in the party and the nation.

The image thus presented was that of a man who reluctantly

was doing what was best for the party and the country. While he felt Eagleton was fully cured, he could not let discussion of Eagleton's health obscure the vital issues of the campaign. There were many people who felt that McGovern should have kept Eagleton on the ticket. A Gallup poll, commissioned by Newsweek, indicated that 59% of the people felt that Eagleton was still qualified for the Vice Presidency, 55% felt that he should not resign from the ticket, and 68% said that his presence on the ticket did not cause them to feel less favorable toward it.[16] To counter undesirable reaction by this group, the statement was a joint one in which Eagleton agreed with what McGovern had said and promised to work for McGovern's candidacy.

It was a nice try, but perhaps Eagleton came off better than McGovern. Those who were solidly for McGovern probably agreed with his reasons, although many may have regretted his abandonment of Eagleton on principle. Those who opposed McGovern or who were leaning that way found yet another reason for doing so. At the height of the controversy McGovern found himself four more points (twenty-three) behind Nixon in the polls.[17] The issue, particularly McGovern's statement that he was 1000 per cent behind Eagleton, was to be a source of ridicule for the remainder of the campaign.

The search for a replacement extended the damage, as possibility after possibility turned the McGovern people down. A joke soon circulated to the effect that "The Democrats are not running through the phone book looking for a candidate.

It just looks that way." Eventually, they settled on Sergeant Shriver, a Kennedy brother-in-law who headed the Peace Corps and the Office of Economic Opportunity during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. He was the tenth person approached as a replacement for Eagleton and had not even been seriously considered for the original nomination at Miami Beach. On August 5, McGovern delivered a television address, nominating Shriver and commencing the campaign against Nixon.[18]

Most people who saw the address viewed it during the early evening, just prior to the prime time television hours, although excerpts were repeated on later news programs. The potential audience was reasonably large, then, and was composed of a representative sample of the electorate. In light of the criticism McGovern had received as a result of his handling of the Eagleton affair and the well-publicized difficulty in finding a replacement, one could assume that his popularity was at a low point. The image that he had previously tried to project, that of an honest, sincere candidate, was in jeopardy. That image badly needed reinforcement.

He began by once more explaining his actions in the withdrawal of Eagleton from the ticket. Once more he emphasized that he followed his "public responsibilities" rather than the inclinations of his heart in asking Eagleton to resign.[19] The intention again was to justify his actions, to indicate that his motives were ethical.

Little of this speech was devoted to Sargeant Shriver, but the paragraph or so that was, indicated that Shriver was

qualified for the office, citing the previous positions he had held. McGovern had bigger concerns than Shriver on his mind: answering the charges of radicalism that had been raised by members of the Nixon administration. He defined the choice that awaited the voters in November:

> It is a choice . . . between your hopes on one hand and your fears on the other, between today's America and the one you want for your children, between those who believe we must abandon our ideals to present realities and those who wish to shape reality to American ideals.[20]

He set up a dichotomy with himself on one side and Nixon on the other, a good/evil, black/white contrast. The intention was obviously to indicate to the voters that their choice was limited and that the choice of Nixon was an "evil" one. Obviously, if Nixon was evil, then McGovern, who represented contrasting policies, was good.

He then referred obliquely to the attacks made on him by administration officials when he said, "They can now be judged, not by their attacks on others but by their own actions."[21] He was, in effect, asking that his audience examine the record of Nixon administration accomplishments and look at their own lives to see what effect Nixon's policies have had. This examination should have served to undermine Nixon's position and give McGovern a foothold to establish his own. This led to a comparison of the attacks on McGovern with the attacks on Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy:

> This, too, is in the tradition of a party whose nominee predicted that if Franklin Roosevelt were elected, grass would grow in the streets of a hundred cities, the weeds will overrun the fields

> of millions of farms, their churches and schools will decay.
>
> But we need not go back that far. In 1960, the Republican nominee said that John Kennedy's domestic policies could only produce cruel inflation, Governmental interference with every aspect of our economic life, recession or even worse.[22]

In other words, he made an analogy with those successful and now respected administrations: The Republicans attacked Roosevelt and Kennedy in the same way they attacked McGovern, they were wrong about Roosevelt and Kennedy, and they would be wrong about McGovern. This linkage served not only as refutation or redirection of the charges of radicalism, but enabled McGovern to compare himself to respected American political figures. The association also served as an indirect endorsement of McGovern and his policies because he was implying that Kennedy and Roosevelt would have endorsed them.

He then took up the issues. Once again his first concern was the war. Where Nixon in his addresses to the Nation talked about Vietnamization as a means of achieving "Peace with Honor," McGovern referred to "the honor of bringing peace" and to the Nixon policies as saving "the prestige of warmakers."[23] In approaching the problem in this direction, he was probably doing his best, considering his views on immediate withdrawal, to conciliate those who demanded an honorable peace, assuring them that peace in itself was an honorable end and that prolongation of the war served no one but the warmakers.

From the war issue, McGovern moved to defense spending. In many ways his position might be called a conservative one

in that he called for "an end to military waste in the defense budget."[24] He pointed out that his proposed budget was actually larger than Eisenhower's during the height of the Cold War, a statement obviously designed to refute the image of McGovern as an appeaser who would undermine U.S. defense.

Tax reform, one of his favorite issues, followed. This issue should have worked to endear him to working people and to earn him disfavor with industry, as he recommended closing loopholes and eliminating special exemptions.

Employment was the final issue which he took up. His position should have satisfied Middle America, for the most part. He advocated jobs for those who could work, through creation of jobs by the government if necessary, and an adequate income for everyone. He pointed out that although Nixon had recommended a guaranteed annual income, it was less than people needed. Pointing out Nixon's recommendation could have served to refute the charges that the idea of a guaranteed annual income was radical.

Then recognizing that there might be opposition to his stand on those issues, McGovern divided the opposition into three classes: one, those who misunderstood, two, those who had a different opinion, and three, those who opposed him because they defended special interests. He promised to clarify for the first, debate the second, and expose the third. In doing so, he pictured himself not only as a reasonable man but also as one who would fight special interest groups in behalf of the general public.

His final appeal was to the need for improvement in the quality of American life. This appeal should have reached most Americans, as most recognize that crime in the streets, pollution, over-population, and so on are making life increasingly unpleasant. In presenting his solution to those problems or at least in recognizing that they needed to be solved, he should have appealed to people as a man who understood and cared about the problems that America faced.

He offered a challenge for those who would join him. What others had labeled as radical was actually a pioneer journey, not "to a distant coast, but inward toward the most powerful aspirations of the human heart."[25] This was consistent with American pioneering ideals and should have struck a responsive chord in some of his more idealistic listeners.

Along the way, McGovern had made reference to Walt Whitman and Thomas Jefferson. He closed by quoting Solomon from the Bible, ". . . give me now wisdom that I may go out and come in before this people, for who can judge this thy people that is so great."[26]

The overall image that one can draw from this speech is that of a man who personally regretted what had to be done to Thomas Eagleton, but who made that choice in the best interests of the people. In the tradition of the Republican Party, his opponents had made charges against him, but in the tradition of Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy, he would persevere. He would take his case to the people, and would defend it against

misunderstanding, honest opposition, and special interests. He would try to remedy the deterioration of the quality of American life in the best American pioneer traditions, as a patriotic and pious American.

How effective was it? Again, it may have reassured his admirers, but it probably swayed very few of the uncommitted or the opposition, even if they saw the broadcast. People who have made up their minds about a candidate may not bother to watch his speeches if there is anything else to do. If I may offer a personal example, my parents, brothers, and sister ate dinner during the broadcast and paid no attention whatsoever. If this were a widespread reaction, then the effect of the speech was probably very limited.

This concludes chapter three, concerning the beginnings of George McGovern's campaign as Democratic nominee. It was not an auspicious beginning, and it certainly interrupted the momentum that George McGovern had built up during the primary campaign. Even worse, it exposed McGovern's campaign to ridicule, to jokes that he would have a great deal of difficulty living down. The decision he made in the Eagleton crisis was to have a disastrous effect upon McGovern's credibility as a candidate, especially among young people who may have felt that McGovern was abandoning Eagleton because of political expediency. It accented party disharmony, and the time that was lost in putting together a ticket torpedoed the McGovern strategy of getting in an early start on the campaign. In short, the McGovern campaign ship was nearly sunk before it had left port.

Footnotes

[1] "How McGovern Brought It Off," Newsweek, July 24, 1972, p. 28.

[2] "Big Labor's Big Beef," Newsweek, July 24, 1972, p. 36.

[3] "Wallace's Strategy Now," United States News and World Report, July 24, 1972, p. 29.

[4] George S. McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President: Acceptance Speech," Vital Speeches, August 1, 1972, p. 610.

[5] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 610.

[6] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 610.

[7] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 610.

[8] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 611.

[9] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 612.

[10] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 611.

[11] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 612.

[12] McGovern, "The Democratic Candidate for President," p. 611.

[13] Norman Mailer, "The Evil in the Room," Life, July 28, 1972, p. 41.

[14] Paul R. Wieck, "McGovern & Company," The New Republic, August 5 & 12, 1972, p. 20.

[15] Senators George McGovern and Thomas Eagleton, "Withdrawal: Nominee for Vice President," Vital Speeches, August 15, 1972, p. 643.

[16] "Newsweek Poll on Eagleton," Newsweek, August 7, 1972, p. 13.

[17] Paul R. Wieck, "Regaining Momentum," The New Republic, August 19 & 26, 1972, p. 10.

[18] George McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President: The Campaign Begins," Vital Speeches, August 15, 1972, pp. 644-645.

[19] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 644.

[20] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 644.

[21] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 644.

[22] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 644.

[23] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 645.

[24] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 645.

[25] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 645.

[26] McGovern, "Recommendation for Vice President," p. 645.

The Issue: National Defense

Perhaps no position taken by George McGovern in the 1972 Presidential campaign was more misunderstood by the public than the one he took on national defense. McGovern's long standing opposition to military waste, to new weapons merely for the purpose of increasing "over-kill" capacity, and to deployment of U.S. troops overseas was effectively misrepresented by Nixon administration officials. Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird labeled McGovern's position a "white flag of surrender approach to national security." Vice President Spiro Agnew said that McGovern would "leave the President no adequate response but nuclear war if U.S. interests and U.S. friends anywhere are threatened."[1] The media and McGovern's admitted lack of charisma probably made it easier for Nixon surrogates to twist McGovern's position on national defense, as sensational charges generally make better news than dull position papers. On the day McGovern's national security recommendations were released, NBC and ABC "spent more time describing a minor collision between the new presidential limousine and a bicycle. ABC gave the panel report 20 seconds." Only CBS correspondent Marvin Kalb discussed it in detail on national TV. Three of the nation's major newspapers, The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and The Baltimore Sun, carried the story on page 30, page 14, and page 9, respectively.[2]

Perhaps some of the blame should be laid to McGovern for not making his policies clear, but as we will see later in this chapter, it was not because of lack of effort on his part that his position was misunderstood. In this chapter the emphasis will be on one issue and will focus on two speeches which are representative of McGovern's stand on that issue, National Defense. Before taking up the analysis of the two defense speeches previously mentioned, perhaps it would be best to establish for the record what McGovern's actual position on the issue was.

Simply stated, the McGovern position was that enough defense is enough, as opposed to the Nixon position that no amount of defense is enough. In other words, the primary disagreement revolved around the arms race. While McGovern insisted that the United States need spend only enough to maintain present defense capabilities, Nixon officials demanded that those capabilities be expanded. An example might be our arsenal of nuclear warheads in which we hold a two-to-one advantage over the Soviet Union. Where McGovern maintained that we have a sufficient amount of defense capability in this area, the Nixon administration approved plans to expand that capability to a four-to-one margin by 1977.[3]

In addition, McGovern had taken issue with the Pentagon's penchant for investing in costly gimmickry such as an Army vehicle called the Goat which was supposed to cost $5,000 each and float and actually cost $15,000 each and sank.[4] Other

examples cited by the McGovern panel of advisors on national defense[5] in their report of September 21, 1972, were the building of the Trident submarine to replace the Polaris, which was not yet outmoded; the B-1 bomber, which would cost up to $50 million per plane; the Navy F-14 fighter, which would cost ten times as much as a Soviet MIG 21; the Army's Cheyenne helicopter, which was cancelled after $400 million had been spent; and the C-5A planes, which were originally supposed to cost $3.4 billion for 120 planes and which eventually cost $4.9 billion for 81 planes.

This position hardly made McGovern an appeaser and could hardly justify Laird's description of McGovern's policy as "waving the white flag," but that is very likely the way the delegates to the national conventions of the VFW and American Legion interpreted it. Richard Nixon's promises of a "Peace with Honor" took root in these two veterans' organizations, filled largely with older veterans who clung to the myth of American infallibility. McGovern's opposition to two Presidents', two commanders-in-chief's, defense policies did not agree with these veterans' idea of the respect and obedience due that office. The watchword for these veterans was "My country, right or wrong!" and "America, love it or leave it!" Those who dissented were not real Americans, and McGovern obviously fell into the dissenter category.

The first of the two speeches being considered here was delivered to the American Legion Convention in Chicago, Illinois,

on August 22, 1972. Wearing the official Legion headgear, McGovern immediately sought to identify himself as belonging to the same reference group as his hearers. His first paragraph noted his membership in the Legion:

> My fellow Legionnaires and my fellow Americans. Yes, in spite of all you may have heard, I am a long-time member of the Coaches-Goetz Post of Mitchell, South Dakota, a former chairman of its Americanism committee, and my dues are paid up for 1972. You can disagree with me, but you can't disown me![6]

An example of utilizing facts not previously known about the source, these facts identify McGovern as a member of the same reference group and thus may aid his audience in identifying with him. Throughout the speech, he continually stressed the fact that he was a fellow veteran in order to impress his audience with this shared status.

In the second paragraph, he pointed out that he appeared before them "as a candidate for President of the United States." This was probably meant to impress them, not only because he had the endorsement of his party, but also because of the very majesty of the office and in view of the respect they held for it. He also referred to "the healthy respect we [Presidential candidates] have for you politically. . . ." Obviously he hoped that the respect would be mutual. In addition, he noted ". . . your commitment to a full and free discussion of the issues . . ." and ". . . the assurance that the democracy we have fought to preserve includes the right to think and speak as free and responsible citizens--patriots all!"[7] With these statements, he accomplished two things: first, he pointed out

that it was their duty to hear him with an open mind, and second, he identified both himself and his audience as patriotic Americans.

Throughout the introductory part of the speech, and indeed throughout the entire speech, he emphasized the common experience that he and his audience had shared: service in the Armed Forces of the United States. He used this not only to establish a rapport through a shared experience, but to contrast the Army they knew with the modern Army in order to indicate what was wrong with the Army today.

While he indicted the Vietnam War, an unnecessary and unpopular war, as the cause of many of the modern Army's problems, he was careful not to place the blame on military leaders, with whom his audience could be expected to identify: "Let me make it clear that our military men did not start this war, or seek it."[8] To the contrary, he referred to two generals, former Army Chief of Staff, General Matthew Ridgeway, and former Marine Commandant and World War II Congressional Medal of Honor winner, General Shoup, who publicly opposed the way the Vietnam War was conducted. The use of these names endorsing his policy could be expected to elicit favorable responses from a veterans' organization.

In addition to the effect of Vietnam on the military, McGovern brought up an example of what the money spent on Vietnam could be otherwise used for, flood relief in eastern Pennsylvania. The example was very apt for two reasons: first, he was able to contrast it with U.S. bombing of dikes in North

Vietnam, and second, the flood was a front-page issue then, and some of the delegates may have had personal involvement with it. This may have contributed to his image as a humanitarian and as one who was concerned with problems of regional and national scope.

He also took up another issue which should have been dear to his audience, veterans' benefits. He referred to himself "as a poor boy from South Dakota" who "got a PhD at Northwestern University under the G.I. Bill." Once more, he was using a personal example to identify himself as a member of the group. He went on to say, "We need a new G.I. Bill today that will assure all Vietnam veterans the same level of benefits and opportunity we received after World War II," and "I shall also do my utmost to restore the capability of the V.A. hospital and medical programs to give all eligible veterans the care they have the right to expect."[9] His concern for such programs should have indicated that he was the kind of person who shared the same priorities as his audience.

Perhaps the most essential part of his speech dealt with the issue of the McGovern defense posture. It is at this point that he attempted to refute the charges made by Nixon administration officials. He pledged, "So long as I am President of the U.S., Americans [sic] will never become a second-rate power." To counter Agnew's assertion that McGovern's policies narrowed the available options, he pointed out that

> I have devoted more time and effort to my defense posture than to any other part of my preparation for the

> Presidency. I have made a careful calculation of the security needs of the country. There is not a single possibility that is not provided for and then some. My budget retains a firm commitment to conventional defense and to nuclear deterence.

This should have demonstrated McGovern's stability and thoughness, as he had carefully thought out his defense program. By way of example, he noted that his budget provided for "enough fire-power to destroy Russia and China simultaneously 20 times over." He further noted that he would review his "defense budget with our military commanders constantly." This was evidently intended to reassure his listeners that if McGovern were elected, defense would be adequately maintained. He capped the argument by promising that ". . . no hostile power will succeed in threatening this country if I am President."[10]

Nevertheless, he had objections to waste in military spending, and it was this issue that he took up next. Again, he utilized a common experience to avoid offending his listeners: "But everyone who ever served in the armed forces knows that our military spending is riddled with waste and inefficiency." Although he admitted the need for a strong defense, he insisted that ". . . we also need to rein in the high-flying military spenders who think the sky is the limit and have flagrantly abused the blank checks given them in the past by Congress and the people." As a concrete example of this waste, he cited the rank-heavy modern Army and added the personal touch: "And some of us thought we had too many officers then!"[11] Again, this last remark appears to have been aimed at showing that McGovern was "one of the boys." The entire issue should have

impressed his audience with McGovern's concern for the tax payer's money, if they were not already resigned to military waste as a necessary evil.

McGovern used the military waste issue as a springboard to refute two charges against him: that he would weaken the Armed Forces and that he would restore isolationism as U.S. policy. Answering the first charge, he said:

> The leaders who would weaken our armed forces are not those who would eliminate waste from our military budget. . . . The leaders who have deeply damaged our defenses are the men who used our military power for purposes our people have rejected.

To the second charge, he answere:

> The danger of isolationism does not come from those who want a sensible policy in Indo-China. . . . The danger has come from those who persist in a policy the American people know to be foolish and futile and costly in treasure and lives. They are the ones who invite a really catastrophic retreat from the world.[12]

McGovern had, with these two points, attempted to alter the image created for him by Nixon administration officials. He did not attempt to refute any direct statements, but rather a synthesis of the criticism leveled at him. He knew that his audience probably believed these things of him and that these charges had to be answered if he were going to achieve any kind of credible image.

The major stumbling block for McGovern with this audience might very well have been his Vietnam policy of unilateral withdrawal. He had to convince his audience not only that Vietnam was a mistake, but also that we had to make a complete break with the old Vietnam policies. If he could not do this, he

would be unable to achieve a suitable credibility with this audience. To this end, he tried to emphasize that we have other responsibilities, which we cannot meet because of Vietnam:

> If we are going to meet our true responsibilities, we must be strong and secure at home. As long as this country is divided, and confused about its directions; as long as it is soft economically; as long as it continues to have the highest welfare rate, the biggest drug problem of any modern nation in the world, we are not doing our job--either for ourselves or for those who look to us for inspiration.[13]

By emphasizing these neglected problems, McGovern undoubtedly hoped to shift the priority to these issues and relieve some of the pressures his Vietnam policy might have been bringing to bear on his image.

McGovern continued, carrying through the argument about meeting these responsibilities, putting the emphasis on the word "we," bringing in his experiences as a bomber pilot and as a United States Senator to bolster his point. ". . . War is not inevitable. Neither is peace." It must be won. "You and I, different as we may be, are going to have to win it."[14] Thereby, he had continued to use his war experiences, as well as those of his audience, to bond them into a "we" who shared the responsibility of making America the kind of country it should be.

From that point, he began his conclusion with a strong patriotic appeal which he carried through the remainder of the speech. He concluded by referring to "all of us who risked our lives to defend this heritage. . ." and quoting the pledge

of allegiance. Once more the strongest appeal at the conclusion was a patriotic one. Perhaps the patriotic conclusion is typical of the campaign speech in general; perhaps the use of it was due to the nature of his audience; or perhaps it was the result of an attempt to refute the slurs on his patriotism by others.

Two days later, McGovern gave a very similar speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota. As in the speech to the American Legion, McGovern immediately reminded his audience of his statue as a veteran by beginning, "My fellow veterans and my fellow Americans. . . ." Although he could not claim membership in the VFW, he did recognize "two distinguished National Commanders of the VFW from my home state of South Dakota--Merton Tice and Ray Gallagher." He also noted, "All of us have served in the defense of the United States."[16] The effect of these and other similar references was again to (1) establish McGovern as a member of the same reference group as his audience and (2) emphasize a shared experience.

Again he referred to his education on the G.I. Bill: "This South Dakota preacher's son could always dream of an advanced degree at a great university. But it took the G.I. Bill to make that dream come true." This remark probably affected his ethos in several ways. First, it indicated his status as a god-fearing minister's son. Second, it pointed out that he was one of the common people, who needed the G.I. Bill to afford an education. Third, it emphasized the fact that he was an educated man.

Fourth, it indicated that he was sympathetic to veterans' causes.

In this speech, as in the previous one to the Legion, he contrasted the Army that they knew with the modern one and blamed the present problems on Vietnam:

> It is no secret that I have opposed our involvement in Vietnam from the beginning. I have felt that our national interests would be degraded, and our national security would be weakened, by our participation in that war. [17]

Not only is this another attempt to justify his opposition to the war, but the mention of his long opposition to the war could indicate to his audience that McGovern was a far-sighted man who had recognized the problem long before other people. It may also, however, have served to remind them that he had opposed two Presidents, which may, in many eyes, have reflected against him by linking him with the radicals whose demonstrations mean treason to them.

He contended that his opposition to Vietnam was justified, that Vietnam had weakened our Armed Forces, and he supported that contention with references to examples of ". . . the men who are quitting West Point and the other Academies . . ." and ". . . the enlisted men who are marking time until their tours are up."[18] The use of logic and examples like these could impress them with McGovern's knowledge of the facts. The facts, as McGovern saw them, led to the conclusion that we could not have a strong military until Vietnam were ended.

Again McGovern emphasized his own experiences and how they related to his defense posture:

As one who saw the terrible cost of weakness before

> World War II, I am deeply committed to a strong military, with all the forces we need to deter nuclear attack and to defend our own society and our vital interests around the world. We must never be so weak as to invite aggression. We must always be strong enough to prevent any threat to our security. [19]

He did several things in this passage. Once again, he emphasized the bond between the audience and himself: service in the Armed Forces. He also indicated that he believed in a strong defense, which should have been basically the same belief held by members of this veterans' organization. The feeling that they were sharing with him the same experiences and beliefs should have increased their confidence in him.

Taking up the matter of military waste, McGovern reeled off a number of examples, some of which he had used in the American Legion speech, such as the rank-heavy structure and the Army vehicle known as the Goat.[20] These examples could have been effective, but probably even more effective was his citing of a study conducted by Senator Goldwater in which it was found that the Pentagon had made eighteen different films showing servicemen how to brush their teeth. This example should have been effective because it linked the name of a hawk on Vietnam, Senator Goldwater, with McGovern's position on military waste. If both the hawks and the doves agreed that money had been misspent, then maybe McGovern was not such a pariah for advocating a cut in defense spending.

Another example which McGovern used was the jamming of the M-16 rifle in combat situations. His statement indicated that he really cared about the ordinary G.I.: ". . . I am sick and

of our front line soldiers being used as guinea pigs for weapons that haven't been proved."[21] In other words, the combat soldier, with whom many of his audience may have identified was the loser in these situations. With McGovern at the helm, he contended, this would not have happened.

Again this speech concluded on a patriotic note. Where in earlier speeches, notably the acceptance speech at the Democratic convention, he used the phrase "Come home, America," here he referred to "the road back to the kind of America we love."[22] His concluding statement linked McGovern's defense stand with that of Abraham Lincoln, as he quoted Lincoln:

> Let us strive on . . . to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan--do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.[23]

These two speeches are representative of McGovern's stand on national defense. In both he very strongly attempted to establish intrinsic ethos. He made numerous references to the second World War and to his participation in it, an example of both emphasizing a shared experience between the source and his audience and making known facts which have a bearing on reference group membership. He offered indirect endorsement of his policies by invoking the names of Generals Ridgeway and Shoup, Senator Goldwater, and Abraham Lincoln. He utilized the effect of immediate stimuli by appearing in a Legion cap and making numerous references to the occasion and to the fact that he stood before tham as a candidate for President. His choice of topic was not only appropriate, but essential, and

his grasp of the facts and use of evidence indicated that he had done his homework well. He used emotional appeals in an appropriate manner and used appropriate appeals: patriotism, compassion, responsibility.

How effective was he in refuting the defense image thrust on him by the Nixon administration? U.S. News and World Report, in covering the events, called his reception ". . . at best a polite . . . [one] in both places." Specifically referring to the American Legion speech, the article said, "There were few cheers--but no boos--during the McGovern speech. In contrast, President Nixon received a standing ovation when he addressed Legionaires August 24 . . . ."[24] Apparently, Nixon's hold on these two organizations was too strong for McGovern to overcome, at least on these occasions.

Footnotes

[1] "White Flags and Whitewash," The New Republic, October 7, 1972, p. 5.

[2] "White Flags and Whitewash," p. 5.

[3] "White Flags and Whitewash," p. 6.

[4] George McGovern, "Remarks by Senator George McGovern, Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Minneapolis, Minnesota," August 24, 1972, p. 3.

[5] Co-chaired by Paul C. Warnke, former Assistant Secretary of Defense; Clifford Alexander, Jr., former member of the National Security Council staff; and Herbert F. York, President Eisenhower's director of research and engineering in the Pentagon.

[6] George McGovern, "Address by Senator George McGovern American Legion Convention, Chicago, Illinois," August 22, 1972, p. 1.

[7] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 1.

[8] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 2.

[9] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 3.

[10] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 3.

[11] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 3.

[12] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 4.

[13] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 4.

[14] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 4.

[15] McGovern, "American Legion," p. 4.

[16] George McGovern, "VFW," p. 1.

[17] McGovern, "VFW," p. 2.

[18] McGovern, "VFW," p. 2.

[19] McGovern, "VFW," p. 2.

[20] See page sixty-two of this study.

[21] George McGovern, "VFW," p. 3.

[22] McGovern, "VFW," p. 3.

[23] McGovern, "VFW," p. 3.

[24] "In McGovern's Bid for Party Unity," United States News and World Report, September 4, 1972, p. 32.

The Issue: Economic Policy

Another issue vital to the 1972 campaign was economic policy. McGovern had campaigned hard in the primaries for economic reform, despite the fact that he was not well-versed in economics himself. This lack of knowledge on McGovern's part probably accounted for the controversial nature of his complicated program, and his difficulties in answering questions raised by his detractors regarding his program. Melville J. Ulmer, contributing editor to The New Republic, pointed out that

> He [McGovern] has been forced to backpedal, contradict himself, and even acknowledge uncertainty or ignorance on some points. I attribute this to the hypothesis that he has too uncritically accepted from his prestigious Yale, Harvard and MIT advisors a program he only imperfectly understands.[1]

McGovern's original economic proposals came under fire from all directions. One of his most controversial proposals, income redistribution, was to replace the present welfare system with what was called a "demogrant" of $1,000 for every man, woman and child, with deductions from that amount depending on the amount of total family income so that only the lowest-income people received the full amount and families with over $4,000 per person received nothing. The biggest argument against the plan was the cost, which McGovern estimated at $43 billion. However, some critics estimated it as much higher, as high as the $144 billion figure named by Richard Nixon.[2]

Other proposals, involving tax reform, would have raised $28 million by placing a minimum tax on higher incomes, eliminating the special depreciation allowances and investment tax credit granted by the Nixon administration, and raising the inheritance tax. While these reforms might have made taxation more equitable, especially since some of the money would have been returned to the states for property tax relief, many upper- and upper-middle-income voters feared that McGovern's proposals would have adverse effects on the economy by reducing investment incentives.

The third part of McGovern's program was designed to cope with employment, inflation, and public service needs. He proposed elimination of wage and price controls and the stimulation of competition through lowering import barriers and through antitrust efforts. Hopefully, the increased competition would keep prices down. To reduce unemployment and expand public services, he would contract with private industry for services like public transit, neighborhood health centers, day-care centers, and environmental centers. The construction and maintenance of these facilities would provide employment. In addition, McGovern advocated subsidies to aid defense industries in converting to peacetime work. Critics of the program said it would do more to stimulate inflation than employment, because a shortage of skilled workers would cause contractors to bid for their skills, thus creating wage increases and eventually price increases. Meanwhile, the unskilled among the unemployed would still be out of work.

The complexity of the program and the charges against it spurred McGovern and his economic aides to make revisions in his economic program, which was then presented to the New York Society of Security Analysts in a speech on Wall Street, August 30, 1972. This chapter will consider McGovern's attempt to bolster his image on the economic issue in the Wall Street speech and in another speech delivered in Portland, Maine on September 15, 1972.

The first of the two speeches was delivered to the New York Society of Security Analysts. Being deeply involved in the stock market, the members of that audience would not be said to be favorably predisposed toward McGovern, as an article in Newsweek magazine pointed out:

> With few exceptions, businessmen have found his tax-reform ideas confiscatory, his welfare and budget ideas inflationary and his proposed defense-spending cuts outright dangerous--and by the time he went to Wall Street . . . to confront the business community in its symbolic lair, McGovern had inspired more open hostility there than any Democratic nominee since Franklin Delano Roosevelt.[3]

As in the speeches cited in the previous chapter, McGovern faced an up-hill battle in dealing with a basically hostile, but still polite audience.

Before specifically outlining his new economic proposals, McGovern spent some time shoring up his image. He began by referring to the occupation of his hearers in asking them to put aside what they had previously thought of him (the image they had formed of him, his extrinsic ethos) and judge him by the facts that he would present in his speech:

> Your profession as security analysts requires that you look beyond labels and first impressions to find the facts. Today I ask that you extend your expertise from portfolios to politics.[4]

Not only had he asked them to ignore previous impressions in order to judge him by the facts he would present, but he had also indirectly complimented the profession on its perceptiveness. Hopefully, this would make it easier to change their image of him by making them more receptive to what he would say.

McGovern immediately set out to indicate that the image of him that had been presented to the voters by the Nixon Administration had a false basis. That basis, he said, was fear, and that fear was unfounded. It was based only on the political strategy of Richard Nixon, and he compared Nixon's strategy to that of another incumbent Republican President:

> In 1932, an incumbent Republican President said that "the only possibility of winning the election (is) . . . exciting a fear of what Roosevelt would do."[5]

His strategem here, as in previous speeches, was to compare his candidacy with that of Franklin Roosevelt. As the same charges were raised against Roosevelt that were raised against McGovern, the inference was that the fears the audience held of McGovern would be proved as false as those others held of Roosevelt. Since the image of George McGovern as seen by this audience was based on those fears, his successful refutation of them should have benefitted his image.

McGovern devoted a major proportion of the first part of his speech to refutation of charges made against him by Nixon and other administration officials. The purpose of this

refutation was not only to refute the charges which contributed to the extrinsic ethos that McGovern presented to this group, but to turn the charges against Nixon. An example of this was the law and order issue:

> Last week, he [Nixon] tried to make the American people afraid that Democrats do not respect law and order. But it is in fact Richard Nixon who has demeaned our highest court of law with shoddy nominations, two of which were rejected by the United States Senate. And agents of his "law and order" campaign have been arrested with their wiretap equipment, invading the Democratic National Committee in the dark of night.[6]

With this and other examples, McGovern sought to discredit the charges against him by discrediting their source. If the blemishes on his image were from a disreputable source, then their impact might be diminished.

Shifting from the attacks Nixon and his surrogates had made, McGovern contrasted the promises Nixon had made with the accomplishments of the Nixon administration:

> They say they stand for a balanced budget--but their deficits have already exceeded the combined deficits of President Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and President Johnson. Indeed, the cumulative four-year Nixon deficit of $80 billion represents a fifth of the entire national debt accumulated since the age of George Washington.[7]

The point made here was that if Nixon could not be trusted to carry out his economic promises, how could he be believed when he attacked McGovern's policies? Furthermore, in view of Nixon's accomplishments, it was a bit inconsistent on Nixon's part.

McGovern again labeled the Nixon strategems "scare tactics." This label, if believed by his audience, should detract from the image of his opponent and bolster his own. The use of such

tactics, he said, is not the Democratic way: ". . . It is no service to America."[8] He was thus able to link his opponent with undesirable, un-American activities and, by contrast, link himself with more desirable ones.

Further criticizing Nixon's policies, McGovern compared Nixon's economic plans to the plans to end the war that Nixon had announced four years earlier, secret plans the existence of which was questionable. He contrasted Nixon's secrecy and vagueness with his own openness and specificity in presenting the facts and figures regarding his plans to reduce military spending, reform taxes, reform the welfare system, and provide for a full employment economy. The contrast between Nixon's secrecy and McGovern's openness should have benefitted McGovern's image, and the fact that McGovern had his plans worked out in detail should have contributed to his image as one who "did his homework."

The first item in McGovern's economic plans was a $10 billion reduction in the Defense budget for each of the following three years. He contended that this sum could be excised from the Nixon budget without endangering national defense capabilities. Possibly one of his most telling arguments for a reordering of budget priorities was his invocation of President Eisenhower's warning against too much military spending:

> Do we remember General Eisenhower's warning in 1961 that if the military takes too much, it weakens the nation by undermining other areas of national strength?[9]

The endorsement of McGovern policies, albeit an indirect endorsement, by a figure of Eisenhower's stature should have

had a favorable effect. Not only was Eisenhower a reknowned military leader, but a Republican President in an age in which the name Republican was reckoned as almost synonymous with pro-business. Men of the business world like those of this audience would look upon the person of the late President Eisenhower with favor, and inasmuch as McGovern was able to associate himself with Eisenhower's policies, McGovern's ethos should have been positively reinforced.

A second item in the McGovern proposal was tax reform, which he estimated as providing another $22 billion in revenue by 1975. This issue probably hurt McGovern's image more than any other with his immediate audience and their counterparts throughout the country, who had a personal stake in taxes on investments and on capital gains because their livelihood would be endangered if such taxes were to discourage potential investors. McGovern attempted to build up his image by couching his arguments for tax reform in terms like "a realistic rate structure," "tax loopholes," "equal treatment," "the avoidability of taxes," "excessive allowance," "escaping their just taxes," "even-handed tax-treatment," "strive for fairness," "reasonable share," and so on. By stressing equity, fairness, and the general good over special interests and individual advantage, McGovern attempted to counter the possible effects of their fears on his image. He obviously hoped, by phrasing the problem in terms of fairness and justics, to persuade his audience to put aside their own interests in the name of higher ones. If they were moved by the argument, they were likely to see McGovern

as a progressive thinker who had the best interests of the people at heart; if they were not, they were likely to regard him as a wild-eyed radical whose poorly conceived monetary policies would wreck the economy of the United States.

Because these fears were exactly what the incumbent and his surrogates were turning against McGovern in their campaign strategy, McGovern continued by contrasting the policy he had outlined with Nixon's proposals. Again, he stressed the nature of Nixon's tactics and their unethical dimensions:

> The Nixon scare tactic is that the McGovern tax reform would force Americans to pay half their income in taxes. The fact is that . . . no American whose income comes from wages and salaries would pay one penny more in federal taxes than he does now.[10]

Not only did McGovern again remind his audience of the nature of the attacks against him, but he attempted to refute the allegations. In refutation, he stated that wage earners would not pay higher taxes and that closing tax loopholes would not hurt investment. To the extent that his audience resented Nixon's tactics and believed McGovern's refutation, his image should have been enhanced.

In addition, McGovern continued to contrast the open nature of his policy with the secretiveness of Nixon's. He called the Nixon position ". . . at best a mystery and at worst a promise made to be broken."[11] Again, McGovern's image should have benefitted by the contrast.

The next issue McGovern took up was the benefits that could accrue from the additional revenue raised from cutting military spending and closing tax loopholes.

> . . . We can fulfill an agenda that includes revenue sharing with our cities and states and aid for rural development. It provides for better education, cleaner air and water, quality health care, and a bill of rights for Vietnam veterans and policemen. It makes possible a host of important advances, ranging from safer streets to rougher enforcement of occupational safety.[12]

To the extent that the audience believed these ends worthwhile, their esteem for McGovern should have become greater in that he was able to establish such an association between his policies and those benefits.

In addition, McGovern went into greater detail on two proposals for use of the extra revenue. The first was property-tax relief. Again, he contrasted his position on the issue with Nixon's:

> It is a secret plan--which is the same kind of plan he promised for peace in Vietnam four years ago. I think that this time, the secret plan is to raise taxes, not to reduce them.[13]

The contrast between the openness of McGovern's plans and the secretiveness of Nixon's should have been in McGovern's favor, as should the contrast between McGovern's remedy and what McGovern suggested Nixon would propose, a national sales tax. McGovern pointed out that not only would Nixon leave the loop-holes open, helping the rich stay that way, but Nixon would recommend a value-added tax which would weigh heaviest on "the working class, the poor, older people, and middle income families." In effect, the Nixon answer to the property tax problem would be "to substitute one regressive tax for another."[14] Again, to the extent that the audience accepted the need for property tax relief, McGovern's image should have benefitted

from the issue. Again, he pictured himself as on the side of justice for the tax payer and Nixon on the side of injustice. This particular audience should have been sufficiently well-off, considering their occupation, to have realized the need for property tax relief. On the other hand, their reaction to this point would have depended upon their reaction to closing tax loopholes. Obviously, they would not have agreed with McGovern's logic here if they had not agreed with his earlier point regarding loopholes, since they would not have property to worry about if McGovern's proposals ruined their livelihoods.

His second proposal for use of the extra revenue was a system of National Income Insurance as an alternative to welfare. In presenting this plan, McGovern was abandoning his previous welfare reform proposal, the income redistribution scheme. The dropping of the income redistribution plan may have eliminated some problems, but it could have caused another: his failure to adhere to his original position on the issue left him open to charges of inconsistency. The image this could have created was that of one who resorted to hastily conceived stop-gap methods, to be tried and then abandoned if not sufficient to solve the problem.

The new welfare proposal consisted of three parts which would be fully operational by 1975: the creation of useful public service jobs, expansion of Social Security, and assistance in the form of both cash and food stamps to those outside Social Security and unable to work. He also promised to have his experts continue to work "on a system of tax credits and

tax reductions to assist low and moderate income persons." He may have missed an opportunity to boost his image here. He referred to those experts as "some of the nation's leading economists."[15] He could have, considering the credentials of some of those experts,[16] expanded more on their qualifications. By establishing them more firmly in the minds of his audience as the names in economics, he could have utilized their endorsement of his economic policies to greater effect.

His conclusion was a long one, summarizing the points he had made during the course of the speech. He emphasized the open nature of his proposals and their advantages, the condition of the economy under Nixon, Nixon's fear tactics, and the vagueness of Nixon's proposals. He also made additional references that should have aided his ethos. He quoted John F. Kennedy, whose status as an assassinated martyr could only help McGovern when the two were linked. He noted the tendency of the economy to undergo recession under Republican administrations and referred to Democratic administrations like those of Lyndon Johnson and Franklin Roosevelt in which the economy fared better. This relationship should have also benefitted his image by making his economic policies more palatable.

In justifying his proposal, McGovern also appealed to the self-interest of his audience. He raised the question of what is good for business and what is not. The things that were good for business were the things that McGovern stood for: "a balanced economy, and a people confident of the essential decency of their leaders."[17] The things that were not good for business

he associated with Nixon: recurring recessions, no vision of the economic future of the country, and a lack of respect by youth for the country's achievements. If effective, this appeal should have helped bolster his image as a friend of business, or at least have cushioned some of the bad effects of his "loophole" proposals.

Beyond appealing to their self-interest, McGovern appealed to the audience's senses of justice and compassion. "Above all," he said, "it is a matter of *moral* right."[18] Couching his appeal in terms of morality could have had the desired effect of picturing McGovern as a moral man, but on the other hand, it could have been interpreted as "preaching" to them. Which interpretation they chose was undoubtedly consistent with their opinion of him on earlier issues.

As in previous speeches, although not to as great an extent, McGovern made use of patriotic appeals in his conclusion. In this case, he made the transition from appealing to what was morally right to appealing to what was consistent with the ideals on which the country was founded.

> Our government is the expression of our national conscience. It is time to look into that conscience and to prove by the way we govern that we really do believe in what we celebrate as our way of life. It is time to recall that the promise of America was not a pledge to the priviledged, but a covenant with all our people. Let us keep that covenant now.[19]

Again, McGovern had linked his campaign policies with the ideals on which America was founded, thus attempting to strengthen his image as a patriotic American.

Another association which occurred was a reference to

Franklin Roosevelt in answer to a Nixon charge against McGovern's economic policies. As in earlier references of this nature, it would appear that McGovern hoped to counter the negative image of himself and his economic policies by linking his candidacy to those of prominent Democratic Presidents of the recent past. Such linkages could have muted the charges of radicalism against McGovern.

In his final paragraphs, McGovern reminded his audience of his background "as the son of a poor clergyman from South Dakota."[20] This served not only to emphasize his humble, righteous beginnings which were in the tradition of Lincoln and other great Presidents of the past, but also to give him the opportunity to express his love for the country that gave him the chance to better himself. He also reminded his audience of his service as a bomber pilot in World War II, which may have also helped to de-radicalize him in the minds of this audience.

Throughout the conclusion, McGovern interwove the ideas of what was good for business and what was good for the country. That they were one and the same with McGovern's economic proposals was clearly what he wished to establish. By thus establishing them as identical, McGovern undoubtedly meant to polish his image as the man who could solve America's economic problems.

As in the acceptance speech at the Democratic convention, McGovern concluded with the refrain from Woody Guthrie's popular patriotic song, "This Land Is Your Land." The choice of this song is apt, as McGovern seemed to be saying that the responsibility for making the country live up to its ideals rested on

the people in that audience: the choice was theirs. Indirectly then, he was not only praising the Democratic system, but also the individuals in his audience who were a vital part of that system. The use of such praise, as it was not overly obvious, should have reflected nicely on McGovern.

The answer to the question of how successful the speech was cannot be quantified precisely. Nevertheless, the reactions of members of that audience were reported by the press. John loeb, senior partner of Loeb, Rhodes & Co., was quoted as saying, "My colleagues and I feel intellectually against McGovern's philosophy of government. He is a fine gentleman, but naive and misguided." Another member of that audience, analyst Robert Stovall of Reynolds Securities, found McGovern's policies frightening: "McGovern is destroying the American dream. I have a farm, an estate, stocks and bonds and four kids that I want to leave something to. Everyone in the room was frightened by one point or another."[21] Even McGovern supporters were not particularly encouraged by the speech. "My heart is with McGovern, but my pocketbook is not," said John Westergaard, president of Equity Research Associates.[22]

McGovern evidently failed to reassure his audience! Some feared that his proposed tax on capital gains would stimulate short-term speculation and reduce funds available for new business investment and innovations; some feared that his welfare reform plan would create a new demand for goods that would trigger further inflation. The fears that he had tried to reduce remained, although there were a few signs that those fears may

have been modified a little. One Boston banker, for instance, termed the program "livable," though not "preferable."[23] Business could have lived with his proposals, but it was obvious that they did not like them, or him, that much better than prior to the speech.

The second speech with which this chapter is concerned was delivered in Portland, Maine, on September 15, 1972. Again, McGovern was concerned with answering the charges Nixon had raised against the McGovern economic proposals, but this time his audience was more likely to favor what he had to say. This time his audience was composed of labor leaders from the Maine area. Not only would representatives of labor be more favorable to proposals that would tax the rich rather than the working man, but also they were unhappy with Nixon's wage and price freeze, which they felt effectively froze only wages. On the other hand, while some unions had endorsed McGovern, a large segment of labor was not pleased with his candidacy either. However, McGovern did have the decided advantage on September 15, of having the endorsement of the prominent Senator from Maine, Edmund Muskie, who shared the platform with McGovern and introduced him in somewhat laudatory terms, in what The New York Times called Muskie's "clearest and most enthusiastic" endorsement of McGovern of the campaign to that time.[24]

McGovern began by attempting to establish a rapport with his audience based on praise for New England and for Maine in particular. He referred to "an old Maine adage [that] advises us never to talk unless we can improve on silence,"[25] the common

sense of New Englanders, and the leading role of their ancestors in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. He also praised Senator Muskie. The effect of these references was obviously to convince his hearers of the high regard he had for them, in the hope that this regard would be mutual.

He explained that his purpose in speaking to them was to answer the charge that the Democratic Party was radical. In other words, he intended to refute the radical image that had been attached to him. His first step in countering that image was to define "radicalism." His definition of "radicalism" was "a sharp break with the essential principles of our free society," and he applied that definition to the policies of the Republican Party. He listed five principles of American society violated by the Republican leadership: (1) ". . . that the people shall determine their own destiny," (2) ". . . that government will not squander the people's hard-earned money," (3) ". . . that those who can work should work, and only those who are unable to work should receive welfare," (4) ". . . that in a full employment economy public revenues should equal public expenditures," and (5) ". . . that all our people should pay a fair share in taxes."[26] By listing these principles and pointing out Nixon's failure to comply with them, McGovern was able to link himself with Democratic principles and Nixon with radical positions. By contrast, McGovern and his policies should have appeared more reasonable.

The most radical facet of all, according to McGovern, was the Republican economic policy. He charged Nixon with deliber-

ately unemploying millions of Americans in order to stop inflation and, when that strategy did not work, of instituting unfair controls that froze wages while prices continued to rise. This issue should have affected most listeners because these were the same things labor had been saying about the controls from the beginning. The fact that these controls had failed to halt inflation should have further incensed the audience against Nixon's economic policies. Again, McGovern should have benefitted by the contrast.

Nixon and his surrogates had called McGovern's economic proposals radical. In response, McGovern said,

> What the administration has done to the economy is radical. What they have said is even more radical. The men we have elected to lead us are instead misleading us. And official falsehoods deny a free society, because they betray the right of people to know and to decide the great issues.[27]

So, in McGovern's opinion, it was not McGovern who was radical; it was McGovern who represented the principles of a free society and who would present reasonable solutions to our economic problems.

Having disposed of Nixon's economic position, McGovern told his audience how he would solve the economic problems of the country. His proposals included full employment through ". . . stimulation of the private sector, . . . $10 billion worth of new government contracts with private industry, and . . . public service jobs. . . ."[28] They also included a five-part plan for voluntary price and wage guidelines to slow inflation. McGovern's image should have benefitted from the

fact that he was proposing programs which attempted to remedy the faults of the Nixon policies. His promises of more jobs should have been favorably received by labor.

His conclusion was relatively brief, consisting of three short paragraphs in which he emphasized that his concern was for price stability and for the good of the working man rather than special privilege and corporate profit. He reiterated a common theme: "On this, as on so many issues, I stand as the only candidate for President who has told the public what his program for the future is going to be."[29]

In the two speech analyses contained in this chapter, it is indicated that McGovern attempted to alter the image of himself and his economic policies as radical. He did this primarily by trying to show his policies as reasonable and workable. In the first speech he contrasted his policies with those of Nixon by showing the vagueness and secrecy of Nixon's policies. In the second, McGovern contrasted them by showing that his policies were actually more consistent with the principles on which our government was founded. He based much of his refutation in the first speech on Nixon's campaign tactics. By emphasizing the fact that Nixon was playing on the fears of the public, McGovern hoped to mollify those fears. Unfortunately, he was largely unsuccessful, but that was not unexpected. But if he were to achieve any kind of success on November 7, he would have to establish his credibility on this issue.

Footnotes

[1] Melville J. Ulmer, "McGovern's Economics," The New Republic, June 24, 1972, p. 21.

[2] Richard M. Nixon, "The Republican Candidate for President: Acceptance Speech," Vital Speeches, September 15, 1972, p. 707.

[3] "McGovern Through a Loophole Darkly," Newsweek, September 11, 1972, p. 53.

[4] George McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," text of speech delivered to New York Society of Security Analysts, The Washington Post, August 30, 1972, p. A12.

[5] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[6] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[7] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[8] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[9] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[10] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[11] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[12] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[13] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[14] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[15] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[16] Professor James Tobin of Yale, Arthur Okun, Professor Edwin Kuh of M.I.T., New York tax attorney Adrian W. DeWind, Brookings Institute tax economist Joseph Pechman.

[17] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[18] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[19] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[20] McGovern, "Jobs Are the Cornerstone of My Policy," p. A12.

[21] "McGovern Through a Loophole Darkly," p. 53.

[22] "McGovern Through a Loophole Darkly," p. 54.

[23] "McGovern Through a Loophole Darkly," p. 53.

[24] "McGovern Offers Wage-Price Plan," The New York Times, September 16, 1972, p. 12.

[25] George McGovern, "Remarks by Senator George McGovern, Portland, Maine," September 15, 1972, p. 1.

[26] McGovern, "Portland, Maine," pp. 1-2.

[27] McGovern, "Portland, Maine," p. 3.

[28] McGovern, "Portland, Maine," p. 3.

[29] McGovern, "Portland, Maine," p. 4.

Corruption in the Nixon Administration

Although McGovern dealt with the failings of the Nixon Administration in virtually every speech he delivered during the campaign, the speeches with which this chapter is concerned dealt with the alleged corruption to a much greater extent. The Watergate scandal had occurred early in the campaign and, along with other questionable dealings including the ITT affair and the Russian wheat deal, had stirred the moral indignation of the Democratic contender and his workers.

This chapter will examine three speeches which were concerned with these and other issues that made the Nixon Administration, in McGovern's opinion, the most corrupt in history.[1] The analysis will focus upon how McGovern's ethos was affected by this issue and how he attempted to use the issue to build his own ethos and reduce that of Nixon.

The first of the three speeches was given in McGovern's home territory, at a fund-raising dinner held for him in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, on September 24, 1972. The audience of 1180 persons, therefore, was a friendly one, composed of South Dakota Democrats, McGovern workers, and local dignitaries. The image that McGovern presented to this audience was undoubtedly that of a favorite son and a leading figure in South Dakota politics, not only because he was the first Presidential candidate from their state, but also because he was largely

responsible for the rescue of the South Dakota Democratic Party from oblivion as a result of his service as executive secretary of the party in 1952.

McGovern began by emphasizing his connections in South Dakota, reinforcing the identification between himself and his audience. His first sentence was "It's good to be home again." He also referred to the name of his airplane, the Dakota Queen, and to the fact that his pilots were from South Dakota, one from Howard and the other from Sioux Falls. And he referred to another South Dakota pilot, himself, whom he hoped would be "at the controls of America after November 7."[2] He also made liberal use of the pronoun "we" in stressing that the tasks that awaited were not his alone, but would require their efforts too. Another way in which he was able to strengthen his ties with this audience was his adoption of what he called "South Dakota values," which he proposed "to restore to the leadership of America."[3] These values were such things as common sense, fairness, and taking care of one's neighbors. Certainly it did not hurt his image to ascribe these qualities to himself and to his audience.

After establishing the values which he meant his candidacy to represent, he contrasted his position with that of his opponent:

> One of the things that gets a South Dakotan's back up is when the men we've elected to protect our interests turn out to be servants, not of the public interest, but of powerful special interests. I know that on some of the most controversial national issues, many of my fellow South Dakotans have disagreed with me. But never once have I permitted some selfish special interest to have preference over the public interest.[4]

Although he did not mention Nixon by name, McGovern's audience knew to whom he was referring, and the point which he was making was clear: Nixon represented special interests, McGovern public interests.

McGovern then catalogued a number of scandals involving Nixon and special interests. He listed the ITT affair, the Lockheed loan, and the Penn-Central Railroad mismanagement and tied them in with Nixon's refusal to reveal the names of the contributors to his secret $10 million campaign "slush fund": "We all know whose names are on that list, and that's why it's such a secret."[5] Not only did he imply that ITT, Lockheed, and Penn-Central had paid off the Nixon Administration with campaign contributions, but he once more contrasted the secret and "dishonest" tactics of Richard Nixon with the open and "honest" tactics of George McGovern.

The bulk of his speech, however, was devoted to a scandal which had particular relevance to this audience: the wheat deal scandal. McGovern's standing in South Dakota, a wheat state, was largely based on his defense of agricultural interests, and this scandal was one that affected South Dakotans more than any other. As such, his concern with that issue and his chastisement of the Nixon Administration's actions would have enhanced his image as a defender of agriculture.

McGovern was not content just to charge the Administration with wrongdoing: he supported his charges with names, facts, and figures. By doing so, he should have reassured doubters in his audience that his charges were not merely campaign rhetoric.

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Most of McGovern's charges were specifically directed against Secretary of Agriculture Butz, not a popular figure with farmers. Butz was a safe target and opposing him could only help McGovern's image with farmers. McGovern called for Butz's resignation and for an independent investigation of the affair:

> I don't think Mr. Butz should continue in his job for one more day until this entire mess is cleared up by an independent investigation. And I don't mean another Administration-controlled whitewash like we had with the Watergate affair . . . .[6]

Mentioning the Watergate affair should have added further fuel to his charges and gained him more sympathy from his audience.

McGovern then portrayed the Nixon Administration as unresponsive to the needs of the people:

> Once again the Administration has said, "What do we care about the people. We have power."
>
> But the people still have some power of their own. They have the power to vote and to turn out the men who have demonstrated their callous disregard for the public good over four years.[7]

With his opponent portrayed as indifferent to public interests, McGovern again stood out in sharp contrast when he listed the goals of his Administration:

> I want the next four years to be a time when once again we can believe that what the government tells us is the truth.
>
> I want the next four years to be a time when no one is asked to carry more than his share of the burden, and no one is asked to carry less.
>
> I want the next four years to be a time when ordinary working people . . . can believe that their government is out to protect their interests and make their lives better.[8]

On the one hand, Nixon was presented as unresponsive to the

needs of the public; on the other, McGovern was presented as sensitive to those needs. As further demonstration of the human quality of McGovern's anticipated Administration as contrasted to the cold, impersonal nature of Nixon's, McGovern related an anecdote from his youth that many of his listeners may have found affecting. It was about a South Dakota farmer during the Depression whose check for a year's work raising hogs was barely enough to cover the cost of trucking them to market. Remembering the tears in the man's eyes, McGovern said:

> I resolved then that there was something terribly wrong with a system that would do a thing like that to a strong, decent, hardworking man like Art Kendall. I resolved that if I ever had the chance, I would throw myself into the fight to protect men like Art Kendall, with all the force and fury I could muster. [9]

This story must have had great impact on that audience. Undoubtedly many of them could have identified with the subject of that sad tale. By casting himself as the protector of men like Art kendall, McGovern must have substantially reinforced his image as the farmer's friend.

His final appeal was a familiar one: the same patriotic appeal, climaxed by the quotation from the Woody Guthrie song, "This Land Is Your Land." In this speech the appeal was much briefer than in earlier speeches, but then these people knew him and his record and did not have to be convinced of his patriotism.

The following day, September 25, McGovern delivered a speech to the Western States Water and Power Conference in Billings, Montana. Again McGovern faced a relatively friendly

audience. The New York Times labeled the delegates to the conference "consumer-oriented," which meant that they fit in well with McGovern's populist philosophy. The Times also noted two huge signs lettered "Welcome, George McGovern" and reported enthusiastic applause in response to McGovern's appearance.[10] In brief, the audience to which McGovern spoke on that occasion could be largely termed environmentalists and consumer-advocates, likely being idealists of the same mind as McGovern.

McGovern began on a typical note, by attempting to establish identification with his audience, referring to them as "my neighbors on the high plains." He also used the collective pronoun "we" to indicate that he considered himself and his audience as belonging to the same reference group: "Out here we can see a long way--all the way to the White House and a new Administration next year."[11] From these examples, it is clear that McGovern wished to establish or reinforce a friendly relationship from the beginning of the speech.

In addressing the issues with which his audience was particularly concerned, McGovern linked his candidacy with that of John F. Kennedy and contrasted it with that of Richard Nixon:

> When John F. Kennedy spoke to you here in Billings in 1960, he promised to appoint men to the regulatory agencies who would put the public interest first. He made good on his promise.
>
> When Richard Nixon was campaigning in 1968, his campaign manager, Mr. Mitchell, addressed a group of bankers, and promised that if Mr. Nixon were elected he would appoint more bankers to make government policy.
>
> He made good on that promise.[12]

Having thus contrasted the campaigns of Kennedy and Nixon, McGovern had identified himself with (1) a popular Democratic President and (2) policies that were in the public interest, and he had identified Nixon with policies that were in the interest of "the money men." Because this audience was largely composed of people who represented consumer interests, McGovern should have maintained or reinforced a favorable image as a champion of public interests.

McGovern established early in his speech that he was deeply concerned with the same issues as his audience: an alarming tendency of government under the Nixon Administration to be dominated by big business and special interests. The first example he used was that of the sale of American wheat to Russia. This example should have been effective with this audience, as some of them represented states in which wheat was an important crop. But even more relevant to this audience was his cataloguing of alleged Nixon Administration misdeeds relating to national resources. McGovern pointed out that four of the agencies most important to the interests of his audience were staffed by people who could be expected to be more favorable to special interests than to the interests of the delegates to that conference. He reminded them that the Secretary of the Interior was an Easterner who knew little and cared less about the problems of the Western Region, that the Bureau of Reclamation (under the direction of a former executive of a major gas utility) had undertaken projects favorable to major private power companies and detrimental to small companies and the holdings of farmers and ranchers.

He also observed that the Federal Power Commission had been directed by a series of executives with connections to major coal, oil, and gas companies and had made a number of rulings favorable to those interests, and that the Justice Department had been involved in scandals like the ITT affair and had failed to prosecute charges of price fixing and violation of pollution control laws by big corporations, despite the urgings of Congress and consumer groups.

The facts, names, and figures that McGovern presented on this issue (one so vital to his hearers) reinforced the comparison between the campaigns of John Kennedy and Richard Nixon that McGovern had made earlier and thereby further reinforced the desired image of himself. In addition, the use of supporting data rather than mere assertion could have had the effect of strengthening McGovern's ethos.

Having indicted the actions of the Nixon Administration as they had related to the concerns of his audience, McGovern presented a twelve point plan ". . . for developing and conserving resources of the West and of the nation."[13] Each of these twelve points remedied a fault on which he had indicted his opponent. They presented an image of George McGovern as a person who cared about natural resources and the problems of the consumer and who would not sell out to special interests.

Having presented his program, McGovern made two final appeals. The first was to again remind his audience of the nature of his relationship to them:

Many of you here today have known me for years, here

> in Montana, over in South Dakota, back in Washington. I like to think that those who know me believe that when I say I will do something, I'll do it.[14]

He had thereby reminded them that he was one of them and could be expected to look after their interests.

The concluding appeal was again love of country, but not quite in the sense that it had been in previous speeches. In previous speeches it had been patriotic; in this speech, as befitted the audience who heard it, it was love of nature and of our pastoral heritage:

> This earth of ours is our most precious heritage. It is ours to use wisely and love deeply. Nothing less will ensure a hospitable dwelling place, here in the plains and mountains we love, and throughout this country, for our children's children.[15]

In so concluding, McGovern was saying that the hopes of future generations rested with the ideas he represented. Inasmuch as these ideas coincided with those of his audience, McGovern's ethos was appropriately enhanced.

As in the previous speech, McGovern had paraded examples of Nixon Administration misconduct before an audience which was already pro-McGovern. The image those audiences held of McGovern could not help but be strengthened by his promises to remedy the wrongs wrought by his opponent. McGovern's stand, representing them and their interests versus the special interests that Nixon represented, should have enhanced his ethos.

The third and final speech with which this chapter is concerned was delivered to representatives of the press, United Press International editors, on October 2. McGovern's relationship with the press was relatively representative of his rela-

tionship with the general population of the country. Early in the campaign, McGovern was largely ignored, but as he became acknowledged as a possible nominee, he received more coverage, much of it favorable. Considering the Administration's feud with the press, McGovern was expected to enjoy favorable treatment. Unfortunately for McGovern, the press compiled a long list of black marks against him that eroded his position until they disliked him almost as much as or more than they disliked Nixon. Columnist Joseph Kraft summed up what a number of anti-war liberals felt when he wrote: "The basic fact is that the country is faced with an unhappy choice."[16] Neither of the candidates were particularly liked by a large segment of the press, and the UPI editors before whom McGovern spoke on October 2, were undoubtedly representative.

McGovern began by referring to a statement made by his wife on Meet the Press the previous day to the effect that ". . . the current administration was the most corrupt administration in recent history."[17] To the extent that this statement coincided with their own beliefs, it should have increased McGovern's ethos with his audience. However, if they believed McGovern to be blowing things out of proportion, his statements could have reinforced an image of instability on his part, a propensity to make wild charges. The examples McGovern cited should have helped to minimize this image, because he did support his charges. By comparing the corruption of previous Administrations to that of the Nixon Administration, McGovern made that of the Nixon

Administration appear both greater and more serious:

> Instead of a vicuna coat buying a letter to a regulatory commission, we hear about a campaign contribution buying a billion-dollar antitrust settlement. Instead of a deep freeze, we hear about a wheat deal that freezes farmers out of their earnings as surely as any frost, while a few grain companies reap fantastic profits. Instead of an $18,000 Nixon slush fund, we hear about a $10 million Nixon secret fund.[18]

By indicating that most instances of corruption in recent years had been minor compared to those of the Nixon Administration, McGovern added credence to his charge and thus reduced the possible taint on his image. Further, he added credence to his charge by reminding his audience that this was not the first time Richard Nixon had been connected with illicit activities and that only the scope of that activity had changed.

McGovern also used this issue to bolster his image as a patriotic American by referring to the alleged corruption as "not merely the corruption of government but the corruption of America."[19] This image was carried through in succeeding paragraphs as he referred to what he called "the real America." In that context, he explained how he felt toward America, an America he believed was being corrupted by the Nixon Administration: "And it is all of this--the enduring values and the proud heritage of 200 years--that is denied by the corruption of America."[20] Presuming that any of his audience did question his loyalties, McGovern's pronouncements should have shored up his image in that regard.

In cataloguing the disservices he felt Nixon was doing to America, McGovern began with Nixon's conduct of the Vietnam

War. He reminded his audience that one of the reasons Nixon had been elected was that he had promised peace, but that America was not yet at peace. He reminded them that the war had been conducted to support ". . . dictators, dope runners and gangsters in Saigon . . . ."[22] He reminded them that six million Vietnamese had been killed in that war. And he reminded them of a news picture of a young Vietnamese girl running naked from the site of a napalm strike. In view of McGovern's standing opposition to the war, these references should have served to put Nixon in a bad light and McGovern in a favorable one. McGovern sunned up his position as follows:

> The bombing does not save the South Vietnamese; it destroys them. And while it does that, it corrupts the compassion and the humanity of our people. The real America stands for peace, against an unjust war.[23]

Another disservice to America that McGovern cited was one that should have appealed to his immediate audience. Considering the disagreements between the press and the Nixon Administration, McGovern's remarks concerning freedom of the press should have found favor with the UPI editors. He referred to Nixon's relationship with the press as trying ". . . to bully the press into docile submission," and seeking ". . . to replace a press corps with a cheering section."[24]

McGovern linked Nixon's attitude regarding the press with other examples of corruption of the Constitution, citing Nixon's disregard for the separation of powers (freezing funds allocated by Congress) and his attempts to pack the Supreme Court as other examples. These examples should have served to lower the

esteem of Richard Nixon in the eyes of the audience and may have, by contrast, raised McGovern's.

A third corruption McGovern cited was that of the political process itself through what McGovern called "the politics of evasion."[25] He contrasted Nixon's attitude toward public discussion of the issues in the 1972 campaign with the one Nixon professed in 1960. This gave McGovern the opportunity not only to assail Nixon's failure to actively campaign in his own behalf, but to link McGovern's candidacy with that of John Kennedy. While the relationship between Kennedy and the press was not always smooth, it was certainly better than that between Nixon and the press. The more important issue to McGovern, however, was Nixon's strategy of using surrogates to campaign for him while he himself used the auspices of his office to remain aloof from campaign politics. Certainly this must have been frustrating to McGovern. In this speech McGovern tried to turn Nixon's tactics against him by labeling them evasion of the issues. McGovern quoted a 1960 statement by Nixon favoring public debate by Presidential candidates and commented:

> I think that Mr. Nixon was right when he wrote that, but evidently he has changed his mind. Evidently he assumes that Americans will not demand answers. He assumes that he can hide at the White House, without explaining his record, defending his conduct or detailing his plans for the future.
>
> And this may be the most insidious corruption of all--for when a candidate does not level with the country, the people lose their liberty. They are deprived of that fair opportunity to reckon and choose which alone assures their control over the great decisions of the next four years.[26]

As in previous speeches, McGovern obviously meant to contrast

his practice of openly discussing the issues with Nixon's failure to do so. By framing his charges in such language, however, he may have offended the sensibilities of some of his hearers. They may have felt that McGovern was going too far, especially when he asserted that the reason Richard Nixon would not debate was that he was afraid to face the people. McGovern's challenge to Nixon, indicating the Senator's willingness to debate, may have tempered their estimation of him. His willingness to let Nixon choose the format, place, and time made him seem a little less dogmatic.

Having challenged Nixon's credibility, McGovern then undertook to rebuild his own. He noted that in certain surveys he was in trouble with voters because he had ". . . changed [his] . . . mind on selection of Senator Eagleton as [his]. . . running mate, and on details of [his] . . . tax and welfare plans." His candid approach to the matter should have won some approval, especially in view of the way the Nixon Administration tended to respond to criticism. Where the Nixon Administration tended to blame others, McGovern admitted three possibilities for his failure to reach the public. It could be, he said, his failure to communicate his real character to the public, or a masterful selling job by Nixon, or an ". . . inability by some of the press to bring the same critical examination to the two candidates."[27] While some of the press might have been impressed by McGovern's willingness to say that he might be to blame, many of them probably were not too happy about being told that they might be to blame. It is only human nature not to appreciate criticism

of that sort.

In response to the criticism about the way he had handled the Eagleton affair, McGovern pointed to the fact that Eagleton was campaigning for him and that the Senator from Missouri had not suffered any loss in popularity as a result of being dropped from the ticket. The endorsement of McGovern by Eagleton may have offset some of the damage to McGovern's ethos suffered as a result of the affair. As to his apparent inconsistency on his welfare and tax proposals, McGovern pointed to Vietnam as an example of what happened when a leader refused to admit a mistake. McGovern's openness again should have aided his ethos, and the contrast he presented between himself and Nixon should have favorably affected his image:

> I have held to a steady course on the transcendant issues of our time: the war in Vietnam and the reallocation of excessive military spending to the urgent needs of our society. I see Mr. Nixon in contrast as a man of no constant principle except opportunism and political manipulation.[28]

This comparison should have favorably affected his image, that is unless the hearer interpreted McGovern's indictment of Nixon as too harsh. If that is the case, it was likely to reflect against McGovern.

In concluding, McGovern returned to his previous appeal regarding what the real America was and how it had been perverted. Part of the responsibility, along with that of the people and that of the candidates, rested with the press, and he called for the press to force Nixon to speak out. Although McGovern insisted that he did not mean for the press to take sides, some of them may have felt that he was doing so. They may have also

resented his telling them how they should go about taking care of their business.

McGovern's final statement was a patriotic sentiment, referring to the great land that "you and I", meaning his audience and he, could make of America. This observation not only added further support to McGovern's patriotic image, but indicated that he felt that his audience shared an important role with him. His deference to them was obviously meant to win their approval.

Of the speeches analyzed in this chapter, two were directed to obviously pro-McGovern audiences and the third was to a somewhat less enthusiastic audience. The third was the most important because of the composition of its audience and the influence of members of that audience on public opinion. How did McGovern do? Well, briefly, he received a favorable reception as expected from the first two audiences. As far as the third audience went, McGovern did not do as well. In some ways, the third speech was reminiscent of the 1960 contest, McGovern's loathing for his opponent seemed to spur him to make pronouncements about Nixon that appeared to some observers to be defamatory. Those who already had doubts about McGovern's stability undoubtedly looked at McGovern's attacks on Nixon as overstatement and further support for their beliefs.

Footnotes

[1] George McGovern, "Remarks by Senator George McGovern, UPI Editors," October 2, 1972, p. 1.

[2] George McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern, Ben Radcliffe, Chairman," September 24, 1972, p. 1.

[3] McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern," p. 2.

[4] McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern," pp. 2-3.

[5] McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern," p. 4.

[6] McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern," p. 6.

[7] McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern," p. 7.

[8] McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern," p. 7.

[9] McGovern, "Dinner for McGovern," p. 8.

[10] "McGovern Calls Nixon Ally of Business," The New York Times, September 26, 1972, p. 36.

[11] George McGovern, "Remarks by Senator George McGovern, Western States Water and Power Conference, Billings, Montana," September 25, 1972, p. 1.

[12] McGovern, "Western States Water and Power Conference," p. 1.

[13] McGovern, "Western States Water and Power Conference," p. 4.

[14] McGovern, "Western States Water and Power Conference," p. 5.

[15] McGovern, "Western States Water and Power Conference," p. 5.

[16] "Plague on Both Houses," Time, September 18, 1972, p. 47.

[17] George McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 1.

[18] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 1.

[19] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 1.

[20] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 2.

[21] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 1.

[22] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 2.

[23] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 2.

[24] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 3.

[25] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 3.

[26] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 3.

[27] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 4.

[28] McGovern, "UPI Editors," p. 4.

Conceding the Election

George McGovern spent the evening of November 7 in his three-room motel suite in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Exhausted from the long campaign, he slept through the early returns, awakening to learn that electronic projections had already declared him the loser despite the fact that the polls were still open in some western states. At 9 P.M. he sat down with speech-writer John Holum to draft his concession speech, and less than two hours later he delivered that speech to what Newsweek magazine called "a passionately cheering mob"[1] at the Sioux Falls Coliseum.

For the record, it was one of the biggest defeats in Presidential politics. McGovern carried only Massachusettes and the District of Columbia for a total of seventeen electoral votes to Nixon's five hundred and twenty-one, and McGovern won only 38% of the popular vote.

It was with the knowledge that he had just sufferred the biggest defeat of his life that George McGovern addressed his followers on the night of November 7, 1972. He began by acknowledging the applause that greeted him and reported that he had conceded the election to Richard Nixon by telegram:

> . . . I have just sent the following telegram to President Nixon: "Congratulations on your victory. I hope that in the next four years you will lead us to a time of peace abroad and justice at home. You have my full support in such efforts with

best wishes to you and your gracious wife, Pat.
Sincerely, George McGovern."[2]

McGovern's gracious and magnanimous congratulations to a foe he had opposed so bitterly undoubtedly won him the respect and sympathy of his audience. And while McGovern conceded the election gracefully, he did not abandon the principles he had campaigned on. As McGovern's words indicated, Nixon had McGovern's support to the extent that Nixon's efforts were directed toward "peace abroad and justice at home." This undoubtedly meant a lot to McGovern's most ardent supporters, who made up a large portion of his audience that night.

Then McGovern referred to another losing Democratic Presidentia contender, Adlai Stevenson. The linkage with Stevenson was important because, although Stevenson was a two-time Presidential loser, he was an admired and respected man who had served his party and country well. In effect, the association indicated that not all was lost, that George McGovern could still do much in behalf of his fellow man.

The reference to Stevenson served also to introduce the hurt that McGovern felt on losing. Despite the hurt, McGovern chose to dwell on the joys of the campaign. This served his ethos in two ways. First, it showed McGovern manfully bearing up well under the shock of defeat, and second, it reminded those in his audience who had worked for him of a shared experience that was, to some degree, rewarding to them all. McGovern used an oft-repeated quotation to sum up his feelings about the people who had shared the joys and sorrows of his campaign:

The poet Yeats said something that I quoted the night

> of the Massachusetts primary, and it looks like Massachusetts [one of the two electoral districts he won] is coming through again tonight. Yeats said, "Count where man's glory most begins and ends and say my glory was that I had such friends" and that's the way I feel tonight.[3]

McGovern's reference to those who had worked for him as his friends and his obvious appreciation of their efforts for him undoubtedly endeared him even more to the devoted among his audience. The closeness between the candidate and his workers was reinforced throughout the speech by McGovern's constant usage of the pronoun "we", indicating that the campaign was a group effort and that it was due to their efforts that he got as far as he did.

Despite the crushing defeat which could have devasted his followers, McGovern refused to dwell on the bad side. Looking on the good side, McGovern proclaimed that the campaign had its credits:

> There should be no question at all that we have pushed this country in the direction of peace . . . .
>
> . . . . . ,
>
> And if we have brought into the political process those who never before have experienced either its joy or its sorrows, then that too is an enduring blessing.[4]

By assuring his audience that their efforts were worthwhile, McGovern restored some of the esteem and pride that may have been lost both by himself and by members of his audience as a result of the Nixon landslide. In doing so, he made it easier for them to continue to support him without loss of self-esteem. Also, in referring to one of the ends that they had accomplished, that of pushing the country toward peace, McGovern conferred

upon himself and his audience the title of "peacemaker." Considering McGovern's religious background, that was perhaps the most precious name he could bestow on them.[5]

In concluding, McGovern reiterated his conviction that his candidacy and the efforts of his supporters had accomplished much, and he asked his followers to form a "loyal opposition" and "continue to beckon it [the country] to a higher standard." He appealed to them not to lose faith in the system:

> . . . I ask all of you tonight to stand with your convictions. I ask you not to dispair of the political process of this country because that process has yielded to much valuable improvement in these past two years.
>
> The Democratic Party will be a better party because of the reforms that we have carried out. The nation will be better because we never once gave up the long battle to renew its oldest ideals and to redirect its current energies along more humane and hopeful paths.[6]

McGovern's appeal to his youthful followers to stay with the party should have earned him the grudging respect of party regulars, who had openly scorned those who "dropped in" to support one candidate and then "dropped out" of the political process again. The linkage with party reform and the conformity with Democratic ideals should have reinforced McGovern's ethos with his more idealistic followers.

McGovern's final comment was in the form of a Biblical quotation in which he conveyed the blessings of God on his followers in their role of the loyal opposition and as servants of what is right and good.[7] In this he not only was being consistent in his interpretation of the issues of the campaign, but was reinforcing the concept among his hearers that their

actions on his behalf were right and good. The reference also reinforced the image of McGovern as a devout Christian who sought to do what was in the best interests of his fellow men.

On the whole, it was one of his best speeches. Newsweek labeled it ". . . perhaps the most moving of his entire campaign."[8] What could have been a bitter diatribe was instead a gracious acceptance of defeat and an unpretentious paean to those who had supported him in his quest to alter the character of American government.

Footnotes

[1] "I've Done Everything I Could," Newsweek, November 13, 1972, p. 29.

[2] George McGovern, "McGovern Concession Speech," The Washington Post, November 8, 1972, p. A4.

[3] McGovern, "McGovern Concession Speech," p. A4.

[4] McGovern, "McGovern Concession Speech," p. A4.

[5] "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God." Matthew 5:9.

[6] McGovern, "McGovern Concession Speech," p. A4.

[7] Isiah 40:31.

[8] "I've Done Everything I Could," p. 29.

Conclusion

George McGovern lost the election, but as the speeches cited in this paper illustrate, it was not because of the lack of effort on his part. The concern of this paper has been the scope and quality of that effort as it affected McGovern's image, his ethos, in respect to some of the audiences he faced in the course of the campaign. The purpose of this final chapter is to briefly try to tie together the results of previous chapters and to draw some conclusions from them.

As noted in chapter two, there are four categories which make up extrinsic ethos which the speaker can manipulate in the speech to contribute to his intrinsic ethos. The first of these is experiences, either direct or vicarious, which the members of the audience have with the speaker. McGovern made use of this factor a number of times during the speeches cited. Prominent examples of this usage would be his reminiscences with audiences of his supporters about the good and bad times they had shared, as in the acceptance speech (chapter three), in the speech at the fund-raising dinner in Sioux Falls (chapter six), and in his concession speech (chapter seven). Other examples occurred when he emphasized his record as a Congressman, a Senator, a pilot in World War II. His record as a bomber pilot was put to use in his speeches to the American Legion and the VFW national conventions (chapter four; his record as a Representative and a

Senator was generally utilized to indicate that he had faithfully served the interests of his constituents and the interests of the public in general.

The second category involves the introduction or the emphasis of previously known facts about the speaker, especially when the information indicates reference group membership. Whenever possible in his campaign, whenever a suitable audience faced him, McGovern put forth a maximum effort in attempting to establish an identification with his audience in this manner. In the speeches to the American Legion and the VFW, his references to the facts of his Legion membership and his service in the second World War were obviously meant to establish him as a fellow veteran, a member of the same reference group as his audience. Another example was the speech at the fund-raising dinner in Sioux Falls. McGovern made sure that he identified himself as a favorite son by emphasizing his ties with South Dakota. McGovern utilized this tactic in virtually every speech of any length cited in this paper, a notable exception being the Wall Street speech (chapter five), where McGovern's acknowledged lack of expertise on economic matters would have made it difficult for him to identify with security analysts. The fact that the members of that audience owed, or felt they owed, much of their livelihood to the tax incentives McGovern wished to eliminate would have made that task even more difficult.

A third category deals with endorsements of the speaker by other people who are popular with the particular audience at hand. McGovern utilized this in two ways: first, by having

Ted Kennedy, Edmund Muskie, and other prominent people share the platform with him and introduce him to audiences, and second, by linking his name and his policies with the names and policies of other prominent Democrats, especially John Kennedy and Franklin Roosevelt. Ted Kennedy and Sargent Shriver, a member of the Kennedy clan by marriage, contributed some of the charisma that McGovern himself lacked, and the endorsement of the Kennedy clan was perhaps the factor that gave McGovern the only state (Massachusetts) he won in the Presidential election. Unfortunately for McGovern, although he did have the endorsement of individuals and groups like the Kennedys, Mayor Daley of Chicago, Julian Bond of Georgia, and some independent unions, many state Democratic organizations and office-seekers divorced themselves from his candidacy. Especially noticeable for their lack of endorsement were George Meany and his AFL-CIO, which declared itself neutral and went so far as to threaten sanctions against locals which violated that neutrality.

In his speeches, McGovern linked his policies most commonly with John Kennedy and Franklin Roosevelt, especially in reference to his economic policies inasmuch as the Kennedy and Roosevelt candidacies had drawn criticism similar to that directed against him. Also, McGovern compared his position on defense with that of Dwight Eisenhower. By associating his policies with those of Kennedy, Roosevelt, Eisenhower, and others, McGovern implied that those men would have endorsed his policies. McGovern also used what might be called a "reverse endorsement" by contrasting his policies with those of Richard Nixon and

representing those of Nixon in an unfavorable light. When directed toward audiences predisposed against Nixon, such a contrast could serve as an endorsement of McGovern.

The fourth category, involving stimuli immediate to the presentation of the speech, is almost impossible to ascertain from the text of the speech except when references are made by the speaker. However, from secondary sources and accounts of the events accompanying the speech, one may make certain inferences. One can, for instance, note that certain of the speeches were televised and that fact should reinforce the importance of the speaker. Also, dress and manner can contribute to the ethos of the speaker, and obviously McGovern's wearing the Legionaires' cap did not have an adverse effect on his appearance before the American Legion.

Another factor affecting ethos is the choice of topic. Certainly McGovern's choice of topic was governed by the audience to which he spoke. For instance, when speaking to the United Press International editors (chapter six), he spoke about freedom of the press and the encroachment on that freedom under the Nixon Administration; when speaking to veterans groups, he spoke about national defense; when speaking to security analysts, he spoke about economic policies; and when speaking to environmentalists (chapter six), he spoke about national resources. To the extent that his audiences felt the same way about these issues or were persuaded to his position, these issues should have favorably affected his ethos.

McGovern's handling of logical appeals should have favored

his ethos, also. His observations were, for the most part, well-supported with examples, quotations, statistics, and reasoning. McGovern gave the impression of being well-researched, of having "done his homework" on all the issues, despite the shakiness of his economic stand. Of course, this was largely due to his use of various panels of experts on specific issues, but the knowledge that McGovern's candidacy had attracted authorities in these fields (economics and defense, for example) should have boosted his ethos to some degree, also.

McGovern's choice of emotional appeals was also advantageous, for the most part. He largely made use of "good" appeals such as patriotism, justice, honor, and compassion; whereas, he attributed "bad" appeals such as fear and greed to his opponent. Later in the campaign, however, his attacks on Nixon, labeling him "another Hitler," may have been interpreted as fear tactics. Certainly, McGovern drew a great deal of criticism at times for the content of his attacks on the President, many people believing his charges to be beyond the bounds of propriety. The effect of such charges on the individual voter would be determined largely both by his previous opinion of McGovern and by that voter's regard or lack of regard for Nixon.

McGovern's style, another consideration in determining ethos, tended to be somewhat literate, even poetic at times, although probably not so much as to disturb the average citizen. He quoted often from romantic poets and the Bible, but not at length. He also made frequent reference to a popular patriotic song by Woody Guthrie. His was not a flowery style, but was often an

eloquent one. Stylistically speaking, McGovern's speeches should have had wide appeal and contributed to a favorable image.

Another factor which may have influenced McGovern's ethos was his delivery. McGovern's delivery has been criticized for being dry and matter-of-fact and for having a strong Mid-Western twang. This could have had the effect of portraying him as unsophisticated, a "hick" from a backwoods state, but on the other hand, these qualities could have presented him as a folksy, Lincolnesque figure. The lack of humor in his speech could have pictured him either in a negative sense as a man devoid of humor or in a positive sense as a man deeply concerned with the issues. His debating and contest-speaking experience undoubtedly was responsible for a reasonably fluent delivery, if not a colorful one.

Still another ethos-affecting agency which McGovern seemed to use effectively was the occasion. In each speech, he emphasized the nature and consequence of the occasion on which he spoke, giving a great deal of credit to the significance of the gathering and to the importance of the members of that gathering in respect to the campaign. The fact that McGovern was chosen to speak at various conventions, that he was the Democratic nominee, and that he was able to link himself with the objectives and ideals of those gatherings should have been in his favor.

Audience-response is the final ethos-affecting factor noted in chapter two. As noted there, the response of the audience in general affects the speaker's ethos in the eyes of individual

members of that audience. In some of the speeches cited previously (the American Legion, VFW, and Wall Street speeches, for instance), the audience responded politely, but unenthusiastically. That response would have tended to cool potential enthusiasm on the part of a member of an audience who observed his peers responding only perfunctorily to McGovern. In other speeches cited (the Western States Power and Light Conference and the fund-raising dinner in Sioux Falls, for example), the audience was more enthusiastic, which would have tended to reinforce a positive image by carrying more reluctant members of the audience along with the majority.

In drawing conclusions about McGovern's attempt to achieve a favorable image, one might make four observations. First, the Eagleton affair dealt McGovern a severe blow, especially among the young. One of McGovern's strengths up to that point had been his honesty. The Eagleton affair left him looking like the stereotyped politician, who had deserted his running mate in the name of political expediency. Second, there was little real enthusiasm about either candidate. Much of the talk about the election revolved around Nixon as the lesser of two evils. An indication of the lack of enthusiasm was the low voter turnout: fewer than 54% of the electorate actually voted, and that figure was the lowest in twenty-four years.[1] Third, perhaps the reason McGovern's efforts proved to have little effect was that the voters had made up their minds early in the campaign. This is the assessment of a St. Louis University political scientist, George Dorian Wendel, who said this about the cam-

paign:

> Most people perceive the McGovern candidacy as ideological. . . . In that kind of race, people make up their minds quickly and early, and then turn off the campaign.[2]

If the people were not listening, McGovern had little chance of changing their estimation of him. Fourth, there is some evidence that the 1972 Presidential campaign was analogous to the only other political race that McGovern had lost, the 1960 Senatorial contest against Karl Mundt. Both Mundt and Nixon were linked in McGovern's mind with McCarthyism and had, in fact, co-sponsored a bill to register "Communist" organizations that McGovern had lobbied against as a student at Northwestern. In both races, McGovern had perhaps allowed his dislike for the political ideology of his opponent to approach the dimensions of a personal vendetta and a moral crusade. In both races, he drew criticism for overstepping the bounds of propriety. Another indication of the comparable nature of the two campaigns stems from the fact that Nixon campaign strategists had obtained the authorized McGovern biography by Robert Anson which had appeared during the campaign. The pages referring to the Mundt-McGovern race were heavily underlined.[3] Obviously, McGovern's tactics were anticipated and countered by Nixon's campaign strategists, who evidently counseled the President to lie low and wait for McGovern to make the mistakes that negated his candidacy. Although George McGovern put forth a tremendous effort that left him drained of energy by the conclusion of the campaign, it is my belief that the four factors listed above negated those

efforts and were largely responsible for one of the greatest defeats in American Presidential politics.

Footnotes

[1] "Nixon's Great Triumph," Newsweek, November 13, 1972, p. 28.

[2] "The Look of a Landslide," Newsweek, November 6, 1972, p. 42.

[3] John Osborne, "Cutting Up McGovern," The New Republic, October 21, 1972, pp. 12-13.

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A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SPEAKER CREDIBILITY IN THE 1972 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN OF GEORGE S. McGOVERN

by

ROBERT DUANE NORDYKE

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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Department of Speech

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

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Senator George S. McGovern of South Dakota waged an unsuccessful effort to make himself a credible candidate for the Presidency in 1972. Although he secured his party's nomination on the first ballot at the Democratic national convention, he also suffered a defeat of major proportions to his incumbent Republican opponent, Richard M. Nixon, in the November general election. This study dealt with eleven representative campaign speeches delivered by Senator McGovern during that campaign, from July 14 to November 7, 1972.

The purpose of this thesis was to examine the ethos content of Senator McGovern's campaign speeches in order to determine how he went about the task of establishing a favorable image for himself in the eyes of the American voting public. The method of analysis was primarily based on the conclusions of Kenneth Anderson and Theodore Clevenger, Jr., especially as reflected in Anderson's book, Persuasion: Theory and Practice.

The study indicated that McGovern utilized most, if not all, of the tactics suggested by Anderson in an attempt to shore up a vulnerable image. The study also indicated four possible reasons for McGovern's ineffectiveness: the impact of the Eagleton affair, the lack of enthusiasm about either candidate on the part of the electorate, the tendency of voters to make up their minds early in the campaign, and the inclination of McGovern to engage in an ideological crusade against Nixon.