A Rhetorical Analysis of the Speech Theory and Practice of Ralph McGill.

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And Practice of Ralph McGill

A Dissertation

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by
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B.A., Auburn University, 1960
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to analyze and evaluate the speech theory and practice of Ralph McGill, publisher of *The Atlanta Constitution*.

What is McGill's speech theory? McGill has been active in public speaking as student, speaker, critic, and theorist. This writer extracted ideas relating to oratory which McGill had discussed in his *Constitution* column. McGill presents a thorough treatment of speech, ranging from audience analysis to suggestions for improving commencement speaking. Though deploiring the exaggerated appeals used by many politicians, McGill is convinced that speakers must be given complete "license" to speak. Traveling with such political candidates as Eugene Talmadge, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, and John F. Kennedy, McGill learned that "people remembered best some personal thing and would vote for that above issues." Also, he wrote that "you learn when you walk with men, that an ideal is not worth a tinker's dam if it fails to understand human limitations." McGill's speech theory also stresses the importance of public speaking, careful research, a fresh style, and purposeful communication.

To study McGill's speech practice, the writer selected two speeches relating to education. First, on February 10, 1959, McGill delivered the Blazer Lecture at The University of Kentucky. He
contended that southern states should not close their public schools. Using the same basic speech given one week earlier to a Rotary Club in Augusta, Georgia, McGill attempted to prove statistically that the South could not afford to close its public schools. Although it is difficult to assess the reaction of his audience, McGill probably had sufficient data to prove his thesis. Also, McGill probably established his credibility by identifying himself with the interests and goals of his audience. Certainly one can conclude that southern states eventually followed McGill's plea for open public schools; however, no causal relationship can be established between his speech and the policy of the southern states.

The second speech studied was McGill's oration on June 30, 1966 at Miami Beach. This writer saw McGill speak extemporaneously to more than 6,500 delegates at the National Education Association convention. Using no notes, McGill attempted to convince the educators to make plans for future needs in education.

While McGill seemed generally disorganized, he probably won the respect of his auditors by citing numerous personal experiences and by picturing himself as a humble writer with a sincere interest in education. To measure the reaction of McGill's audience, the writer distributed five hundred postcard questionnaires immediately following his address. Since the respondents were not chosen randomly and since only one hundred and forty-six persons responded, no statistical inferences can be drawn concerning all 6,500 delegates. Also, it is difficult to determine whether the questions measured the information
sought or the audience's personal attitude toward McGill. However, it is interesting to note the reaction of the one hundred and forty-six persons who did respond:

1. On the basis of this speech, how would you rate Ralph McGill as a speaker? Circle one:
   
   - poor - fair - adequate - good - superior
   
   Total (146)
   
   7  6  22  78  33

2. Were McGill's ideas presented so as to be clearly understood?

   3  7  12  60  64

3. How conclusively did McGill prove his point(s)?

   8  8  21  57  52

Finally, research has revealed Ralph McGill as a man of integrity, good will, intelligence, courage, and purpose. Persons who share McGill's hope for equal citizenship for all, have often found encouragement and strength in his oratory. McGill's indifference to available means of persuasion and his inability to adjust to oral communication, however, have limited the effect of his plea that, as both he and Abraham Lincoln said at Cooper Union, "right does make might."
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The United States has experienced tremendous change within the past thirty years. For example, the federal government has expanded its programs and influence to touch nearly every area of life. The Negro has begun to win his basic right to vote and receive equal educational and economic opportunity.

From 1938, to the present, Ralph McGill, Publisher of the Atlanta Constitution, has played an active and, some believe, key role in the social revolution within the South. Late in the 1930's, McGill began a long vigil for human rights, which gained impetus with the United States Supreme Court's 1954 ruling against school segregation.

McGill, often identified with the plight of the American Negro, has never devoted his time and talents to one cause. Rather, he has written and spoken about any issue which seemed important at a particular time, whether politics, economics, social problems, morality, or education. McGill, then, has taken an active part in changes within the southern region of the United States; one instrument he has used has been oratory.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to report, analyze, and evaluate the speech theory and practice of Ralph McGill. To determine McGill's
effectiveness, his speaking will be judged on the basis of audience response, craftsmanship, wisdom in judging trends, and his own speech theory. Two speeches are to be studied in detail, the Blazer Lecture, delivered at Lexington, Kentucky, February 10, 1959, and McGill's address to the National Education Association, Miami Beach, Florida, June 30, 1966.

Plan of the Study

Analysis and evaluation of McGill's speech theory and practice will include seven chapters. Chapter One, the introduction, provides an orientation necessary for understanding the overall plan of the study.

Chapter Two consists of McGill's speech education, including his childhood experiences, formal education, newspaper experience, reading habits, and speaking experience.

Chapter Three presents a description and evaluation of McGill's "Speech Theory," or, ideas expressed by McGill on speech related topics. These principles are then used as one criterion upon which McGill's oratory is judged.

Chapter Four has a three-fold purpose, to analyze McGill's speech personality, speech preparation, and delivery.

Chapter Five constitutes an analysis and evaluation of McGill's Blazer Lecture at the University of Kentucky, February 10, 1959. The purpose is to determine how successful McGill was in proposing that southern states should not close their public schools.

Chapter Six also is a rhetorical analysis of one speech, the
address delivered by McGill to the National Education Association, June 30, 1966, Miami Beach, Florida.

Chapter Seven constitutes a discussion of conclusions reached concerning McGill's speech practice.

Sources

Most valuable was McGill's daily column in the Atlanta Constitution. Promoted to Executive Editor in 1938, McGill has written continuously until the present. McGill's column has great value as a source because, in it McGill discusses his beliefs, attitudes, personal experiences, and opinions. Subject material has no limit, ranging from cooking to Churchill, poetry to politics, and sources to style.

Other important sources include articles written by McGill, speech manuscripts provided by McGill, and interviews with McGill and his secretary, Miss Grace Lundy. Primary materials have also included letters from classmates and teachers, and copies of school records.

McGill's The South and the Southerner autobiographically describes the social and economic development of the South. While this book provides valuable data concerning childhood influences and a few personal experiences, McGill focuses largely upon the South. Little is said about his own role. Reviewing McGill's book for The New York Times, Claude Sitton concluded:

Some may quibble over small points in this book--its organization . . . and certainly, the author's failure to include
something more of his own role as a bender of twigs.¹

Little information is available concerning McGill's personal career. Several human interest articles offer brief accounts of McGill's activity, but apparently no extensive research has been reported:


CHAPTER II

RALPH MCGILL'S SPEECH EDUCATION

To evaluate Ralph McGill's speeches, premises, and speech theory, one must study his entire speech education. Thonssen and Baird, scholars in speech criticism, wrote that, the speaker's knowledge and experience figure importantly in any critical estimation of his merit. Rhetoricians generally agree that a sound training--a broad familiarity with the field of knowledge--is essential to the development of an effective speaker. . . . Recent studies rest on sound precedent, therefore, in stressing the importance of the orator's background for a full understanding of the speeches subjected to criticism. . . . the critic will be in a better position to understand an orator's arguments if he knows the practical experience upon which the thinking rests. 1

What preparation has McGill had for his role as public speaker? To determine the nature and extent of McGill's speech education, an analysis will be made of his childhood experiences, formal education, newspaper experience, personal experiences, reading habits, and speaking experience.

Childhood Experiences

Childhood experiences which were particularly important to McGill's speaking were his farm environment, family influence, reading habits, employment, and religious training.

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Farm Environment

McGill lived the first six years, and most summers until he was sixteen, on a "somewhat isolated Calvinist farm community located some twenty miles upriver from Chattanooga."\(^2\) The environment on this six-hundred acre farm, situated ten miles from Soddy, Tennessee, had considerable influence upon McGill's ideas about race relations, his personality, his intellectual development, and his language.

Race relations. Growing up on a small farm in East Tennessee influenced McGill's attitude toward minority groups. Because there were few Negroes, McGill was exposed to little overt racial prejudice. Soddy was a "farm trading center turned into a small mining center by the discovery of coal,"\(^3\) thus, there were fewer plantations requiring cheap labor. Also, because there was less cotton than farther south, there were fewer Negroes:

> We always raised a few acres of wheat on our place in Tennessee. It was nine miles from a post office and was bottom and hill farm land along the Tennessee river. We never knew cotton. We ran to corn, wheat, mules and horses.\(^4\)

McGill, then, simply did not come into contact with many Negroes. Any help used on the farm was recruited "from the white tenants on the place."\(^5\) McGill wrote, "I remember when I saw my first


\(^3\)Ibid., p. 30.


\(^5\)South and the Southerner, p. 64.
Negro I thought at first it was a coal miner. But I was a boy then, come maybe once a month to the town."6 He stated further that, "having started out in life somehow, with no prejudices against people as people--at least none I can remember--I have always liked people."7 He did not,

. . . recall any of the preposterous or vicious racist demagoguery met with in later years. It could be heard in states to the South of us but we largely escaped it. It would not be honest to be smug about this. There were few Negroes in East Tennessee. Middle Tennessee had no history of racial agitation of politics.8

**Personality.** McGill's farm experience also affected his personality, encouraging him to be independent:

. . . I hail from a river bottom farm along the Tennessee, with the eastern foothills of the Cumberland mountains climbing from it on into the deep reaches of the Great Smokies. I say this merely because the heritage of the hills is independence, and as far as I'm concerned I have my share, and value it very highly indeed.9

**Intellectual maturity.** Living on an isolated farm may have delayed McGill's intellectual development, i.e., his exposure to important ideas. Located ten miles from Soddy and about twenty miles from Chattanooga, the farm was cut-off from the outside world. Because McGill only lived on the farm for six years, and during the

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8*South and the Southerner*, p. 109.

summers until he was sixteen, he probably experienced no serious effects; but his parents' reservoir of knowledge, which would be passed to McGill, may have been restricted. McGill described his isolated farm; he remembered the weatherbeaten old white oak post; the metal mail box dulled with rain and winter sleet... The mail--rural free delivery--the RFD--the mail man--word of the outside world before radio or telephone came to farms--it was, the mail was, the great link with the world. He brought the news.

Language. A rural environment gave McGill a love and a feel for language, and also affected his choice of words. Celestine Sibley, long-time writer for McGill's Atlanta Constitution, also recognized this effect, especially in his daily newspaper column:

The columns reveal the farm boy who is alive to the beauty of his land, writing of "the acrid, nostalgic smell of wood burning beneath the weekly washday pots; the pine-and-oak smoke from the chimneys of farmhouses fighting with the smell of wet plowed earth."

McGill's farm background also affected the language and content of his speeches. For example, speaking before the American Seed Trade Association in Chicago, December 4, 1958, McGill told about his life on "an East Tennessee corn and mule farm along the bottom lands of the Tennessee River":

As a young boy I have ridden a horse to the mill with a sack of corn in front of me. I remember yet the nut-sweet smell

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10 Ibid., June 14, 1946, col. 3, p. 10.

of the mill, the warm feel of the stones and of the meal itself as it fell into the bin. I have plowed corn, first "busting middles" and then graduating with pride to the advanced step of "plowing around" corn with a double-shovel plow.\(^\text{12}\)

Not only did McGill's outdoor life affect his own language, when asked by journalism students how they could learn to write, he answered that it is good to be,

.. . a teller of tales who can put into them the language of persons and the feel of the soil and the people. It also is a fine thing, for a writer, .. . to have an eye for trees and hills and birds and animals and a memory for smells and sounds. .. . About the only advice I know is to work with words and to try and make them live; to seek and make them move easily across the pages, and to cause them to say something and to build images.\(^\text{13}\)

**Family Influence**

The second major determinant under childhood experiences was the influence of McGill's father and mother.

**Father.** McGill's father introduced him to education, government, and politics. His father "had only the inadequate schooling offered in those foothills of the Appalachians, but he had a liking for books and a grief because he had not been able to have more education."\(^\text{14}\) His goal had been to become a lawyer, but, unable to get "in a lawyer's office" for instruction, he became a "good salesman"

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\(^{12}\)Manuscript given this writer by Ralph McGill.

\(^{13}\)Atlanta Constitution, May 7, 1948, col. 3, p. 12.

\(^{14}\)South and the Southerner, p. 47.
of heaters. McGill, who learned to read at the age of five, accredited his father with having taught him:

> It was my father who early encouraged me to read. Books were few at the farm. Most of them were religious in theme, including collections of Presbyterian sermons. I could read well before I entered the first grade, an event delayed by an illness. . . . My father taught me. . . . He was a hardworking, kindly man. There was a streak of stubbornness in him, as well as brooding, but these moods were always short. He was pretty much the Calvinist Puritan and was inclined to be dogmatic in his views. If he ever took a drink I never knew it, and if he ever used profanity I never heard it. Yet I never had even a light spanking from him, though I deserved many.

McGill's father, probably with the help of his mother, taught him to respect the United States government:

> Perhaps because of my "raising," I have had from boyhood on what amounts to a reverence for the Supreme Court and its place in our life, for the Presidency as an office, and the Congress as the voice and representation of the people.

McGill's father also introduced him to politics, the science he would love most as an adult. Politics made a lasting impression:

> I have only episodic memories of baseball, the Methodist and Baptist revivals to which I went for excitement, of circuses, and other entertainment. . . . But politics I do remember. My father took me along to the polls. I saw the returns in 1908 when William Howard Taft beat William Jennings Bryan. I was too young for the result to mean anything to me save to share in my father's partisan joy. But in 1912 when Woodrow Wilson won I was already secretly a Wilson man from much reading of his speeches and newspaper accounts of him.

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15 Ibid., pp. 40 & 33.
16 Ibid., p. 38.
18 South and the Southerner, pp. 102-104.
In his newspaper column, McGill wrote again of his early exposure to politics. It is important to note that McGill is a strong Democrat, a condition which influenced many of his policies:

When I was a boy of about 10 years of age my father . . . encouraged me to visit the polls on election day. . . . Woodrow Wilson won me completely and I became almost a fanatic follower of the Princeton teacher. I cast my first vote for the presidential Democratic nominees in 1920--Cox and Roosevelt—and against Warren G. Harding. I have never cast anything but a Democratic vote since and do not anticipate any other course in the future.19

Mother. While McGill's father stimulated his interest in reading, government, and politics, his mother was the source of strength at home. Her influence was not as obvious, so more difficult to define. However, she may have kindled the flame of moral concern which motivated McGill for years to come:

At home, my mother was the guiding force, but so quietly that it was years before I realized it . . . She encouraged and inspired. She was always a believing person. She had a personal faith which sustained her and others.20

It was probably his mother's measured sustenance, then, which led McGill to select such topics as that used at the 1960 Lovejoy Convocation:

But, let us return to our central theme, which is the spirit of man and his capacity to believe—this was what characterized Lovejoy and others like him—he believed. He had values. His mind was not withdrawn on the issue. It believed.21

19Atlanta Constitution, September 13, 1949, col. 3, p. 12.

20South and the Southerner, pp. 44-45.

21Speech delivered by Ralph McGill, the 1960 Lovejoy Convocation, Colby College, Waterville, Maine, November 10, 1960. Manuscript provided by Ralph McGill. See also: Vital Speeches, XXVII (December 15, 1960), 134-137.
Reading Habits

In addition to farm environment and family influences, McGill's childhood education included reading. He wrote of books and their effect:

... I am one who actually hid in a barn loft to read the Dick Merriwell story... I read the Buffalo Bill stories and the Wild West paper novels in the same study—the barn loft... They weren't bad books... and I am convinced the propaganda of those stories and books had an effect. Right always triumphed. Honesty emerged as the best policy. Integrity and fair play were strong assets.22

Moving to Chattanooga at the age of six, McGill had what appears to have been an unusual fondness for books. Reading took precedence over the usual boyhood interests, until poor health required him to return to the old farm:

I was a thin, scrawny youth, but I tried hard to play baseball and football with the sandlot teams which we formed in the absence of any organized sports in the elementary school. Yet it was the Carnegie Library that drew me most strongly. In those early summers I would ride my bike two miles every morning to check out a new book. I read so much that in the second summer in Chattanooga it was necessary to send me back to the farm upriver to stay with my grandmother... In the succeeding summers I managed to read books found on the farmhouse shelves, mostly on religious subjects... and without any notice of it from me, my health came slowly back.23

In 1949, McGill discussed other books read as a child, concluding that he gained interest in history:

Looking back at my own childhood readings, the first I can recall were the fairy stories of Jack and the Beanstalk, Sleeping Beauty and the like... The Henty books were among

23South and the Southerner, pp. 48-49.
my favorites. I still regard them as having been of real value. They provided an interest in history. . . . The Rover Boys and a series of books about an Indian called "Deerfoot" pop next into my memory. After that I graduated to the Waverly novels at an age much too immature for them. I went through a craze about Ireland . . . Irish stories, novels and plays. About this time in my life—when I was about 12 years old—I was reading two books per day. . . . The truth is that, after long years of reading, I have just now learned I read a lot of useless stuff. I am getting in shape to start in on the famous "100 books" selected by the staff at the University of Chicago. . . . I suppose I am just now learning how to use the ability to read. If any of the things read to me or read by me as a child have come floating up in my adult mind I don't know it. But maybe they have.

Earlier, McGill had remembered a few other books he read as a child:

There were the Barbour books, Treasure Island, Robinson Crusoe. There were the Deerfoot books, and, finally, the Deerslayer and Ivanhoe, Lorna Doone and Vanity Fair; The Tale of Two Cities, David Copperfield, Oliver Twist. . . . I missed many books I should have read. But I was drunk with books. I went on to the War Between the States. . . . I developed a great passion for the Confederacy, and many bloody-nosed fight had I in defense of that Lost Cause. . . . I got then, and have enlarged since, an immense dislike for Jefferson Davis and complete hero worship for Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Nathan Bedford Forrest. . . . If I had to pin down the books that most influenced my very young life and the years that came hard on the heels of that first reading of Alger, Barbour and Henty, I would have to say they were the books of Stonewall Jackson and Lee. I got from them and from my Welsh and Scottish ancestry, too much sentiment . . . a mixture of naivete and reality, a belief in loyalty and a liking for causes. And also the bitter fact that high ideals, devotion to duty and honor are not, in themselves, passports to victory.

Employment

A fourth childhood experience consisted of jobs held by McGill


in Chattanooga. For example, collecting bills probably was good experience for one who would later speak on controversial social problems:

The summer of collecting "small, mean bills, some of them damned old and mean" was a fascinating one. Fritz and Wiehl was an old, highly respected company, selling the usual line of drugstore supplies. . . . I was fourteen and a half years old and not, certainly, a commanding figure. But they did not need one. All they wanted was someone to present the bill as a reminder and argue for payment. . . . The summers as a salesman in a haberdashery store were interesting and easy. . . . I learned the peculiarities of tastes in ties, shirts, and underwear. I also became acquainted with the vanity of the male animal.26

McGill's "summer job in 1918," was with the United States Marine Corps at Parris Island, South Carolina, an experience he valued highly:

I know that the training I had at the old Marine Corps boot camp on Parris Island a lot of years ago was more valuable to me than any one, or even two, years of schooling I ever had. It was rough and tough and unrefined, but out of it I got more understanding of discipline, order, co-operation and people than I ever got from college or lower grade school. . . . it was--the best schooling a man could have.27

Working on a roofing crew in 1919 was McGill's "best and most rewarding summer job." This work offered McGill an opportunity to associate with members of the Negro race, an experience he had not known before. The young boy who then expressed concern for his Negro boss, Charlie White, would one day speak out for that man's entire race; he would not "forget":

26South and the Southerner, pp. 59-62.

By midsummer I realized I had become very fond of Charlie and he of me.... In my last week on the job we both began to talk sadly of my quitting to go off to school at Nashville.... He knew I had to have a job there and that I would have to borrow some money.... Charlie insisted he would bring the old truck out and take me and my trunk down to the station.... "Don't forget me," he said. "I'll never forget you, Charlie," I said.... He stepped back, reached in his inside coat pocket, and took out an envelope. "Don't you open this till you get on the train," he said.... When the train was out of the station, I opened the envelope. There was a folded five-dollar bill and scrawled note. "For my helper to spend at school," it read. It was then I wept.28

Religious Training

McGill was exposed to Calvinism both at home and in the "white, clapboard Presbyterian Church."29 McGill remembered differentiating between boring and interesting oral reading:

. . . the earnest voice reading from the Bible . . . hesitating over words . . . mispronouncing the Biblical names . . . faltering in the middle of the sonorous prose stretches . . . and the terrible sleepiness which came with the voice, rising and falling in the Sunday morning scripture readings. But, now and then, someone would be there to read who would make the words come alive and bring out the full majesty of the King James version prose, and then it would march and stir and trumpets would sound.30

At the Presbyterian church in Soddy, McGill heard long fundamentalist sermons:

. . . the Calvinistic services . . . were hot with the fires of an eternal hell and perfumed by sulphur and brimstone. They were never mild sermons, as I recall.... The sermons

28South and the Southerner, pp. 63-68.
29Atlanta Constitution, April 14, 1949, col. 3, p. 16.
30Ibid., December 18, 1949, col. 3, p. 4.
were long. A man who couldn't preach hell-fire and damnation for a good hour was regarded as weak and slothful and likely to let sin get the best of things. The Presbyterian faith in those days was stern than now, I think, and debated infant damnation and the awesome, pre-destined ends of man. So the long hour passed . . .

What effect, if any, did these experiences have upon McGill? He suggested that Calvinist training may have made him more sensitive, but, on the other hand, McGill appears to have rebelled against much of the strict doctrine. McGill, who is presently an Episcopalian, wrote:

Being Presbyterian born . . . I know worry and the remorse of conscience. The hot breath of Calvin often is a blow torch on the seat of the pants of my immortal soul. I am a restless rebel who cannot regularly endure the shackles of organized religious services. The utterances of most divines make me dance with impotent rage or angry denial of their conclusions.

McGill's religious training probably has affected his actions, but the extent of that influence is impossible to assess. He wrote:

But whether it is because the hot breath of Calvin has been on my neck since birth or whether I have got too much sense, I never could endure night clubs or gambling as a way to spend money. Both seem to be the height of stupidity and dullness to me.

It is interesting to note, however, that neither Calvinism nor good sense kept McGill from whiskey and being a "wild" reporter in Nashville, though, in recent years, he has given up drink.

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31 Ibid., April 14, 1949, col. 3, p. 16.
In summary, McGill's speech development was influenced by several childhood experiences, including a farm environment, family influences, early reading habits, employment, and religious training. A rural environment and public employment caused McGill to be independent, yet he knew no prejudice against Negroes. The young farmer developed a lasting love for politics, and was early motivated to read.

**Formal Education**

Whether McGill had formal training in public speaking should help one determine why he speaks as he does. Also, knowledge of his education should provide insight into McGill's beliefs concerning speech. McGill's formal instruction will be divided into three sections, elementary school, McCallie Preparatory School, and Vanderbilt University.

**Elementary School**

Leaving the farm at the age of six, McGill "went first to the Fourth District School" in Chattanooga, "a large, ugly, square two-story building with gravel-covered playgrounds."\(^{35}\) Because of a principal who encouraged reading, McGill remembered his training at the Fourth District School to be of particular importance:

> One year we had a new principal, Professor John Counts. He . . . announced that for every class from the fifth grade on, the final period each Thursday afternoon would be given to reading. Children should read more, he said. . . . So,

\(^{35}\)South and the Southerner, p. 43.
then and there, he read us a chapter from *She*, by H. Rider Haggard. . . . I was then in the fifth grade, so our class had three years of this. Under his stimulation we read *Treasure Island* and a number of the Henty books. Now and then Professor Counts would drop by to read us a page or so, or listen to one of us—or he would ask questions. Looking back, I cannot be sure that all of us enjoyed the reading. But there were enough of us who did to create excitement. . . . The Henty books gave me my first interest in foreign history and I shall always remember them, and Professor Counts, with gratitude. . . . three years later . . . we were pointed out as an exceptional class. Three or four of us were trying to write stories and poems.36

On a different occasion, McGill wrote of a teacher who stressed reading. He could have been referring to the same "principal." "For me there was the great, good luck in the fifth grade to have a teacher who greatly stimulated his class to read."37

**McCallie School**

McGill probably received most of his speech training at McCallie School, a private institution in Chattanooga for boys. McGill remembered a young farm boy quite overwhelmed by the opportunities at McCallie:

From the elementary school in Chattanooga I moved up to the McCallie Preparatory School where I managed to make the football squad, was accepted for the drama and literary clubs . . . I was like a bird dog puppy, running happily about scaring up coveys. . . . I remember no frustrations in all the four pleasant years, save in Dr. James Park McCallie's math classes.38

Six experiences at McCallie School were important to his speech

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38 *South and the Southerner*, p. 54.
development. They were his speech activities, dramatics, writing, reading habits, influence of teachers, and course work.

**Speech activities.** Speech training at McCallie consisted of oratory, declamation, debate, and discussion. During his first year, McGill won a gold medal in oratory, "giving an original paper with the imposing title 'America's Position Untenable.'"\(^3^9\) In 1917, his senior year, McGill won the "city declamation medal," causing the McCallie Pennant to name him "champion orator of the city."\(^4^0\) Also, the Pennant reported that senior McGill "has won several oratorical medals," "Winner Oratorical Medal '14-'15, Winner Inter-Prep Oratorical Cup '15-'16."\(^4^1\) The McCallie Alumni Journal, in 1947, described McGill's accomplishments:

Thirty years ago in the spring of 1917 he graduated from McCallie after a record which presaged his present ability both as a speaker and writer. He won the orator's medal in both 1915 and 1917 and in between the two years he won the inter-prep orator's cup in 1916.\(^4^2\)

McGill was also active in the "Interscholastic Discussion League." For example, in 1915, he represented McCallie in a discussion of "America's Present Commercial Opportunity."\(^4^3\) The following year he discussed "The Manufactures [sic] of Tennessee." Other

\(^3^9\)Ibid., p. 55.
\(^4^0\)The McCallie Pennant, 1917, p. 13.
\(^4^1\)Ibid., p. 26.
\(^4^3\)McCallie Pennant, 1915, p. 45.
members of this league performed at Baylor School, Chattanooga High School, Central High School, and the Girl's Preparatory School.44

What was the nature of these discussions? W. G. Davies, who, in 1917, was the "editor on literary societies" for the Pennant, after fifty years, wrote that McGill "represented McCallie in discussion groups held jointly with other high schools in Chattanooga on assigned subjects."45 Dr. J. P. McCallie, "President of Board of Trustees and Co-founder of McCallie in 1905," wrote this writer that "the Discussion League was not for winning a medal or a decision of 'Winner' but for investigation and intelligent presentation of current topics of interest."46

In addition to oratory and discussion, McGill apparently debated while attending McCallie, but the extent of that activity is not clear. M. W. McGill, a first cousin of Ralph's and a classmate at McCallie, informed this writer that McGill "was rather active in the debating society."47 McGill wrote that, "when I was a kid at McCallie School, I was trying to . . . make the debating and declamation teams."48

44 Ibid., 1916, p. 45.
46 Letter from Dr. J. P. McCallie, January 15, 1966, Chattanooga.
McGill probably debated as a member of the Daniel Webster Literary Society, an organization of which he was secretary in 1915 and vice-president in 1914. An article in the 1917 *Pennant*, "The Literary Societies of McCallie School," describes the nature of the speech training within those organizations. It should be remembered, however, that McGill entered McCallie at the age of fifteen; consequently, he would not have benefited from the training in the Uncle Remus or James Fenimore Cooper societies:

The literary society work is the one activity of the school in which all of us, large and small, take part. When we first come to McCallie, we are assigned to one of the smaller societies, either the Uncle Remus or the James Fenimore Cooper Society. Under faculty supervision we're coached and encouraged to make efforts to debate in public, to declaim and to read aloud in an interesting manner, so that, after we are promoted to the larger societies and have had a few years experience, we are prepared to try our literary abilities among ourselves and before the public with other schools.

The importance of the literary society work may readily be seen from the fact that the men who represent McCallie in interscholastic debates and oratorical contests have had from three to five years preparatory experience in the literary societies. These men are usually taken from the Daniel Webster and the Len White societies, the societies which are made up of the boys in the High School classes from fourteen years up.

The men who were picked to represent the best literary talent of the school this year were elected to the Inter-Preparatory School Senate of Chattanooga. They were Messrs. Ralph McGill, Eugene Tatum . . . from the Webster Literary Society . . . .

The Daniel Webster Literary Society also provided other opportunities for oral practice. For example, McGill wrote, "I . . . had memorized a dozen or so poems, mostly Kipling's, for reciting at the

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49 *McCallie Pennant*, 1917, p. 72.
weekly sessions of the Daniel Webster literary club. . . ."50 "In our school plays and literary club discussions we enlisted the cooperation of the young ladies from the downtown girls preparatory school."51

Dramatics. Besides numerous speech activities, McGill also took part in dramatics. Active in the Dramatic Club for three years, he was selected "Best Actor" in 1916, playing the role of Jones in "What Happened to Jones."52 In 1915, he was Casey Jones, a college politician, in "Aaron Boggs, Freshman."

Not only did McGill travel, he took advantage of the visiting troupes:

I saw every play I could and there was then a good road season even in cities as small as Chattanooga. I saw some of the celebrated actors; John Drew, David Warfield and Robert Mantell are the three I remember best.53

Eight years earlier, in his daily newspaper column, McGill had remembered other performers:

From the peanut gallery I saw Cyril Maude in "Groumpy," Otis Skinner in "Mister Antonio," and John Drew in "Major Pendennis." Drew, I think, was the most polished actor I ever saw. Robert Mantell in "The Merchant of Venice" remains with me yet as a deeply moving performance.54

50 South and the Southerner, p. 55.
51 Ibid., p. 54.
52 McCallie Pennant, 1916, p. 35.
53 South and the Southerner, p. 57.
What was the value of McGill's contact with the theater? He considered it to be worthwhile:

The annual school play was for me a profitable educational course. A young Chattanoogan, Robert Straus, had had a few small comedy roles on Broadway, but he was not a great success, and for three springs he coached our drama club. In my last two years he gave me the lead role. The senior year it was in "What Happened to Jones," and we took it on the road to two small nearby Tennessee towns. The role required me to kiss one of the young ladies. We were, in our town at least, an unsophisticated generation, and for me, with my preposterous shyness, the awkward kiss at each performance was agony.55

**Writing.** In addition to speaking and acting, McGill devoted considerable time to writing, both in English class and for the *McCallie Pennant*. Lewis Berkeley Cox, who taught English to McGill in 1914-15, after fifty years, wrote that,

... according to my recollection, Ralph wrote exceptionally well then for a boy of his age. Especially if the class were given an opportunity to write on a subject of each student's own choosing, Ralph would almost invariably come up with the most interesting story of any boy in the class. His grades, as I recall the situation, were hurt by weakness in spelling and punctuation, but his ability to express himself vividly was outstanding.56

McGill's grades in Cox's English class were seventy-eight, first term, and seventy-seven, second term.57

W. G. Davies, McGill's classmate, trying to recall after fifty years, agreed that McGill was able to invent an interesting story.

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55*South and the Southerner*, pp. 56-57.


57Official transcript, McCallie School.
Davies described McGill's performance in F. M. Benton's "Caesar class": "In Caesar class, 2nd year Latin, I remember he fixed up a dummy of the front page of a newspaper, written in Latin--headlines and all." 58

McGill put his classroom knowledge into practice, writing for the McCallie Pennant. In 1916, he was local editor and, in 1917, humorous editor of that publication. At the age of sixteen, McGill wrote the first of at least two short stories for the Pennant. Writing about "Old Peter," the most unpopular professor in school, who finally gave his life to save a student, McGill revealed two characteristics which were to remain part of his column and speeches. First, "Old Peter" involved an emotional concern for human relations. Second, as demonstrated in the following quotation, McGill demonstrated an interest in working with words: "Those were his last words, for in that great rescue he had inhaled flame and gasses and at dawn, despite the efforts of the physician, his soul took flight." 59

Reading habits. McGill continued to read widely and with enthusiasm. "In elementary and secondary school years I frequently rode the two miles from our suburb to the Chattanooga Carnegie Library for books . . . ." 60 Discussing books read while at McCallie, McGill expressed concern that he lacked direction in his reading:

In my first autumn at McCallie . . . Woodrow Wilson became my hero. I read all of his writings I could find. . . . I

58 Letter from W. G. Davies, November 21, 1965, Chattanooga.
59 McCallie Pennant, 1914, p. 29.
60 South and the Southerner, p. 63.
. . . had discovered the Waverly novels. Somehow I never had any direction in my reading. I read hungrily, with darts here and dashes there. It was an odd mixture, Opie Reed, Lafacadio Hearn, Whitman, Shakespeare, Frank Norris, Ralph Henry Barbour, Owen Johnson, Robert W. Service, and of course, Emerson's essays and poems. The novel which made the greatest impression on me in those days was Norr's McTeague.61

Other books and authors studied by McGill are listed under "Childhood Experiences."

Influential teachers. McGill named Spencer Jarnegan McCallie and Clarence Rothwell Wilcox as teachers who influenced him while at McCallie School:

Looking back at my years . . . in prep school at McCallie, I recall chiefly Spencer McCallie, in history, and Clarence Rothwell Wilcox in English. . . . I hasten to admit that perhaps this was my own fault. Yet, if so, it was also my own "fault" that McCallie and Wilcox excited and stimulated my mind, while others did not.62

McGill pictured McCallie's classroom technique:

He was one of those rare men with a genius for teaching. He could stir the imagination of his students. I still remember how he looked in class and the things he said about the Romans, the Greeks, the Spartans, the Phoenicians, Persians and others out of the dusty past. . . . In teaching Bible history he was equally as good. He taught them as men, and as seen by their contemporaries. Professor, as we called him, was a rare man.63

McGill also praised Wilcox, an English teacher who did much of the work in speech:

61Ibid., pp. 55-56.


63Ibid., October 22, 1949, col. 3, p. 4.
When I was a kid at McCallie School, I was trying to win letters in all the athletics they had, as well as work in the dramatic club, on the school paper, make the debating and declamation teams. We had a fellow named Clyde Wilcox who taught us many of these things. He taught me football, baseball, track and elocution with at least moderate success, but he was a miserable failure as a teacher of algebra and geometry.64

Although McGill usually speaks highly of Wilcox, he also regrets that he never received direction with his reading:

But somehow, more's the pity, I never had an English teacher in prep school who gave either inspiration or direction. The result was, and is, that my reading has large gaps in it.65

This writer asked McGill to "describe some of the exercises or activities Wilcox used in training students":

I don't know that he had any special techniques, except to put us up there, and have us declaim or recite something you yourself had prepared. . . . Dr. Wilcox would always have a

64Ibid., July 18, 1949, col. 3, p. 10. F. W. Hengeveld, Registrar, Davidson College, Davidson, North Carolina, reported that:
We . . . state that the record earned by Mr. Wilcox was a good one and he graduated from Davidson with both the B.S. and M.A. degrees with the Class of 1911. The records indicate that Mr. Wilcox was President of the Student Body during his senior year. We do not have information on extra-curricular activities nor so far as our records show did Mr. Wilcox participate in debating, elocution, etc. He did complete three years of English while a student--a course in Rhetoric during his freshman year. Text used, Herrick and Damons Rhetoric. In his sophomore year, the text used was Carpenter's English Prose. During the senior year of Mr. Wilcox, the texts used were Arden Texts: The Globe Shakespeare, Woody and Lovette's English Literature. . . . He died October 27, 1960.
Letter to this writer, October 15, 1965.

65South and the Southerner, p. 56.
critic, one of the faculty, as a critic, and he would criticize your enunciation or perhaps . . . if you made an error in pronouncing a word, or an error in grammar. The critic at the end of your talk or declamation would then get up and give this orally so that the whole group could get the benefit of the criticism. This was a very good technique, and, other than that, I don't recall.

Course work. Formal instruction is the final topic to be discussed under speech education at McCallie School. McGill wrote that he did poorly in "Dr. James Park McCallie's math classes," and in algebra and geometry. Official transcripts show that McGill did best in English and French and poorly in solid geometry, German, and trigonometry. Clarence Wilcox, one of McGill's favorites, taught American literature, including Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" and George Washington's "Farewell Address." In this course, McGill made relatively high grades of eighty-five the first term and ninety-two the second.

66 Taped interview with Ralph McGill, December 29, 1965, Atlanta, Georgia. W. G. Davies, in a letter from Chattanooga, November 21, 1965, wrote about Wilcox's methods:
Mr. C. R. Wilcox was an excellent English teacher. He went on to be headmaster of Darlington at Rome, Georgia and then to represent one of the large foundations in educational work. As best I remember he encouraged both original orations and memorizing of great speeches [sic]. The only actual speech [sic] that sticks in my memory is the dramatic reading of Dan McGrew--it was a favorite of his for a couple of years.

67 South and the Southerner, p. 54.

**Vanderbilt University**

In addition to elementary and McCallie schools, McGill experienced some speech development at Vanderbilt University. He suggested that "hero worship for an older cousin who had graduated from Vanderbilt Medical School had persuaded him to register in the pre-medical department. No one counseled me."

Earlier, McGill had written, "I wanted to be a doctor . . . and would have been could I have found the money."

After one year at Vanderbilt, McGill joined the U. S. Marine Corps, returning to the College of Arts and Science, 1919-1920. The next year, 1920-21, McGill enrolled in Vanderbilt Law School: "For a year as a Vanderbilt law student I sat at the feet of Judge Ed. Seay, an erudite, somewhat eccentric man whose subjects were wills and real property." As he had done with medicine, McGill quit his pursuit of law:

> The law bored me. At the time I considered myself to be one of the lost generation, discovering Mencken, Sandburg, and all the new poets and novelists of the time. . . . I did not gain 10 yards on torts, and failed of a first down on contracts.

Experiences important to McGill's speech development at Vanderbilt University will be considered under five headings: speaking,
writing, dramatics, course work, and influence of teachers.

**Speech activities.** McGill did less speaking at Vanderbilt than at McCallie School, but was involved in some oral work. For example, public speaking was limited to a few talks as a representative for the Sigma Chi social fraternity. Poet Allen Tate, classmate of McGill at Vanderbilt, wrote, "I can't remember him giving a public speech," but added that "he had a very pleasant personality: a 'good guy.'"74

Most of McGill's oral practice centered around his interest in poetry. Two experiences stimulated McGill's interest in declamation, Professor Edwin Mims' freshman English class and a literary group called "The Fugitives." McGill described Mims' approach in the classroom:

> We memorized and we read aloud. Professor Mims enjoyed reading to the class. As he read his eyes moved back and forth, like a man watching a tennis match on a miniature court, seeking to find a nonattentive face. . . . It was, all in all, a good class for stimulating one to read poetry and to memorize it. The very first day's assignment was to learn the part of Tennyson's "Ulysses," beginning, "Come my friends, 'tis not too late to seek a newer world." I can say them yet. But we heard almost nothing of contemporary poetry. . . . He wrestled mightily with young minds out of the small towns of Tennessee and adjoining states, seeking to make them "see" and "feel."75

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74 Letter from Allen Tate, July 12, 1966, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.
75 *South and the Southerner*, pp. 71-72.
Writing in his column for the *Atlanta Constitution*, McGill told of other authors studied and how Mims persuaded students to "feel":

The late Eddie Mims . . . hammered Tennyson, Browning, Milton, Keats and Shelley into us by demanding that we memorize great chunks of lines from *Idylls of the King*. And I could reel off *Il Penseroso* and *L'Allegro* without hesitation. Dr. Mims was a demanding man. He would, when he did not see a look of awareness on the faces before him, call them out by name, ask them to stand, and denounce them as having the emotional reactions of an oyster. "Don't you see that?" he'd shout. "Can't you feel that?"

What influence did Professor Mims have upon McGill's speech development? The exercises probably helped develop what *Newsweek* called, McGill's "prodigious memory." McGill told this writer, "in my freshman year I won a prize which he [Mims] offered, a very modest little prize, to the person who memorized the most lines of poetry."

When asked if his memory had been "especially helpful in speaking," McGill replied:

Yes, it has been very helpful. I guess I'm pretty corny about poems, and things, and so on occasion, this hasn't happened often, but I can think of four or five times when I would be talking and it would seem to me that a line or so from a poem might be helpful and I just pull that out of my memory, it wouldn't even be in the manuscript at all, and throw it in. I think memory does help.

One would also suspect that McGill's oral practice in Mims' English class helped him overcome some of his shyness.

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77 *Newsweek*, LIII (April 13, 1959), 102.

Besides Mims' influence, McGill benefited forensically from his association with "The Fugitives," persons who rebelled against Mims' unwillingness to discuss contemporary poetry. Students met to discuss, read, and recite: "Many a night I have argued into the dawn over one of Shaw's prefaces."79 "There was much talk at Kissam Hall and at the Sigma Chi House. Many a night at the old hall we talked and read poetry until dawn."80 McGill further described his activities:

Looking back from the sixties to the twenties, the Fugitives are seen as the best symbol of the South's campus response to the many motivations of rebellion, of flight, from the tyranny of the Southern Brahmin. Poems were written in class, pages from proposed new novels were read along the paths between classes. They were fine sunlit days. . . . Vanderbilt had no course in writing novels, poems or plays. For me, the nights with Merrill Moore and Stanley Johnson provided the most stimulation to read and think.81

McGill not only discussed poetry, he also recited and read aloud:

It was not until I was a sophomore that I discovered contemporary poetry. Happily for me, I came upon Edward Arlington Robinson and memorized "Miniver Cheevy," all of "Mr. Flood's Party," and recited or read aloud at the slightest excuse. Then came William Butler Yeats, Sandburg and Eliot.82

Stanley Johnson, a young English professor provided shelter and stimulation for more oral work:

80 South and the Southerner, p. 74.
81 Ibid., pp. 85-86.
Edwin Arlington Robinson . . . was introduced to me years ago in the flat of an English teacher at Vanderbilt University. We used to gather there at night and read poetry aloud. On this night the teacher read, "Mr. Flood's Party." . . . I met, too, "Richard Cory," and "Miniver Cheevy" and "Reuben Bright"--and all the rest of Robinson's poem[s].

McGill was well known for his ability to declaim poetry. For example, in 1946, more than twenty years after Vanderbilt, McGill received a long-distance call from an old colleague, asking where a certain poem could be found. ". . . if anyone could tell us where to find this poem you could." The phone call caused McGill to reminisce:

Time was when I would recite at the drop of a hat and, as they say, find the hat to drop. I once knew 37 of Kipling's poems and about that many of Mr. Service's ballads . . . . at the end of my freshman year I knew 2,000 lines of Tennyson . . . . I got to be a sort of poetic Sinatra of my time and generation, able to recite as long as the party or the night lasted. I never made them swoon, but still that call was a pretty good tribute. . . . After more than a quarter of a century there was someone at that party in Chattanooga who was in school with me and remembered hearing me recite "Cynara."83

Writing. At Vanderbilt, McGill's interest turned more and more to writing, including a controversial column in the student newspaper, which provided valuable experience for one who would later tackle the explosive issue of civil rights:

My own energies, after bitter frustration with verse, turned to the weekly student newspaper, the Hustler [not available at Vanderbilt]. A column idea was submitted and accepted. It ran column one on page one and quickly involved me in discussion and controversy. Some of the latter led to blows, but it was fun. There was an excitement in getting the four pages ready

84Ibid., September 6, 1946, col. 3, p. 12.
for the paper. We made an all-night job of it, talking and arguing on a variety of unrelated subjects.  

Interest in newspaper work led McGill to a part time job and, eventually, to a career:

Two of the fraternity chapter alumni worked on the Nashville Banner. . . . One day . . . I filled in. . . . This was my first newspaper job, and it was agreed it would be a regular one. . . . That summer I was also a part-time police reporter, and held minor assignments. The pay was seventeen dollars per week. I can still recall the intense excitement and the pleasure of those days. I knew then I had found what I wanted to do.  

Dramatics. After leaving McCallie School, McGill's interest in drama caused him to go off Vanderbilt's campus for work in the theater. However, his voice halted what McGill hoped would be a career in acting:

Bobby Straus later [after McCallie] caught on with Fritz Leiber, a really competent Shakespearian actor. . . . After the First World War, when I was at Vanderbilt University and working part-time on the Nashville Banner, Leiber's troupe came often to Nashville. Straus was playing the lead comedy roles. I carried spears, was a messenger in MACBETH, and in Hamlet once filled in as the second gravedigger. I was wild to be taken on. Straus arranged a talk with Leiber. "First, let me tell you," he said, "that you do not have the voice for it. You can never play the really big parts." We looked each other in the eye for a moment, and then I thanked him, and went out, blinking back tears. It had been a great dream.  

McGill pictured his role in "Macbeth" and explained in more detail why his voice was unsuited for the stage:

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85 South and the Southerner, p. 76.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., p. 57.
I reached my peak as a great [tongue-in-cheek] dramatist when I was chosen by Fritz Leiber for a stage part in the tragedy "Macbeth." At the moment when Macbeth stands defiant, confident that the prophecy of the three witches was correct and that he shall not suffer defeat until Birnam wood moves against him, a messenger comes to warn him the English troops are near, and Macbeth shouts: "The devil damn thee, thou cream-faced loon, Where gottest thou that goose look?" I was the messenger, and the fact that friends in the gallery tittered at that "cream-faced loon" line did not dispel the magic of it. Later I came back again to bring word that Birnam wood was on the move. The critics, careless fellows, overlooked my art, being provincials... Leiber was my beau-ideal. He would have taken me with his troupe, but he talked to me plainly, telling me that my husky voice would never do for real dramatics. So I went back to my reporting beat, sighing over a lost dream.

McGill, then, while at Vanderbilt University, showed a great love for the stage. Because of this, he probably gained in confidence before audiences and probably was made more conscious of good voice activity.

Course work. The Registrar at Vanderbilt University, though unable to provide specifics concerning McGill's formal instruction, did send some information:

Mr. McGill entered the Vanderbilt University College of Arts and Science in September, 1917, and completed his freshman year in June, 1918. He entered as a graduate of McCallie School. He was away from the University during the 1918-19 academic year. I presume he was in military service... [Marines] He returned to the College of Arts and Science for the 1919-20 academic year. In those years only two years of liberal arts work were required for entrance into Law School. He was enrolled in the first year class of the Vanderbilt Law School during the 1920-21 academic year. I believe he began his newspaper work with one of the Nashville papers while still a student, but I am not sure of that [Nashville Banner].

89 Letter from William O. Batts, Jr., Registrar at Vanderbilt University, October 7, 1965, Nashville, Tennessee.
After this writer made a second inquiry, a representative of the Registrar sent photo-copies of courses required by Vanderbilt for graduation. Since McGill changed from medicine to law and then, apparently, to a more general course of study, he probably was exposed to some requirements in both the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science degrees. Although this writer has no idea which courses McGill took, since he was near graduation when expelled from Vanderbilt, he must have fulfilled quite a few of these requirements:

Required for the B.A. Degree

Latin (3 hours); Greek (3 hours); Mathematics (4 hours); English (3 hours); Chemistry (3 hours); History (3 hours); Philosophy (3 hours); and in addition a course of three hours in a science, to wit, Chemistry, or Physics, or Biology, or Geology. . . . Latin, Greek, English, Mathematics, and either Chemistry or History should be taken in the Freshman year. . . .

Required for the B.S. Degree

English (3 hours); Mathematics (4 hours); Chemistry (3 hours); History (3 hours); Philosophy (3 hours); a course of three hours in a science, to wit, Chemistry, or Physics, or Biology, or Geology, and in Languages: Latin and a Modern Language, German, French, or Spanish; or two Modern Languages continued thru the second year. . . . English, Mathematics, Chemistry, or History, and six hours of language work should be taken in the Freshman year. [Some paraphrasing.]

Requirements for first-year law students consisted of: contracts, torts, bailments and carriers and public callings, agency, criminal law, common law pleading and practice [no evidence to indicate

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90 "In the spring of 1922 a combination of a column in the Hustler, which the chancellor did not like, and a bit of by-play in inter-fraternity rivalry, caused the chancellor to suspend three of us. I went to work full-time at the Banner." South and the Southerner, p. 89.
McGill took this], and personal property.91

Although little is known to this writer concerning McGill's actual studies at Vanderbilt University, McGill has made a few comments pertaining to his work at that institution. His interest in freshman English has been considered. McGill refused to take one course "because the man holding the chair of economics had been personally endowed by a retired manufacturer and was a paid speaker seemingly at the beck and call of certain groups." McGill regretted that decision because he "deprived" himself "of the fundamentals of economics."92

Influential teachers. The Vanderbilt Alumnus asked McGill to "reminisce about teachers who stimulated" him while he was at the University. He named Edwin Mims, Edwin E. Reinke, George Pullen Jackson, and George Mayfield:

From Dr. Mims I got an accelerated interest in poetry and in memorizing it. From Doctors Jackson and Mayfield I received an impetus to learn about Germany and France, their literature and art. And from Reinke I learned to know and recognize the keen blade of truth and its place in life. . . .

The man . . . who gave me what mental discipline I possessed when I left there, and who became my good friend and who stimulated me . . . was the late Edwin F. Reinke, head of the biology department. . . . He taught me the value of doubt--and to ask "How do you know that's true". . . .

Dr. Eddie Mims and George Pullen Jackson sparked my imagination and started me off into rewarding fields of reading and thought, but it was Reinke who gave me discipline. . . .

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91 Letter from Mrs. Janice Sowell, secretary, Registrar's office, Vanderbilt University, August 8, 1966; photo materials from official college publications.

92 Atlanta Constitution, October 2, 1946, col. 3, p. 6.
Another who helped me by stimulating my imagination was Dr. George Mayfield. He is a grand man, with a gift for talking with students outside the classroom...

I don't know how good my evaluation of teaching is. In the meager records in the Registrar's office the results wouldn't add up to much. But, my idea of a teacher is one who sparks the interests and imagination... causes a man to try and keep on learning all his life. That's what Reinke, Mims, Mayfield, and Jackson did for me. They were never just classroom teachers.93

In summary, at McCallie and Vanderbilt McGill discussed, debated, declaimed, and acted, experiences which probably helped him gain confidence in himself. However, he apparently had no formal instruction in public speaking. Significantly, McGill continued to read widely and develop a broad background of knowledge.

**Newspaper Experience**

McGill's work as a journalist probably has had important influence upon his speaking; consequently, this is considered here. For example, McGill's employers helped shape his style of writing, stressing the need for clarity. It is significant, then, that one consider any influence his newspaper experience may have had upon his speaking.

Full-time employment began with the *Nashville Banner* in 1922, after an unexpected departure from Vanderbilt University. In Nashville, McGill had three experiences which probably contributed to his speech education: influence of editors, concern for politics, and study habits.

93 *Vanderbilt Alumnus*, March, 1952, pp. 8, 12.
Influence of Editors

City editor. McGill's editors on the Banner were blunt, yet effective teachers. For example, as a novice reporter, McGill covered "a run-away horse," an event which proved to be a lesson in writing. Writing philosophically about a horse and wagon did not impress McGill's city editor, nor did an imitation of Sherwood Anderson's style:

I remember my first time at a typewriter in the news room of the old Nashville Banner. . . . The city editor called me to the desk and told me to get the story on a run-away horse and wagon which but a few minutes before had terrorized Church street. . . . Along the way were bashed in cars, mostly Model T Fords. I wrote it as the rebellion of the horse against the machine age—a desperate decision to attack and take the consequences. I wrote this because I had been reading Sherwood Anderson. It was an imitation, I hoped, of his style. The city editor looked at me curiously. "College stuff, eh?" he said. And went to work with his pencil.

Managing editor. Marmaduke B. Morton, managing editor of the Banner, taught McGill the importance of integrity and clarity, both which McGill found difficult to attain:

My first managing editor was a gaunt, tall and cadaver-like man. Legend has it he did not take his corn pipe out of his mouth when he went to bed. His name was Marmaduke B. Morton. He had been schooled by Henry Watterson on the old Louisville Courier Journal. He was a hard and unyielding man, but a good teacher. "As in religion, so it is in newspaper writing," he would say. "There are just two great commandments. The first one is that a man writing should put the fodder down where the stock can reach it. And the second is, don't lie to yourself." The first commandment calling for simplicity of expression

isn't always easy. The second is the most difficult of all, because there are times when the easiest way out is to lie to one's self and pass on the lie to those who read.\footnote{Ibid., September 30, 1957, col. 1, p. 1.}

Owner and publisher. Major Edward Bushrod Stahlman, owner and publisher of the \textit{Nashville Banner}, groomed McGill for politics, his chief interest. Persons reading McGill's column, and probably his speeches, will recognize the influence of Stahlman's "personal journalism." McGill usually involves himself personally with his subject, particularly his use of first-hand experiences. McGill wrote:

Whenever I hear the phrase "Personal journalism" I think of Major Edward Bushrod Stahlman. . . . When he died in August, 1930, Major Stahlman had been owner and publisher of the \textit{Banner} since 1885. In all those years the paper mirrored not so much the news as it did his personality and convictions. . . . It was his custom to pick a young reporter from the staff and make a political writer of him as a backstop for the veteran who ordinarily covered the state house. . . . I had been so selected, and I went to the Major's office . . . for my first instructions. . . . The year was 1922 . . . Major Stahlman spoke every election year in the city primary campaign. The meetings were held at night, and the speaker's stand was a mobile pickup truck with holders on each side for two kerosene flares. I was assigned to cover the Major. . . . We reporters all loved the Major because he was such a reckless and courageous fighter.\footnote{\textit{South and the Southerner}, pp. 90-92.}

McGill inherited Stahlman's courage, but probably not all of his recklessness, learning it was wiser to delay action until one could define the best policy:

Looking back, I realize there is something of the Major in me. I do not hold with his extreme, almost compulsive partisanship. But I believe in being strongly partisan on
issues which require a choice. That guarantee of freedom of the press is in the Constitution for just one reason--to enable newspapers to speak out. Also, it seems important that newspapers should have, as the Major had, an acute sense of right and wrong. . . . there comes a time in all controversies when one must hit the issue right on the nose. . . . Sometimes it is better to spar for a while or back away for a good look. But finally the issue must be hit hard.97

Concern for Politics

McGill's newspaper experience also taught him much about politics. For example, McGill learned what it took to be a successful politician:

I learned . . . that a polite political campaign was entirely ineffective. But the most valuable lesson I learned was that if you get in mud--you will get muddy--and if you do get muddy it is a mistake to try to scrape it off. That only smears it. Let it dry and it will fall off, because it isn't real. It is just political mud.98

Covering political campaigns provided McGill an opportunity to observe oratory in the raw. For example, Stahlman assigned McGill to a senatorial race and instructed him to play the role of a speech critic:

Before sending me to join [Gus] Fitzhugh, the Major told me to count every crowd and report its exact number. He also wanted me to note every cat-call and the response to each point. In brief, I was to do a hatchet job on Mr. Fitzhugh. . . . My stories were satisfactory, the Major said . . . . They reported that local leaders everywhere predicted Fitzhugh's defeat, that he frequently had been jeered, and that his speeches were flat. This was all true, especially the latter charge. . . . He had no gift for small talk, and he was not at ease before the shirt-sleeved farmers and their

97 Ibid., pp. 100-101.

families who filled the sultry courtrooms or gathered in some grove around a platform of new-sawed lumber to hear political candidates. Such ease is acquired only through experience, and it is not even distantly related to the confident mien which an attorney may assume arguing a case before a jury or a judge.  

Involvement in politics also taught McGill to be realistic when dealing with public officials. Life in Nashville, for example, became a lesson in human behavior. McGill discovered that people were driven by the profit motive:

I recall lying behind a log once on a Tennessee hillside while bullets whined over me and through the woods. . . . I had gone along with a sheriff's force to cover a great still raid. I was a young reporter then and too naive to know the reason for the raid was that city policemen were running this still and cutting in on an area supplied by stills the sheriff was interested in. We caught two city detectives. I learned fast.  

Although McGill was eventually assigned to the Banner's sports department, he continued to report politics. Newsweek reported that "although The Banner in 1923 made him acting sports editor, he continued to handle occasional political stories." McGill wrote that, "chance had taken me from cubbing in politics to sports. I went with reluctance, but that ended when I saw Ki Ki Cuyler and Richbourg and LeBourvea run and hit."  

McGill's experience on the Banner, then, exposed him to many

99 South and the Southerner, pp. 92-96.
100 Atlanta Constitution, November 10, 1951, col. 1, p. 1.
influences: clear and honest writing, courage to act on vital issues, effective politics, realism, and individual motivation. George Barker, who interviewed McGill for the Nashville Tennessean Magazine, concluded:

He was a wild, energetic reporter in Nashville during all of the Roaring Twenties. He was young and undefeated and wrote about everything he could find—sometimes murder in the morning and sports in the afternoon. "It was a good time and a good place to be a young newspaperman," he says. "Nashville was loaded--bootlegging, gambling, vote rigging. Society was really high . . . ."

Study Habits

Besides influential editors and politics, there was a third aspect of McGill's speech development while working in Nashville. McGill and several friends read, studied, and debated ideas; however, little attention was paid to national politics:

On the Banner four of us found an evening or so each week on which to read plays out loud, with the parts assigned. We discovered Eugene O'Neill. We read Russian plays, all of Ibsen's. . . . The new novels were devoured and discussed. I can yet remember the impact of JURGEN, MAIN STREET, and BABBITT. . . .

It is unrewarding to speculate on what direction the country might have taken, and what it and the world might have avoided, had James M. Cox and Franklin D. Roosevelt been elected in 1920. . . . We never thought deeply about these things on the campus at Vanderbilt, or in the city room at the Banner . . . . 104

Closely linked to McGill's study, was his exposure to stimulating

104 South and the Southerner, pp. 76-79.
people. For example, McGill remembered the impact Edna St. Vincent Millay had upon the young farm-reporter:

In those days I, too, was a poet not long out of college and I was her servant. Had she asked for the Golden Fleece I would have sought it. . . . She was there to give a reading of her poems and that afternoon in the hotel suite she recited some which were never on a program. . . . One I asked her to write down and sign for me, which she did. It [is] lost . . . I have never seen it anywhere else. Without Millay saying it, with gestures, it lacks something. I recall it inexacty, but it went something like this:

"See that man standing there,
The one close there by the stair?
No, not him. The one in blue serge pants.
Well, he was born in Paris, France."105

The Atlanta Constitution

Upon leaving the Nashville Banner in 1929 with his new bride, Mary Elizabeth Leonard, McGill became assistant sports editor for the Atlanta Constitution. In 1938, after a trip "to study agricultural co-ops and marketing conditions in the Scandinavian countries whose small farms and populations" approximated "those of the Southern states," McGill returned to his new post of executive editor.106 In 1942, McGill became editor and, in 1960, publisher, the position he now holds.

As sports editor of the Constitution, McGill gained further knowledge of politics, of people, and numerous subjects. For example, in 1935, in a massive sports column, "Break of the Day," McGill wrote:


If I had all the wealth in the world I would arrange for at least four things: All the babies and children in the world would have all the milk they needed to drink; and nobody's sister would ever be in need; and every young boy would be taken to see that log hut on a Kentucky hillside in which Abraham Lincoln was born and every person in these United States—all the 120,000,000 of them, would be given a chance to look into the face of Franklin D. Roosevelt and see him smile and hear him speak. 107

The sports page was also used as a training ground for language development. As he had done at McCallie School, McGill continued to work with words. For example, in Pasadena, California, December 31, 1935, McGill previewed the Rose Bowl football game:

They are tenting tonight on the old camp ground and tomorrow afternoon they will have at it in the famous Rose Bowl of concrete, topped with blossoms, to determine whether Stanford or Alabama shall be the football champions of the season. [Alabama won.] 108

As editor and publisher, McGill has written about all kinds of topics, his world travels, Georgia and national politics, religion, raising bees, and Dwight D. Eisenhower's speech improvement. During his thirty-seven years with the Atlanta Constitution, McGill has had three experiences which have enabled his speaking to mature, personal experiences, reading habits, and speaking experiences. Each of these will be treated below.

**Personal Experiences**

McGill's numerous experiences have enabled him to keep abreast of people, events, and issues. Probably his speech theory and practice

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have been influenced by his travels and a variety of activity.

Travel

McGill has personally witnessed many historic events of the twentieth century, providing him with an unusual opportunity to study policies, personalities, and issues. In 1933, as a vacationing sports editor in Cuba, McGill took time out to cover the Batista revolution.\(^{109}\) In 1938, McGill managed to "visit Great Britain and to have the great luck to catch on with the German movement into Austria."\(^{110}\) McGill returned to England in 1943 and on several later occasions; he witnessed Winston Churchill's speeches to the House of Commons, before, during, and after the war. In 1945, McGill was one of three representatives sent by the American Society of Newspaper Editors on a 40,000 mile tour of world capitals to "examine conditions affecting freedom of the press."\(^{111}\) McGill observed the military government of postwar Germany, covered the Nuremberg trials, and witnessed the United Nations charter meeting in San Francisco. Celestine Sibley summed it up when she wrote that "a combination of luck and all-encompassing curiosity has time and again landed McGill where the news was breaking."\(^{112}\)

In his daily newspaper column, McGill has written about his

\(^{111}\)Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 177 (April, 1946), 76.
\(^{112}\)Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 231 (December 27, 1958), 52.
visits to Bethlehem, Moscow, Paris, Bonn, Japan, Nigeria, Warsaw, London, Manchester, Colombia, Austria, Delhi, Cairo, Scandinavia, Egypt, Palestine, Iran, Persian Gulf, Rome, Andara, Istanbul, Karachi, New Delhi, Chunking, Ceylon, and Africa.

McGill has also traveled throughout the United States, thereby keeping in touch with people, events, and issues. For example, his newspaper column often begins with, "In the past three weeks I have ridden by car or flown by plane over much of Georgia and the South."113 Political conventions and campaigns have held particular attraction for McGill. He traveled with such candidates as Robert A. Taft, Adlai Stevenson, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Richard Nixon, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson.

What role has McGill's wide experience played in his speaking? Because he has a good memory, plus the fact that he takes detailed notes of first-hand observations, McGill is able to speak extemporaneously about events and places he has actually seen. McGill wrote what he considered to be the value of experience: "Character builds itself out of a man's experiences."114 "Whatever traveling I have done, and whatever and all I have seen, have taught me just two things--humility and the awful truth of the uncertainty of things."115 McGill also found that,

113 *Atlanta Constitution*, August 11, 1946, col. 3, p. 14C.
experience teaches one that at least a certain amount of integrity and courage, and some sort of spiritual quality, are good things for a man to have inside him. . . . Travel and study and experience teach one, not to be too sure about the answers, and to know that humility is a comfortable garment which wears well and is becoming. If I have learned anything, it is never to be too sure about things. It is best, I think, always to be a seeker, and never to stop and say, "That is all."116

Celestine Sibley, long-time writer for the Atlanta Constitution, pointed out the importance of McGill's travels to his credibility:

Sometimes he is referred to as the conscience of the South, and in Atlanta his function is frequently summed up in the words of one subscriber who said simply: "He does my thinking for me." . . . Those who say he does their thinking for them say it without apology because they know that no matter where the news is breaking, the chances are that the Constitution editor is either there or has been there and knows, first hand, the issues involved.117

Variety of Activity

McGill's abilities and accomplishments have brought many jobs, experiences, and awards, all enabling him to speak from a wide background of knowledge. Some of these activities will simply be listed here: chairman of the local Selective Service Board in Georgia, 1940-44; War Labor Board's advisory committee for Georgia, 1942; Advisory Board of the Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, 1942; Southern Council for Regional Development, 1943; special advisor to director of State Department's International Information

Service, 1945; Georgia state chairman for the thirteenth annual celebration of American Brotherhood Week, 1946; chairman of a committee of educators, editors, publishers, and civic leaders, formed to further legislation for the State Department's overseas cultural relations program, 1947; meeting with President Eisenhower, for prominent American business, labor, finance, publishing, and education leaders, 1953; national chairman of the newspaper committee for Brotherhood Week, 1957; national education committee to study use of tape recordings and other devices for education, 1958; member of John F. Kennedy's twenty-one-member advisory committee for Labor-Management Policy, 1961; member of the Commission on Goals for Higher Education in the South, 1961; Fair Campaign Practices Committee, 1964; traveled extensively by request of the United States government.

**Reading Habits**

Ralph McGill is a tireless reader. To determine the extent and nature of his study, four questions are answered: How much does McGill read? Why does he read? What is his plan? What does he read?

**Amount of reading.** What is the extent of McGill's reading? He considers reading to be his "chief vice."\(^\text{118}\) "To the point of being unsocial to a fault," McGill prefers reading to bridge, gin rummy, poker, dancing, and smoking:

> Having had the hot breath of Calvin on my neck since birth, I grew up under the impression that dancing and card playing

\(^{118}\) *Atlanta Constitution*, November 21, 1949, col. 3, p. 10.
were sinful. This made it necessary for me valiantly to try both. . . . There is no more sin in the ace of hearts than in a pack of rook cards. . . . I could never understand why anyone would play any card game when it was possible to talk or read. I think it much more sensible to invite guests and issue each a good book to read until midnight than to sit playing a card game.  

McGill wrote about the extent and nature of his reading:

Since I try to read about three books each week, and have a great deal of trouble finding the time to do so . . . I have to pick and choose. Therefore, most of my reading is nonfiction and much of that is selected deliberately with the idea of trying to learn something from it.

Reasons for study. McGill reads because he is convinced that contemporary problems, as well as those of the future, can best be solved on the basis of past experience: "It has long seemed to me that we should take from the past that which gives us strength and courage and to use both to face the problems of today and tomorrow which also require strength and courage."

Secondly, McGill studies to keep abreast of the changing times:

In this day and time it is necessary to do a lot of reading, much more than ever before. . . . It is this adult generation, with its pattern of thought and its culture, developed of that past, which meets with the modern technology of a world swiftly industrialized by the steam engine, the gasoline and Diesel engines. That is one reason it is more difficult for us, who in the space of a generation have come from the coon-skin cap and the percussion-cap rifle, to jet-propelled, radio-controlled weapons and the atomic bomb and atomic energy, to work efficiently with the mental tools we possess. . . . It explains the

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120 Ibid., November 24, 1949, col. 3, p. 18B.
frustration and the futility of civic club and radio speakers who forever are panting to "go back" to something. The past always seems to have been more simple. . . . But we aren't going back and we are going on. 122

Plan of study. McGill claims to have no plan or direction in his reading. In 1950, he wrote, "I prowl around with my reading, without much plan or reason, except trying to learn something, and that way you come across a mixture of books and articles and end up not learning too much, I guess." 123

Quite often, however, McGill speaks in behalf of that which sounds most logical, like planned study, but really believes his own way to be best. For example, McGill stated:

I do not know whether planned reading is superior to just reading. . . . I think perhaps planned reading may be best, but to do so causes one to miss much. And who is to do the planning? It may be best just to pitch in and read, putting aside any book which, after getting a third of the way through is still uninteresting. 124

Reading material. The final area under reading habits will be the nature of McGill's reading material. McGill's favorite sources are the Bible and Stephen Vincent Benet's "John Brown's Body," works he often quotes when writing and speaking. Celestine Sibley pointed out the influence of the Bible upon McGill's newspaper columns:

Many of McGill's columns quote the Scriptures and from time to time somebody detects in his own style the measured music

122 Ibid., December 9, 1946, col. 3, p. 6.
123 Ibid., February 1, 1950, col. 3, p. 10.
of the Old Testament. One visitor's comments on the subject were quoted by McGill in a column: "An old fellow whose clothes smelled of wood and smoke and mothballs came in and said, 'You must read the Bible a right smart.' 'Well,' I said, 'I do.' But he confessed to the old man that he flies in terror from a cover-to-cover study of Holy Writ but keeps, "the Book handy to read for relaxation and pleasant roaming about in it."

As a newspaper man he likes its "good reporting" and marvels that there were "no bad war correspondents" at the battles described in the Old Testament. His idea of a flawless lead on a news story is the one beginning: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job."

McGill also draws from the Bible when speaking. For example, in his address to the North Carolina Press Association, July 12, 1956, and again at De Pauw University, April 18, 1958, McGill began with a passage from "Proverbs."

It is written in Proverbs that a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. The beauty of that simile teaches humility, especially to an advertising or newspaper man, whose job it is to use words . . .

In addition to the Bible, McGill's speeches also reflect his interest in "John Brown's Body." For example, when delivering his "Lincoln Day Address" at Cooper Union, New York, February 12, 1960, McGill concluded with a quotation:

I like what Stephen Vincent Benet said, in "John Brown's Body," of Lincoln's trials and his patient search for answers: Wrote Benet:

'What is God's will?
They come to me and talk about God's will
In righteous deputations and platoons,
Day after day, laymen and ministers. . . .
But all of them are sure they know God's will.
I am the only man who does not know it. . . .'

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125 Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 231 (December 27, 1958), 25.
126 Manuscripts provided this writer by Ralph McGill.
Always he had his mystic faith in the people—in their ability to maintain popular government. . . . For us a century older now, there is the clear duty to have and express that faith and not to allow any petty sophistication to blind us to the fact that right does make might. 127

To further demonstrate the kind of materials McGill reads, sources used by McGill in his daily newspaper column are listed here, using his own labels:

H. Allen's three novels, The Forest and the Fort, Bedford Village, and Toward the Morning; Death Comes for the Archbishop; Drums along the Mohawk; A Farewell to Arms; The Late G. Apley; Appointment in Samarra; Northwest Passage; The Grapes of Wrath; The Heart is a Lonely Hunter; Look Homeward Angel; Of Time and the River; Web and the Rock; You Can't Go Home Again; Anthony Adverse; Arrowsmith; Gone With the Wind; E. Merton Coulter's The Confederate States of America; Winston Churchill's war memoirs; Economic Geography of the USSR; "The Old Man and the Sea"; U. S. Camera; Divided We Fought; picture life of Lincoln; a work by Benjamin Thomas about Lincoln; Agnes Demille's "Dance to the Piper" and "Sam Clemens of Hannibal"; Salvadore Madariaga's Bolivar; J. P. Marquand's H. M. Pulham; Esquire; Henry Steele Commager's The Blue and the Gray; Boris Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago; Life's Meaning; Howard Odum's Southern Regions of the United States; Lincoln Papers; Atlantic Monthly; E. E. Robinson's They Voted for Roosevelt; C. Vann Woodward's The Burden of Southern History, Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel, Reunion and Reaction, Origins of the New South, The Strange Career of Jim Crow; Thunder Out of China; F. Perkins' The Roosevelt I Knew; Eric Severeid's Not So Wild a Dream; The Autobiography of William Allen White; John Hershey's Hiroshima; James B. Conant's The American High School Today; Would Schools be Desegregated?; John Fox's The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come; Erskine Caldwell's Tobacco Road; Thomas Hamilton's Men and Manners in America; Virgil's Georgics; Gunnar Myrdal's The American Dilemma; Eugene O'Neill's plays; Edmund Burke's "Conciliation with America"; Mercury; Sophocles' "Ode to Antigone"; Carl Sandburg's six volumes on Lincoln.

A few additional sources demonstrate the wide variety of materials McGill studies:

127 Manuasript provided this writer by Ralph McGill.
Report of the U. S. Commissioner of Education for the year 1900-1901; 1916 census statistics; University of Georgia economics department study on industry; National Education Association's report on support of education by states; newspapers from "all over the nation"; farm publications such as the Hereford Journal; intelligence reports; translations of the Soviet press; monitored radio programs; report published by the University of Tennessee.

**Speaking Experience**

Besides childhood experiences, formal education, newspaper experience, and reading habits, McGill's speech education consisted of extensive speaking experience. Since McGill apparently had no formal course in public speaking, his oratory has resulted largely from personal observation and practice. The extent and nature of McGill's speech practice is the subject of this section.

McGill did some speaking while working with the Nashville Banner. He spoke extemporaneously at schools in the area about sports and politics, subjects of which he wrote daily. According to McGill, these talks were never recorded in any way. 128

In 1929, after joining the Constitution, McGill began an active speaking career in Atlanta. This writer asked McGill when he "first became active as a speaker":

Well, I think I would say it was in the 1930's, in the early years of the depression, that I became really pretty active, and this was just sort of an accident you might say. I always enjoyed sports, but I never set out to be a sports writer... I had always maintained an interest in outside subjects... I did some articles on the economic effect of the cotton collapse in the depression years... in the thirties, I had some friends who were on the faculty at Emory University in political...

science and economics, and at that time one of the government agencies encouraged communities to set up forum meetings, and I remember going around to some of these with Dr. Goodrich White, and particularly with the late Cullen Gosnell who was head of the political science department, and we would . . . go to towns all over Georgia, sometimes we went a hundred and fifty miles away, drive there and come back late at night, make talks at these forums. So I got going in that, and then, in 1937, I was awarded a Rosenwald Fellowship . . . [which] enabled my wife and me to go to Europe . . . Then I had the great luck to be in Berlin to see one of Hitler's great demonstrations, and then the greater luck to be able to go into Austria at the time of the Anschluss there in March, in '38, and stay there until the plebiscite in April . . . so I stayed in Europe 'til the Munich agreement . . . So, naturally, when I came back, there was a great demand from civic clubs and all sorts of organizations to talk about one of these many experiences. I made hundreds [of talks] . . . I think that since the '30's it has been going on, certainly since the European trip. Of course I've had many other trips over to Europe, such as three years ago this month [or, 1962], I went to West Africa [on a fact-finding trip for President John F. Kennedy] for about three months . . . I made a number of talks about that . . . I went over during the war; the last year of the war I made a trip clear around the world . . . representing the American Society of Newspaper Editors . . . so I must have made a hundred talks about various aspects of this, in the next year after that certainly . . . Incidentally, most of those talks [about his trips] would be extemporaneous. I didn't have a manuscript; I didn't need a manuscript, you see? 129

Since the 1930's, then, McGill has been in constant demand as a speaker. In 1965, Grace Lundy, McGill's secretary, described the extent of McGill's speaking:

Mr. McGill turns down quite a few invitations to speak--I would estimate between six and eight hundred a year. In 1965 he made forty talks that I have recorded on calendar. This, of course, does not include tapes he was asked by various radio and television stations to make in Atlanta and in the cities where he would be making talks. His newspaper duties, the boards and committee meetings . . . including White House

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Ibid.
Committees, and the fact the day has only twenty-four hours make it necessary to confine his talks to a limited number. He hates to turn down school and college groups in particular, as he is highly interested in young people.130

McGill is willing to speak to almost any kind of audience, and about a variety of topics. The journalist's speaking experience will be discussed under eleven headings: church groups, education, radio and television, labor, human relations, organizations, the press, government, foreign, occasional speeches, and commencement speaking.

Church groups. McGill often speaks at churches. For example, he told of the difficulty encountered when trying to change old traditions and beliefs:

One night I was asked to talk to the men's Bible class of a small-town church. I tried to speak casually, yet seriously, noting that we Southerners have a reputation for being Bible-oriented, for quoting from it, and for using it in our politics. I said that somehow along the way we had managed to exclude the Negro from our concept of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. . . . There was polite applause. Later, when the meeting was concluded, an old man came up to me. "I just want you to know," he said . . . "that I believe in white supremacy. Even the Bible says as much. I hold with our traditions." I patted him on the shoulder and said, "Well, the Bible is interpreted many ways."131

Education. McGill also enjoys speaking to school groups, probably the type audience McGill has addressed most. For example, in 1959, he talked to the Columbia University School of Journalism. In

130 Typed statement given this writer by Grace Lundy, December 29, 1965.

131 South and the Southerner, pp. 232-233.
1961, he told the Harvard Law School Alumni Association that, "since
the United States Supreme Court Decision of May, 1954, the leadership
of the Southern bar has not lived up to its responsibility."\(^{132}\)
In 1961, the American Federation of Teachers heard McGill say that, "we
have no way to be sure the abilities and talents of thousands of
youngsters now moving toward, or in, secondary schools, will become a
national asset."\(^{133}\) In 1963, McGill told members of the National
Council for the Social Studies that "educators must take the lead in
stemming 'the increasing feeling of alienation from the country's
future by extremists, depressed or disadvantaged groups.'"\(^{134}\)

**Radio and television.** Much of McGill's speaking on radio and
television is in the form of panels and discussions. As early as
1946, McGill discussed "displaced persons and Palestine" over radio
station WAGA in Atlanta. The Constitution reported at that time that
McGill's next "radio appearance will be April 12, when he goes to
New York to appear on the Town Hall of the Air program broadcast
nationally over the American Broadcasting Company's network."\(^{135}\)
In 1959, McGill was one of several persons on NBC's "Today Show" who
discussed the difficulty of obtaining news from official sources.

\(^{133}\)Ibid., August 17, 1961, col. 1, p. 15.
\(^{134}\)Ibid., December 2, 1963, col. 1, p. 46.
Labor. McGill has shown a particular interest in labor, as recognized by the late President John F. Kennedy, when he appointed McGill to his twenty-one-member advisory committee for Labor-Management Policy. Two examples will illustrate McGill's speaking in this area. On May 13, 1946, McGill shared speaking duties with Senator Wayne Morse at the Southern Labor Conference of the American Federation of Labor in Asheville, North Carolina, where he spoke to a racially integrated audience from twelve southern states. The day after McGill's address, George L. Googe, Southern Organizing Director, responded to the speech:

"We are also planning to expand our Public Relations Department so that we will be able to tell with more facility and clarity our story," he [Googe] said. "We are taking heed of the fine constructive criticism offered by Ralph McGill, Editor of the Atlanta Constitution, in his address before the conference here. He said we had for years been telling our story in a slipshod [McGill's very word] manner and we intend to do something about it."^136

Second, in 1947, McGill talked to the Textile Union of America (C.I.O.), in state convention at Rome, Georgia. McGill pictured the occasion and the audience's response:

My subject was one which generally could be said to be covered by the phrase, "The Marshall Plan" . . . that if it fails of adoption we will learn, as the tobacco farmer already is learning, that there is a direct tie between our pocket-books and those in other countries. . . . The CIO delegates listened with great patience and I like to think, with interest. A very brief question period [a format McGill was to continue] later revealed they think about the Marshall Plan about as the general run of Americans. . . . They were all Anglo-Saxon types, I noted, as I sat through a singing

Human relations. McGill, known best for his concern for minority groups, has often spoken to and in defense of both Jews and Negroes. For example, in 1946, McGill informed two hundred and fifty "delegates from Jewish communities in Georgia, Alabama and east Tennessee" about his experiences on a recent trip to Germany and Palestine. Delegates had met to "plan for a $100,000,000 United Jewish Appeal for Refugees, Overseas Needs, and Palestine." Willington Wright, reporter for the Constitution, described the occasion and speech:

The conference took place in the civic room of the Ansley [hotel in Atlanta] against the background of a huge placard indicating that 5,700,000 Jews had died in Europe as the result of Nazi atrocities. . . . In opening his remarks, McGill first told of his visit to the court at Nuremberg, where 22 Nazi leaders are on trial for some of the atrocities of which the delegates heard yesterday. . . . McGill then told of his visits to some of those camps [for displaced persons].

Most of McGill's speeches about human relations have tackled, as he told a Florida audience, "the largest single domestic problem of the United States"--"the nation's 13 million Negroes." For

139 Manuscript provided by Ralph McGill, delivered before the "Open Forum," Daytona Beach, Florida, January 3, 1954.
example, McGill spoke to "civic, labor and church leaders from 72 Southern cities in 11 states," met "to seek the reasonable and tolerant approach to the problem of civil rights." In his newspaper column, McGill analyzed the speech situation, telling first what he had said, then the response stimulated by his speech. He wrote:

I had opposed the timing and the methods behind the Federal legislation as proposed [by President Truman], with an argument which can best be summed up as follows: "I want the South to do what is right. I do not want the Federal Government to compel it. . . . The proposed Federal legislation will not affect or change existing state laws . . . a fact largely overlooked. Juries still are selected from panels drawn in the respective communities. Changing a jury from the courthouse to the jury box in the Federal building will not change a state of mind."

Response to McGill's speech was both immediate and delayed. Following his oration:

. . . two young Negro students came up to me, separately, and asked these questions:

1. "Mr. McGill, why is it the majority in the South [represented by McGill's speech] do not want the Negro to have justice and a fair chance?"
2. "Will you tell me, sir, how a liberal viewpoint [like McGill's] can oppose the Federal legislation?"

Several days later, after McGill had discussed the speech and occasion in his column, he wrote of a delayed response:

A young Negro woman, married and the mother of one child, came to see me. . . . She said that she came because of a

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140 Atlanta Constitution, February 28, 1948, col. 4, p. 11.
141 Ibid., March 1, 1948, col. 3, p. 6.
142 Ibid.
conversation with her friends, who had urged her to come. 
I want to put it down, her thinking, exactly as I can. "We 
read in the papers about your talk at the school and about 
how they asked you questions and didn't agree with you. We 
read what else you had to say," she began. "Those people 
(at the university) wouldn't spit on us. There isn't anybody 
harder on a common Negro than they. . . .  They are a lot more 
distant to their cooks and maids than white people. So, don't 
you worry too much about how they acted. . . ." Let this be a 
second chapter in a primer on Southern thinking. 143

Organizations. McGill also talks to all sorts of clubs. Two 
examples are presented, a Kiwanis Club and a garden club. McGill 
wrote of the problems involved in explaining Georgia politics to a 
Kiwanis Club in Bradenton, Florida:

I ran into some trouble trying to explain Georgia's predicament to the Kiwanians who overflowed into adjoining halls. 
It is so difficult to explain that not even Georgians themselves can explain it . . . .144

McGill, who has raised bees and is considered quite knowledgeable on the subject, provided a delightful example of poor audience analysis:

Once upon a time I was called upon to talk on the subject of 
the bees. I began by saying that their social system was not 
unlike our own. The female bee, called the queen, is a bit 
fat, had to be waited on all the time, and the male bees work 
themselves to death keeping her in the style to which she is 
accustomed. I was speaking to a garden club, and to my surprise this bit of levity did not roll them in the aisles. I 
hastily turned to the subject of pollination.145

143 Ibid., March 5, 1948, col. 3, p. 10.
145 Ibid., October 8, 1947, col. 3, p. 10.

There are some newspapers which are not doing well. I have run my own poll on them in the form of close examination and study and they are, without exception, newspapers which are either so reactionary as to be far behind the times save for a steadily decreasing type of readership, or daily present to the readers a tasteless, monotonous paraphrase of a Biblical truth, "the same yesterday, today and tomorrow."

Government. Much of McGill's work in government has been in committee meetings, using informal discussion, but he has done some speaking. For example, in 1954, he addressed the Air Defense Command in Colorado Springs. In 1960, he talked to a "United Nations group" in Detroit, and, in 1948, he was asked to testify before the Foreign Relations Committee on the European Relief Plan.

Foreign. McGill has talked in a number of foreign areas, including Japan, Africa, and England. In 1962, he spoke in Japan about "Press Leadership in Provincial Areas." The next year, he traveled in Africa on a fact-finding tour for President Kennedy,

146Manuscript provided by Ralph McGill.
making several talks and answering questions. Back in July 25, 1943, however, McGill made what must have been an interesting speech, using the facilities of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Although the BBC informed this writer that McGill's speech was not available on tape, the New York Times carried an Associated Press report:

Ralph McGill, editor of The Atlanta (Ga.) Constitution, praised the British today, saying that they were able to fight the war and at the same time plan to be a better nation when peace comes. In an address for the British Broadcasting Corporation he noted in particular plans already made for revision of the educational system to insure wider schooling for all classes and a program for the rebuilding of London.\(^\text{147}\)


Commencement speaking. Among McGill's many commencement addresses were speeches at Duke University, Cranbrook School, University of North Carolina, Oberlin College, Wellesley College, DePaul University, University of Miami, and Butler University.

In summary, Ralph McGill's speech education, though based largely on practical experience and first-hand observation, has consisted of childhood experiences, formal education, newspaper experience, personal experiences, reading habits, and speaking experience.

Reared on a small farm, McGill was extremely shy, yet this rural environment was an asset in many respects. McGill learned to be independent and, because there were so few Negroes, was taught no prejudice. He worked with the soil and came to appreciate the wonders of nature, many of which are part of his language.

At McCallie and Vanderbilt, McGill enjoyed many opportunities to speak. Debate, discussion, declamation, and drama were excellent exercises for the shy farm boy who would one day speak throughout the world. Although McGill had many practical speaking experiences, he apparently benefited from no formal course in public speaking.

As a newspaperman, McGill discovered many truths he had not found in school. Editors taught him the importance of clarity, integrity, and personal involvement in one's work. Politics, the science he loved as a lad, was observed first-hand. McGill formulated a belief that was to influence his thinking for years to come: Individuals and governments should pursue policies that are feasible.

Because of his positions with the Constitution, McGill could travel widely and serve on numerous committees. Because of his experiences, study habits, and excellent memory, McGill was able to speak credibly to all kinds of audiences about a wide variety of topics.
CHAPTER III

SPEECH THEORY: IDEAS EXPRESSED BY RALPH MCGILL

Ralph McGill has been active in public speaking as a student, speaker, observer, reporter, critic, and theorist. McGill has witnessed many of the important speakers of the twentieth century. He "heard William Jennings Bryan when he was an old man."¹ On February 21, 1938, McGill heard Hitler speak when he "practically announced he would go into Austria."² The next month, while in Austria, McGill heard Hitler speak again.³ In 1938, and on two later occasions, the journalist witnessed Winston Churchill address the House of Commons, experiences which will be used to demonstrate McGill's treatment of oratory:

It will always be among my joys that I did see him . . . at three great moments: two of history and one of great personal satisfaction--putting the resolution before the Commons for a message of affection and loyalty to Queen Elizabeth. In 1938 I sat in the old House of Commons and heard him, like a prophet of old crying in the wilderness, warn against the course of appeasement pursued by the Chamberlain government. Again, during the war, I heard him in the House of Lords, where Commons met after their own historic chamber was bombed out. And a few days after the Queen returned in May 1954 from an arduous and important journey, he put the resolution of congratulation, loyalty and affection. He came slowly into the House just before the questions assigned to him for answer . . .

³Ibid.
his squat figure, with the pink round face. He looked older because he was. It was with obvious effort he pulled himself to his feet. Until he speaks his face is expressionless, cast in the familiar lines. But when he rose to have his say and the full light played upon him, he comes alive. When the great organ-like voice began and the close-clipped and rolling words followed one another until they sounded like a symphony, then he really seemed to glow. He stroked the stand upon which notes rested, rubbing the hands back and forth. His hands were pink-white and unusually slim for so heavy and short a man. He rarely looked about. But the words came on and on and for anyone who had an affection for words, they were like notes from some great symphonic arrangement with now and then a trumpet solo... Churchill spoke with the old resonance. His words purred and rolled like summer thunder.4

McGill has also observed more recent speakers, including Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Robert A. Taft, Adlai Stevenson, Richard Nixon, and John F. Kennedy. McGill managed two gubernatorial campaigns in Georgia, those of Governor Ellis Arnold in 1942 and James Carmichael in 1946.5 He was present when Douglas MacArthur addressed a joint session of Congress. Ralph McGill, then, has been a close observer of twentieth century oratory.

What is McGill's speech theory? Although McGill has recorded no systematic theory of speaking, he has had much to say about public deliberation. Since 1938, McGill has written a signed editorial column for the Atlanta Constitution, the chief source used by this writer for discovering his ideas and beliefs.6

6Taped interview with Ralph McGill, Atlanta, Georgia, December 29, 1965.
Description of Ralph McGill's Speech Theory

Drawing from his personal experiences and first-hand observations, McGill has written extensively about public speaking. McGill's views concerning oral communication are discussed under the following headings: (1) his philosophy of communication, (2) his belief that public speaking and debate are important aspects of our society, (3) his beliefs concerning audiences and why they respond as they do, (4) the role of supporting materials and reasoning, (5) a speaker's delivery, (6) style, (7) the importance of purposeful oratory, and (8) the institution of commencement speaking.

Philosophy of Communication

McGill's philosophy of speech includes those factors which seem basic to his beliefs concerning oral communication. These are freedom of speech, the need for an informed public, importance of continued study, the nature of communication, and the significance of being objective.

Freedom of speech. McGill's philosophy requires that each person be given an opportunity to make his own decisions:

The reason I dislike censorship generally is because I dislike someone else deciding what is good for me and what is bad for me. I prefer to decide for myself... And I want the privilege of deciding. What is more I think I ought to have it.7

While McGill believes that all speakers should be given a chance to

speak, he does not suggest that all views be supported:

Henry Wallace is coming to the South on a speaking tour . . . why shouldn't he speak? There is no reason why any person shouldn't hire out to speak, as Mr. Wallace has . . . . No one has to go to hear him. He has an idea and a policy. I think it wrong and I believe him to be doing himself and his country a disservice, but if I were to be in Atlanta I would be very interested in hearing him speak . . . he has every right to speak.®

An informed public. Since a democratic system exposes people to all views, the public should be informed on important issues. McGill contends that the public should be protected with the arm of "truth." He considers it the responsibility of schools, newspapers, television, and radio to inform the people. McGill wrote, "A free people must be free to discuss and debate--because they have been informed." 9

Continued study. Not only the public, but also the speaker should be well informed. To be an enlightened individual McGill suggests that,

. . . a doubting and inquiring mind is the best mental tool to have. . . . Travel and study and experience teach one, most of all, not to be too sure about the answers, and to know that humility is a comfortable garment which wears well and is becoming. If I have learned anything, it is never to be too sure about things. It is best, I think, always to be a seeker, and never to stop and say, "This is all." 10

Nature of communication. McGill's philosophy of speech is closely linked with his understanding of democratic institutions. Discussion and debate are not only tools of inquiry, but also learning processes. Argumentation is an inherent strength of the United States government:

In our country there is a dangerous (I think) school which argues that our congressmen should be required to follow their party platforms. . . . As we look at the unstable governments in Europe which employ the parliamentary system, we could wish they had our own to combat the problems of the times. Our system not merely permits debate--as does the magnificent parliamentary procedure. Ours prolongs it, for years, if necessary. Our process is educational.11

Objectivity. Finally, one should be willing to consider the value of opposing views. To be an enlightened debater or speaker, McGill contends one must understand and appreciate arguments advocated by different participants. For example, he wrote, "when there is time I like to look at controversy from all sides before reaching a decision."12

In summary, McGill contends that all views should be heard. So the public will be prepared to evaluate those views, people must be educated. McGill believes the dialogue encouraged by the form of government in the United States can be considered an educational experience.

Importance of Public Speaking and Debate

Ralph McGill's concern for communicative prowess is revealed in three ways. First, he believes that forensics should be used as a standard for evaluation. Second, communication is requisite to successful politics. Third, students should be trained in communicative skills.

Criterion for judgement. Probably remembering his own training at McCallie School, McGill evaluates both institutions and individuals on the basis of speaking experience. For example, in an article for the Saturday Review, "Rebirth of Hope at Ole Miss?," McGill considered absence of a debate program to be indicative of low standards: "Standards at the university here remained low. . . . The curriculum is not regarded as sound. . . . The university supports no debating society, no student literary publication."\(^{13}\)

Second, when critics chided the United Nations for being only a debating society, McGill rebutted:

The cynical, using a cynical phrase, have described the United Nations as "just an international debating society." . . . Nevertheless, there is a great deal to say in behalf of a debating society.\(^ {14}\)

Besides institutions, McGill has also judged individuals on the basis of forensic experience. For example, though differing with

\(^{13}\) *Saturday Review*, 45 (November 17, 1962), 51.

Herman Talmadge on many issues, McGill respected him as a "better than average student and active in debating."\(^{15}\) McGill considered oratory and debate to be vital to the success of George Smathers, now United States Senator from Florida:

At the University of Florida, in 1932, he cut down on athletics and went in strongly for debating and public speaking, on orders from his father. . . . He captained the basketball team, was president of the student body, won the Southern Intercollegiate oratorical contest, and was one of the top debaters of his time. . . . In 1938, Sen. Claude Pepper . . . was up for his first real campaign. By then the oratorical ability of the young university law student had reached the senator's ears . . . Smathers made the senator sound so good that a delighted county organization drafted him to make speeches over the county and one for good measure in Miami. . . . In his high-school days, Smathers had been miserably shy. Later, at college debates, the young ladies shrilled for him somewhat in the manner now reserved for crooners.\(^{16}\)

**Partner with politics.** McGill's concern for public communication is expressed in his discussion of effective politicians. He believes that,

. . . politics still cry for men who are free to run and who can take into the race character and a certain ability to speak on the stump--to let the people look at him and hear him and not be afraid of them or himself.\(^{17}\)

To be seen and heard, however, is not enough; a public official must learn to adapt to a particular audience so as to be clearly understood. As an example, McGill cited former Governor of Alabama, James

\(^{15}\) *New Republic*, 116 (January 27, 1947), 12-14.

\(^{16}\) *Saturday Evening Post*, 222 (April 22, 1950), 32.

\(^{17}\) *The Atlanta Constitution*, January 20, 1946, col. 3, p. 8B.
Folsom, who

... has one great gift, which to a public figure, is more precious than rubles and much fine gold. He knows how to talk to the people, at about a fifth grade level, without talking down to them. He talks their language, in a sort of fifth-reader style, and the result is inevitable—they know what he is talking about... Very few persons know how to talk to the people so that the least of them know, and understand, what is being said. He does.18

Speech education. A third index of McGill's support for good speech, is his contention that students should be trained to speak and write. Concerned with students' inability to communicate, McGill concluded that,

... the first emphasis should be placed on the English language, the speaking and writing and understanding of its written form. There seem to be no doubt at all but that the one most vital working tool any person may have is the ability to receive and impart information in his own language. ... In an age of increasing technology and impingement of contending political ideologies, the ability to read understandingly and speak well our native tongue is most necessary. Without it we will fall on evil days.19

As a final note, McGill's interest in effective communication has also been recognized by the federal government:

Twelve appointments to a national advisory committee to study such new educational media as television and tape recordings were announced by Dr. Lawrence G. Derthick, United States Commissioner of Education... Representatives of the public who have demonstrated an interest in the problems of communications media [are]... Ralph McGill, editor, The Atlanta Constitution...20

19 Ibid., December 31, 1946, col. 3, p. 4.
In summary, McGill, in his philosophy of communication, contends that training in public speaking and debate should be encouraged. Also, such experiences should be considered indices of good training. Not only is such training desired, McGill suggests that it is requisite to effective public service.

Audience: Emotional Appeals and Speaker-Audience Integrity

McGill's speech theory, developed largely from first-hand observation, is audience centered. McGill's precepts concerning audiences include his general opinion of the public, the nature of learning, audience motivation, audience adaptation, audience limitations, and speaker-audience integrity.

Opinion of the public. McGill speaks of the American people as if they were both good and bad, capable of reasoning but usually led by selfish interest, courageous yet apathetic about important issues.

McGill often expresses great faith in people, believing that,

... truth resides in this great heart of man. Love, beauty, compassion, humility, charity, tolerance and courage also have rooms there. Man reasons. Therefore he is not all animal.21

McGill also listed one of man's virtues to be the ability to face crisis situations, though people are not always perfect:

Man, generally, is pretty fine. He can do things as noble and majestic and courageous as any angel or demi-god might

do. He may wander off base a bit, or stray down strange paths. But man, in great moments of history and in simple, hidden moments of great crisis and danger, has come through shining with all the glory of man created in the image of God... Man is not perfection. He may... load his vest and lapel with emblems and decorations to prove that other men accept him; be filled with prejudices as unworthy as original sin; be really unable to receive and convey information in his own tongue, and practice silly habits, but when the chips are down he can go ashore at Iwo Jima or fly his plane alone into an enemy formation, firing all his guns in a last desperate effort. He can work and toil and give his life nobly to others in great unselfishness. He can produce nobility out of himself because he is made in God's image and God, somehow, has given him a soul.22

Although McGill has faith in man, he often expresses great concern for man's attitude and actions. For example, he wrote that "people generally are not happy. They do not know why they are unhappy... More and more across America there are people saying, 'Nobody gives a damn any more.'"23 In 1949, McGill concluded that because people lacked conviction, they were difficult to actuate:

As one of those who all too often finds himself sitting up there at the head table waiting for an introduction as the speaker of the evening... I find myself looking out at the faces before me and thinking: "These people are here because they are Christians, or at least subscribe to the Christian faith. They are, in the main, good people. In the back of their minds they nurse the secret knowledge that the Christian ideal is the right and proper one. But, their failure, and their resulting skepticism, results from the frustration of not being able to carry out what they know to be true. If I had to define the great lack of modern man I would say modern man has very little spiritual self-confidence. Behind an exterior which may indicate self-confidence, there is a great inward lack of it."24

23 Ibid., September 8, 1946, col. 13, p. D2.
24 Ibid., February 27, 1949, col. 3, p. 14B.
McGill also believes that people generally are poorly informed, unconcerned about timely issues, and motivated by prejudice; consequently,

\[ \ldots \ldots \] politicians properly have a rather low opinion of the voters because of this casual stupidity as regards issues and legislation. \ldots \ldots By and large the people are not in-formed and it usually is rather easy to lead them off on false trails by appealing to old prejudices and by smearing an opponent in humorous, yet acid, manner. The politicians know that political crowds by and large are not interested in the issues and are bored with any discussion of issues. So, they give them what they want and thank a benign God that they are at least a little smarter than the voters.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Nature of learning.} Persons interested in communication should study human behavior to discover why men believe and act as they do. For example, if a speaker hopes to affect an audience he should learn as much as he can concerning the nature of that audience's beliefs and how they were conceived. McGill asserts that men are molded by their environment:

The blotting paper of a new mind soaks up all the inks spilled upon it--the ink of pettiness, of meanness toward his fellow man, the dark ink of intolerance, and, if it be spilled, the Hitlerian ink of the master race. We know so little about the human mind. But we do know that by the time it is five years old it has taken on many directions which will be permanent. And we do know that for all its early years it is more sensitively receptive than the finest record in the studios where reproductions are made. And that, finally, when they begin to use mental tools on their own, they are tools machined and sharpened in the forges and on the anvils of others, and older, minds.\textsuperscript{26}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[26] \textit{Ibid.}, July 26, 1946, col. 3, p. 12.
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Besides early experience, McGill cited inheritance as a second determinant of human behavior. Individuals are different and, importantly for the speaker, should be treated differently:

From the first diaper to the final shroud, "things" conspire to make us what we are. No two children, not even in the same family, are subjected to the same sort of prenatal and early influences. . . . This, plus the fact that the original juncture of the chromosomes provides a possibility of wide differences, makes it most important that we know each child is a person. People are not people. They are persons. That is a tough thing to learn because it isn't good enough just to admit, you have to put the knowledge into effect in your thinking and your actions. Persons are persons, and life is made up of the competition and relationships between them.27

Because experience and inheritance act to produce individualists, McGill suggests that one should not classify groups of people as if they were the same:

I can name you, chapter and book, if you want it that way, a vulgar, crude, repulsive gentile or a little jerk of any other race if you want it. What burns me more than anything else is to have otherwise sensible and intellectually honest persons try to generalize. I can name you any night club or private club or joint and show you a good Baptist acting worse than any Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Episcopal or Nazarene or Jew. The trouble is with prejudice. One sees what he or she wants to see.28

**Audience motivation.** McGill has made his treatment of human behavior even more meaningful by discussing audience motivation. Drawing largely from his first-hand observation of political campaigns, McGill concluded that audiences were chiefly moved by motive appeals.

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For example, while working with the Nashville Banner, McGill discovered that "people remembered best some personal thing and would vote for that above issues." After traveling with candidates and witnessing national political campaigns, McGill concluded that,

... political campaigns are full of sound and fury... The principals usually do very well, talking about platforms and the various planks. The planks selected are those which are believed to contain the most appeal to the lacks, wants, needs or emotions of the voters. An emotional one is best. If the people really are aroused about something close to their personal life then that is the "plank" to stress.

Having analyzed editorially and also managed gubernatorial campaigns in Georgia, McGill found the shout of "nigger, nigger" to be most effective, thus,

... the professional politician plays to weaknesses. He knows that the greatest political force which can be unloosed is discontent. It is greater even than the force known as "What's in it for me?"

McGill also contends that a person who can satisfy an audience's basic needs can win a desired response, since people deprived of necessities are more apt to respond than those already satisfied:

... I can write a political and social truth: If you are hungry and a man comes along and says, "Join me and fight and you and your children will eat"--that man will get up and go and fight. A full belly never looks for a fight. Every political leader in this country knows that truth and uses it. The contented don't join in political protest... It is the same technique the world over.

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30 Ibid., August 1, 1948, col. 3, p. 2D.
31 Ibid., June 13, 1948, col. 3, p. 2D.
Drawing upon his belief that men are individualists, and also considering the importance of audience adaptation, McGill warned that,

... we are led by our emotions, our loyalties, our affiliations, our longings, our beliefs, and our desires to give color to what we hear and to read into them interpretations which another person, with opposing beliefs, emotions, desires, loyalties and affiliations might find incredible.\(^{33}\)

**Audience adaptation.** To be a successful orator, McGill suggests one must adapt to a particular audience and locale. For example, while traveling with Dwight D. Eisenhower's campaign train, McGill reported the ill-effect of Eisenhower's inability to adapt his delivery to a southern audience:

The people do like Ike... They come in great numbers to hear him, and they want almost painfully to be moved by him to excitement and political passion. In this he fails. He had trouble getting started in each of his six appearances (six cities in the south)... He begins too abruptly and he hurries. He has been told this. So, now and then he pulls himself up, and for a while he seems about to take his audience in hand. But he forgets, and soon he is clipping along in his dry, slightly high, Midwestern voice. In Miami he forgot and startled the Floridians by pronouncing the name of their city with 'Me-ammy' instead of 'My-ammy.' This is inexperience. He will learn. The Eisenhower speeches of late October will be much more finished and effective than those of today.\(^{34}\)

Having observed political oratory for more than twenty years, McGill decided a stock address (one repeated before different audiences) was not as effective as one prepared for a particular audience:

Writing politics to me is like eating ice cream. I enjoy it. But it is not without its troubles... There also is


disillusionment, as one sees a candidate receive a speech in which he has had no part, and watches him recite it as his own. One grows used to the three or four "stock" addresses, varied at the beginning to include some local reference, but they are productive of a wistful regret.35

Using Adlai Stevenson as a model, McGill contended that a speech designed for certain auditors was a sign of integrity: "We have long been sickened by cliches. Stevenson is fresh and new. He never repeats. Each speech, even for a small town, is new. He is too honest a man to give them a hack routine."36

McGill, drawing his tenets from the market place and political arena, warned against assuming honest principles will speak effectively for themselves; the speaker must adjust to audience limitations:

You learn when you walk with men, that an ideal is not worth a tinker's dam if it fails to understand human limitations. . . . The people are individuals. They include every degree of education and ignorance. They are filled with racial and other prejudices. They discriminate. They like and dislike. Greed moves them. So does pity. . . . People continue to reflect their own individualism. An ideal which fails to take that into consideration is useless as a tool of progress.37

**Audience limitations.** McGill's long career in public affairs has taught him to be realistic about men. While appreciating their potential, McGill recognizes their limitations. For example, McGill contends that many persons simply are not capable of understanding a message:

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A few years ago, Dr. James Conant... mournfully discussed the necessity of installing a course in high school English in the first-year English classes at Cambridge.... This started me off on a modest bit of research through the succeeding years. It involved no great detail. It consisted simply of noting down, in letters to the editor, how many failures there were to understand the plain words of a written column, article or report of a speech. It is perfectly amazing how many persons simply do not know their own language well enough to read it well and with understanding or understand it when they hear it spoken. Almost every person who has written for publication or made public speeches has experienced the subsequent new meanings and interpretations advanced by his audience, impossible to understand except that words obviously mean quite different things to different people.38

On a second occasion, McGill expressed impatience with poor audience performance, this time drawing from his own speaking experience:

If one does say anything which is remembered it is pretty sure to be distorted and one is shocked, days later, to get a denunciatory letter beginning, "As you said in your speech here last week...." Alas, it is no good arguing about it. The reply always is, "I heard it, didn't I?"39

Speaker-audience integrity. McGill relates speaker integrity to audience precepts because he finds questions of honesty to be closely connected with appeals to prejudices, attitudes, beliefs, wants, traditions, needs, discontent, and self-interests. Under audience motivation, this writer discussed McGill's amoral views concerning ways to move an audience. At this point, the writer will piece together McGill's beliefs pertaining to communicative integrity.

38Ibid., December 31, 1946, col. 3, p. 4.
What is McGill's concept of proper audience appeal? McGill faces a dilemma; he supports complete freedom of expression, but opposes extravagant emotional appeals. However, probably because of the importance of freedom of expression to writing and speaking, McGill places the burden for speaker integrity upon the audience:

I am a great hand to stand up for political license. By that I mean it never occurs to me to deny to the politician his right to make extravagant claims. Some may be deplored. Others may be considered dangerous and unworthy. Some will be downright and deliberate lies, designed to fan the passions and prejudices of voters. But, all this is a part of our political system. The candidates, in so doing, are gambling. They are gambling that the people to whom they are appealing are so ignorant as to be unaware of any real issues; so prejudiced as to wish to hear lies and calumny; so careless about government they prefer mud-throwing to facts. . . . This is the political license of the candidate. If he succeeds it is not he who is responsible. It is his audience. If he is elected he mirrors the majority of the voters.  

In 1948, two years later, McGill expressed this belief in a maxim on politics: "Politics is a mirror of the people and a measure of their citizenship."  

The audience, then, should demand higher standards from their representatives. McGill expresses hope that people are becoming more discriminating:

Sen. Teddy Bilbo . . . of Mississippi, delivered himself of a tirade in the Senate chamber last week. . . . in the face of facts, Bilbo flings "Communist" charges. . . . It is not alarming. It is the way of demagogues. . . . It always works with a few people, but it is working every day, every month, every year with fewer and fewer persons.  

\[40\text{Ibid.}, \text{April 9, 1946, col. 3, p. 8.}\]

\[41\text{Ibid.}, \text{June 13, 1948, col. 3, p. 2D.}\]

\[42\text{Ibid.}, \text{April 29, 1946, col. 3, p. 6.}\]
McGill asserts that persons not only reap what they sow, but that they actually ask for prejudiced appeals, hoping to receive reassurance that their position is best; consequently, he advocates more intellectual honesty among speakers:

... organizations will pay well to have their fur stroked pleasantly. There are many audiences which delight to have pleasant fleas named "states' rights," or "the dangers of state-ism" (whatever that is), scratched very vigorously and often. They want to be assured that all they believe is right . . . many of our writers and speakers . . . scratch the same old fleas of "Southern tradition," "states' rights," "saccharin constructive criticism," "the unholy course of Northern Democrats," "let us alone," the "advancing South," and so on, without ever really saying anything. We are making progress--we are doing some mighty and noble things--but we are doing them largely because of those who keep pointing out the need for them to be done. . . . We can do with a little more intellectual honesty and less professional flea scratching. 43

In more recent years, as Time magazine discovered too, McGill has become less "discreet" in his appeal for honest deliberation, particularly in the field of human relations. 44 For example, in 1962, McGill wrote that,

... inflammatory politics lie at the basis of all the eruption of violence in the South--wherever it has occurred. It is a harvest of a chain-reaction. The extremist segregationist candidates deliberately, shrewdly choose the words they know will arouse the church burners and the doers of violence. The vocabulary of these candidates is one of heat and invective. They arouse the crowds with lies and false witnessing. When in their judgment their audience is ready for the suggestive words they provide them. Candidates who were running on hate and prejudice were fond of such phrases as:

"We won't stop fighting until we drop to our knees. . . ."


44 Time, 62 (December 14, 1953), 51.
"The Confederate guns speak to us from the past. . . ."
"Our heads are bloody but unbowed. . . ."
"Blood will flow. . . ."
"We will never surrender. . . . Never! Never! Never!"
"We will show the Supreme Court it can't tell us what to do. . . ." [All ellipses McGill's.]\(^{45}\)

In summary, McGill places the audience at the core of his theory of communication. He considers the audience to be largely responsible for methods used by speakers. Although McGill believes man to be basically good and courageous, he criticizes him for his prejudice and willingness to accept exaggerated oratorical claims. McGill contends that worthwhile ideas, if effective, must be adapted to "human limitations."

**Supporting Materials and Reasoning**

McGill's concern for facts is usually expressed indirectly when treating questionable emotional appeals. For example, McGill wrote that,

... there are certain words which possess unusual power. They can halt the processes of thought. When the mind encounters one of these words thinking stops, is neatly parked in the brain's garage, and the faster, more reckless vehicle of emotion is brought out on the mental highway. The emotional car has 12 cylinders and jet propulsion. It travels fast. But it doesn't steer well. It has very unreliable brakes and can't be stopped within a mile or so of facts. In truth it more often than not runs slap over the facts and ends up in the ditch of error. . . . It is the favorite vehicle of a certain type politician.\(^{46}\)

In his consideration of supporting evidence and reasoning, McGill


discusses the need for adapting materials to the audience, the importance of careful research, and the need for careful presentation of facts.

**Audience adaptation.** Like one's entire message, McGill contends that forms of support should be adjusted for a particular audience. Believing that dry data have little chance of success, McGill advocates that facts be interpreted for human interest:

Statistics are cold things of paper and ink unless one can think of them in terms of persons—all kinds of persons—the happy, the free, the untroubled, the ambitious, the frustrated, unhappy, defeated, the neurotic, the unstable, the able, the misfits—the old, the young, the babies—all these are the flesh and bone of statistics. And all these persons have their own individualities, culture, backgrounds, loyalties, and problems.47

McGill, then, suggests that statistics are not to be divorced from emotional appeals. In fact, if supporting evidence is to be effective, it should be emotionally appealing:

Some of my best friends are economists. And therefore statisticians. . . . Their statistics come to them in reports of steel tonnage, carloadings, production generally, and so on. These statistics never weep, go to pieces in hysteria, or need pills. Economists never get to meet the statistics that come into a newspaper office, for instance . . . the young wife of a serviceman who expects a baby tomorrow and who had just been evicted from the one-room efficiency apartment she and her husband share because they are going to become parents . . . the old couple who are living on a small pension and whose rent has been raised from $17 a month to $45. . . . All these, too, are statistics. They are statistics of now, right this minute. What they will be six months or nine months from now when the

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economy "levels off," I don't know. ... Somebody has got to do something for the walking statistics of today. 48

McGill believes that a logically conceived message is not enough; the speaker's entire message must be suited to the needs of a particular group:

I find, by persuing the New York papers, that on the Sabbath, last, a number of divines in that great metropolitan center were troubled and seeking for the light. ... Now, I am sure all these sermons were well-turned out and received in understanding and appreciation. They were, for better or worse about like the sermons preached in a thousand other cities, great and small, varying but little, each showing the signs of study and research in the books providing sermon techniques, studied in school, or after. Everything said was true. Not a sentence could be argued away. ... But, and here I return to an old theme, not a one of the sermons reported from New York, or from any other church of like status in whatever city, would have had any appeal for thousands of citizens who, how correctly I do not know, are reported to be thirsting for the word. Now, obviously, the answer is not to bring all sermons down to the level of the chanting, emotional gibberish, flung from slightly frothed lips. But somewhere there must be an answer. 49

Careful research. As seen in his criticism of two speakers, McGill strongly advocates conscientious investigation and study.

Evaluating Senator Paul H. Douglas' speech before the U. S. Senate, McGill defined what he considered to be great speaking:

An independent, Douglas is in the great tradition of the days of Webster, Calhoun and Clay. Not since their day has the Senate had a man who possesses Douglas' great capacity for informed powerful debate. ... His great speech some weeks ago in "the great debate" on American foreign policy is one of


49Ibid., October 2, 1947, col. 3, p. 10.
the finest arguments the Senate has heard in our time. It was not just a speech. It was packed with all the ingredients of greatness; facts well documented and arranged, logic, force and eloquence.\textsuperscript{50}

McGill's interest in informed orators is also revealed in his evaluation of Methodist Bishop Arthur James Moore:

\ldots he is an unusually well-educated man. He has never ceased to study, read and learn. He is the author of several scholarly religious books and is a careful researcher and student in all addresses, sermons and writings.\textsuperscript{51}

Reporting facts. Research is of primary importance, but McGill contends also that information should be presented carefully, as implied in three of his criticisms. First, McGill evaluated speakers in general:

Our orators and spellbinders have done us a lot of harm by their exaggerations. For years they have told us that our soil was the finest in the world and would grow anything. This isn't true.\ldots They have spoken in glowing terms of our plentiful rainfall, and climate. Both are excellent. But we have too much rainfall at the wrong time.\ldots They --the spellbinders--have suggested that all we have to do to convert from cotton and tobacco to dairying and livestock is to buy the cattle.\textsuperscript{52}

Second, McGill criticized faulty reasoning used by speakers in Georgia:

It is distasteful to Georgians\ldots to have the Columbians, a hate organization, to locate in the State.\ldots Their audiences are almost entirely good, plain persons of little or no education, of little working skills therefore in a very

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., March 13, 1951, col. 1, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{51}"The Bishop's in a Hurry!," Saturday Evening Post, 224 (November 10, 1951), 34.

\textsuperscript{52}The Atlanta Constitution, April 8, 1948, col. 3, p. 8.
low-income group. The spellbinders, their fingers itching to get those $3 initiation fees, talk to them with a certain logic, about as follows: "Gov. Arnall talks about freight rates. Gov. Talmadge is always talking about the farmers. Mayor Hartsfield is interested in streets and airports. You are interested in bread and meat and a living wage. That's what we are going to do for you."
This is the line—not merely of the Columbians, but of all such organizations who seek to create mass discontent.53

A third example of McGill's concern for reasoning can be found in his judgment of Douglas MacArthur's speech before a joint session of Congress. Having witnessed that oration, McGill analyzed it in his daily column for more than a week. McGill found contradictions among his ideas:

There was almost an electric crackle in the air as the House door-keeper called out, "The General of the Army, Gen. Douglas MacArthur." The paneled doors opened and he came in with the committee of escort, his face intense and serious. The electricity was there in the House chamber where the Senate and House members heard him all the time he spoke. It was evident that fires burned fiercely within the man who spent the last 14 years of his life in Asiatic areas of the world[.] Now and then he did not contain them and one could almost smell the sulphur. His performance was a masterpiece of theater and drama. His manuscript was carefully prepared and reached an emotional peroration, calculated to touch the hearts of all.

... But neither he nor what he said there will soon fade away. He demonstrated plainly that there was no compromise on his position. He left no doubt but that the President was right in relieving him of his command, whatever the merits of the two policies at issue. And once the tumult and the shouting had died and once the captains and the kings had departed, and the spell of his theatrical qualities were broken, it was possible to see contradictions in his position and to realize that chiefly what he had done was to restate in full his ideas about blockading China, bombing north China and giving supplies, ships and aircraft to Chiang Kai-shek for use by that defeated general.54

54 Ibid., April 20, 1951, col. 1, p. 1.
In summary, McGill would have an orator select and present statistics so as to have emotional appeal. Also, he believes a speaker should be a careful researcher and, at the same time, a reliable source.

**Delivery**

McGill awards delivery high priority in his theory of speaking, often using that canon to determine whether a speech is effective.

In his observations and criticisms concerning public speakers, McGill has discussed methods of delivery, the importance of good will, and bodily and voice activity.

**Method of delivery.** McGill advocates "plain talk," which simply means saying something important in a clear and unaffected manner. Such speaking he believes is best accomplished without a manuscript. For example, although McGill considers former President Harry S. Truman to have been only an average speaker, he used that public official in demonstrating the value of an extemporaneous delivery:

He is just a fair-to-middling speaker when he is up there with a manuscript before him. But when he talks from his heart his heart comes through and he sells himself solidly. I have seen him, addressing a convention of newspaper editors, most of them hostile, take them in completely when he put aside his manuscript, turned off the radio connection and just plain talked. He does that to crowds. 55

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McGill, though opposed to manuscripts, recognizes a need for organizational aids. For example, in 1952, traveling with Dwight D. Eisenhower's campaign train, McGill explained the value of note cards:

The general's speaking has improved in a very marked manner. His sentences no longer wander and lose themselves. The first two days he was pretty awkward. Then his fretting staff worked out a system of notes, printed in large letters he can read without glasses, on cards about three by five inches. With them the general's speeches move along in proper, orderly manner.\textsuperscript{56}

\textbf{Good will.} McGill contends that a speaker might get by if he "fal ters on words," but an audience expects to be respected. To emphasize the significance of establishing good will with an audience, McGill wrote of former President Truman's oratory, concluding that he was "not a good speaker," but "he sounds as if he means what he says."\textsuperscript{57} Three years earlier, in 1949, while attending Truman's inauguration, McGill made a similar observation. While Truman was "no speaker," he was sincere, even when using a manuscript:

The President then turns quickly to the speakers' stand with its battery of microphones. His manuscript is before him. He goes quickly to its words. The words are strong ones and they hold the people. There is a great silence as the massed thousands listen. There is no sound at all save the amplified words of the President. He is not a speaker. He falters on some words. But there is no mistaking his fervor or his faith... There is courage and faith in the speech.\textsuperscript{58}

Using Senator Robert A. Taft as an example, McGill warned

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Ibid.}, September 19, 1952, col. 1, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid.}, April 1, 1952, col. 1, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{58} \textit{Ibid.}, January 21, 1949, col. 3, p. 12.
that the speaker who was unable to express himself sincerely probably
would be ineffective:

One night during his New Hampshire campaign . . . Senator
Robert Alphonso Taft spoke in the city of Berlin. Afterwards
he sat at a late supper, with local supporters and members
of his entourage. "What about it (the speech)," he asked of
a local citizen. "Well," said the friend, hesitant, "I
talked with some of the boys (from the mill which employs
more than 5,000 persons) and they liked what you said, but
they thought you were a little too distant and lofty." The
senator from Ohio reportedly sat silent for a moment, re-
reflecting, and then said, with a sort of wistful finality,
"I am just not handy that way." . . . It is true, as he has
said, that he is just not handy at it. And that may be the
hurdle he cannot make. The American people, like others,
want someone who warms them and who causes them to lift up
their eyes and their hearts. And the able gentleman from
Ohio, who has never quite understood this simple fact, and
who has always been impatient with the truth of it, has been
unable to overcome it with either expediency or logic.\[59\]

**Bodily and voice activity.** While recognizing the great speak-
ers' abilities to perform effectively, McGill places little emphasis
upon use of gesture and voice. In fact, he frowns upon "podium pran-
cers"\[60\] and "radio commentators who put that phony excitement in their
voices. . . ."\[61\] However, as shown at the beginning of this chapter,
McGill admires speakers who have impressive deliveries. A portion of
McGill's description of Churchill's address before Commons, will be
repeated here:

He came slowly into the House. . . . When the great organ-
like voice began and the close-clipped and rolling words


\[60\] *Ibid.*, July 31, 1949, col. 3, p. 18A.

followed one another until they sounded like a symphony, then he really seemed to glow. . . . He rarely looked about. . . . His words purred and rolled like summer thunder. 62

Finally, one passage summarizes McGill's basic beliefs about delivery. Evaluating a talk made by J. C. Penney, McGill insisted that a speech should be presented humbly and with an attitude of inquiry:

. . . I attended in Atlanta the most unusual . . . sort of meeting ever held. Perhaps 100 persons from business and the professions were invited to a luncheon to meet and hear J. C. Penney, founder of the chain store which bears that name, talk about Christian leadership. . . .

Mr. Penney, who is a man of 75 years [in 1950], slight and gray, stood up, and began to fumble for words. It was this which first attracted me. "What," I said to myself, "doesn't he know it by heart? Hasn't he got it all down like the rest of them X plus Y equals Z?"

He didn't have it. He said he had a written speech, but he had been asked to talk from his own experiences. He did. He talked awkwardly as I have ever heard a man talk, yet he was convincing, as orators rarely are. He was not glib. His joke was not too well told. He fumbled around, finding his way through his thoughts.

Finally, he got going. It was a rambling story of a man who began with poverty and became wealthy through initiative and hard work. It was the story of a moral man, who was the son of a minister who had been turned out of a church for being willing to have ministers accept pay and to abandon the theory of infant damnation, and so on. He never avoided God, He was not hostile. He was just a sojourner and a seeker.

He didn't know any answers. He didn't have any formula for me or anyone else. . . . He didn't make the mistake which, in my opinion, is the mistake of so many who preach, talking in generalities . . . Mr. Penney held his audience still and quiet because he was completely and humbly sincere. . . .

It was a unique meeting. Men who have heard hundreds of "inspirational" talks, dozens of glib and cheery leaders and who remember not a word they said, will remember for a long,
long time the deeply moving and completely sincere, awkward, halting talk of a humble man who had had Christ come into his life.63

In summary, McGill suggests that a speaker should be characterized by humility and an attitude of inquiry. He contends that this kind of orator is more believable than one preoccupied with a beautiful voice and bodily activity. A speaker's delivery, then, should reveal a man of good will and genuine concern for his audience.

Style

As a journalist and speaker, McGill is interested in language use. For example, he often discusses the difficulty of finding the right words for expressing an idea clearly. In addition to clarity, he also writes about the need for appreciating one's language, respect for words, how style can be an aid to effectiveness, and means of improving one's choice of words.

Clarity. McGill suggests that a message should be clear and, secondly, that words may provide insight into the man. While recognizing that clarity is difficult to achieve, McGill contends that a message should be easily understood:

One who deals in words ... is of necessity humble. ... Humility also comes with the knowledge that no matter how hard one strives to put the little words, simply and plainly one after the other, one does not always succeed.64

Not only should language be clear, it may also express the

64 Ibid., March 23, 1947, col. 3, p. 14C.
conviction of the speaker. For example, when describing John F. Kennedy's inaugural address, McGill linked the President's words with his courage and plans for the future:

Much of the world was waiting to hear from the nation's young President, and he had plain words for them and few generalities, in what was a tersely eloquent inaugural address. . . . There were courage, strength and determination in what the new President said. One sensed that behind his words are plans already made and others in the making. . . . There is a balanced sense of realism and idealism in the new President as his words so well revealed.65

**Appreciation for language.** McGill's second tenet of style is that words can be appreciated, both for themselves and when used in an oration. For example, McGill found poetry in the names of trees located in the South:

Their names are like poems and ballads--sour wood and scarlet oak, black gum and birch, basswood and beech, black walnut and black locust, red maple and white oak, sweetgum and sycamore, yellow poplar and red oak, hemlock and hickory, Virginia pine and the white, short leaf pine, buckeye and the mountain cucumber, the wild black cherry and the mountain magnolias, spruce and silver-bell, white ash and the chinquapin. Many of their names are in old fiddle tunes and mountain songs.66

McGill also pointed out that words may have their own value within a speech, especially in occasional oratory. For example, McGill heard poetry in one of Douglas MacArthur's last speeches:

No more old-fashioned eloquent and poetically emotional speech has been made in our time than that by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur when recently he received the Sylvanis Thayer Award at West Point. The general is 82 years old, but

stands straight and trim as of yore. Emotions boil within him; he cannot put them down. . . . Standing before the young men, some of whom were not born when the Japanese struck in December of 1941, the old general pulled from his mind this wondrously moving pageant of emotional response:

"The shadows are lengthening for me. The twilight is here. My days of old have vanished—tone and tints. They have gone glimmering through the dreams of things that were. Their memory is one of wondrous beauty, watered by tears and coaxed and caressed by the smiles of yesterday. I listen then, but with thirsty ear, for the witching melody of faint bugles blowing reveille, of far drums beating the long roll. In my dreams I hear again the crash of guns, the rattle of musketry, the strange, mournful mutter of the battlefield. But in the evening of my memory I come back to West Point."

This is the stuff of oratory such as stirred another generation when William Jennings Bryan, Bob Taylor, Bob Ingersol, and others of equal eloquence appeared in lectures under the various lyceums. There is something in it of Tennyson and his Ulysses. . . . There was a grandeur in the speech—and a certain pathos, too.67

Respect for words. McGill's speech theory requires that persons use language respectfully, as seen in his treatment of words in his daily newspaper column:

Of all the words so badly mauled and abused today, such as "democracy," for instance, none is worse maimed than the word "culture." It was never a word to mean anything "top-lofty," or "high-falutin." It is a word that means the whole way people live; how usefully or progressively. Or why they were not useful, happy or progressive.68

Also, McGill is critical of persons who use respectable terms for selfish purposes:

Very few swords have been beaten into plowshares. But a

great many words have been fashioned into weapons. "Illegal" is such a word, newly come from the forges of propaganda hammers.69

Aid to effectiveness. In addition to clarity, appreciation for language, and respect for words, McGill also considers style an aid to speech effectiveness. For example, in 1952, when analyzing Adlai Stevenson's speeches before the Democratic convention in Chicago, McGill pointed out the importance of his language. First, McGill told how Stevenson, in his welcoming speech, used style as a tool for debate:

. . . quite remarkable for these times, he had something to say. . . . It was well written. It was filled with new phrases which gamboled like lambs at play and with sharp-pointed shafts which went into the hide of the Republican elephant like the barbs of picadors. He is no orator. But he knows what he is saying because they are his own words and thoughts.70

A few days later, McGill analyzed Stevenson's acceptance address, concluding that command of language was an asset to a political candidate:

His welcoming speech had interested the delegates. His acceptance address thrilled them. They knew they had in Adlai Stevenson a man who approaches Woodrow Wilson in mind, thought and command of language. Some few said of his acceptance that it was perhaps too highly pitched for the average man. It was not. The people listened to Wilson and understood him and believed in him. Because almost all politicians speak in cliches and in a dull and deadly formula it does not necessarily follow the people will not welcome


freshness of phrase and thought, written by the speaker himself, and not prepared for him by a team of speech writing ghosts.\textsuperscript{71}

**Language improvement.** Finally, McGill suggests ways of developing command of language. Although McGill, in the examples below, is thinking chiefly of written messages, he probably would offer similar advice to the orator. He recommends that, "to make . . . words paint pictures in the mind and awaken emotions in the heart requires both sweat and ability."\textsuperscript{72}

Probably drawing from his experience on a farm, McGill suggested,

\begin{quote}
\textit{it is a fine thing to have an ear for language . . . to be a teller of tales . . . who can put into them the language of persons and the feel of the soil and the people. . . . About the only advice I know is to work with words and to try and make them live; to seek and make them move easily across the pages, and to cause them to say something and to build images. Those who wait for "inspiration" will never write. . . . work is the chief ingredient--plus a mind that never got put into the butter mold from which most of the minds are pressed--a mold which makes too many afraid to be different, not only in clothing and actions, but in thought and words.}\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

In summary, McGill's experience as observer and critic has caused him to express definite ideas about language. He will accept no excuse for a "dull and deadly formula." One's style should be fresh and imaginative. If the communicator is willing to work and has a certain ability, he can not only develop an interesting style,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{71}Ibid., July 28, 1952, col. 1, p. 1.
\item \textsuperscript{72}Ibid., May 1, 1946, col. 3, p. 6.
\item \textsuperscript{73}Ibid., May 7, 1948, col. 3, p. 12. [It is very likely that this dislike for "molds" has affected McGill's lack of concern for organization, in both written and oral messages.]
\end{itemize}
but also an instrument for making one's speech more effective.

**Purposefulness**

As observed many times, McGill's beliefs concerning public speaking were derived from the market place and political battlefield. Consequently, he is interested in orations which serve an end. McGill, then, insists that a speech should accomplish a purpose and, second, that effectiveness be one criterion for judging an address.

**Goal oriented.** Whether it be before a civic club or graduating seniors, McGill believes a speech should serve some purpose. For example, McGill suggested that if members of an audience already agree with an orator, there should be no talk:

> Here of late I have managed to produce a slight case of curvature of the spine by sitting bent over at luncheon and dinner tables here and there about the country, giving an attentive, if weary, ear to the speakers. My schedule is one which includes many varieties of meetings and speeches... But always at these meetings I find myself pleasantly sleepy after too much food, wondering why they waste so much time on oratory. It is something like church. Only rarely is there present a person who has not formally committed himself to the faith.74

When there is a need for persuasion, however, a person should speak. McGill considers speaker-initiative to be of particular importance in politics. For example, in 1952, McGill wrote how Dwight D. Eisenhower lost votes in the New Hampshire primary; a farmer stated,

> "I like him [Eisenhower]. I think he is doin' a good job and is a fine man. Maybe I'd vote for him. But you know something?"

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"What?" "I ain't never voted for a man that ain't asked me to." With that one sentence he put his finger on the great weakness of the Eisenhower campaign. The general isn't here asking for votes.  

**Criterion for judgment.** McGill's belief that a speaker can be evaluated on the basis of whether he achieved a desired response can be found in his comparative criticism of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill:

In our time we have had two of the greatest movers of people the world had known since the days of the magnificent speakers of the ancient empires of Greece and Rome . . . Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill. Churchill, I believe, is the better, yet I am not sure of it. I don't know how he appeals to the masses of listening people. He was not able to persuade and lead his people in the days when war was coming. Roosevelt, with a more difficult people, was.

Although McGill considers purposefulness to be significant, it is doubtful that he would place too much hope in one oration or label a man a poor speaker simply because he did not win a desired response. Progress moves too slowly:

. . . compromise is the one vehicle which moves the world and society along in its inch-by-inch progress. . . . progress moves like an inch-worm. It is accelerated only when human limitations are relaxed or removed.

In summary, McGill is interested in instrumental communication. While the speaker should be original in expression, he should also strive to serve some purpose. Also, in a democratic society

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77 *Ibid.*, September 26, 1948, col. 3, p. 2D.
persons should be willing to speak when the need arises. Although
McGill probably would not label a speaker ineffective if he failed in
a particular address, effectiveness should be a determinant of good
speaking.

Commencement Speaking

McGill, having spoken to graduating seniors on numerous oc­
casions, has formed strong opinions about commencement speaking. He
believes commencement speakers should reveal a certain attitude; he
offers suggestions concerning what graduating seniors should hear
and, finally, McGill tells specific ways commencement exercises could
be improved.

Speaker attitude. McGill contends that commencement oratory
requires either "great humility or complete egocentricity."

Because older persons have had their own difficulties in life, their advice
should be offered with humility:

... I have been making a commencement speech or so. . . . It
requires a lot of one or two qualities to make a commence­
ment speech--a lot of humility or a lot of gall. An honest
person must have humility and admit that adults don't often
provide much inspiration.

Speech content. What should this humble orator say? McGill
recommends, rather than attempting to provide a sure formula for
success, that one present principles by which to live:

79 Ibid., June 1, 1948, col. 3, p. 10.
About all you can say is that ideals, integrity, honesty, a passion for justice, and a religious faith as opposed to a religious dogmatism, are the best working tools to take out into life. That sounds corny, as they say, but it is true. Few persons can say they planned their lives to be what they have become.80

Also, commencement messages should be adapted to the era in which they are given:

Prospecting in newspaper reports of baccalaureate sermons and commencement addresses turns up more fool's gold than pure metal. The world changes, but thoughts tend to mark time. An astonishing number of speakers urged seniors to "return to old beliefs in ideals, pride, loyalty, patriotism, devotion and hard work." Seniors very properly yawn through such speeches. They knew that even in the days of our founding fathers there was a great amount of disloyalty, cheating, corruption and lack of ideals. . . . The best commencement speakers were those who were concerned with the quality of life—not with success, and certainly not with the melancholy litany of returning to the old days—the old days that never were.81

Suggestions for improvement. McGill contends that because a speech is to be purposeful, a commencement oration should be presented only when a contribution can be made. For example, should a school be unable to find a speaker with a worthwhile message, that institution ought to plan a different program:

Now, alas, I am off to make a commencement speech in Miami. . . . I sometimes think—unless a class may have an Alben Barkley—it would be better to assemble the class and let them hear a great singer, or musician, hear a fine symphony, or watch a magnificent ballet—and then to say, "Ladies and gentlemen, life will be a mixture of joy and of sorrow, of success and

80 Ibid.

failure, try to hold to that which is beautiful and good—
keep always a questing mind and a flexible one—and may God
walk with you."\(^82\)

In 1951, three years later, McGill made a second suggestion:
"Maybe they (youth) don't need commencement speakers at all—just
better examples by adults."\(^83\)

In summary, McGill is discontent with much of today's commence­
ment speaking. To improve that institution, McGill suggests that
speakers adapt their messages to contemporary life. They should not
only speak with humility, but also offer principles by which students
can live. Also, McGill insists that commencement programs should be
varied.

**Evaluation of Ralph McGill's Speech Theory**

Now that McGill's speech theory has been described in detail,
an attempt will be made to evaluate his basic precepts. McGill's
tenets grew out of long years of personal experience. He has re­
corded his own reaction to hundreds of communicative situations. His
precepts will be judged on their own merit, and not as if McGill had
attempted to write a complete theory of rhetoric.

**Philosophy of Communication**

Probably no two speech scholars share the same philosophy of
speech; Thonssen and Baird, in their authoritative book, *Speech*


Criticism, were still undecided about their own beliefs, discussing them in a "postscript" entitled, "Toward a Philosophy of Rhetoric."

McGill's philosophy of communication will be judged generally upon Thonssen and Baird's criteria, importance of classical works, union of rhetoric and politics, and reunion of rhetoric and ethics.84

Classical tradition. While it is quite likely that McGill has been exposed to classical theories, this writer found no mention of such subjects, other than "the magnificent speakers of the ancient empires of Greece and Rome."85 Had McGill been more aware of classical theories, he probably would have been more thorough in his role as reporter-critic; however, his wide background in literature, journalism, history, fiction, and biography and his practical experiences seem to have provided him with a sound philosophy of speech.

Rhetoric and politics. Drawing his speech ideas from personal observation, McGill shows an amazing agreement with Thonssen and Baird's second criterion, that politics and rhetoric be closely affiliated. McGill contends that public speaking, discussion, and debate are synonymous with democratic processes, and would certainly concur with Thonssen and Baird's observation that, "rhetoric is a practical art. And the political figure is a practical man."86


85 The Atlanta Constitution, April 3, 1949, col. 3, p. 14B.

86Thonssen and Baird, Speech Criticism, p. 467.
Rhetoric and ethics. Like most of McGill's beliefs, his view concerning a speaker's integrity is very practicable. Realizing that some speakers will make exaggerated and dishonest claims, McGill contends that the most effective way to regulate such orators is by audience rejection. While this method is completely dependent upon the audience's ability and willingness to judge, considering the fact that a democratic system should permit free expression, it probably is a very realistic approach.

Importance of Public Speaking and Debate

Persons trained in speech probably would support McGill's contentions that schools should sponsor debate programs and speech instruction. Also, McGill probably is wise in using forensic training as an index for individual and institutional performance.

Audience

Considering the fact that McGill did not attempt to write a speech theory and that his ideas were presented in a daily newspaper column, his views concerning audiences are surprisingly thorough. He writes convincingly of how men can be courageous, but how they often are apathetic and led by personal prejudices. Also, he shows clearly how men are affected by their own personal experiences. With this in mind, he writes meaningfully of how communicators should adapt their messages to the wants, needs, affiliations, loyalties, and interests of a particular group.
Supporting Material and Reasoning

McGill insists that orators use sound facts and valid reasoning. In his daily column, McGill presents numerous examples of exaggerated claims, hoping his readers will learn to recognize and reject such techniques. Not only is the orator to be a careful researcher, he must also give careful consideration to how materials are to be presented. For example, McGill emphasizes how statistics are to be delivered both logically and in an attractive manner.

Delivery

Speech scholars probably would support McGill's plea for "plain talk," or conversational public speaking. Also, McGill's recommendation that orators speak without manuscript probably would win strong approval from speech trained persons.

Inherent in McGill's consideration of delivery, is the precept of credibility. He contends that sincerity and humility are the two most important characteristics of delivery, and can best be accomplished by speaking with an attitude of inquiry. The speaker should be a "seeker," cautious about offering the "answers" to complex questions. Because McGill considers good will to be of primary importance, he probably contends that sincerity and humility are true indices of character; consequently, he does not treat integrity separately.

Style

McGill, like most speech scholars, believes clarity to be a primary requisite for good speech. Ability to communicate with an
audience so they "know what you are talking about," is vital to public speakers. Also, to improve one's command of language, McGill says a speaker or writer must have ability and a willingness to work.

Purposefulness

McGill's emphasis upon speaker-initiative is probably a good thing for a democratic society. He contends that orators should be willing to speak when the need arises; speeches should be purposeful. Also, McGill would find strong support from many speech scholars in his contention that effectiveness should be one criterion upon which addresses are evaluated.

Commencement Speaking

Since no source is known which treats commencement speaking in detail, McGill may have made a contribution to this kind of oratory. His precepts are based on years of practical experience before graduating classes, and grounded in common sense.
CHAPTER IV

SPEECH PERSONALITY - SPEECH PREPARATION - DELIVERY

Speech Personality

Ralph McGill's speech effectiveness probably is influenced by his speech personality, speech preparation, and delivery. For example, his speech personality probably helps determine the kind of speaker he is. To determine McGill's speech personality and its effect upon his speaking and his role in society, an analysis is made here of his serious nature, his emotional involvement, his love for politics and a fight, his practice of worrying, and his role in society. Personality is used here in a general sense, including factors which affect McGill's attitudes and actions.

Serious Nature

Most persons writing about McGill are impressed by his stormy collegiate career and his colorful personal experiences. While this is an interesting aspect of McGill's life, one who studies all of McGill's works will be far more affected by the extreme seriousness of his career. In 1946, McGill reflected upon the solemnity of his work:

It occurs to me I have not had any fun in a long time and that I probably have become a bore, going about with a long face and a serious story on my tongue. The banner I have been carrying has written upon it the slogan, "Life is real, life is earnest." . . . So, if you will pardon me, I will for a time,
at least, go on picketing the joint carrying the banner which reads, "Life is real, life is earnest."¹

This serious nature affects McGill's speaking. When talking with this writer about an occasion that actually placed McGill in a position of having to be humorous, he said, "I just got up and tried to be moderately funny. I'm not very good at being funny. I tell you—I'm a serious minded sort of person I'm afraid."²

McGill, then, has found life to be a serious business. Although he loves people and enjoys being with them, McGill finds strength in private venture and thought. This aspect of his personality is usually reflected in his speeches, both delivery and content. He is "not very good at being funny."

Emotional Nature

Ralph McGill is filled with emotion and a driving concern for humanity. While he has difficulty concealing his feelings, he is unwilling to use personal pathos in appealing to an audience.

His emotional nature is attributed to his ancestry. "Of Welsh and Irish descent, I . . . inherited . . . a tendency to weep over sad movies, great pieces of writing, dramatic stage scenes, and mournful songs."³ The result, McGill says, "is to conceal emotion badly."⁴

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¹Atlanta Constitution, August 4, 1946, col. 3, p. 2D.
²Taped interview with Ralph McGill in Atlanta, December 29, 1965.
Although McGill responds to life emotionally, he dislikes the extravagant appeals of speakers, and refuses to be a part in it. For example, during a heated gubernatorial campaign in Georgia, McGill finally reached a point when he wrote:

... I prefer real fighting and not exhibitionism or loud, pious screams. So, for the once, I am a cynic. I will get over it... So, much of the pious whooping, if you will pardon me, makes me sick to the stomach.5

McGill also tries to limit emotional appeal in his own writing and speaking. In fact, he simply does not like to become too "personal." He wrote, "I dislike always to write personally of family or friends."6 Recalling a memorial he had attended in honor of students who had given their lives in the Second World War, McGill stated, "I never like to reveal personal emotions on this page [of the Atlanta Constitution] or anywhere else."7

McGill, then, burns with emotion, but dislikes revealing personal feelings. Most important, for his speaking, he made it clear that he would not sell his emotional nature in public:

My immediate Confederate ancestors, and my Welsh ancestry, which cause me to weep over sad pictures, books and lost causes, are so much a part of me that when I sat down to write the story of the Southern demonstration at the Philadelphia Convention [in 1948] I was so emotionally upset I had trouble writing it fast enough. But that is a part of me, and it is not for sale, and I do not use it for

5Ibid., January 26, 1947, col. 3, p. 14C.
7Ibid., May 20, 1946, col. 3, p. 6.
street-walking solicitation in my trade. It belongs to me and I honor it as mine. I do not offer it shamelessly in the market place.\textsuperscript{8}

\textbf{Love for Politics and a Fight}

To understand why McGill continues to speak and write in face of controversy and personal abuse, one must discover another aspect of his personality. He has emotional stability, self control, enjoys a good fight, recuperates quickly, feels a sense of responsibility, and becomes personally involved with his work.

Without question, it would require great emotional stability and self control to withstand the stress of McGill's daily routine.

In 1949, he wrote:

\begin{quote}
It never occurs to me that my daily routine is of any special interest, but a visiting friend has left emotionally exhausted saying he would crack-up under it. During his visit my wife had anonymous letters abusing me, one suggesting I was in love with another lady, an occasional drunk was abusive over the phone and still others called up for advice and help in how to get off the stuff. Kluxers, acting on orders, tried to smear me, with a stupid lie, and various persons called to complain or praise comments on politics. People sought help getting jobs. Meanwhile, the mail continues heavy and office callers are at an all-time high with comment and proposals, good, bad and amusing. Many of the letters, calls and callers are wonderful. It had never occurred to me it was anything other than normal. It is always like that... . My work and my life have been, and are, a lot of fun. I can't imagine a man who doesn't like to discuss controversial subjects, but who avoids them out of fear of being "bothered." It never occurs to me that anyone dislikes me for it and I never met anyone I didn't like, in at least some degree. I like newspaper work and have never had a day when I wasn't eager to go to work. There have been days, to be sure, when I didn't feel like it, but never a day I didn't look forward to the work with
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{8}\textit{Ibid.}, July 30, 1948, col. 3, p. 8.
pleasure. It rarely seems strenuous, and most of it is fun. If I crack up I will be the most surprised of all. 9

Emotional stability is also required when speaking face-to-face with an audience. McGill indirectly tells how his auditors often react when he is introduced to speak, but "it still is fun":

There are times, I assume, when anyone doing a daily column wishes he were a nature writer. . . . When these writers are introduced at luncheon clubs everyone smiles sweetly. . . . No one ever frowns and whispers to his neighbor, "I hear he is a little to the left when it comes to Roosevelt and his ideas." A fellow who does a daily piece which goes down in the market place and walks about, entering into arguments and taking a part in a brawl if necessary, is different. His job is somewhat remindful of one which used to be in vogue at the old-fashioned carnivals. A fellow would stick his head through a hole in a large sheet of canvas. For a nickel, you could throw three baseballs at his head. . . . most of the days I love it in there with my head through the canvas and everyone privileged to pay his five cents and throw three baseballs at said head. . . . And, even though now and then one of the missiles hits you square in the nose, it still is fun. At least to me. I always have trouble not working up a sort of affection for the tougher adversaries, the ones that fight back the hardest. 10

McGill, then, demonstrates amazing emotional stability and self control, even to the point of respecting those who "fight back the hardest." How is he able to discipline his public statements and actions? First, McGill is willing to enter public deliberations because he considers this to be the only effective approach. Second, McGill somehow has learned to "roll with the punches." Third, he considers it his responsibility to take part in public discussions.

Finally, it will be noted that, in spite of McGill's ability to control himself under pressure, he is unable to remain detached emotionally from issues and personalities with which he becomes involved.

McGill disagrees with persons who advocate ignoring controversial issues. Social and political problems can only be solved by a willingness to get "muddy":

There are always those who say the best policy is a "hush-hush" policy. And that the least you say about crackpot organizations the better. I can imagine certain conditions under which that might be true. But mostly I go along with the policy of getting in there and firing both barrels--after you have something to fire. . . . To fight them you have got to get in their gutter and fight with some of their weapons. Including mud, if they use it. You've got to be highly impolite and you have got to know something about them. You've got to call names and know something of their records. The pleasant fact is they always have records. But the point is, you can't be afraid of them. They will try to smear you and everything you say. They will try to terrorize your family and annoy you with anonymous calls. That isn't important if you know how to shrug it off and regard it as part of the game. 11

This ability "to shrug it off" also enables McGill to withstand the pressures of his office. His love for a fight, plus his long years of exposure in public have enabled McGill to roll with a punch, withstand bruises, and to recuperate quickly. Even so, McGill becomes personally concerned with those he supports:

Partisan campaigns are hard on the arteries and are productive of at least incipient stomach ulcers. If I am on someone's side I suffer each blow struck at him and I agonize over each day's progress. . . . I am not by nature nonpartisan. I like a political fight as some persons like cake or pie. A political campaign to me is easily the most fascinating and absorbing event which our society produces. And I like to be in there

11 Ibid., December 12, 1946, col. 3, p. 12.
where the plotting and the planning are thickest; to find cigarette and cigar smoke-filled rooms more exhilarating than the pure air of mountain tops. I like throwing punches and rolling with them. I do not bruise easily. The black and blue of political blows goes away in a few days.\(^{12}\)

McGill likes to believe that he does not fight just to be fighting. One reason he is willing to contribute to a national dialogue on social issues is because he considers it his responsibility to do so. This practice of acting purposefully is inherent in McGill's explanation as to why he took no particular side in Georgia elections in 1948:

It seems a little odd to be out of the State ring and not in there fighting; rolling with the punches and taking an occasional one. But it is comforting, in a way, if less exciting, to try honestly to speak for the whole community; not to have allegiances to party names or slogans . . . after all, unless there is some great principle at stake, the higher duty would seem to be to remain aloof and speak for the whole community . . . it is important to debate, talk, write and discuss--and that is where a newspaper comes in.\(^{13}\)

Regardless of McGill's emotional stability, self control, love for a fight, and sense of obligation, his private reactions to heated discussion is not so well disciplined. McGill likes to win, and doesn't lose easily. Probably because of his basic emotional nature, McGill becomes a part of all he supports. In 1946, for example, McGill took it personally when his candidate for governor of Georgia lost:

Since I was in there with my coat off swinging as hard as I could . . . there are those . . . on the other side who would

\(^{12}\)Ibid., September 8, 1948, col. 3, p. 10.

\(^{13}\)Ibid., August 22, 1948, col. 3, p. 2D.
like to know how it went with me. It went hard. It made me feel pretty sick. It was a bitter pill to swallow. There was very little sugar, if any, on it... I don't like to lose... Losing goes awfully hard with me. But I was on the losing side. I did all I could. It wasn't enough. And that's how I felt. I hope that covers it. 14

A Worrier

McGill has learned to weather public exposure, but not without worry. Because of personal involvement with issues and personalities, he is unable to leave his concern at the office. The same is true with McGill's speech activity. He worries before and after his speeches.

Though McGill may not bruise easily, he is sensitive to the needs of men. He is not able to "walk among men" without becoming personally concerned:

But, I do not have the disposition to leave problems at the office. I take them home. I wake in the night with them. This is especially true if it be the troubles involving some person who needs an immediate solution. This is not to argue, necessarily, that I am sensitive or kindhearted. I trust that I am. But, it is merely to say troubles of others trouble me... You wake and remember them all, wondering how their destinies worked; how many escaped, how many were trapped. And they leave you weary and depressed and sleepless while you wonder. 15

McGill wrote, "I am not a professional optimist. I am a worrier and a dreader and a fretter..."16 Once again, the poor Calvinists were blamed for this blight. "I know worry and the remorse of conscience.

16 Ibid., January 2, 1950, col. 3, p. 20.
The hot breath of Calvin often is a blow torch on the seat of the pants of my immortal soul."\(^{17}\)

Concern for mankind is not only practiced by McGill, he believes this to be an index of civilization. "Emotional concern for human life is perhaps the one most significant mark of a civilization and civilized individuals. All of us--governments and individuals--must have an emotional concern for individual life."\(^{18}\)

How does McGill's involvement with men and issues affect his speaking? He worries whether they are "adequate" for a particular audience and later, after the speech is over, whether he represented his convictions effectively. In 1949, for example, McGill stayed up half the night attempting to improve a commencement address to be delivered at the University of Miami. Apprehension over the message interrupted his sleep:

I accepted an invitation from the University of Miami to make the commencement address. . . . I do not know how to make talks and I admit to being so worried about this one that I did not sleep much the night before. I kept waking up, thinking about it. Once, at 3 o'clock, I got up and cut the speech by four paragraphs. . . . It was the sort of speech I had always wanted to make, to say: "Ladies and gentlemen, no one can tell you anything for sure. You have got to find out for yourselves. Try to take with you the best working tools you can get, among them being the simple virtues of honesty and courage." But I was happy to be done with it.\(^{19}\)

McGill inevitably becomes wrapped up in the speech, issues, and

\(^{17}\)Ibid., February 18, 1947, col. 3, p. 8.

\(^{18}\)Ibid., April 22, 1952, col. 1, p. 1.

\(^{19}\)Ibid., June 9, 1949, col. 3, p. 14.
occasion. He wrote of his reaction to a radio program in New York:

The Town Hall broadcast was over and I had seen one of my favorite persons, Sen. Carl Hatch, off to a late train. I walked for a half hour to get rid of the tension and excitement of debate, and turned finally to my hotel.\(^{20}\)

In telling this writer of his apprehension about speaking, McGill revealed that his nervousness usually went away once he began speaking. Also, he accepted the fact that a "little" nervousness may be an asset:

I'm in no sense an orator. . . . I get nervous about each one of them, but this goes away once you get going. And I think it's a good idea, maybe, to be . . . feel a little tense about it. Sometimes, in speaking to a university audience, you get a feeling of worry, whether you are going to be adequate. I remember speaking at the University of Kentucky one year, the Blazer Lecture and, a few of these that you prepare for, and then you get worried whether this is correct or not, and try to edit it as you go along. Sometimes you feel you have brought it off, and a few times you don't bring it off.\(^{21}\)

Probably the most detailed account McGill has given of a particular speech and his personal involvement in the occasion, was his column concerning his talk at Spellman College, Atlanta, Georgia. This statement reveals two important traits of McGill's personality. First, he is unable to divorce himself from the issues and the speaking situation. Also, though he does worry about his speeches, he continues to speak:

A night ago I was on a forum program discussing civil liberties. It was an interracial forum. . . . I go through a curious sort of experience in these things. In the first place, I don't know why I accept. I am, it seems, cursed with

\(^{20}\) Ibid., May 19, 1947, col. 3, p. 6.

\(^{21}\) Taped interview with Ralph McGill, December 29, 1965.
a certain sense of responsibility. I go to these highly controversial programs feeling like a sacrificial lamb. Sometimes I get my throat cut and barbecued. At other times, I manage to come out of it intact. But, there is no real profit in it.... I go wearily home, tiptoe in not to awaken the sleeping, and think it over while drinking a glass of milk or so in the kitchen to settle the jangling nerves. Unfortunately, the good Lord gave me no share of omniscience. There are those who have it. In a way, I envy them.... I accept invitations to appear at these things because it seems to me someone ought to do so. There is a sense of duty.... which seems to me to demand it. So I go and later in the night, letting my wounds be soothed with milk, I resolve "never again." But, come another invitation to argue important issues, and the imp, which at least wears the disguise of righteousness, whispers in my ear: "It's your duty." So, I accept. And begin to worry and fret.... So, I go and talk and go home with my bruises, drink my milk and resolve "never again," as nerves jangle and sleep is delayed. But, always there seems another time.... It isn't too comfortable.22

McGill's Role in Society

McGill's personality helps determine his approach to social issues. This section discusses McGill's attitudes toward public problems and defines his role in light of those attitudes.

While McGill often makes "quick decisions" and is devoted to the Democratic Party, he tries to be objective in his dealings with public issues. Three attitudes in particular affect his actions, including his speaking. First, he attempts to view all sides of an issue before reaching a decision. Second, McGill considers it important for one to be willing to change his mind. Finally, his actions are tempered with patience.

McGill likes to weigh arguments and evidence on all sides of a

22Atlanta Constitution, February 29, 1949, col. 3, p. 2D.
controversy prior to taking a public stand. Radicals, both to McGill's right and left, often are frustrated or angered because of his willingness to recognize valid arguments and competent agents on opposing sides. McGill, for example, has bitterly quarreled with fellow Georgian, Roy Harris, former national president of the White Citizens Council. Nevertheless, McGill does not hate him, but is able to respect his ability as a fighter. After expressing this respect in public, McGill had to defend his position:

I wrote a piece about Mr. Harris a short time ago in which I said he was easily the most effective politician in this generation. This caused me to be abused by a number of persons who wished to know why I was lauding such a political "menace." Well, I was not endorsing Mr. Harris' works... But I always respect champions, and Mr. Harris is a champ. I also would be less than honest if I did not say that I like him personally, even though violently disagreeing with him, often and publicly. I got to liking him the days when we were fighting together to elect Ellis Arnall Governor. In the last month of the campaign I was with Mr. Harris constantly. Ellis Arnall wouldn't have been elected without him...23

Celestine Sibley, writer for the Atlanta Constitution, confirmed McGill's practice of respecting the loyal opposition, even within the ranks of his own newspaper:

He not only permits disagreement from his aides, he encourages it. An ardent Democrat and a wholehearted and enthusiastic supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt, both personally and editorially, he hired some years ago a young man from Savannah who was known to have Republican leanings and was suspect of being, in the McGill phrase, "a mossback reactionary." The young man, William H. Fields, advanced rapidly... not because he tactfully suppressed views counter to those of his boss but because he advanced them boldly and argued them with a sharp and caustic

23 Ibid., February 20, 1947, col. 3, p. 10.
intelligence which delighted McGill. In times of great editorial crusades The Constitution staff has always had members who were in marked disagreement with the announced policy of the paper, and it never occurred to the editor that they might be sinister borers from within... he welcomed them as sort of friendly whetstones on which to sharpen the edge of his own arguments and persuasions.\textsuperscript{24}

There is a second attitude which permeates McGill's public deliberations, the belief that, "a man has a right to change his mind."\textsuperscript{25} On November 28, 1952, and again, repeating the same column, December 10, 1960, McGill wrote of his pride in the ability to alter his thinking:

Once I figured up an approximate number of words I had written, and that made me the more humble. The total ran into the millions. In the course of the years many of my ideas have changed. I have always looked with pride on the fact that today I find it easy to change my mind when confronted with reasons to do so. A philosopher once declared "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." A person should continue to learn as he goes along. If one learns then one changes one's mind. It is quite inevitable.\textsuperscript{26}

Years of experience before the public eye probably have influenced McGill's third personality trait, patience. Two examples may help to demonstrate McGill's ability to remain outwardly calm and patient under pressure. In Moscow, Russian officials gave McGill a "bad time" concerning "racial violence" in the United States. McGill wrote, "I rolled with the punches and never showed any loss of patience or failed to make a full comment."\textsuperscript{27} On a fact-finding tour of Africa

\textsuperscript{24}Celestine Sibley, "They Don't Scare McGill," \textit{The Saturday Evening Post}, 231 (December 27, 1958), 51.


\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., November 28, 1952, col. 1, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{South and the Southerner}, p. 185.
for the late President John F. Kennedy, McGill agreed to answer ques-
tions following a talk. He told an Atlanta television audience that
when young communist rebels tried to cause him to become angry, they
were quite unsuccessful.\(^\text{28}\)

What effects do these three traits—weighing opposing argu-
ments, willingness to change an opinion, and patience—have upon
McGill's public deliberations? These characteristics inevitably cause
McGill to be criticized from extremists of all kinds. McGill probably
gains a thorough understanding of the issues, and also discovers
workable solutions. Ability to remain calm in heated discussion and
debate would probably lead to clear thinking, plus the respect of some
members of an audience. Finally, once McGill is able to decide upon a
workable proposal, based on objective study, that proposal can be sup-
ported with confidence and a sense of security. He then realizes that,
within the limits of present available knowledge, he has found a re-
spectable policy:

\[\text{. . . my favorite rule . . . is always to try honestly to say}
\text{what you think to be the truth, since it is thereafter unneces-
sary to try to remember or worry about what you said. This does}
\text{not mean, of course, that the course of events does not change}
\text{one's ideas. I am most afraid of the persons whose minds are}
\text{never changed; the persons who "never learn anything and never}
\text{forget anything."}^{\text{29}}\]

So far, it may appear as if McGill were a saint among men. The

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\(^{\text{28}}\)Taped interview produced by W.A.G.A., Channel 5 television, Atlanta, Georgia.

three personality traits discussed above, of course, are goals toward which McGill strives. At times he doesn't do very well. McGill, for example, confessed that he had a tendency to make snap decisions. "At least one of my faults, which I slowly have been subduing, is that of making quick judgments or decisions." Although it is not necessarily a fault, to understand McGill's stated policies and beliefs, one must realize that he is devoted to the Democratic Party--its leaders and policies, past, present, and future:

I cast my first vote for the presidential Democratic nominees in 1920--Cox and Roosevelt--and against Warren G. Harding. I have never cast anything but a Democratic vote since and do not anticipate any other course in the future.

Also, McGill is not always patient. In 1946, for example, a candidate for the Georgia legislature stomped into the Constitution building, demanding that his statement be published in McGill's paper. Because the man was "tough, ugly, rude, and abusive," his statement never made print. McGill, while writing of his usual patience, gave what seemed to be a public apology to the candidate:

I last lost my temper about 25 years ago. Maybe longer. The other day I came close. . . . Ordinarily I am a patient guy, realizing that the weather is hot, tempers strained, and that to a candidate, even to one without a chance, but badly bitten by the political bug, a "statement" is more important than the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. I want the gentleman to know I am sorry. And that I am sending out for the book on how to win friends and influence people. I have waited too long to read it.

\[30\] Ibid., October 27, 1947, col. 3, p. 6.

\[31\] Ibid., September 13, 1949, col. 3, p. 12.

\[32\] Ibid., June 29, col. 3, p. 4.
McGill's role in society. To determine whether McGill's speech effectiveness depends upon the three personality traits discussed here, one must study individual speeches. This will be done in separate chapters; however, some observations can be made pertaining to the effect McGill's personality has upon his role and methods in society. This writer will first discuss what reputable sources have concluded McGill's role in society to be and then define what this study has found.

The Atlantic Monthly, which published several of the articles now found in McGill's "Atlantic Non-Fiction Award Winner," The South and the Southerner, had high praise for McGill. He was labeled a "fearless" editor, "known throughout the South for his fighting heart . . . and for his two-fisted editorial approach to any bothersome problem below Mason and Dixon's line."34

In 1953, when the Press Club of Dallas and Southern Methodist University gave McGill an editing award, they cited him for "distinguished service as a crusading editor and writer."35 The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, awarding McGill the honorary degree of Humane Letters, in 1963, really lavished praise on the southerner from Georgia. He was hailed as "spur to the conscience of America, champion of human rights, foe of demagoguery, prophet of the

34Ibid., 184 (November, 1949), 64.
mature Southland, heir to the Chair of Henry W. Grady and Joel Chandler Harris--yours is a voice from Atlanta that speaks to the whole world."36

What has this writer found McGill's general role and methods to be? When the Atlantic Monthly pictured McGill as a "fearless" editor with the "two-fisted editorial," it simply planted the first seeds for a sure to be McGill myth. On a few rare occasions, such as the bombing of a church or school, McGill has resorted to open battle, but for the most part McGill has remained the most calm--patient, willing to change his mind, able to see both sides--man in the entire South.

The Atlantic Monthly gave a much more accurate assessment of McGill's approach to southern problems when it called him "one of the bravest and most balanced liberal editors in the deep South."37 Without question, McGill has shown great courage in his public pronouncements, both written and oral. Besides his decisive stand on human relations in more recent years, McGill courageously supported minority groups during a long period, 1937-1954, when few men, North or South, were willing to speak. His methods and policies, however, have been more "balanced" than "two-fisted" or "fearless," more like a teacher than a crusader. While this writer discovered this by reading most of McGill's writings, George Barker simply discussed the topic with McGill. This is what he found:

36 Ibid., April 16, 1963, col. 4, p. 32.
McGill has written articles championing Negro civil rights and school integration in most of the nation's better magazines. They usually preface his stories with words like "fearless . . . strong Southern publisher." In his office last week, McGill denied that he is fearless, or particularly strong. "I worry about my son and my wife," he says. "They take a lot of abuse because of me. . . . If you're looking for some dramatic thing that showed me the great truth . . . you're gonna be disappointed," he says: "There isn't anything like that. I never learned about prejudice from my parents and when, in school, I ran into prejudiced kids, I just thought that was a problem of their own—not mine."38

While McGill's role in society is not easily defined, it is true that he is not, nor has he ever been, a crusader in the sense of a William Lloyd Garrison. The three traits discussed above prevent it. In fact, McGill is convinced that "extremists--in either direction--almost inevitably provide dangerous and damaging leadership."39

On December 29, 1965, this writer asked McGill what his role has been in society. Before asking, however, McGill was reminded of a statement he had written in 1947. At that time McGill had stated:

It occurred to me . . . what may or may not be a weakness. I cannot be sure, but, admittedly, I cannot be a good crusader because I have been cursed, all my life, with the ability to see both sides of things. This is fatal to a crusader. A real, burning crusader must be able to see only his side. I do not criticize this, because much of our progress has been brought about by crusaders. But, unfortunately, they are rough fellows and in their furious laying about they undo almost as much as they accomplish.40

After reminding McGill of his 1947 statement, this writer then asked: it has "been about eighteen years" since you made that

statement, "how would you just describe generally, Mr. McGill, the role that you have played?" While he still contended that he was no crusader, his reply was rather circuitous. In his usual rambling style, McGill appears to be saying that his role has been to study present conditions, discover problems and their causes, and then speak-out in support of individuals--Ku Klux Klansmen, Jews, Negroes, laborers, farmers, et al--who have been exploited, and against those who do the exploiting. McGill told this writer:

Well, I think I would still have to say this is true [that he is no crusader]. I'm always bothered---I remember---I've always felt a certain sympathy for the average Klan member, for example. He is a poor devil who feels a sense of fear or resentment. He doesn't know how to get in to see the mayor; he has no one to turn to. And here come along these shysters who are after his fifteen dollars, used to be ten. I remember we had a group here that was a fascist type group, called the Columbians. This grew up out of housing problems. And these fellows would go to these poor people, having trouble about housing, and this was racial problems sometimes then. They would promise, well we will take care of you--you join. They got ten dollars, and picked up a few other dollars, and of course they did nothing, but maybe except have a little violence, and bomb some house or burn it or something. I felt a little sympathy for these people, who were illiterate usually, and very poor and they didn't know---so they were exploited. And I've always felt---my indignation has run toward the people who do the exploiting. I don't know if that explains it.41

Because McGill is usually a patient man, capable of appreciating arguments, and willing to alter his thinking in light of new facts, he is unable to be a crusader. He lacks the "omniscience" required to conclude his own position to be the only possible solution to complex

social issues. McGill demands to have the right to stand alone, unattached to personalities or doctrine, free to change his mind and reach completely independent decisions. In light of these evidences, this writer concludes Ralph McGill's role to be that of a social critic. Such an office provides the license McGill needs to "go down in the market place and walk about," while at the same time, remaining free of any "organization representing any cause." He may approach a political campaign with his "coat off swinging as hard as" he can, or, when there is no "great principle at stake," "speak for the whole community":

I belong to no organization representing any cause. If I belonged to one I would not feel like sitting down and banging out a piece for the paper about how I disagreed with it. So, I don't belong. I do belong to the Democratic Party, but fortunately a political party is an arena. . . . I also am a Mason, an organization which is committed to the ideal of tolerance and brotherhood. . . . But I belong to no organization committed to a cause. I like to think I have served some causes. I have tried to put my shoulder to whatever worthy wheels seemed in need of pushing. I have joined to get a few oxen out of ditches. I like a fight and I have had my share. I expect to have more. . . . But . . . I am not a good crusader. I like to call my shots. And aim where I think a shot is needed.42

In 1949, McGill provided further explanation of his role in society. This time he all but uses the words "social critic." He insists that he be given "the freedom of his mental processes" so he can "comment on events and policies."

I have always tried to develop a nonconforming mind, believing such a mind necessary to one whose job it is to comment

on events and policies. I am by nature a nonconformist. I have joined a few organizations, but I have never been able to wear the identifying badges or attend the meetings. Even in college, the fraternity pin I wore for a while made me uncomfortable. . . . Also, I always have detested dogma. Being a Christian, I have long been disturbed by dogma or methods. . . . If man ever becomes tamed, and if he loses the one paramount freedom from which all others stem--the freedom of his mental processes--then all else is lost.  

In his role as social critic, McGill likes to go "down in the marketplace and walk. . . . about, entering into arguments and taking a part in a brawl if necessary." McGill, both in his writing and speaking, seeks to inform and persuade his audiences. McGill told this writer about his writing and speaking. The quotation below refers to McGill's daily column, but as soon as he had completed the statement, this writer asked, "would you say the same thing about your speaking, in that you try to be informative and persuade?" McGill answered, "I do. I certainly do. And try to recognize their point of view, if you know there is dissent in the audience, and you try to counter it." McGill, then, spoke of how he attempts to teach and persuade, both when speaking and writing:

I've always thought that in writing you . . . must not get too far ahead of the audience you're trying to reach. Now, if you do, you find yourself writing for just a small group. I hope it isn't immodest, but I think that I have managed to stay--to keep the readership, of a lot of persons, you might say, the average reader. . . . They may dissent violently, but they don't quit reading. And I've deliberately tried to do this, to write persuasively or to provide information for

discussion. . . . I've always thought . . . that a newspaper columnist or editorial writer ought to be something like a teacher, in that you ought to try to stimulate discussion. You ought to provide, when necessary, what seems to you to be the information pertinent to the question. . . . You ought to try to write . . . as persuasively as you can. I'm always cheeted up when I get letters referring to me critically as a brainwasher. . . . This would indicate that these people are aware, maybe, of a persuasive quality.45

In summary, McGill plays a creative role as social critic, actively writing and speaking with the purpose of informing and persuading audiences to consider enlightened approaches to social issues. This role is tempered by McGill's personality, his ability to weigh issues carefully, a willingness to change his thinking, and patience. When this writer asked Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. for his judgment concerning McGill's "role in our society," he concluded that McGill has taken "a role of creative social leadership":

I have the greatest admiration for Ralph McGill. He has shown himself over the last generation a newspaper man of exceptional wisdom and courage. I believe that he has been in large part personally responsible for the contrast between the progress toward better racial relations in Georgia and the continuing bigotry and bitterness in Alabama. In my judgement, Mr. McGill exemplifies as much as anyone in our time the ability of the newspaperman to remain faithful to his craft and at the same time assume a role of creative social leadership.46

Speech Preparation

McGill's preparation of addresses varies with the occasion, but


two basic patterns emerge. He devotes minimal attention to talks delivered extemporaneously and, secondly, he and his secretary prepare manuscripts only when absolutely necessary. McGill probably makes little immediate preparation for talks given extemporaneously. He draws from years of study and personal experience and, as he says, speaks from the "top of his head." When this writer asked McGill how he had prepared the oration given to over 6,000 educators at the 1966 National Education Association convention, he could only say, "Well, I just thought about it for this audience." Questioned further as to whether he relied "on any particular speech or speeches given in the past," McGill replied, "Well, I drew out a few things." After comparing this speech, however, with tapes and manuscripts of other addresses, one can only conclude that McGill did not prepare a fresh talk for the educators. He simply discussed stock themes used many times in the past.

While there is little evidence of systematic preparation for many of McGill's extemporaneous speeches, three factors aid McGill in speaking "off the top of his head." These are his selection of topic, use of memory, and his habit of taking notes wherever he goes.

McGill makes a practice of selecting his own topic. Since, as shown in the chapter on speech education, he is able to rely on study and personal experiences, McGill usually talks about subjects he has read about or personally observed. He also speaks about subjects which he has first discussed in his daily column in the Atlanta Constitution.
Several examples demonstrate McGill's practice of speaking with little immediate preparation. His secretary told this writer that in 1965 McGill was to speak at the St. James Episcopal church in Marietta, Georgia. As McGill got out of the car at the church, he asked The Reverend Albert Hatch, "What do you want me to talk about?" Hatch reported that this gave him "quite a scare."

Writing about a speech he delivered in 1950 to 1,000 4-H club members, McGill revealed that he had done little more in the way of preparation than "just think about" the audience:

In the moments before the young man had risen to introduce me to this audience . . . there had come to me the sudden realization that I was trying to think, and reach across a gulf of time. . . . I am very much afraid that for most audiences of young people the average adult speaker who draws on his past must seem to be talking of some never-never land. . . . I was deep in all this thought when introduced. "I cannot in conscience offer you a challenge," was all I could muster as a beginning. . . . Words, whether spoken or written, come hard with me. 47

McGill, then, is usually given license to name his own topic, even if he chooses to wait until the last minute. Not only does McGill decide upon a theme, his secretary reported that most audiences "expect" McGill to talk about southern issues, thus making it even easier for him to speak with little immediate preparation.

One additional example dramatizes the importance of selecting the right topic. McGill was invited to speak at the Temple Beth Am in Miami, January 26, 1966. Dr. Morton S. Notarius, M.D., chairman of the

forum committee, wrote that McGill was specifically "requested to speak on aspects of the South other than Civil Rights." What did McGill talk about? Dr. Notarius wrote that McGill "spoke mostly about civil rights, which was not the requested topic." A close study of the recording of that speech reveals that McGill used the same themes that he usually discusses in extemporaneous addresses—a discussion of present southern conditions and their origin.

McGill's prodigious memory is important in his preparation of extemporaneous talks. His memory is helpful both during research and while speaking. Grace Lundy, McGill's secretary, stated that few people "perceived the capacity of McGill's mind." For example, he can often recall the book and page which contains a quotation needed for a speech. When asked if he found what Newsweek called his "prodigious" memory to be helpful in speaking, McGill told how he was able to use materials without planning:

Yes, it has been very helpful. I guess I'm pretty corny about poems and things, and so, on occasion, this hasn't happened often, but I can think of four or five times when I would be talking and it would seem to me that a line or so from a poem might be helpful, and I just pull that out of my memory . . . and throw it in. I think memory does help.

McGill wrote of a speech delivered from "the bed of a truck" to

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48 Letter to this writer from Dr. Morton S. Notarius, March 9, 1966, Miami, Florida.
49 Letter to this writer from Dr. Notarius, February 2, 1966, Miami.
50 Newsweek, LIII (April 13, 1959), 102.
members of the Gordon County Farm Bureau in Calhoun, Georgia, showing how his extemporaneous speeches consist of personal experiences loosely put together for a particular audience. In this speech, he forgot one "story," but remembered others:

So, I stood there on the truck and talked about how I had seen the countries of Europe and the East where soil erosion has created deserts. . . . I meant to tell the story about looking down into Boaz's valley where occurred the prettiest story in the Bible . . . that of Ruth and Naomi. . . . I forgot that one. But I told of others.52

McGill's practice of making notes of his personal experiences also aids in his preparation of extemporaneous speeches. Whether in south Georgia or Europe, McGill records personal observations, enabling him to use these notes, even years later, in making a speech. This, in concert with his good memory, gives McGill an almost inexhaustible supply of familiar supporting materials. He often headlines his column with such phrases as, "From an Editor's Notebook: At DePauw University,"53 "Some Notes Made on an Envelope at New Haven,"54 "From Notes Made at the Chicago Meeting of American Sociological Association."55

In 1954, McGill described one method he uses in recording reactions to personal experiences:

Always, when strapped in my seat, I help the aircraft to become airborne. I begin to peer from the small window, spellbound by

what is below. And with a typewriter or a writing pad on my knees, I like to put down something of how it seems.

Does McGill rehearse his talks in any way? When this writer asked McGill if he practiced his speech before talking to an audience, he replied, "I don't rehearse it at all." Questioned further as to whether he had ever practiced talks in the past, McGill said, "no, I never have."

In summary, McGill probably makes little immediate preparation for numerous speeches delivered extemporaneously. He selects a topic which enables him to draw from personal experience, relying on his memory and habit of recording first-hand observations. It is probably true, as implied in the statement below, that McGill's speech preparation includes the planning of a general outline of ideas to be discussed:

I went to Washington, by invitation of the Foreign Relations Committee, to testify on the ERP (European Relief Plan) .... I asked the Committee to pardon what might seem like a reply to former President Hoover. I informed them that I had been writing and saying the tenure feature was the most important for a long time. Indeed, I had written out what I was to say to the Committee a day before Mr. Hoover's message and had committed its facts, opinions and coherence to memory.

While much of McGill's speaking is extemporaneous, at times he uses a manuscript. To understand McGill's use of a speech text, one must remember that he writes the manuscript only because certain occasions require it. McGill and his secretary prefer not to write

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57 Ibid., January 27, 1948, col. 3, p. 4.
a text and increasingly refuse to accept invitations that require a manuscript.

To understand McGill's construction of a written speech, one needs to examine his method of choosing a topic, his research, and the writing of the speech. As with extemporaneous talks, McGill values the privilege of naming his own theme. One need only be reminded that this enables McGill to draw from personal experience, to use notes made on trips, draw from old speeches, and to benefit from ideas discussed in his daily newspaper column. One important difference, however, between extemporaneous speeches and those delivered with a manuscript is that formal occasions which require the speech text are usually more restrictive. For example, as McGill said, "Cooper Union, of course, this was a natural. It had to be about Lincoln." Nevertheless, even though the general subject area may be dictated by the occasion, McGill still finds ways to use stock themes.

How are McGill's manuscript speeches researched? McGill and his secretary reported this to be a joint effort. McGill told how he and Miss Lundy gather supporting materials:

Well, I have a very fine secretary, Miss Grace Lundy, who has been with me a good many years. She is a great help in research. We both sort of work at it together, or divide up any area of necessary research. She will find books or articles, and I'll find some, then I'll set-in to read, and make notes, and so forth.  

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59 Ibid.
Later, after interviewing McGill, Miss Lundy gave additional information, plus a clearer understanding of this joint research effort. While McGill had suggested that Miss Lundy did much of the actual work, she emphasized McGill's efficiency. The following information is presented as this writer wrote it down during an interview with Miss Lundy.

She stated that she had much less research to do than most secretaries whose bosses spoke in public. Few persons perceived McGill's capacity and ability to find materials, often going directly to the page and book desired. He would then, for example, place a poem right before Miss Lundy and she would type it in the manuscript directly from the book. She mentioned how McGill would collect data, "pieces" of paper, etc., placing them in his "black folder." Importantly, however, Miss Lundy remembered that she would at times go through the file of used speech texts and select manuscripts McGill might want to use for a new occasion, thus making it more convenient and less time consuming for McGill. Research, then, is a joint effort between the two, with McGill's resourcefulness being the important instrument in finding materials.

Three methods are used in writing the speech manuscript. McGill may write an original speech, using, what is called here, a "full-cycle" approach. Secondly, an original text may be the result of the "half-cycle" method. Or, finally, an old speech text may be revised for a new occasion. During the taped interview, McGill
defined what this author calls the "full-cycle" mode, the manuscript being passed from McGill to Lundy, back to McGill, and then typed by Lundy:

Well, I will do a rough draft of it, sometimes in long hand, sometimes typed, and then I will turn it immediately over to her [Miss Lundy], before I've read it even, and let her find any errors, typographical or grammatical, or any others, or any loose construction. I don't think a person is too good at reading his own copy, at least I'm not. Then when she does that, I will then take it and correct those, indicate the corrections, or make them, and then I always usually find this gives me an idea to eliminate something, or add something. So we'll work it over until its a pretty marked up manuscript, and then she'll do the real draft of it.60

This seems to be an efficient means of preparing a speech but, unfortunately, this "full-cycle" is seldom completed. Talking with Miss Lundy at length, she reported that since she had been with McGill, beginning in 1946, she could only recall two occasions when the manuscript passed through the complete process: the "Lincoln Day Address," at Cooper Union in 1960 and a Harvard Law School Address in 1961. She provided a similar version, however, of the full-cycle used in those two speeches:

1. Mr. McGill makes a rough draft, typing some, and writing-out some. He often writes parts of a speech while riding the bus home each day, always carrying his black folder with papers, clippings, etc.
2. After completing the first draft, McGill gives it to Miss Lundy, who then reads it, looking for "phrases" that have been "dropped." This happens, she continued, because the "mind moves faster than the pen." Then she would ask McGill about her findings or suggestions, before making her first typed draft.
3. She returns her typed edition to McGill, who reads the text

60 Ibid.
for mistakes, rewrites certain parts, polishes it, and then returns the text to Miss Lundy for its final typing. After she completes the last draft, McGill may write-in something or delete a word or paragraph right up until the time he delivers the speech.\(^{61}\)

Miss Lundy insisted that a lack of time prevented McGill's use of this thorough means of preparing his speech texts. With the exception of two speeches, as she remembered it, the "half-cycle" method was used with all original orations. With the half-cycle mode, Miss Lundy assumes much more responsibility for the end result of the manuscript, especially its wording and organization. It should be recalled that McGill stated he dashes off the first "copy," as "if writing a newspaper article," then gives it immediately to Miss Lundy before he has "read it even." Using the half-cycle approach, then, McGill does not read the speech through even once before Miss Lundy types the first and only draft. He relies completely upon Miss Lundy's judgment for "errors" and "loose construction" of any kind. If this were not bad enough, Miss Lundy reported that quite often she is typing the final draft an hour or so before McGill is to catch an airplane. Miss Lundy and McGill both referred to this last minute preparation as a "cliffhanger" speech. Miss Lundy described the "half-cycle" mode usually used in preparing speech manuscripts:

1. Mr. McGill would write a first draft, typing some and writing-out some, just as with the "full-cycle" method.
2. The rough draft is then given immediately to Miss Lundy. She asks about "dropped phrases" or anything else she

\(^{61}\)Interview with Miss Grace Lundy, Ralph McGill's secretary, December 30, 1965.
might notice but, unlike the complete cycle, the text is not returned to McGill. After asking questions concerning errors, Miss Lundy types the final draft. Then, after the speech is in its final form, McGill receives the text and makes changes, additions, or deletions.62

Because McGill often sees the final draft of his manuscript while on the way to his speaking engagement, he usually revises his text continuously until time to deliver the address. McGill confirmed this practice when he told of being aboard an airplane, "en route to Cincinnati to make a talk for a campaign of which Charles Taft was chairman. . . ." He "was busy with the manuscript of" his "talk."63

The third means of preparing a written oration is to revise a used speech for a new situation. Although McGill's "speech theory" advises against this practice, he often does it. McGill may either go to a used text and tear out one page or use an entire speech with minor alterations. While personally copying a number of McGill's manuscripts, this writer discovered several single pages missing, with the torn corner still fastened between the remaining pages. McGill likes to deliver used speech texts in their entirety, making only those changes required for a new occasion. Miss Lundy demonstrated this procedure by using a manuscript delivered to the Birmingham Rotary Club, May 17, 1961, and a second manuscript, based on the first, used at Georgia Institute of Technology, December 7, 1962. She placed the two

62Ibid.

manuscripts on her desk side-by-side, turning the pages simultaneously to point out the exact procedure.

McGill would take the old text, read it, and write instructions in the margin, enabling Miss Lundy to type the new edition for a different audience. At first, McGill was rather systematic, numbering his insertions from one to four: "#1," "Insert II," "Insert 3," "Delete & Insert 4." After that, the following instructions were indicated: "delete," "Insert," "Ole Miss," "Cuba now [i.e., add the discussion of Cuba at this point]." Early on the old text, McGill had written in, "Mention Ga. Tech."

There was one additional comment written-in on the old text, this time by Miss Lundy, demonstrating the important role she plays in advising McGill with his speeches. On page five of the old manuscript, McGill had told his Birmingham audience about the "latest" figures available to him pertaining to southern education. Miss Lundy, checking the old text herself, penciled the following question in the margin, "Is this up to date?" Miss Lundy pointed to that question, confirmed it to be her own writing, and told this writer that it was her practice to read the old text and ask questions or make recommendations concerning the preparation of the new speech. In this particular case, McGill did not alter his "1957-58 figures," apparently deciding they were just as suitable in December, 1962, as they had been in May, 1961.

What specific changes did McGill make in adapting his 1961 Birmingham speech to the 1962 Georgia Tech audience? A few examples should help demonstrate McGill's revision of an old text for a new
occasion. The first illustration, taken from the initial paragraph of the speech, shows vividly how McGill expresses the same idea while drawing different examples from the experience of each audience.

Words which are unique to each occasion are underlined:

**Birmingham Rotary, 1961**

I think it would be well for any speaker addressing the membership of this organization, and perhaps for the membership itself, to understand that it largely is composed of the sons of the industrial revolution.

You and your fathers have been the makers of productive and technological revolution. This city is the site of a major Southern research institution which spends its time developing new techniques and materials which will accelerate the changes in our region and in our lives.

**Georgia Tech, 1962**

I think it would be well for any speaker addressing the members of this faculty and student body to understand that it is one of the motivating sources of the industrial revolution that for more than a century has been shaking and changing the world. Graduates of this institution have been the makers of productive and technological revolution. This school carries on major research and experiment in developing new techniques and materials which will accelerate the changes in our region and in our lives. The important research is in fields unknown, or unimagined, by former generations.

A second alteration consisted of adding one sentence in support of his assertion that "no region of our nation has more to offer" than "the South." The change had no apparent connection with either audience, unless McGill reasoned that his college audience would be more affected by additional support. This does demonstrate McGill's attempt to strengthen his message for a new occasion:

**Birmingham Rotary, 1961**

No region of our nation has more to offer that future than does the South. No area has so great an opportunity to make a contribution to national unity and

**Georgia Tech, 1962**

No region of our nation has more to offer that future than does the South. We have an abundance of natural resources—forests, water, minerals, and climate; and of
strength. We recognize... potent industrial resources. No area has so great an opportunity to make a contribution to national unity and strength in human resources. We recognize...

A third change was to delete a reference made in Birmingham to a speech made by U. S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy at the University of Georgia. One can only speculate why this was omitted. Certainly, after twenty months, Kennedy's address could no longer be considered a "recent one." McGill probably thought the Atlanta audience would have been too familiar with the Kennedy speech. Anyway, he used the following material in Birmingham, but left it out at Georgia Tech:

... a few days ago U. S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy spoke in Georgia, at the University. He did not make an anti-Southern talk. It was one dedicated to the American promise. Perhaps because of this his Georgia audience stood, when he had finished, and gave him one of the longest ovations ever tendered a visitor to the University. He did not single out the South for criticism. He said that the problem between white and colored people is one for all sections of the United States. But, he added, the South has a special role to play "in demonstrating America at its greatest--at its full potential of liberty under law." [A number of other references were made to this talk.]

Later in the Georgia Tech address, McGill deleted an example pertaining to an Episcopalian minister which he probably concluded was not as timely in 1962 as it had been in 1961:

And, just a few days ago, an Episcopalian minister in Mississippi was in very real trouble for saying from the pulpit he believed it to have been best for the Civil War to have ended as it did. Can we blame Moscow or Peiping for this divisive problem?

There were references made in Birmingham which would have had no significance at all for the Atlanta audience. When McGill revised
the manuscript for his university audience, he simply deleted the following reference to a Birmingham campaign:

Recently, I read in the papers, Birmingham sought to stimulate business and civic spirit with a campaign urging the people to quit sitting down. I do not know the content of this campaign, but I assume it included planning to take care of the city's dilemma when, as one day it must, the school problem confronts it. We know enough about our present and future to know that the South's future will be determined within its urban areas.

At this point, after twelve typed pages, McGill had one page remaining in the speech given in Birmingham. To complete the address to be delivered at Georgia Tech, McGill omitted the final page of the Birmingham oration, and added three pages not used in Birmingham.

In summary, out of a total of about three hundred and twenty-one typed lines in the Birmingham text, two hundred and fifty-three were unchanged for Georgia Tech, and five lines received only minor alterations. It is very important to note that McGill deleted sixty-three typed lines from the Birmingham text while preparing the speech for Georgia Tech, and added only two typed lines within the original three hundred and twenty-one lines of the old manuscript. As stated earlier, McGill did attach three additional pages to the original three hundred and twenty-one lines for his Atlanta address. The significant point to notice, however, is that McGill, while deleting all specific references to the Birmingham area, added no examples or discussions of particular interest to the university audience. There could be three reasons for this. The original Birmingham address discussed education in detail, so the thesis would have been appropriate
at Georgia Tech. This probably influenced the original choice of the Birmingham speech as the one to be revised. Secondly, McGill may have added comments concerning Georgia Tech after he arrived on the scene. Or, McGill could simply have failed to make adequate adjustments when hurriedly revising an old speech for a new situation.

One question remains relating to speech preparation. Does McGill write his own speeches? When McGill was asked if he wrote his speeches after the research had been completed, he answered, "Yes. Yes." Miss Lundy, his secretary, was more emphatic, stating that no one has ever written "one word or paragraph" for McGill. McGill, however, depends upon Miss Lundy for research and criticism. Although McGill does write his own speeches, the mechanical production involves a joint effort between McGill and Lundy.

When Miss Lundy was asked if persons other than herself assisted in any way, she replied that McGill would "certainly take advice," but they were usually so rushed that there was no time to seek criticism. She could remember only two times when McGill received an outside opinion, both quite by accident. While McGill was preparing the "Lincoln Day Address" for Cooper Union, a Mr. Norman Berg, who then worked with the Macmillan Publishing Company, happened to drop by McGill's office and was asked to read over the manuscript. He advised McGill to delete the quotations or references made to supporting authorities, reasoning that the New York audience would want to hear what "Ralph McGill" had to say, not "all those other people." Did McGill take his advice? Miss Lundy remembered McGill cutting one
or two authoritative references or quotations, adding that McGill liked to use outside support to substantiate his own thinking. The only other incident of outside criticism came when Harold Martin read the Harvard Day Address; he made no suggestions.

**Delivery**

McGill prefers speakers who use "plain talk" and have unaffected deliveries. To determine the nature and effectiveness of McGill's delivery, the writer analyzes here his methods of delivery, the physical aspects of his delivery, his voice activity, and the general effectiveness of his delivery.

**Method of Delivery**

McGill usually speaks either extemporaneously or from a manuscript. He began speaking extemporaneously while working in Nashville, and continued that method after moving to Atlanta, talking informally about his personal experiences. Telling this writer about his method of delivery when discussing his European trips, McGill said, "I didn't have a manuscript. I didn't need a manuscript you see."

In recent years, McGill has continued to speak off-the-cuff:

... in the last year or two, I find myself doing fewer manuscripts. I'm going down to Miami ... in late January ... [to] one of the large synagogues down there. ... And they asked me not to prepare a manuscript. They prefer sort of an impromptu discussion.

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64 Taped interview with Ralph McGill, December 29, 1965.
65 Ibid.
McGill's secretary confirmed this trend. On June 24, 1966, she wrote, "Mr. McGill is so busy he simply cannot accept speaking engagements that require a manuscript." 66

There are occasions, however, when McGill does write a manuscript. When speaking, McGill can use a manuscript yet not appear to be reading:

And when I look down at a manuscript or a page of a book, I can take in a pretty good paragraph, just looking at it. So I don't have to read a line of the manuscript in the sense that a person—you see a person hold it and read it—I don't have to do that at all. I can follow it almost exactly without seeming to be reading it. 67

McGill usually constructs a manuscript only because he has been requested to do so. Thus, there is probably little difference in the way he delivers a speech when using a text and when speaking extem­poraneously. When asked how closely he followed his speech text, McGill replied:

I'd have to generalize. I think in almost every speech you depart from a manuscript in some instances. I can't recall, oh maybe once or twice, I could recall that I followed it absolutely. Most of the time you depart from a manuscript. Something happens after you get there, or you meet someone, or there will be some local subject come up that you learn the audience is interested in, and you work in something about that. 68

Three examples illustrate the way McGill adapts his delivery

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66 Letter from Miss Grace Lundy, Ralph McGill's secretary, June 24, 1966.
68 Ibid.
and use of manuscript to different situations. First, at Cooper Union
McGill knew almost nothing about the audience who would hear him; con­sequently he,

... stuck to the manuscript, except for one or two little
departures simply because, you know, you are behind scenes
until you come right out on the platform. You don't know
who's going to be there, and they don't know who or how many,
or anything.69

Under different conditions, McGill may abandon his manuscript
completely. For example, when McGill spoke at a Saint Patrick's Day
dinner in Georgia, he wrote that,

... there had been considerable drinking before and during
the dinner and so, when the time came for me to speak some of
them were singing at the tables. ... They never did get it
completely quiet. So, I just didn't even attempt to deliver
the talk I had written for that. ... I just got up and tried
to be moderately funny.70

A less extreme and probably more representative example of
McGill's use of a speech manuscript came when he addressed students at
Washington and Lee University:

Newspapers "must get down and walk with the people," declared
Ralph McGill ... to over 100 students and faculty members
here. ... Departing many times from his prepared speech,
... the Constitution's editor told a highly receptive audi­
ence that the newspaper industry "must have better editors
and reporters."71

To appreciate why McGill speaks as he does, one must under­
stand his strong convictions concerning oratory. In probably the most

69Ibid.
70Ibid.
71Ringtum Phi, February 21, 1947, an anonymous reporter.
complete statement McGill has made relating to his own speaking, he reveals his preference for discussing important ideas in an unaffected manner. Notice how he associates what he considers to be good speaking with his own manner of speaking:

I am not a speech-maker. Oratory is not one of my assets. But I am willing. I can stand on my feet and talk without any knocking of knees or tightening of the solar plexus nerves. But, unfortunately, this is not speech-making and it is not easy. If one is not a speech-maker with at least a half-dozen portable trapezes which one may set up and perform upon in any sort of hall or upon any open platform, then one is forced to have something to say. This is dangerous. It also annoys the audience. If one has something to say there are always those in the audience who disagree. They are forced to sit there gritting their teeth and growing red about the gills, their civic club luncheon, always a digestive shock, all the more lethal as it delightedly sabotages the digestive juices and curdles the cheerful little aminoacids. The honest speaker, in such a situation, must always say that what he is expressing is his own opinion and that it may be wrong, but that it is what he thinks, based on experience, observations and study. But this never appeases the dissenters. This sort of thing is never a success. . . . The speech-makers are different. They have at least three or four speeches tailored to any occasion. They begin with the polite little jokes, which fit any community. They toss out a bouquet to any or two local celebrities who sit beaming in the audience. They then proceed to the introductory paragraphs of their "message," move powerfully into the meat of it, and bring it to a ringing conclusion. The old-fashioned virtues, God, mother, soil conservation . . . blend richly to produce a warming, satisfactory result which makes every one happy and inserts no grains of irritating thoughts into the oyster of the mind. I seriously envy these gentlemen. Of course, I think some of them carry it too far. One I know, who makes a modest charge, sends out photographs of himself on slick paper. Beneath it are listed his subjects. Then follows the praises of critics. For a fee he will come and set up his trapezes and swing back and forth on them with the greatest of ease. . . . He does it well. He startles no one. . . . Also, the talker, as opposed to the speech-maker, invariably is persuaded to accept invitations when he has nothing to say, a fate which has been my lot on several occasions. Lacking a speech to pull out of the file, the talker stumbles around, and ends up angry with himself and in agreement
with the audience that it was a dull affair. I am almost persuaded the field is best left to the speech-maker. 72

Physical Factors

An orator's general appearance and bodily activity probably affect the way an audience will react; consequently, these factors may be important to the speaker's platform performance. McGill's physical aspects are discussed under two topics, general appearance and bodily actions.

General appearance. McGill's general appearance is particularly affected by his weight and dress. His weight has ranged from one hundred and fifty-two pounds while in college73 to two hundred and forty-five pounds in more recent years.74 As of October 11, 1966, McGill weighed one hundred and eighty-five pounds and was five feet and ten-and-three-quarters inches tall.75

People are often impressed by McGill's casual attitude toward dress. Newsweek told of the "rumpled 61 year-old" journalist.76 George Baker, interviewing McGill, wrote that "... he apparently doesn't worry a lot about combing his hair or pressing his suits. He looks real everyday ..."77 When this writer interviewed McGill, he

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75Letter to this writer from Grace Lundy, October 11, 1966, Atlanta, Georgia.
76Newsweek, LIII (April 13, 1959), 102.
also found him to be somewhat casually dressed and attired in what must be his favorite dress, a striped shirt and tie. He also appeared solidly-built, but in no sense fat nor out of proportion.

Bodily actions. McGill seems to think that extensive use of gestures is a sign of an "orator," which he insists he is not. Rather, McGill sees himself as simply delivering informal "talks." McGill told this writer:

I never thought of gestures and I don't make many. If so, it certainly is a natural one that I'm quite unconscious of. As I said I'm not really a--I'm in no sense an orator.78

Voice

Audiences are also affected by a speaker's vocal usage. For example, no matter how well prepared an orator may be, if he can not be heard then he will be unable to win a desired response. In addition to volume, other factors which may affect a speaker's effectiveness are quality of his voice, use of pitch, rate of speaking, articulation, and pronunciation.

Quality. The most noticeable aspect of McGill's voice is his quality. When at his best, McGill's voice is raspy, but not unpleasant. When he has a cold or his voice is in poor health, however, his quality is grating, harsh, and unpleasant.

McGill's normal voice quality, while pleasant, is certainly

unique. In 1916, at the age of eighteen, he was advised against an acting career because his "husky voice would never do for real dramatics." Celestine Sibley described McGill's voice as one "which is known to radio, television and lecture audiences and which has the gusty, raspy timbre of a barn door swinging in a high wind."

On occasions, McGill's voice quality is almost unbearable. For example, in 1947, a reporter noticed McGill's "attack of laryngitis" when he spoke at Washington and Lee University. When speaking at Emory University, in 1959, McGill coughed and cleared his throat with each phrase, making his line of reasoning difficult to follow.

Eleven persons who heard McGill at Emory University, May 7, 1965, chose the following terms in describing McGill's voice quality: "low & raspy," "easy to listen to," "raspy," "voice quality is awful—thin & rather high," "not attractive to me—it is too husky," "not 'pretty' to listen to [but] not irritating," "a little gravel[y]," "voice quality is unique and individualistic," "good quality of voice but cleared throat often," "horrish-squeaky," "a high pitched voice of poor quality which grates on my nerves."

**Pitch.** McGill usually relies upon pitch variation to emphasize certain points. Also, when he has taken time to prepare his

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80 Celestine Sibley, *Saturday Evening Post* (December 27, 1958), 52.

81 *Ringtum Phi*, February 21, 1947, editorial.
speech, his pitch inflection probably contributes considerably to his conversational style. Indeed, his pronunciation of certain sounds is much like a "barn door swinging in a high wind." For example, the following words, spoken at Emory University, 1959, began on a level pitch, but when McGill came to the vowel, he gradually rose until the sound faded away: "Tennessee," "poor," "whole," and "small." With other words, McGill will begin on a level pitch, gradually rise, as with the words listed above, then, turn slowly until he drops-off on a low pitch: "years," "fired," and "sure."

There are times when McGill has difficulty controlling his pitch. He may begin a sentence or word at a high pitch, then attempt to go higher when emphasizing a point. Consequently, he goes beyond his range and must end his sentence abruptly. Because of this, McGill often disturbs the mood he has created in support of his ideas.

McGill may be unable to control his pitch at certain levels. When at Vanderbilt University his drama career was cut short because his "voice did not have the dramatic range to enable him to go far" in the theater.\(^82\) In 1954, McGill wrote that he had "no ability to sing."\(^83\) There is probably a second reason why McGill has difficulty with his pitch control. He apparently becomes so involved with his message that he momentarily forgets about his delivery; consequently, his voice reaches its highest pitch before he realizes what he has

\(^{82}\) *Atlanta Constitution*, November 8, 1949, col. 3, p. 10.

done. Then, he stops as if he has startled himself and his mood is lost.

One example will serve to demonstrate how McGill's pitch affects his speaking. When telling an Emory University audience in 1959 about his recent trips to city slums, he used San Francisco to illustrate how cities had changed. When he reached the words "a city of" ("San Francisco, for example, a city of - - - - " represents McGill's pause) beauty and of ancient . . ."), his pitch got entirely out of control and his mood and chain of thought were interrupted.

A portion of this same sentence ("for example, a city of") was subjected to spectrographic analysis. With the help of John L. Leinhardt, graduate student in speech science at Louisiana State University, a Kay Electric Sonagraph was used in making a spectrographic analysis of McGill's voice. The purpose of this test was to discover what did happen when McGill moved from a relative normal pitch when he said "for example," to a very high pitch when he said "a city of." Dr. George Gunn, Associate Professor of audiology and speech science at Louisiana State University, interpreted the results:

(See Figure 1.)

The voice pitch for "for example" is well within normal range (centering around 140 cycles per second). The pitch for "a" is relatively high for a male voice (200 c.p.s.). The voice pitch for "i" in the primary syllable of "city" is approximately 450 cycles. This particular pitch is unusually high, far beyond the normal fundamental frequencies employed by males. In addition, it is more than an octave higher than the preceding vowel (a) which, in itself, would be termed rather high.
Figure 1.

Spectrographic Analysis of McGill's Voice
Rate. McGill's rate, while differing with the type occasion and method of delivery, usually is slow and deliberate. McGill's speech at Emory probably is representative of his informal approach to public speaking. Because McGill gives what he calls an "imromptu-discussion," his ideas aren't well conceived; consequently, his rate lacks uniformity. He is not sure what he will say next, so his speech is filled with long purposeless pauses between words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs. The audience must wait, hoping McGill will finally complete his point.

When McGill is better prepared, his ideas flow more smoothly and are more easily understood. Rate then becomes an asset, revealing interest and concern for his topic and audience. For example, in a taped recording of McGill's speech at the Temple Beth Am, in Miami, McGill used pauses to emphasize his point. Also, he applied stress to convey his feelings:

There-has-never-been a single instance-of a single-southern-state-making any concession in [race relations].

Volume. McGill's volume is loud enough to convey his ideas, but on occasions sentences will fade until barely audible. His difficulty usually is a result of inadequate preparation, when he jumps to a second thought before completing his first. When McGill spoke before the congregation and guests at Temple Beth Am, if the taped recording is any indication, his volume was more than adequate.
Articulation. McGill probably is able to make acceptable speech sounds, when his speech has been well conceived. This writer has found no problem resulting from McGill's inability to pronounce phonemes and syllables. At times, because of lazy lips, tongue, and lower jaw, McGill mumbles. Also, when speaking certain words, he makes the usual substitutions of (I) for (E), as in "ten" and "many."

Pronunciation. McGill's pronunciation is usually that of educated southerners. Having lived in Tennessee and Georgia all of his life, McGill has southern speech. While his speech is probably standard, he often has faulty pronunciation. For example, he added a sound when he said "rough-a-ly" in place of "roughly." He deleted a syllable when he said "hanl" instead of "handle." McGill, particularly when he has not prepared an address, will mumble entire phrases. For example, in place of "We were a region," McGill came out with something like "We-r-gn."

McGill's practice of stressing vowels is almost amusing and certainly is characteristic of his speaking. While impossible to divorce from his pitch inflection, McGill often holds a sound without varying his pitch. For example, he prolongs such sounds as "o," "a," "e," and "u."

In summary, when McGill's addresses are carefully prepared, his rate, volume, and pronunciation are aids to conversational speech. Quality and pitch set McGill apart from most speakers and can cause him to be very impressive or ineffective, depending upon his health and amount of preparation.
General Effectiveness of His Delivery

Opposing opinions have been expressed concerning McGill's speech effectiveness. In 1965, for example, McGill was nominated for the Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha speaker of the year award. Dwight Freshley, professor of speech at the University of Georgia and one of those voting on the award, sent other members of the board his opinion of McGill's speaking. "... I must confess that hearing him in person is a great disappointment; he just doesn't fulfill the 'effective' category at all." Dora Byron, Director of Emory University's adult education program, when asked to evaluate McGill's speech at Emory, May 7, 1965, reported:

Nothing outstanding, either negative or positive, just good informal "talking with" audience presentation--(McGill, himself, would be the first to admit he holds no place as a dynamic speaker; the total of the man & for what he stands be his appeal on the platform--).  

Implicit in these two comments is the belief that McGill's intelligence, character, and good will far out weigh his delivery. Freshley's impression, based entirely upon delivery, wrongly implies that effectiveness can be determined apart from a speaker's intelligence and responsibility, the other criteria upon which the Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha award is judged. There are those who find McGill's "ineffective" delivery very effective. His presentation,

84 Typed comments sent to persons selecting the 1965 "Speaker of the Year" award for Delta Sigma Rho-Tau Kappa Alpha.
85 Letter to this writer in January, 1966.
they suggest, emphasizes his ideas. This view is found in the student newspaper at Washington and Lee University, February, 1947:

. . . we had the opportunity to hear Mr. Ralph McGill speak on Monday. . . . Here, at last, was a speaker who could and would give us information . . . facts! . . . he spoke "straight from the shoulder." To us it seemed that he was thinking first of informing his audience--and not at all of impressing them. . . . Students on the verge of plunging into the whirlpool of life want--and need--considerably more than beautiful oratory, untried political theory, and moral didacticism. They want facts; and it was facts which Mr. McGill gave his audience Monday night. We sincerely hope his visit may mark the beginning of a new trend of procuring speakers for University assemblies.86

The truth of McGill's ability as a speaker, more particularly, as a deliverer of speeches, probably lies between the exaggerated impressions of Freshley and the college editor. This writer will evaluate McGill's delivery more specifically in relation to the speeches studied in the next two chapters.

86Ringtum Phi, February 21, 1947, editorial.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF RALPH MCGILL'S BLAZER LECTURE

McGill has not only written about public speaking, he has also been active as an orator. To determine McGill's effectiveness as a speaker, the writer will evaluate two of his orations, the Blazer Lecture and his address to the National Education Association. This chapter deals with the Blazer Lecture McGill delivered at the University of Kentucky on February 10, 1959.

Speaking Occasion

Ralph McGill went to Lexington to convince students, faculty, and townspeople that public schools in the South should remain open. To understand forces which were working at the time of McGill's speech, one must piece together events that led to the precarious status of public education in the South. Analysis of occasion will follow the plan used by Chauncey Allen Goodrich in his Select British Eloquence, providing

... a historical introduction to each of the speeches, explaining minutely the circumstances of the case, the state of parties, and the exact point at issue, being intended to place the reader in the midst of the scene as an actual spectator of the context.¹

Historical Background

Prior to the Supreme Court's ruling against segregated schools,

May 17, 1954, the South was relatively calm with its separate but unequal public school system. However, the New York Times reported that within the first year after that court's ruling, the South had "witnessed considerable confusion, much indecision, more uneasiness and a few bold experiments."  

**Events in the South.** The South's reaction to the idea of racially integrated public schools was decisive, including legal, persuasive, silent, and violent opposition. Legal opposition began three days after the 1954 ruling against segregated schools when "Gov. Thomas B. Stanley of Virginia . . . invited Southern governors to meet in Richmond early in June for exploratory talks on the school segregation question . . ."  

When those states met on June 10, 1954, "governors and other officials" from twelve of fifteen states attending agreed "to seek legal means of circumventing the U. S. Supreme Court's desegregation ruling."  

This legal defiance took many forms. The Atlanta Constitution reported on January 10, 1956, that "the first of a series of bills to strengthen segregation in Georgia will begin moving through the State Senate . . ."  

Virginia voters, on January 9, 1956, "by a margin of

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more than 2-1 . . . directed the General Assembly to call a convention to amend the state constitution so state money" could "be used for tuition grants in private nonsectarian schools." Virginia's palliative proposals were struck down by the courts. On October 21, 1957, the Supreme Court refused "to review a decision holding unconstitutional the state's 1956 Pupil Placement Act," and, on January 20, 1959, "Virginia's legal barriers against racial integration, under which nine white schools" had "been shuttered since September, toppled . . . in the State Supreme Court." Alabama probably was least imaginative in its legal opposition to school integration. The Associated Press reported January 19, 1956, that "the Alabama Senate . . . shouted its approval of a House-passed 'nullification' resolution declaring the U. S. Supreme Court antisegregation rulings 'of no effect' in Alabama."

In 1962, three years after McGill's Kentucky address, Richard Barnett and Joseph Garai, in their study of Where the States Stand on Civil Rights, described the resistance to court orders. In 1958, for example, the state legislature of Mississippi authorized its governor to close the public schools if needed. Alabama circumvented the court's decision for at least three years after McGill's lecture.

7Ibid., October 22, 1957, Associated Press, col. 8, p. 1.
Georgia opposed school integration, but by 1961 two grades in Atlanta High School had been desegregated. Until 1962, Florida law required total segregation of public schools.\(^{10}\)

On August 30, 1958, five months before his Kentucky speech, McGill informed his readers of the legal opposition being used by some southern states. This not only provides added insight into legal opposition, but demonstrates McGill's awareness of the forces gathering in opposition to public schools:

The Arkansas plan largely follows that of Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina. It allows the state government to withdraw all state funds and forbid the use of local... In general, these states plan to close the buildings and officially declare them no longer available for public schools. They then will proceed to lease the buildings to private operators.\(^{11}\)

In addition to legal opposition, many leaders used oral persuasion and silence to defy court law. For example, on June 6, 1954, Governor "Herman Talmadge of Georgia... called the U. S. Supreme Court's ban on segregation in public schools a 'judicial brainwashing' and said, 'We do not recognize it as a legal decision.'"\(^{12}\) Denial by the church often came in the form of silence. Meeting in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on October 17, 1956, the "United Lutherans, in a stormy session... defeated a proposed statement [340 to 159] specifically


\(^{11}\)Atlanta Constitution, August 30, 1958, col. 1, p. 1.

endorsing the Supreme Court decision against segregation in the schools."^{13} The *New York Times* of May 17, 1955, summarized reaction heard from the South:

There are thirteen Southern and border states that constitute the traditional "Southland." The "official" attitude of this grouping since last May 17 breaks down as follows: South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana have declared that they will maintain segregated schools regardless of the Supreme Court's directives. Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma have adopted a "wait-and-see" policy. Each state has its own distinct "climate" of opinion on the extent to which school integration is possible in certain areas. The principal characteristic of the "wait-and-see" states is that in the main they have counties with widely varying population ratios of Negroes and whites.^{14}

Court decisions were also met with open violence. On February 6, 1956, Atherine Lucy was "barred from classes' at the University of Alabama "as a safety measure."^{15} In September of that year, "bayonet-armed National Guardsmen wearing gas masks moved into position in front of the Anderson County courthouse" at Clinton, Tennessee, "to break up a new mob which had gathered boisterously . . . on the scene of previous anti-integration demonstrations."^{16} On September 7, 1956, the Associated Press reported that "mob pressure . . . blocked efforts of three Negroes to register at the Texarkana, Texas Junior College."^{17}

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^{13}Ibid., October 18, 1956, Associated Press, col. 5, p. 1.


^{17}Ibid., September 8, 1956, Associated Press, cols. 2-3, p. 1.
On September 24, 1957, violence in Little Rock, Arkansas, finally caused President Dwight D. Eisenhower to send 1,000 soldiers "equipped with live ammunition" "to back a federal court integration order with force." Violence returned to Clinton, Tennessee on October 5, 1958 when "three explosions rocked integrated Clinton High School . . . and the FBI immediately launched an investigation into the bombings." By February 5, 1959, just five days prior to McGill's address, social disorder had become so great that President Eisenhower, . . . asked a divided Congress . . . to make it a federal crime to use force or mob violence to block racial integration of schools under court orders . . . [and for] more authority for the FBI in dealing with schools and church bombings, and to authorize federal funds and advice to help states make the change to desegregated schools.

Events in Kentucky. Now that conditions in the South have been described, attention will be focused on Kentucky's response to school integration. That state showed less resistance, yet experienced considerable violence. Probably because of moderate leadership and a relatively mild racial problem, Kentucky expressed some willingness to obey federal law.

Several politicians and educators stated publicly their plans to abide by court decisions. When fifteen southern states met at Richmond in 1954 to discuss school integration, "spokesmen for the three

\[18\text{Ibid., September 25, 1957, Associated Press, col. 8, p. 1.}\]
\[19\text{Ibid., October 6, 1958, United Press International, col. 8, p. 1.}\]
\[20\text{Ibid., February 6, 1959, Associated Press, col. 8, p. 1.}\]
border states of Kentucky, Maryland and West Virginia indicated that they" would "voluntarily comply with the court's decision." In 1955, Governor Lawrence Wetherby stated that "he had nothing to add to last year's statement that Kentucky would comply with whatever ruling the court finally made." Two years later, in 1957, the Associated Press described the moderate position of Governor Wetherby's successor:

Gov. A. B. Chandler, quoting from the Bible to support his stand, today urged the South to accept racial integration. Speaking before the Kentucky Motor Transport Association, Governor Chandler said neither law, morality nor common equity supported the segregational viewpoint. . . . Governor Chandler said it was his fervent wish that he could make a significant contribution to racial amity during his term.

Some educators also told of their willingness to follow court rulings. Wendell P. Butler, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and ex-officio chairman of the State Board of Education, stated in 1954 that "we will do whatever is necessary to comply with the law." These words were put into practice on September 9, 1956, when "complete integration" was "ordered by the Board of Education" of all schools in Louisville "from kindergarten through high school."

21 Ibid., June 11, 1954, col. 1, p. 1. (no wire)
Kentucky, then, had made considerable progress in complying with court orders. By 1956, three years before McGill's address, the University of Kentucky, scene of McGill's address, had been racially integrated for seven years:

The University of Louisville had already opened its doors voluntarily. It was the first southern university to accept them as undergraduates. . . . The University of Kentucky admitted its first Negro in the summer of 1949 to a graduate school, in compliance with a court order that was not appealed. It now has eighty-three Negroes in graduate and undergraduate schools.26

Also, Barnett and Garai found that by 1959, the year of McGill's address, one hundred and twenty-three out of a total of one hundred and seventy-two school districts with children of both races had been desegregated.27

Kentucky's progress, however, was not due solely to good leadership. That state probably did not have the acute racial problem experienced farther South. In 1956, the New York Times suggested two reasons why Kentucky was willing to comply with federal law, neither relating to leadership:

Rigid segregation has never been enforced in Kentucky. That fact plus the fact that the Negroes constitute a small minority--only 6.9 per cent of the total population--made the Supreme Court's order to desegregate less galling to the state than it was farther south. The Negro population ratio had been 13.3 in 1900.28


27Richard Barnett and Joseph Garai, Where the States Stand on Civil Rights, p. 64.

With all its progress, Kentucky still had its share of racial conflict and defiance of law. Many citizens strongly opposed integration of public schools, the basic issue McGill confronted in his Blazer Lecture. On September 7, 1956, at Sturgis, Kentucky, "mob pressure kept nine Negroes away from school . . . despite a two-day vigil of militiamen and police 'to preserve peace and order.' . . . The militia" had "escorted the Negroes to school with drawn bayonets . . . ."29 That same day, in Clay, eleven miles from Sturgis,

. . . a rowdy, angry mob . . . ran newspapermen out of town . . . in the midst of a school segregation dispute seething from Maryland to Texas. At least five reporters and cameramen were forced out of Clay when they sought to reach a racial demonstration at an elementary school where two Negro children tried to enroll . . . .30

On September 25, 1956, there were further demonstrations at Henderson, when "some 570 children . . . walked out of Weaverton Elementary School . . . in a protest led by their parents and a white citizens' group against enrollment of five Negroes."31 Finally, in 1957, demonstrations also erupted in eastern Kentucky:

High school students along the southern border of West Virginia and in neighboring Kentucky staged demonstrations today against racial integration. School officials said the outbreaks, confined to parades and catcalls, were a direct result of integration troubles at Little Rock, Arkansas. Demonstrations took place at Welch, West Virginia, and Belfry, Kentucky, but no violence was reported.32


30 Ibid.


In summary, between the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling in 1954 and McGill's speech in 1959, opposition in the South to racially integrated public schools took many forms. While some leaders in Kentucky, unlike those in states farther south, were willing "to obey federal law," many citizens overtly opposed integration of public schools. Since the Supreme Court had "told resisting Southerners . . . that 'evasive schemes for segregation'" could not "nullify orders of the court," there were only two choices remaining. Southern states could either racially integrate or close their public schools. This was the exact point at issue with which McGill grappled at the University of Kentucky. He contended that Southern states should not close their public schools.

Immediate Speech Situation

To appreciate the situation in which McGill spoke, one should consider the purpose of the Blazer series and the events which took place at the time of his address. Knowledge of the environment in which McGill spoke probably will enable one to judge his ability to adjust to a particular speaking situation.

The Blazer series. McGill delivered the second of several addresses which were given in the Blazer series at the University of

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33 Where the States Stand on Civil Rights, p. 63.

Kentucky in 1958-59. The first lecture was presented by Arthur J. May, professor of history at the University of Rochester in October, 1958. Professor May discussed "'Soviet Russia Revisited,' comparing his impressions of Russia before World War II and in 1955."35 On February 10, 1959, three months later, McGill stated what it meant "To Be Young and a Southerner." In May of 1959, Howard Mumford Jones, professor of English at Harvard University, gave the third lecture.

Because of the nature of the Blazer lectures in 1958-59, the other speeches probably had no particular effect on McGill's performance. The Blazer Lecture was begun in 1948, "by Mr. and Mrs. Paul G. Blazer of Ashland, who established a fund to provide outstanding lectures in history and the social studies at the University" of Kentucky.36 Since the addresses were three months apart and at least the first two were about completely different topics, there was no apparent connection between the issues discussed. Consequently, McGill probably was not expected to adjust to any particular subject area other than "history and the social studies."

Order of business. McGill's lecture was to begin at 8 p.m., on the campus of the University of Kentucky. After meeting with "a small group for dinner at" a hotel, McGill went to the campus. Robert G. Lunde, professor of history at the university, introduced McGill.

35Lexington Herald, October 21, 1958, provided by Mary Hester Cooper, University Archivist, University of Kentucky.

36Lexington Herald-Leader, February 8, 1959, sent by Mary Hester Cooper.
Following his formal address, McGill answered questions for about thirty minutes. After that, McGill joined in "a social hour with some fifteen to twenty U. of K. faculty and their wives" at the home of Professor Lunde.37

Physical setting. The physical arrangements probably were conducive to good oral communication between McGill and his auditors. McGill spoke in the auditorium of Taylor Education Building. He apparently stood on a stage, benefiting from the microphone usually used by speakers in that particular hall. Because the floor was sloped, McGill probably was easily seen.38 Since the auditorium held only three hundred and fifty persons, McGill may have been able to speak conversationally; however, the nature of the occasion probably required some formality.39

The setting plus the size of the audience may have influenced the atmosphere in which McGill talked. Because the auditorium was not full, there could well have been a lack of cohesiveness within the immediate audience; the auditors may have been too spread out.40

The Audience

If McGill hoped to effectively support his plea for open public

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37 Information sent to this writer by Robert G. Lunde, May 3, 1966.
38 Phone call to a Mrs. Sullivan whose office is in the Taylor Education Building, University of Kentucky, August 22, 1966.
40 Phone call to Mrs. Sullivan, University of Kentucky.
schools, he would have had to adapt his ideas to the beliefs, attitudes, and goals of his hearers. Consequently, one should analyze McGill's audience to discover the nature of the listeners to whom he spoke.

Because of the nature of the audience, McGill had to assume there would be persons with different interests. Among the two hundred and fifty persons present the ages ranged from about eighteen to more than sixty; consequently, McGill had to adjust to a wide variety of interests. Also, McGill would have to consider the fact that he would probably address both men and women. The title of McGill's lecture, "To Be Young and a Southerner," shows that he probably designed his message for students.

Most members of the audience probably came from Kentucky, bringing with them different attitudes toward race relations and the issue of public integrated schools. Since there probably were persons present who strongly opposed open integrated schools and others who supported that position, McGill had to make a choice between offending certain auditors or speaking circuitously so as not to disturb.

Since his audience consisted of college students and faculty, they probably were willing to consider new ideas. Also, students and faculty are usually more informed than average persons. McGill, then, would have to be certain of his information and reasoning.

It is interesting to speculate what the audience's attitude was toward McGill and his subject. His title probably had some appeal to University of Kentucky students and made it obvious that he planned
to discuss the South, a topic of interest to most Kentuckians.

In summary, McGill spoke to an enlightened audience composed of two hundred and fifty men and women, probably representing numerous interests and attitudes concerning public integrated schools. While many of the listeners probably respected McGill as a courageous worker for human rights, some probably disliked him and his ideas immensely. Consequently, McGill faced a difficult task in trying to influence all of the members of his audience.

**McGill's Basic Premises**

McGill's daily newspaper columns, books, articles, and speeches reveal six basic premises which underlie his position on public education and other issues:

1. All men should be granted the rights and privileges of full citizenship.
2. Free individuals have a moral responsibility to oppose wrong.
3. Education is requisite to individual and community progress.
4. Southern states should ensure the rights and privileges of their citizens.
5. Laws should be obeyed.
6. Individuals and governments should pursue policies that are feasible.

This section will seek to show the influence of these basic beliefs on McGill's policies concerning education.

When McGill spoke at the University of Kentucky, he advocated keeping the public schools open, a condition which could only continue if the schools were racially integrated. This stand was considerably different from his separate but equal policy of the 1940's. McGill's basic premises, however, remained unchanged, though his solution underwent significant alteration.
Three basic premises underlay McGill's goals, and three additional premises determined his methods of attaining those goals. McGill's goal from the late 1930's to the late 1950's was the same, to make available equal educational opportunity for all. The analysis below shows how McGill's premises affected this goal and, second, how his premises affected his methods of achieving that goal.

The first premise underlying McGill's plea for equal education was that all men should be granted the rights and privileges of full citizenship. This conviction is revealed in statements made by McGill in 1947, 1961, and 1964:

[1947] The Negro ought to be employed on the basis of his skills and ability. We keep our economy poor by depressing him. . . . We will do things for the Negro, and the minorities generally, if we proceed with the chief offensive directed at the basic injustices in housing, health, educational opportunities, police and courts.41

[1961] There are lessons ahead, unpalatable to some, for which we will do well to prepare psychologically and practically. . . . We must begin with a basic fact. It is that every citizen has equal rights in all public fields of life--at the ballot box, in public schools, transportation, et cetera.42

[1964] The remedy is no longer as difficult. It is to grant to the Negro the rights and privileges of full citizenship. It is to look at the Negro and see another human being.43

The second premise influencing McGill's campaign for equal education was that free individuals have a moral responsibility to oppose

41Atlanta Constitution, June 22, 1947, col. 3, p. 12C.
wrong, i.e., unequal education. The following quotations emphasize
McGill's call for moral opposition to social evils:

[1946] If, in our respective communities and States, we are
not willing to do the unpleasant jobs, to stand out against
what is wrong even though it leads to misunderstanding and
criticism, we won't have very happy communities or States.  

[1947] Whatever is done must, eventually, meet the test of
being right or wrong... We must first be honest with
ourselves... We cannot, whatever it be or in whatever
field, clothe wrong in the garments of law or emotion and
say, "It is mine. You will please let it alone." Moral
right is slow and patient... But, you cannot escape it.  

[1962] The Christian church cannot forever proceed with
platitudes and irrelevancies, with fiddle-faddle, with
operating huge, rich country club churches which are almost
totally unrelated to the lives of the people, echoing with
cliches and prescriptions for peace of mind.  

[1964] If a free society is to reach an established goal,
across the board, it must do so to a great extent through
individual decisions. This freedom implies a moral respon-
sibility. This responsibility is that of free business, a
free press, free labor, free civic groups, a free bar, and
free men... We cannot equate the moral value of the just
deed of a free man with the same deed of a state automation.
If a group in a totalitarian society acts responsibly--there
being no moral choice--there can be no moral credit.  

Though concern for moral responsibility largely affected
McGill's goals, it should be noted that in more recent years this
premise has increasingly influenced his method of achieving equal
educational opportunity for the Negro. Now that racial barriers and

44Atlanta Constitution, August 5, 1946, col. 3, p. 6.
47South and the Southerner, p. 231.
southern traditions have been broken, there is less need for McGill to be discreet. Where in the past McGill's policies were determined largely by feasibility and obedience to law, lately he has stressed moral responsibility.

The third premise behind McGill's ultimate aim of equal education was that education is requisite to individual and community progress. This basic belief probably grew out of a study made by McGill in 1938, a first-hand comparison of education in Georgia and Scandinavia. When McGill's findings were published in 1938 by the Georgia State Department of Education, he wrote:

An educated man with at least some idea of how to rationalize himself with the world about him is better prepared for making his lot a better one and for making his community an improved one.\footnote{Ralph McGill and Thomas C. David, \textit{Two Georgians Explore Scandinavia A Comparison of Education for Democracy in Northern Europe and Georgia} (Atlanta: State Department of Education, 1938), p. 12.}\footnote{\textit{Atlanta Constitution}, May 30, 1948, col. 3, p. 12B.}

This faith in education led McGill to support equal schools as a primary means of helping the Negro:

If better education can be given Negro children and decent school buildings and adequate wages paid their teachers, if jobs are available for trained Negroes, that is more important for the long pull than any phryric victory which allows Walter White, or Philip Randolph, of the NAACP, to swing on their trapeze and preen themselves for what big boys they are. \footnote{\textit{Atlanta Constitution}, May 30, 1948, col. 3, p. 12B.}\

Ten years later, in 1958, McGill continued to preach this theme, this time in support of the entire public school system, the issue debated in Kentucky:
But out of the chaos of no schools and the attempt to establish a private system will emerge a public school system. . . . The new system may even be a federally supported one born of necessity. There will, in time, be public schools for the reason that the nation cannot afford to be without them. . . . It is a period when more educated people, not fewer, are needed.  

From the late 1930's until 1959, then, McGill's support for equal education remained strong. His approach to achieving that purpose, however, shifted from separate but equal to racially integrated public schools. Why did this change come about? First, it should be stated that McGill has never had a "policy of integration." His goal has been to obtain equal rights for the Negro, not mix the races. However, in the late 1960's, as McGill became less discreet, his strong emphasis upon moral responsibility could easily have been, and maybe rightly so, interpreted as support for racial integration. On February 3, 1959, however, when McGill delivered almost the identical speech at Augusta, Georgia, he would use one week later in Kentucky, McGill stated, "I do not, and have not, advanced a policy of integration. Nor do I have such a policy. My only policy has been one of proceeding by lawful processes."  

It is interesting to note that when McGill gave this same basic speech before his University of Kentucky audience, he deleted that remark from his manuscript.


51 Manuscript given this writer by Ralph McGill. That McGill actually said this was confirmed in: Augusta Chronicle, February 4, 1959, cols. 3-8, p. 5.
If McGill did not have a policy of racial integration when he spoke at Kentucky, why did he support open public schools, which meant racially integrated facilities? Three premises led McGill to support separate but equal schools until the early 1950's and racially integrated schools after the Supreme Court decision of 1954. First, he believed southern states should ensure the rights and privileges of their citizens. Until the 1960's McGill apparently opposed all federal legislation relating to citizens' rights. Unlike many southerners, however, this was not a delaying tactic nor a palliative solution to social problems. McGill actually wanted to provide equal funds, facilities, and opportunity for the Negro. The following quotations demonstrate McGill's strong belief that southerners should fulfill their own responsibilities:

[1946] Those Southerners who resent what generally is termed "outside interference" . . . might just as well prepare to make the most of it . . . . We have said to let us alone and we would do the job. We have not done that job. Shall we have the moral courage to do it or not? A lot of Americans want to know.52

[1948] I want the South to do what is right. I do not want the Federal Government to compel it . . . . I want Georgia and Mississippi and South Carolina and all the others . . . . to do what is just and right because they want to do it, and not because they are made to do so.53

[1948] I am on the side of human rights and believe it the obligation of the South to so be and to positively assert itself. I do not believe it can be legislated.54

52 Atlanta Constitution, August 3, 1946, col. 3, p. 4.
53 Ibid., March 1, 1948, col. 6, p. 3.
54 Ibid., September 2, 1948, col. 3, p. 12.
[1955] In a limited sense the court [in requiring integration of schools within a "reasonable" time] has ordered a program of gradualism. . . . What this will do is exactly what should have been done . . . restore decision as nearly as possible to the local level.55

[1961] We do not need new legislation. This is something we must find the will to do by ourselves . . . . Not until we do this, will the South be able fully to make its great strength and good will felt in the national forces of morality, politics and industry.56

The second premise underlying McGill's support of equal education for all was his belief that laws should be obeyed. This conviction greatly influenced both McGill's support of separate but equal schools and, later, racially integrated schools. Because of McGill's respect for law, his public statements concerning education evolved through three stages.

The first stage, advocacy of separate but equal schools, lasted until the early 1950's. Though on several occasions, during heated gubernatorial campaigns, McGill wrote that he considered segregation of the races to be the "only workable system," his usual emphasis was upon equal funds, facilities, and opportunity. Until as late as 1950, McGill crusaded for equal education, largely because it was the law of the land:

[1946] Believing now, as always, in separation of the races as the best and only workable system, it is possible to make a few comments. Thousands of good . . . men and women in Georgia . . . believe just as firmly as Mr. [Eugene] Talmadge in separation of races. But they part with him there. They

55 Ibid., June 1, 1955, col. 1, p. 1.

do not go on with hate and violence. They believe there may be separation of races and still equal justice before the law; equal opportunity to use one's skills and still not have to mix with other workers; equal opportunity for education, without mixing in schools.  

[1948] I always have insisted that we, as a region and a people, have been dishonest in our segregation policy... We wrote our laws to say that while the races were to be separated we would provide "separate but equal" educational, travel, recreational and other facilities. This we have not done and no person can insist we have made a fair effort to do so.  

[1950] We want some leadership in law and in creating in the common school division a program of equalization. If we do not the Supreme Court will be forced to invade the field...  

The first stage, then, of McGill's changing policy concerning education, was support of separate but equal schools. The second stage, also based on the premise that laws should be obeyed, was the transitory period between separate but equal and racially integrated schools. From the late 1940's to the early 1950's, McGill tried to prepare the South for a Supreme Court decision he knew would come. On April 9, 1953, for example, McGill wrote a prophetic column entitled, "One Day It Will Be Monday":

... one of these Mondays the Supreme Court... is going to hand down a ruling which may... outlaw the South's dual system, wholly or in part... I believe it a fact that the average citizen doesn't yet have any idea that such a decision is possible... So, somebody... ought to be talking about it calmly, and informatively... The vital point is--there is no reason for violence, whatever the decision.

57 Ibid., June 12, 1946, col. 3, p. 6.
60 Ibid., April 9, 1953, col. 1, p. 1.
The third stage of McGill's thinking concerning equal educational opportunity, also based on the premise that laws should be obeyed, came after the Supreme Court desegregation ruling of 1954. Just as McGill had supported the law which read separate but equal, he exerted his influence to ensure compliance to racially integrated public schools.

[1954] ... whatever the states do eventually must come within the constitutional directives. There is only one alternative and that is secession by armed force. Therefore, every state should be seeking to avoid violence in word or deed and to find a way to live within the Constitution.61

[1957] When the due processes of law are exhausted the decision must be accepted as law. ... Editors, governors, commentators, ministers—all those who speak out—will do well to remember the old text: "Be ill at ease when your words and deeds please the mob."62

[1957] The Constitution is the basic law. And the answers to change lie through the executive and legislative branches . . . not defiance or deceit in telling the people the Constitution is not valid.63

[1958, This column was largely responsible for McGill's Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing.] Dynamite in great quantity Sunday ripped a beautiful Temple of worship in Atlanta. ... This is a harvest ... of defiance of courts and encouragement of citizens to defy law on the part of many Southern politicians ... It is not possible to preach lawlessness and restrict it. ... For a long time now it has been needful for all Americans to stand up and be counted on the side of law and the due process of law—even when to do so goes against personal beliefs and emotions.64

64ibid., October 13, 1958, col. 1, p. 1.
Now that the new civil rights legislation is law, the South has a real opportunity for one of those great leaps forward. . . . The new bill is confined in major part to voting. . . . Southern congressional leaders . . . now have, as we all do, an opportunity for a greater victory by honestly encouraging implementation of the law.65

Besides his belief that southern states should assume responsibility for their own citizens and that laws should be obeyed, a third premise influenced McGill's attitude toward equal educational opportunity. It was that individuals and governments should pursue policies that are feasible. During his earlier support of separate but equal schools, McGill had stressed the impossibility of carrying the burden of a people unable to earn their own way. Consequently, he believed that the Negro should be given equal opportunity. In 1946, for example, McGill wrote:

To point out that the Negro has been standing at the end of the line in housing, justice, schooling and ability to work for what he is worth, is just plain common sense. The South can't go on much longer carrying on its back the economic burden of a people, who, generally, do not have an opportunity to pay their way and to be other than second-rate citizens.66

After about 1949, McGill began to emphasize the impossibility of actually providing separate and equal schools. In 1949, he wrote:

The Supreme Court of the United States the other day reported itself ready to rule on segregation. . . . If the court rules segregation legal . . . it will bring even more chaos to the South--a fact difficult for some to grasp. Have any of our counties figured what it would cost to provide equal school buildings, libraries, laboratories, hospitals, playgrounds, and

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66 Ibid., December 3, 1946, col. 3, p. 10.
so on when they are unable to pay for adequate ones for white people.\(^{67}\)

In 1954, as McGill recalled the events of the past twenty years, he explained to a Florida audience why a separate school system might have been possible years ago, but not in 1954:

When public education was a matter of one room schools, two such schools in each neighborhood were no great drain on the public purse. When a consolidated school building costs several hundred thousand dollars and its technical and vocational equipment is expensive too, here and there, ways will be found to reduce the rigidity of school segregation. The states which maintain segregation in education are face to face with the cost of providing entirely equal if separate facilities.\(^{68}\)

This third premise, then, of pursuing feasible policies, underlay McGill's contention that to practice unequal educational opportunity was financially unstable. This premise influenced other contentions made by McGill. From 1938 to the early 1950's, McGill thought, because of rigid customs and traditions, the only possible way to aid the Negro was to help him get equal (if separate) facilities. The following quotations clearly demonstrate McGill's belief in expedient solutions to explosive social issues:

[1948] I am fully aware of the philosophy of leadership, and of pulling for the long view [complete freedom for the Negro]. But, I happen to be alive as of now and the tools with which I must work are the tools of today... This, I know, satisfies[s]... no one--not even me. But, not being beholden or in politics, I can say it.\(^{69}\)

\(^{67}\)Ibid., March 20, 1949, col. 3, p. 14B.

\(^{68}\)"Open Forum Speech," Daytona Beach, January 3, 1954, manuscript given this writer by Ralph McGill.

\(^{69}\)Atlanta Constitution, March 1, 1948, col. 3, p. 6.
[1950] I was on the Chicago Round-Table program Sunday in a discussion of civil rights. I came off of it only slightly scarred, but still able to walk out of the room not badly scratched and not at all bowed. . . . I had remarked that . . . while all of us know what the objectives are and are unreservedly for them, we know we must crawl before we walk, and we should know that while it is noble to die on the barricades, it is better for all concerned to get what one can in the name of progress. 70

[1950] Among a number of critical letters I have received lately from Negroes is one from a university teacher. He thinks I am too conservative, that I am not liberal enough, that I am a gradualist and a defender of segregation, and so on. In other words, he thinks I am intellectually dishonest and intellectually venal, and I think him to be a fool of the all-or-nothing-right-now variety. . . . I do not suppose any honest person defends compulsory segregation as an institution. . . . It is not democratic or American in principle. But a great many of us, including me, say that it cannot and should not be abolished by fiat or decrees. 71

[1957] Politics . . . is the science of the possible, and moderates are seeking to make some sort of progress. They must learn to run on the fence—not merely sit on it. They also must cultivate the art of running with the hare and dropping back, now and then, to see how the hounds are making out. . . . But the moderate develops a sort of technique of survival. He knows just how far he can go in telling his people the truth. . . . There is schizophrenia in it and great frustration of spirit, but there also is Americanism and good politics as well. The chief reward is an inner satisfaction of being able to face one's self. 72

In summary, six premises underlay McGill's thinking concerning public education, the theme discussed at the University of Kentucky. Although his practical proposal shifted from separate but equal to

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70 Ibid., February 14, 1950, col. 3, p. 10.
72 Ibid., October 2, 1957, col. 1, p. 1.
racially integrated schools, his basic goal that there should be equal educational opportunity for all remained unchanged.

Motives of the Speaker

McGill probably had five reasons for accepting the invitation to give the Blazer Lecture at the University of Kentucky: (1) he probably thought he would enjoy discussing the issue of public schools, (2) he probably felt a sense of personal responsibility, (3) he wanted to see the South progress, (4) he probably had difficulty saying no when invited to speak, and (5) McGill particularly enjoys talking to school groups.

As shown earlier, McGill likes to become involved in public debate on controversial topics. He gets nervous, worries about speaking, and often wonders why he accepts invitations to speak, but he still likes the experience. McGill, then, probably spoke at Kentucky because he thought it would be a pleasant experience. It is not unusual for McGill to write that he "can't imagine a man who doesn't like to discuss controversial subjects, but who avoids them out of fear of being 'bothered.'"73

The second reason why McGill probably went to Lexington was because he felt it to be his duty to do so. As described under speech personality, sense of responsibility is one of the main reasons McGill speaks and writes on controversial topics. For example, McGill wrote

why he had spoken at a controversial interracial meeting:

I am . . . cursed with a certain sense of responsibility. . . . I accept invitations to appear at these things because it seems to me someone ought to do so. There is a sense of duty, perhaps entirely unjustified, which seems to demand it.74

A third possible reason was his belief that public schools were requisite to progress in the South. McGill's faith in education, plus his conviction that public education was the only feasible answer, probably led him to Lexington.

A fourth factor which probably influenced McGill's decision to deliver the Blazer Lecture was his usual reluctance to say no to persons asking for help. In 1958, for example, Celestine Sibley, writer for McGill's Atlanta Constitution, wrote:

Now the tactful Miss Lundy [McGill's secretary] protects him not from his public but from himself, from generously and injudiciously quartering and serving up his time as if it were an insignificant watermelon in a patch full of watermelons. As she knows, if the ladies of the P.T.A. get to him first he will not only agree to make that speech for them, but he may volunteer to run the cake raffle and the Shetland-pony concession at the school carnival as well.75

Finally, McGill probably was motivated by his preference for speaking at schools.76 He told this writer that he preferred to speak to students and church groups. Grace Lundy, McGill's secretary, typed a statement for this writer concerning McGill's speaking, which reported that "he hates to turn down school and college groups in particular, as he is highly interested in young people."77

75 Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 231 (December 27, 1958), 25.
76 Interview with Ralph McGill, December 29, 1965, Atlanta.
77 Typed statement given this writer by Grace Lundy, December 29, 1965.
Speech Preparation

How did McGill prepare his Blazer Lecture? He used the "half-cycle" method, and revised an old manuscript. Two factors enable this writer to conclude that McGill hurriedly wrote his Blazer Lecture, relying on a speech text used one week earlier in Augusta, Georgia. First, his secretary told this writer that she could only remember two speeches which had gone through the more efficient process of preparation and the Blazer Lecture was not one of those manuscripts. Secondly, internal evidence found in the Kentucky text leaves little doubt that McGill not only hurried, but also was careless in his preparation.

To conclude that the Kentucky speech was a revision of the earlier Georgia oration, one must first show that the Kentucky manuscript was prepared second. Evidence shows that McGill first wrote the Georgia address. The Georgia talk appropriately began with a discussion of former Georgian, Henry W. Grady. Throughout that speech, McGill continuously mentioned Grady. Not once, however, did he discuss Grady in his Kentucky address. When revising the Georgia speech, then, McGill had to take out all references to Grady. In his apparent rush, McGill over-looked one instance. This was later recognized because, after the speech had been mimeographed, someone marked through, "Grady's era," in the Kentucky address, substituting, "the bygone era."

One additional error will demonstrate the careless revision

78 Interview with Grace Lundy, December 30, 1965, Atlanta. (next day)
made. Notice how "process" was substituted for "progress" when the Georgia speech was revised for the lecture at Kentucky. It is obvious that "process" had no meaning in the context of this sentence:

Georgia, February 3, 1959

A study of the South's position today reveals a national story of change and shifts, economic, population, and also a pattern of growth and progress.

Kentucky, February 10, 1959

A study of the South's position today reveals a national story of change and shifts, economic, population, and also a pattern of growth and process.

Now that it has been shown that McGill did revise the Georgia text for his Kentucky audience, a few examples will be given to demonstrate how that revision badly damaged the organization and meaning of the Kentucky address.

On November 19, 1958, McGill's daily newspaper column contained the main argument used in his Georgia talk and his Kentucky oration. In all three instances, McGill's purpose was to convince his audience that public schools should not be closed. In the passages below, notice how effectively McGill's newspaper column introduced a long list of statistics by connecting those data with the main issue of closed public schools. When those same statistics were used in addresses in Georgia and Kentucky, however, McGill stumbled into the main point of education as if the audience would hear an informative speech on that subject alone. Since McGill discussed this point for about five typed

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79 Speech to Augusta Rotary Club, Augusta, Georgia, February 3, 1959; Blazer Lecture, University of Kentucky, February 10, 1959; both manuscripts given this writer by Ralph McGill.

pages, the absence of a transition probably left both speech audiences to decide for themselves what that discussion was all about. McGill failed to relate worthwhile statistics to his proposition that public schools should not be closed:

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<tr>
<th>Newspaper 11/19/58</th>
<th>Georgia Speech 2/3/59</th>
<th>Kentucky Speech 2/10/59</th>
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</table>
| Apparent determination of four or five Southern states to abolish their public schools in the segregation controversy is the more incredible if one reviews the South's long struggle to have education. As the 20th Century began in 1900, Southern education suffered from a greater lag than any other public institution in the region. 1901 showed Southern schools to be wholly inadequate. The report of the U.S. Commissioner on education for the year 1900-1901 showed Southern schools to be wholly inadequate. Some of you will do the job of recreating the domestic equilibrium of our region and our country. I hope we do not leave you too much to do. We must agree with Sophocles that the day can be evaluated only after dusk, that it is through death that one judges life. There is quite a job to do--In education, for example, we have come a long hard path. Public education is relatively new in the South. The report of the U.S. Commissioner of Education.

One additional example of materials found in all three sources further shows how his carelessness affected the organization and meaning of McGill's speech. In the newspaper article during his long discussion about education, McGill paused to remind his readers of the significance of education to economic and population trends. Had McGill done this in the two speeches, it would have been helpful, since, following the discussion of education, McGill went immediately into personal income,
employment, and population. Instead, McGill began his treatment of those three main points without mention of their connection to education or, more importantly, to the need for public schools. The audience would have had an extremely difficult time trying to follow McGill's line of reasoning:

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<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Georgia Speech</th>
<th>Kentucky Speech</th>
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<tr>
<td>11/19/58</td>
<td>2/3/59</td>
<td>2/10/59</td>
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Poverty lay heavily on the South. But nowhere was it as burdensome as on the farms.

Education was the paramount need. Without it neither industry nor agriculture could grow. Without it, the best of the young people would continue to go north.

By 1913 a certain momentum was attained.

The remaining materials in McGill's Kentucky oration were either newly written or taken directly from the Georgia speech. In revising the Georgia text, McGill deleted materials which were vital to an understanding of his chain of thought. In both addresses, McGill spent considerable time discussing personal income, employment, and population. The following comparison will demonstrate how McGill tried to keep his theme of public education before his Georgia audience; yet, because of deletions, failed to do so at Kentucky:

Georgia, February 3, 1959

A study of the South's position today reveals a national story of change and shifts, economic, population, and also a pattern of growth and progress.

Kentucky, February 10, 1959

A study of the South's position today reveals a national story of change and shifts, economic, population, and also a pattern of growth and process.
All of what has happened, and will happen to education in the South, serves to emphasize the need to look into our public schools, wherever we may be living . . . .
The South has grown, changed and progressed.

The South has grown, changed and progressed.

In summary, McGill prepared his Kentucky lecture by revising a speech manuscript used one week earlier in Augusta, Georgia. The main point concerning education, used in both of those orations, probably was first written in McGill's newspaper column on November 19, 1958. About two of the sixteen and one-fifth typed pages in McGill's Kentucky manuscript were first published word-for-word in his newspaper column, six pages were identical to the Augusta speech, and seven and one-fifth pages were probably written especially for the Blazer Lecture. Because of careless preparation, one is only able to understand exactly what McGill was trying to say in Kentucky in light of what he had written earlier in his column, and on the basis of what he had said at Augusta. As a result, McGill's Kentucky lecture turned out to be several loosely related informative speeches, with a persuasive appeal attached at the end. Instead of getting better with each revision, because of failure to take more time in preparing his speech, McGill's work got progressively worse, ending in a manuscript which was poorly organized and difficult to understand.

Organization

To be effective, a speech must be easily understood. To be understood, a lecture probably must be well organized. The purpose
here is to determine whether McGill organized his oration in such a
manner as to aid his thesis that public schools should not be closed.
To judge whether McGill was well organized, the writer will discuss
the outline of his lecture, his treatment of a central theme, his
method of arrangement, rhetorical order, devices which were used to
make the oration clear, and how he adapted his organization to the
Kentucky audience.

Outline of the Blazer Lecture

The oration delivered by McGill at the University of Kentucky
may be outlined as follows:

Subject: "To Be Young and a Southerner"

Central thought: Southern states should not close their public
schools.

INTRODUCTION

I. Young Southerners should accept the challenges of the twentieth
century.

DISCUSSION

I. Much has to be done in the field of education.
   A. History reveals the struggle of education in the South.
   B. What is the status of education in 1959?

II. In spite of increase, the South remains below the national
    average in personal income. [Not related by McGill to public
    education.]

III. Because of progress in Texas and Florida, the South has
    enjoyed considerable increase in employment. [Not related by
    McGill to education.]

IV. The nation has experienced many population shifts. [Not
    related by McGill to education.]
   A. Cities are growing as people move from "fields to fac-
      tories."
   B. The nation has experienced population growth.
   C. Some southern states have gained, others lost population.
D. Population shifts will affect the membership of the U. S. House of Representatives.

V. The South should not close its public schools.
   A. Southern states which continue to support public schools "can plan and progress."
   B. Southern states which close their public schools "will pay a price" in education, business, and "things of the spirit."

CONCLUSION

I. Borrowing words from Boris Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago, McGill stated that closing public schools in the South would cause that region to lose its "example of unarmed truth."

Thonnsen and Baird wrote that disposition embraces "the emergence of a central theme, the general method of arrangement adopted for the speech, and the order in which the parts of the discourse are developed."

Central Theme

When McGill discussed personal income, employment, and population, he did not demonstrate to his audience the significance of those three major points to his proposition that southern states should not close their public schools. At times, McGill also lost sight of his goal. For example, when discussing population trends, McGill went to great lengths to show how those changes would affect the membership of the U. S. House of Representatives. He did this at the expense of his central theme.

Method of Arrangement

McGill used historical data to develop his address inductively, following a problem-solution method of organization. He apparently
tried to answer three questions:

1. What is the "job" that must be done?
2. What led to present conditions in the South?
3. What is the solution we must follow?

Instead of limiting and defining one particular problem, McGill chose to begin with a general discussion of conditions in the world, nation, and South. Failure to limit the subject made it difficult later for McGill to demonstrate a causal relationship between public education and progress in the South.

The second step involved an analysis of education, personal income, employment, and population. McGill told his audience why these topics would be discussed: "It is important... to know what the picture is. Otherwise, we will not know what the job is."

The first point under analysis, education, was probably effectively organized. After tracing the long struggle of public education in the South, McGill compared that region's contemporary status with schools in other sections. After tracing the development of education in the South, McGill made a rare attempt to relate his argument to his proposition:

What of education in 1959? The compulsive determination of politicians and many of the people to destroy public education in four or five states is almost incredible even when one lives with it. To speak the phrase, "close the schools", [sic] means a previous process of closing the mind has been completed.

McGill continued his analysis with a consideration of personal income, employment, and population. He made no attempt to point out the connection of those main points with his problem-solution
development, nor his central theme. Not only were these topics not related by McGill to his purpose, they tended to obscure the proposition and serve as an obstacle to comprehension.

When considered in isolation, McGill did a good job with his solution stage. He built a rather convincing, if brief, case for public schools. When considered in light of a total organizational scheme, however, the solution suffered greatly because McGill failed to relate three of his four main points to a specific problem. Also, those points were not causally connected with his proposition that southern states should not close their schools. Since McGill's rather effective treatment of his first main point, education, came before the other detailed discussions, the audience probably had a difficult time discovering the tenor of McGill's address.

In summary, McGill did not define and limit a specific problem, nor did he limit his overall subject. With the exception of one well developed point, McGill's analysis generally was not relevant to his central theme. After McGill finally found his way through the main body of his lecture, he made it clear that the South probably could not afford to close its public schools. Because, however, of his failure to connect his analysis of personal income, employment, and population to public schools, his organization probably seriously limited the effectiveness of his statistics and the success of his lecture.
Rhetorical Order

McGill divided his Blazer Lecture into three sections, introduction, discussion, and conclusion. His introduction began with a quotation from Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, leading to his contention that the audience also lived in both "the best of times" and "the worst of times." Quoting a respected writer probably was a wise way to establish common ground with a university audience. The quotation from Dickens also made it easy for McGill to move from many challenges in society to one problem in particular, public education. McGill, however, failed to take advantage of this when he chose not to limit his problem, but to discuss several economic and social trends.

The body of McGill's oration consisted of a statistical analysis of four main points, education, personal income, employment, and population. While these points emerged clearly and were well supported, revealing a South badly in need of improvement, the latter three topics were not associated with public education and open schools. McGill may have assumed that his education-centered audience would supply the connector between education and social and economic progress, but he probably left them too much to do.

McGill's concluding quotation was carefully chosen, and well adapted to public education. Quoting from Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago*, McGill described public education as the "inward music" which permits an "example of unarmed truth." Not only would students and faculty probably have been in complete agreement with that assertion, but quoting from a reputable source would be appreciated by such an
audience. Also, the quotation served as a reminder of McGill's proposition that public schools should not be closed, leaving the audience with the thought that public education should be actively supported.

**Special Devices**

Although McGill used several organizational techniques, failure to give more attention to those devices seriously impaired the coherence and possibly the effect of McGill's address. Several guideposts warned the audience of points McGill would discuss next. For example, when he began a discussion of education, McGill stated, "There is quite a job to do--In education, for example . . ." Then, when turning to the present status of education, McGill using a rhetorical question asked, "What of education in 1959?" The audience would have had no difficulty understanding McGill's direction after he had remarked:

A study of the South's position today reveals a national story of change and shifts, economic, population, and also a pattern of growth and process. The South has grown, changed and progressed. But so have the other regions. It is important, therefore, to know what the picture is. Otherwise, we will not know what the job is.

While McGill often pointed out the next immediate point, he usually did not relate those points to his central theme. Absence of additional transitions and internal summaries probably lessened the effect of McGill's numerous statistics. The audience was shown no connection between those data and the need for public schools. For example, during the long discussion of personal income, employment, and population, no device was used to relate those topics to the South's
school systems. As noted above, however, McGill did relate his discussion of education to his thesis.

**Organization For a Particular Audience**

McGill attempted to convince faculty, students, and townspeople that public schools should not be closed. If McGill assumed that some members of his audience would find that proposal repugnant, he may have been wise in delaying the specific statement of purpose until near the end of his address. Even so, he should have given more attention to his overall plan of organization. If one assumes that McGill hoped to build such a strong case for public schools during the body of his speech that his audience would decide for itself that public schools should remain open, McGill still probably did poorly; he did not, as Gray and Braden suggest, "make the development so pointed that the audience frames the proposition without being told specifically what it is."

**Lines of Argument**

McGill combined deductive and inductive reasoning to support his proposition that southern states should not close their public schools. Though his specific method of development was inductive, the underlying syllogism may be stated as follows:

- **Major premise:** States which need to progress should not close their public schools.
- **Minor premise:** Southern states need to progress.
- **Conclusion:** Southern states should not close their public schools.

McGill probably assumed that his educated audience would accept his
major premise, that education was requisite to progress. Consequently, a major portion of his argument supported his minor premise, that southern states need to progress. McGill developed his case in the following manner:

Proposition: Resolved, That Southern states should not close their public schools, for

I. Southern states are just beginning to develop adequate schools, because
   A. In 1900-1901, southern schools received inadequate financial support.
   B. Recent financial support has increased, but is not comparable to other regions in the United States.

II. Southern states remain below the national average in personal income.

III. Because of Texas and Florida, the South has enjoyed considerable growth in employment.

IV. The nation has experienced many population changes, because
   A. Persons are moving from "fields to factories."
   B. The nation has experienced population growth.
   C. Some southern states have lost population.

In addition to the categorical syllogism which lay behind McGill's overall argument, he made a second use of deductive reasoning.

Near the end of McGill's lecture, he argued:

Major premise: If a Southern state continues to support its public schools, that state will progress.
Minor premise: Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia have continued to support their public schools.
Conclusion: Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia will progress.

Again, probably assuming his audience would accept his major premise,
McGill focused upon his minor premise and conclusion.

McGill developed many of his arguments inductively. His plan was to analyze education, personal income, employment, and population in order to demonstrate that in spite of the South's progress that region continued to lag behind other sections of the United States. In other words, statistics were used inductively to support his minor premise, that southern states needed to progress.

McGill probably was successful in proving the South's need in education, personal income, employment, and population; however, he did not demonstrate that public school systems would solve the South's lag in personal income, employment, and population. While support of each of the three major points was convincing, McGill did not relate his materials to the assertion which came in the final seconds of his address:

Those states which live in frustration, fear and uncertainty, will pay a price which may not be calculated if they do indeed destroy, even for a time, public education. That it will be severe in terms of education, business, and things of the spirit, is undoubted.

While it is recognized that McGill's audience probably would accept the importance of education to the South's economy, the point is that McGill talked at length about personal income, employment, and population without mentioning education. Consequently, his inductive approach was seriously damaged because of a lack of coordination.

**Forms of Support**

Developing his speech inductively, McGill supported his generalizations with statistics. He probably was successful in proving
individual points, but less effective in using those data to prove the importance of public education.

McGill effectively supported his contention that southern education did not compare favorably with that of other regions. Using reliable sources, McGill quoted from the U. S. Commissioner of Education, a report from the University of Tennessee, and the most recent figures from the U. S. Census Bureau. He stated that the amount spent on education in the South was "about a third of the national average."

While McGill probably provided more than enough statistics to prove that southern education was generally substandard, he made other assertions relating to this point which were not substantiated. For example, he stated that "Southern schools" were "wholly inadequate, poorly attended and poorly taught," but provided no evidence to support those assertions.

Also, McGill was careless with some of his statistics. McGill, as he pointed out in the Kentucky address, uses abbreviated accounts of governmental statistics, which he obtains from the wire services. Consequently, he does not study the entire report. For example, in describing the status of southern education during the early 1900's, McGill stated:

In 1900-1901, for example, Alabama's legislature gave the University a mere $10,000. Until 1904 Louisiana had a limit of $15,000 on annual appropriations for Louisiana State University.

Upon checking the original source, the Report of the Commissioner of Education, this writer found $10,000 to be correct for the University of Alabama; however, McGill's figure of $15,000 for Louisiana State
University was inaccurate. McGill apparently based his argument on fragmentary statistics relating only to current expense appropriations during the year 1903. His statement that, "until 1904 Louisiana had a limit of $15,000 on annual appropriations for Louisiana State University," was, at best, misleading. The Report of the Commissioner of Education gave the following data concerning financial support for Louisiana State University:\textsuperscript{81}

\begin{align*}
1900-1901 &= 48,000.00 \\
1902 &= 21,000.00 \\
1903 &= 15,000.00 \text{ for "current expenses"} \\
& \quad +83,682.00 \text{ for "buildings and other special purposes"}
\end{align*}

After completing his statistical analysis of southern education, McGill continued with personal income, employment, and population trends. McGill proved that the South remained below national averages in these areas, yet made no attempt to connect this with public education.

In summary, McGill generally used sound statistics, drawn from reliable sources. Because of McGill's short-cut method of gathering data (use of wire services), however, some of his data were inaccurate. Also, failure to coordinate his supporting material, probably limited its effect in convincing his audience that public education was the best means of ensuring progress in such areas as personal income, employment, and population.

Motive Appeals

It is generally agreed that man is affected by his concern for physical and social needs. Gray and Braden, in Public Speaking Principles and Practice, described the nature of motive appeals:

It has long been recognized that within each organism are strong internal forces which direct it toward certain goals . . . When properly stimulated, these forces may set off a chain reaction of behavior which does not entirely subside until the goal toward which the activity is directed is reached.82

McGill used five motive appeals in his Blazer Lecture, a mastery motive, and appeals to a sense of fair play, personal pride, patriotism, and desire for ownership. In their book, Persuasion: A Means of Social Control, Brembeck and Howell defined mastery motives as those which cause an individual "to excel, to rival, to compete, to dominate, to lead, to gain prestige, to seek authority, and so on."83

McGill repeatedly challenged "young Southerners" in his audience to lead. This may have been effective, since McGill aimed this motive at being of service to other people. Also, McGill vividly described the need for active leadership:

. . . we must participate as the nation remakes itself . . . to be a part of the future. . . . Tremendous opportunities knock at our door. We are a part of history and it is all


the more good to be alive and a part of it. . . . And perhaps the luckiest person of all . . . is the young Southerner. His leadership is on trial. He can see it plainly and he can follow or reject. Some of you will do the job of recreating the domestic equilibrium of our region and our country.

A second motive appeal was McGill's treatment of right and wrong or his appeal for fair play. He actually left his audience little choice. They could either support the "right" way, i.e., McGill's proposition, or, they could attempt to close public schools. McGill may have won some support for his position because of his ability to identify his own belief with the honorable position. While this probably caused McGill's audience to believe him more readily, it also was an appeal to their sense of rightness:

. . . young Southerners in college . . . are watching their representatives in the spotlight of the great drama of human rights and public education. . . . Somebody is wrong. That at least is obvious. The Deep South direction is exactly contrary to that of the rest of the country. The debate is joined. . . . The young Southerner . . . keeps trying to rationalize the Sermon on the Mount and the last press conference at his state capitol.

Appeal to personal pride was a third motive appeal. McGill praised his Kentucky audience for their obedience to law. Although several communities in Kentucky had violently opposed integration, his university audience probably was pleased by McGill's recognition of their progress. Praise of his audience probably gave McGill's auditors a feeling of personal pride and a feeling of social acceptance on the national level. Consequently, they may have been more willing to respond to McGill's plea for continued support of public education, hoping to receive further signs of social acceptance:
Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia have somehow escaped this ugly compulsion to close schools. . . . You did not have so many closed minds. Your resistance, when confronted with law, accepted law. . . . Kentucky . . . can go forward toward the job of progress that we must do here in the South.

McGill's fourth appeal was for patriotic action. How effective this appeal was probably depended on whether individuals in McGill's audience were loyal to the South, the nation, or both. Probably thinking he should not make this appeal directly to his Kentucky audience, McGill addressed himself to the "Southeast." Since McGill had already freed Kentucky of any guilt relating to public education, his circuitous appeal may not have been related by his audience to their own lives. Addressing himself to the Southeast, McGill bluntly stated that "it should be plain that a first loyalty must be to one's country."

Finally, McGill appealed to his audience's desire for progress and ownership. His university audience probably agreed with his suggestion that states which continue to support their public schools can "go forward." His strongest appeal to profit came in negative form, showing that those who close their public schools,

. . . will pay a price which may not be calculated if they do indeed destroy, even for a time, public education. That it will be severe in terms of education, business and things of the spirit, is undoubted.

In summary, motive appeals used by McGill in his introduction probably helped arrest the attention of his audience and stimulate support for public schools. However, McGill probably needed additional motive appeals during his long discussion of education, personal income, employment, and population.
Speaker Credibility

In their experimental study, Communication and Persuasion, Hovland, Janis, and Kelley defined the significance of speaker credibility:

The very same presentation tends to be judged more favorably when made by a communicator of high credibility than by one of low credibility. Furthermore, in the case of two of the three studies on credibility, the immediate acceptance of the recommended opinion was greater when presented by a highly credible communicator.84

What did McGill's audience know about him when he spoke at the University of Kentucky? Professor Robert G. Lunde, who introduced McGill, wrote this writer that,

I should imagine that virtually everyone present knew about him through his long association with the Atlanta Constitution, his contributions to periodicals, and his reputation as an outspoken courageous advocate of needed reforms.85

Two days before McGill spoke, the Lexington Herald informed its readers about him:

Ralph McGill, editor of the Atlanta Constitution and an outspoken proponent of obedience of the law in the South's integration struggle, will address the second Blazer Lecture audience... at the University of Kentucky... Known for his forthright views on the problems of Georgia and the South, McGill has been editor of the Constitution since 1942.86


85Information sent to this writer by Robert G. Lunde, May 3, 1966.

86Lexington Herald-Leader, February 8, 1959, sent by Mary Hester Cooper, University Archivist, University of Kentucky.
McGill, then, probably was known to his Kentucky audience as an advocate of reforms. Whether he was regarded as "courageous" and whether those reforms were "needed" depended upon the attitude of individuals in McGill's audience. If one assumes that those attending the lecture were liberal in their views concerning race relations and racially integrated public schools, McGill probably had the respect of his audience. Also, the fact that he was a southerner and not an "outsider" probably caused his listeners to be more receptive. On the other hand, since many citizens had demonstrated opposition to racial integration, it could well have been that McGill spoke to some individuals who considered him to be an unbelievable source.

McGill should be judged on the basis of what he did during the speech to cause his listeners to consider him a reliable communicator. In his introduction, McGill's manuscript shows no attempt to identify himself with the occasion or audience; however, study of other addresses reveals that McGill nearly always departs from his prepared text to recognize those who have invited him to speak. Also, he often wins an overt response (applause or laughter) with his extemporaneous response to remarks made by persons introducing him.

Historically, credibility of the speaker has been analyzed under three headings: character, intelligence, and good will.

**Character.** McGill probably caused his auditors to view him as a man of integrity by demonstrating his position in support of public schools to be right. McGill did a remarkable job of making the "debate"
appear "joined" between right and wrong; consequently, his audience probably felt an obligation to at least consider the more honorable policy of open public schools. McGill stated:

Valor, courage, integrity and the mighty mysteries and values of God and man remain constant. So do weaknesses, meanness and vanities. . . . Somebody is wrong. That at least is obvious. The Deep South direction is exactly contrary to that of the rest of the country. The debate is joined.

Secondly, McGill's character probably was further enhanced in the mind of his audience by his praise of Kentucky's support of the more honorable stand, i.e., open schools. One wonders, however, if some members of McGill's audience were not thinking of such towns in Kentucky as Sturgis, Clay, Belfy, and Henderson, where citizens had demonstrated "ugly compulsion to close schools." It was probably true, however, that the audience's appreciation of McGill's compliments was greater than their objectivity. Consequently, the audience probably was more willing to believe McGill after he had praised their past performances:

Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia have somehow escaped this ugly compulsion to close schools [sic]. . . . let us be candid. The real explanation is leadership. You did not have so many closed minds. Your resistance, when confronted with law [and force], accepted law. . . . Kentucky . . . can go forward toward the job of progress that we must do here in the South.

McGill may have further served his cause by his ability to identify the opposition's support of closed schools with that which was wrong. This probably caused McGill's audience to believe him more readily, since only a man of integrity would support the more honorable policy, while opposing those who were, to quote McGill, "trampling out
the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored." McGill described his opposition:

Those states which live in frustration, fear and uncertainty, will pay a price which may not be calculated if they do indeed destroy, even for a time, public education. That it will be severe in terms of education, business and things of the spirit is undoubted... Ignorance, prejudice and shabiness of mind and values always are careless leaks in the dykes of civilization in which man is a free individual. These forces must always be recognized for what they are and their presence and purpose publicly proclaimed and opposed.

Intelligence. Intelligence is usually viewed as an index of credibility. McGill, for example, seemed particularly interested in showing that one only needed common sense to see the vital need for public schools. McGill's audience, then, may have concluded him to be a more credible source, since he not only could handle numerous statistical reports but also recognize the practical side of an issue.

McGill made the following statements in several sections of his speech:

Even the most blind today can sense that we are caught up in a great convulsion of history... a new political leadership... will not consider the greatest issue to be where a colored man shall sit in a street car or where his child will go to school... The compulsive determination of politicians and many of the people to destroy public education in four or five states is almost incredible even when one lives with it... to be willing to destroy the advances made is almost too fantastic to be believed at a time when the need for more and better education has been violently thrust upon us.

A second factor which may have caused McGill's audience to believe him more readily was his ability to relate factual information. An audience probably is impressed with a man's good sense if he is equipped with facts. In seven of fifteen type-written pages, McGill
cited almost nothing but statistics. Failure to include more analysis, interpretation, and motive appeals, probably lessened the effect McGill’s data had in causing his listeners to believe him.

McGill’s intellectual integrity is usually heightened in the eyes of his audience by another method; he often is quite impressive because of his apparent broad familiarity with his subject. However, McGill usually is not limited to a discussion of public education. Because McGill, if the manuscript represents a true picture of the speech, decided not to draw from wide personal experience and travel, he left out his strongest support of his own credibility.

Good will. Not only is a speaker made more believable because of his character and intelligence, but also by demonstrating good will toward those whom he addresses. Since it is not known what McGill said in his opening remarks, this analysis does not include one of McGill’s chief ways of convincing his audience that he comes in friendship.

McGill probably revealed his good will when he recognized the progress made by Kentucky in obeying court decisions. McGill, however, might have been more believable had he qualified his statement that Kentucky had not sought to close its schools. He generally implied that all citizens in that state had willingly followed court rulings; they had not. Nevertheless, McGill’s audience probably was quite willing to agree with his assertion that Kentucky had performed exemplary acts of social leadership. Because McGill praised his audience, he probably established good will and won support for public education.
A second method of establishing good will was McGill's effort to get on common ground with the students in his audience. He stated that students understood contemporary issues and knew how to cope with them. Consequently, they probably felt they had an ally in McGill. Having established good will, McGill could then tell his auditors about the need for public schools, confident that the "young Southerners" would probably give him a fair hearing. Also, the students probably would be more willing to accept McGill's counsel. He stated:

The young Southerner knows even better than his political leaders that the problem which in time will close the doors of his schools is by no means local. . . . Even the most blind today can sense that we are caught up in a great convulsion of history. . . . All this is plain to all the young persons of America. They know that history is on the march. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that, in spirit at least, the young American is closer to the future than his father and mother.

In summary, McGill probably established his credibility to some degree by revealing his high character, intelligence, and good will. However, some members of his audience may have found McGill's overall argument more believable had he been more objective concerning Kentucky's actual status in the field of civil rights.

**Delivery**

A speaker might have excellent supporting materials and valid reasoning, yet be ineffective because of his inability to communicate ideas orally. To determine the nature of McGill's delivery at the University of Kentucky, the writer discusses here his method of delivery, his general appearance, and his use of bodily actions.
Method of delivery. McGill used a manuscript in delivering his Blazer Lecture. Since McGill had taken eight pages from an address delivered one week earlier, he probably was more familiar than usual with the main discussion of his Kentucky text. Professor Robert G. Lunde, who introduced McGill, reported that McGill's address was "delivered from a prepared manuscript, but at times he did depart from the text." Since, as McGill told this writer, he is able to follow a text without seeming to be reading it, he probably did use most of the materials written in his text. The difference between the text and the actual speech, then, probably was that McGill said some things which he did not have in his manuscript. Claude Sitton covered McGill's speech for the New York Times and, if one assumes he reported what McGill actually said and not simply what was included in the manuscript, it is possible to conclude that McGill indeed did say what he had written. Drawing from all sections of McGill's address, Sitton quoted extensively from McGill's lecture. In every case, Sitton's article used the same language found in McGill's text.

McGill, then, probably delivered the same material included in his manuscript, but added additional information after he had begun.

General appearance. How did McGill look when he spoke in Lexington? Relying on a photograph made by the Lexington Herald the night

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87 Information sent to this writer by Robert G. Lunde, May 3, 1966.

88 Louisville Courier-Journal, February 11, 1959, Mary Hester Cooper, University Archivist, University of Kentucky.
of McGill's oration, it is possible to make a few general comments. He appeared to be stockily built, though not fat or over weight. He wore what seemed to be a dark suit, white shirt, and polka-dotted tie. His tie ends lay separated against his white shirt, possibly resulting from his usual lack of concern for sartorial smartness.

Bodily actions. McGill apparently followed his usual pattern of delivery, attempting few gestures and bodily movements. Professor Lunde, trying to recall after seven years, reported that McGill used, few gestures, as I recall. His easy platform manner, his strong convictions, his earnest and sincere presentation of his subject matter held the attention of the audience throughout the talk.

Effectiveness

Many speech scholars contend that speaking should be purposeful; consequently, an orator should be judged on the basis of whether he achieved his desired response. In addition to effectiveness, a speaker is also expected to demonstrate certain skills in constructing a speech. Also, a speaker should reveal some awareness of important issues and their development. Since McGill has formulated his own speech theory, it seems only fair that he be judged in part by what he thinks a good speaker should be.

89  Lexington Herald, February 11, 1959, University Archivist, University of Kentucky.

90  Information sent to this writer by Robert G. Lunde, May 3, 1966.
Figure 2.
Ralph McGill at The University of Kentucky

Left to right: Alfred B. Sears, Ralph McGill, Robert G. Lunde.
Response

What immediate response did McGill achieve? Evidence is not available to warrant a conclusion concerning the immediate response of McGill's audience. However, Lunde, who introduced McGill, reported that McGill won "applause when introduced" "some applause from time to time throughout the speech," and "hearty applause at the end and especially during the question period of some thirty minutes following the lecture."\(^91\)

McGill received some attention in the press, though no reporter reacted to McGill's speaking ability. Claude Sitton reported the speech for the *New York Times*. He quoted extensively from McGill's text, providing his readers with a somewhat complete account of McGill's message.\(^92\) The *Atlanta Constitution* ran an abbreviated report of Sitton's material.\(^93\) The *Lexington Herald* carried a photograph which simply stated that "Ralph McGill . . . discussed southern problems . . . at the University of Kentucky."\(^94\)

There was delayed reaction to McGill's speech in the press, probably based on the detailed description by Sitton. On February 26, 1959, sixteen days after McGill's oration, the *Lexington Leader* printed a letter written to its editor by Robert D. Short which

\(^91\)Ibid.

\(^92\)Louisville *Courier-Journal*, February 11, 1959, University Archivist.


\(^94\)Lexington *Herald*, February 11, 1959, University Archivist.
opposed McGill's contention that contemporary problems were the effect of past policies. Though the letter was obviously written from the far-Right, it came from the type of believer McGill probably needed to convince. Since McGill's speech, as reported in the press, had no favorable effect on Mr. Short, who obviously was well educated, it is certainly possible that McGill's argument did not persuade many others.

In response to McGill's speech, Short wrote:

Editor, Lexington Leader:

The recent Blazer lecture by Mr. Ralph McGill, according to local press reports, tied industrialization, better education and integration into one great future estate for the South. Thus he destines that the past and present South will become but relics of a faded Don Quixote.

The heritage of a people who painfully climbed from the ashes of destruction to the high peaks of eminence in a few short generations, he depreciates as "shut minds." Never in all history, in so few years, have a people who were bankrupt economically and politically, their young manhood depleted, sorely taxed, and burdened with a dependent Negro race, risen so rapidly as did the white South. That neither spiritual responsibility nor stability of character deteriorated, either during their hours of trial or with growing materialistic success, reflects the breadth of vision and mental competence of the people. Their resurgence does not indicate "shut minds."

Industrialization and education are not gods in their own right, but are but tools to be wisely developed for the purpose of strengthening America and under-writing our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of intellectual and spiritual accomplishments, all to the greater glory of God. Racial integration would require lower educational standards. No workman is so foolish as to dull his fine tools.

Propaganda visualizing a people attuned to great industrial advances and less to their children's associations, dangerously approaches a materialistic Utopia.

Where does the gentleman stand anyway? Does he deny his forebears? Does he not appreciate that all our blessings are the result of many thousand years of our white heritage evolved as planned by the Creator and according to His natural laws? Are all revelations and experiences to be cast to the four winds? To project a future, contrary to God's fundamental laws and principles, courts suicide. It is a prime revelation that
a people, a nation or a race must ever go onward and upward or face oblivion. This they cannot do by weakening their potentialities through miscegenation. Parental responsibility and parental respect must continually grow stronger or else a race spiritually deteriorates, regardless of Mr. McGill's depreciating condemnation or philosophy.  

Did McGill's lecture have a noticeable long-range effect? No causal relationship can be established between McGill's speech and Kentucky's continued support of public schools, nor their passage in 1965 of a far-reaching civil rights bill. Kentucky, though troubled with some violence, accepted the inevitability of desegregation, largely because that state had a small percentage of Negroes, as well as moderate leadership in some areas. Kentucky did not have the difficulty with social problems experienced in the Deep South. For example, the University of Kentucky, locale of McGill's address, had been racially integrated for a number of years before McGill spoke. Consequently, Kentucky had pretty well decided to follow McGill's advice, even before he had a chance to give it.

Craftsmanship

McGill should be evaluated on his ability to structure, deliver, and prove his ideas. Because of apathy toward a total organizational plan, McGill probably required his audience to labor for perspective before understanding what he was trying to say. For example, failure to relate personal income, employment, and population to public education probably made those points appear irrelevant. It was probably  

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95 Lexington Leader, February 26, 1959, University Archivist.
significant, then, that Claude Sitton, who provided nineteen inches of press space for McGill's text, chose not to mention personal income, employment, or population.

McGill probably proved individual contentions but, because of a lack of co-ordination, was less effective in building a coherent case for open public schools. McGill probably aided his own credibility with his audience by presenting himself as a friend of students and a believable source. Also, he probably helped his cause by associating open public schools with that which was "right."

Inconclusive evidence prevents a judgment pertaining to McGill's delivery. One member of his audience, Professor Lunde, remembered his performance to have been an "earnest and sincere presentation," which is certainly true of the taped speeches and address observed first-hand by this listener.

**Wisdom in Judging Trends**

McGill's public statements concerning race relations and education lead one to believe that he is a wise prophet. In the 1940's, McGill urged equal treatment of the Negro or face court intervention. In the late 1950's, when some states thought of closing their public schools, McGill predicted that the public school system would survive. Also, he preached that unless Southern states solve their own problems the federal government would. Most important, McGill for the past twenty-five years has cried-out against prejudice in the South and nation. The nation finally, after years of frustration, learned the tune.
McGill's University of Kentucky lecture, though more difficult to assess, probably added to McGill's high percentage of accurate predictions. He called for public schools because the South could not afford to do without them; most of the South eventually decided to live with racially integrated schools. McGill claimed that states which supported public schools would prosper. Although there is no necessary causal relationship between the two, it may be that a public school system has helped ensure the prosperity of the South.

McGill's Speech Theory

In what ways did McGill fail to abide by his own speech principles? First, McGill did not prepare an original oration for the Blazer series. Second, the contents of his address were not adapted as well as usual to the speaker. Because he omitted, at least in the manuscript, his usual discussion of personal experiences, the message didn't "sound" like McGill. Third, McGill did not select and adapt statistics for a particular audience. Fourth, there were indications that McGill did not carefully research his topic for a particular audience. Fifth, McGill's speech was not carefully conceived for his Kentucky auditors.

McGill probably fulfilled some of the requirements of his theory. First, he was intellectually honest, in that he was willing to criticize his own region. Also, though he probably did not particularly want to integrate the races, he told his audience what had to be done to come within the law. Second, McGill attempted to accomplish a specific purpose. Third, McGill used speaker-initiative in accepting the opportunity to deliver the Blazer Lecture.
CHAPTER VI

ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION SPEECH

A second speech to be studied was delivered by McGill to members of the National Education Association on June 30, 1966 at Miami Beach. Because the writer witnessed that address, he is able to supply information that otherwise might not have been available.

Speaking Occasion

McGill attempted to persuade the educators that they should plan for problems produced by urbanization. The events which surrounded this address will be divided into two areas, historical background and immediate occasion.

Historical Background

The nature of McGill's speech requires an unusual approach to historical analysis. McGill did not limit his topic, but presented a sweeping account of social change. Also, he offered no specific solution, stating only that the burden would be placed on education. Consequently, historical background will consist of a piecemeal discussion of four related topics: (1) racial integration, (2) federal legislation, (3) cities, and (4) education.

Racial integration. Opposition to desegregation, which gained impetus after 1954, not only preceded McGill's Kentucky oration, but continued before and after McGill's NEA speech. Reaction to court
decisions between 1959, and 1966, can be divided into violent opposition, demonstrations, non-violent opposition, and obedience to law.

A few examples will demonstrate violent opposition to racial integration during the 1960's. On December 12, 1960, in Atlanta, "a shattering explosion . . . damaged a Negro school and a dozen homes along Pelham Street, NW, and started an intensive . . . investigation."1 On May 21, 1961, in Montgomery, Alabama, "an angry mob of club-swinging, rock-throwing white youths stormed a cordon of U.S. Marshals and state troopers at the Negro Baptist Church . . . ."2 On September 9, 1962, "night-riding arsonists . . . burned to the ground two Negro churches connected with the desegregation drive in Southwest Georgia.3 September 30, 1962,

bloody rioting among University of Mississippi students and adults from off campus protesting the arrival of Negro James H. Meredith resulted in one death and numerous injuries Sunday night before troops arrived on the scene. By midnight one newsman had been shot dead and a U.S. Marshal was reported dying with a wound in the throat.4

September 15, 1963, in Birmingham, Alabama,

a package of 10 to 13 sticks of dynamite was set off at a Negro church . . . killing four children in Sunday School and injuring at least 20 other persons. Negroes, angered by the outrage, retaliated by hurling stones and bottles at policemen and white motorists [including this writer, his wife, and three-year old son] all day Sunday. Two Negro

4Ibid., October 1, 1962, cols. 7-8, p. 1.
boys were shot to death in other racial incidents. . . and a Negro man and a white man were wounded by gunfire.5

On August 6, 1964, "four Athens [Georgia] men, identified by investigators as Ku Klux Klansmen, were arrested . . . in connection with the pre-dawn highway slaying of Lemuel A. Penn, a Washington, D.C., Negro educator."6 Finally, in October 1965, violence broke out in Crawfordville, Georgia, when Negroes "mounted a daily campaign to board the public school buses that carry white children to nearby communities. . . the daily scrimmage had aroused one of Georgia's worst racial flare-ups in years."7

A second reaction to racial integration came in the form of demonstrations, as civil rights marchers invaded the 1960's. For example, on March 15, 1960, "nearly 200 Negro college students staged sit down demonstrations in 10 white eating establishments in Atlanta . . . at lunchtime."8 On May 2, 1963, in Birmingham, "an estimated 700 Negroes were jailed . . . in a massive onslaught of anti-segregation demonstrations as pupils skipped classes to stage marches."9 Two days later, in Birmingham, "snarling police dogs chased away crowds of Negroes and fire hoses flattened youthful demonstrators . . . as hundreds of Negroes tried to stage anti-segregation marches."10

When civil rights organizations became more aggressive, and probably better co-ordinated, demonstrations took on new form. For example, on August 28, 1963, in Washington, D.C., "an estimated 200,000 'freedom marchers'--most of them Negroes--demanded of Congress . . . that it pass an 'effective civil rights bill now.'"\footnote{Ibid., August 29, 1963, col. 8, p. 1.} Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the most influential leaders. On February 1, 1965, in Selma, Alabama, Dr. King "was arrested with 256 other Negroes during a right-to-vote protest . . ."\footnote{Ibid., February 2, 1965, Associated Press, col. 3, p. 1.} On March 21, 1965, King "led 4,000 civil rights demonstrators, guarded by carbine-carrying soldiers, to a cow pasture campground eight miles from Selma . . . on the first leg of their historic 'freedom march' to Montgomery."\footnote{Ibid., March 22, 1965, United Press International, col. 8, p. 1.} In June, 1966, the month of McGill's address, James H. Meredith attempted to lead a similar march along U. S. Highway 51, from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi. \textit{Time} pictured the results:

Two miles beyond Hernando, Miss., Meredith was plodding doggedly up a small hill when a white man popped up from the brush along the highway. . . . A 16-gauge shotgun roared once, and a spray of bird shot blasted into Meredith's right side. . . . Twice more the gunman fired. . . . Meredith . . . suffer[ed] from "multiple superficial abrasions."\footnote{Time, Vol. 87 (June 17, 1966), 26.}

The week of McGill's speech, a controversial debate raged among civil rights leaders as to acceptable and effective methods of protest. \textit{Time} reported the inherent issue, "Black Power."
... many militant ideologues are impatient with what they consider the glacial pace of progress in civil rights. They espouse instead a racist philosophy that could ultimately perpetuate the very separatism against which Negroes have fought so successfully. Oddly, they are not white men but black, and their slogan is "Black Power!"  

There was a third response to racial integration which came in the form of non-violent opposition. Only a few comments are needed to supplement the discussion in chapter five concerning legal circumvention. For example, September 20, 1962, "James H. Meredith, a 29-year-old Negro, tried to enroll in the University of Mississippi . . . but was turned away by Gov. Ross Barnett."  

December 18, 1962, McGill's hometown made what he called a "mistake that can be photographed":  

The city of Atlanta erected barricades across Peyton and Harlan Roads . . . prompting the second court action in two days against an ordinance creating a racial buffer zone and setting off a "selective buying campaign" by Negroes against merchants they said supported the ordinance.  

George C. Wallace, Governor of Alabama, attracted world attention, when he carried out his campaign promise of "standing in the school house door" to block integration of Alabama's schools. However, he was unable to match the forces of the President:  

Still claiming victory, Gov. George C. Wallace retreated from the campus of the University of Alabama Tuesday afternoon and two Negro students whom he had vowed to keep out were enrolled for the summer quarter. Wallace agreed to leave only after President John F. Kennedy federalized

15 Ibid., Vol. 88 (July 1, 1966), 11.  
18,000 Alabama National Guardsmen and an estimated 600 of them began arriving on the Alabama campus.  

Three months later, Wallace and Kennedy crossed paths again when troops were federalized to ensure racial integration of public schools:

Twenty Negro children entered white schools in three Alabama cities . . . in a historic move that came only after another showdown between President John F. Kennedy and Gov. George C. Wallace. Kennedy put the 17,000 Alabama National Guardsmen into federal service, thereby removing them from the control of Wallace, who had ordered some units on active duty a few hours earlier.

Non-violent opposition also was heard from orators and discussants. For example, April 25, 1965, "an estimated crowd of more than 1,000 flag-waving, sign-carrying whites ignored occasional showers to stage a protest march to downtown Atlanta . . . and listen to a fiery oration by segregationist Lester Maddox." A few days after the Supreme Court desegregation ruling in 1954, public officials gathered to discuss possible policies to follow. Discussion continued into the 1960's, when the Atlanta Constitution reported on May 7, 1965, that "a group of Southern governors will meet with Gov. Carl Sanders in Atlanta . . . to discuss a federal ruling that at least four grades in all schools must be desegregated by this fall."

In addition to violence, demonstrations, and non-violence, there was also some obedience to court decisions. In Georgia, for example, in 1964, "Atlanta schools opened quietly for the most part . . .

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Despite sharply increased desegregation . . . "22 Also, there was unexpected progress in a few of the border states. Kentucky, for example, in 1966, passed a far-reaching civil rights bill:

The Kentucky measure . . . goes further toward banning discrimination in public accommodations and hiring than the 1964 federal law. It opens to Negroes all public facilities except barbershops, beauty shops and private clubs, guarantees fair employment standards to the 90% of the labor force that works for businesses employing eight or more persons.23

Data concerning over-all compliance can best be found in articles expressing concern for what little progress has been made. For example, Time, on September 10, 1965, stated that

. . . despite ballyhooed breakthroughs and a carload of court decrees, the Deep South's resilient resistance to school integration has been remarkably effective: only 2 1/4% of the 2,980,000 Negro school children in eleven Southern states actually sat in classrooms last year with whites.24

On February 25, 1966, Time reported that

. . . in January 1966, a dozen years after the U.S. Supreme Court urged "all deliberate speed" in integrating Southern schools, only one of every 13 Negro children in the eleven states of the Old Confederacy was attending a school with white students.25

In summary, during the 1960's, as in the 1950's, opposition to racial integration was decisive, including violence, demonstrations, non-violent policies, and some compliance with law. Consequently, the

22Ibid., September 1, 1964, col. 8, p. 1.
23Time, Vol. 87 (February 4, 1966), 27.
24Ibid., Vol. 86 (September 10, 1965), 45.
25Ibid., Vol. 87 (February 25, 1966), 25.
issue of desegregation, particularly as it related to education, was of primary concern to the nation when the NEA met at Miami Beach, Florida.

Federal legislation. Along with racial integration, McGill's broad treatment of social problems touched on a second topic, federal legislation. Because McGill was interested in what could be done to improve social conditions, this section will discuss legislation affecting such areas as education, public accommodations, hiring practices, and voting. For example, on July 2, 1964, "President Lyndon B. Johnson signed" a "civil rights act into law," covering hiring practices, public accommodations, and education. Its effect on education can be seen in the way the U. S. Office of Education, in 1965,

... interpreted the Civil Rights Act of 1964 "to mean that all school systems receiving federal funds must make planned moves toward desegregation as a condition of their continuing to receive such funds" ... Further "delay on the part of local school systems in filing such plans ... will not only jeopardize allotments of needed funds to such systems, but will still leave such systems liable under the Brown case and other decisions of the courts and Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, requiring desegregation of all public school systems" ...26

The Attorney General of the United States, Nicholas Katzenback, also applied pressure, when he "ordered federal examiners into nine counties in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana to register Negro voters under the 1965 voting rights law."27 On May 13, 1966, one month prior

26 Atlanta Constitution, April 22, 1965, cols. 3-4, p. 1.
to McGill's speech, *Time* analyzed the effect of the voting rights bill on elections in Alabama:

In its first ballot-box test, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 worked as effectively as its most idealistic framers could have dreamed. More than 80% of Alabama's 235,000-plus registered Negroes turned out for the Democratic primary. Half of them had never been registered until the past year.  

In summary, at the time of McGill's speech, the federal government was actively engaged in solving problems relating to education, public accommodations, hiring practices, and voting. The educators probably would be more concerned with programs relating to their own field.

CITIES. Besides racial integration and federal legislation, McGill also emphasized problems growing out of increased urbanization. This section will treat three topics closely related to McGill's message: (1) problems in the cities, (2) causes of those problems, and (3) solutions which have been proposed.

A few of the major problems experienced by cities are poor housing, disease, unequal education, unemployment, and racial conflict. The following quotations point out the need for action in these problem areas, though in no definite order. For example, *Time*, on May 13, 1966, one month before McGill's oration, described the extent of the evils in housing, health, and ability to read, encompassing both rural and urban areas:

More than 7,500,000 Americans live in rat-infested tenements or tumbledown shacks that are officially--and euphemistically--

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classified as "dilapidated"; 1,500 U.S. citizens still die yearly from diseases caused by malnutrition; 6,000,000 subsist on free Government surpluses. In today's society, the nation's 11 million functional illiterates are relegated for life to the precarious ranks of the poor. 29

On March 4, 1966, Time provided data specifically relating to city housing:

Despite nationwide attempts to write new regulations, there are still 5,000,000 substandard houses in cities—nearly all of them without running water or indoor toilets—and in some areas the number of barely habitable homes continues to rise. In New York alone, substandard houses have increased from 420,000 to 520,000 since 1960. 30

Problems facing the nation's urban centers were dramatized, in 1965, during the Negro revolt in Los Angeles' Watts area. Besides overtones of racial conflict, there were other problems in housing, education, employment, and law enforcement. After 2,221 Negroes had been charged with felonies, California's Governor, Edmond Brown, appointed a commission "to find the reasons for the six-day uprising."

The recommendations of that commission, if accurate, provide insight into conditions existing in some of the cities. The commission concluded that Los Angeles should,

... erase the appalling gap between the educational level of whites and Negroes in Los Angeles schools... reduce Negro unemployment... meet persistent Negro charges of police oppression... 31

It is important to note, however, that civil rights leaders suggested

29 Ibid., Vol. 87 (May 13, 1966), 29.
31 Ibid., Vol. 86 (December 17, 1965), 21.
that Governor Brown's commission had "skirted around the question of police brutality, and almost entirely ducked the problem of discrimination in housing." 32

Now that some of the urban problems have been described, an attempt will be made to define a few of the important causes of present evils. City conditions probably were caused, in part, by two factors, inadequate planning for increased population and racial prejudice.

Before getting at the inherent causes, however, it should be shown that cities have experienced tremendous population growth. *Time*, on March 4, 1966, reported that,

... in 1790 the nation's first census showed that 95% of Americans lived on farms or in hamlets. Then the eruption began: from 1800 to 1900, New York's population increased from 79,216 to 3,437,202, San Francisco jumped from zero to 342,782, Chicago from zero to 1,698,575. 33

In that same issue, *Time* added that "67% of the nation's population is jammed into 9% of its acreage. In all, 130 million people inhabit the 224 U.S. communities that are officially classified as metropolitan," or having "50,000, plus that of its adjacent suburbs." 34

Why has increased population caused problems? *Time* suggested two reasons, both tied to inadequate planning. First, because American cities "sprang full-blown from the wilderness; there was no planned

32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., Vol. 87 (March 4, 1966), 30.
34 Ibid., 29.
base for rational expansion . . . "35 Second, "the deterioration of the city has resulted largely from a governmental vacuum. The metropolis has traditionally been at the mercy of laissez-faire policies—and politicians. Too often the problems slop hopelessly across city and suburban boundaries . . . "36

Besides poor planning, there has been a second basic cause, racial prejudice. Because prejudice is intangible, it is difficult to define and isolate as the cause of a problem; yet it has produced problems for the city. For example, because the Negro often is not welcome in suburbia, he usually resides in the poor sections or slums. This means, as Robert Clifton Weaver, head of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, put it, that the Negro (and poor white) will have "inadequate public services and inferior schools."37 And, as already demonstrated in the Los Angeles area, inadequate services and unequal opportunity can lead to riots and destruction.

While it is difficult to discover where the cycle (and cause) begins, Time quoted two sources, both implying that racial discrimination was one cause of urban problems:

Says Economist Miles Colean: "We can't get around the sad fact that middle-class families living in the city who depend on public schools have not made up their minds that they can live with Negroes." [Robert C.] Weaver adds pointedly: "We need an open suburbia—not just an upper- and middle-income-class suburbia."38

36Ibid.  
37Ibid.  
38Ibid., 31.
Although poor planning and racial prejudice have been major sources of difficulty, there have been many additional causes of city problems. For example, *Time* told one reason why housing problems continued to exist in New York:

Archaic taxing methods actually discourage slumlords from improving their properties, since they would then be assessed at a higher rate.39

Also, *Time* pointed out a much more basic cause for continuous conditions in the cities:

Paradoxically, it is the neediest who are helped least by the welfare state. The majority of the poor reap no benefits from social security, unemployment insurance, or the right to unionize. . . . Public housing has brought the poor more eviction notices than new apartments, and slum dwellers scornfully refer to urban renewal as "urban removal."40

What solutions have been designed to alleviate urban problems? Since McGill hoped to convince his audience to do something about evils produced by social change, it is important to understand programs in existence at the time of his speech.

The federal government probably was doing most to assist urban centers. Until relatively recently, the government's policy had been to treat the results, with little consideration for causes. For example, as recently as 1965, after the destruction in Los Angeles' Watts section, "President Johnson dispatched to Los Angeles a 'task force' . . . to inaugurate a crash program of federal help for the 45-sq. mi., riot-torn area."41

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Within recent years, however, the federal government has demonstrated more awareness and concern for urban conditions. This is evidenced by a newly created Cabinet post, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). *Time* summarized this and other accomplishments made by the Eighty-ninth Congress in the area of urban affairs:

A $7.8 billion housing program aims to meet such varied needs as urban renewal, campus dwellings for college students, and 60,000 more public-housing units. Congress went further and created the first new Cabinet post in twelve years, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which amalgamates a batch of existing bureaus within a single agency devoted to the problems of the cities, where 70% of all Americans now live.42

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), directed by R. Sargent Shriver, also sponsored numerous programs, all available to persons occupying the large urban areas. Four of their programs include the Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, Vista, Head Start (mentioned by McGill), and Community Action.

The **Jobs Corps** was "set up to provide remedial education and job training for unemployed, out-of-school youths from 16 to 21 . . . ." As of May 13, 1966, it had "25,609 trainees (about 50% Negro) at 100 centers." The **Neighborhood Youth Corps**, unlike the Job Corps, which is "curative," is "preventive." It is "designed to occupy needy teenagers before or just after they drop out of school with $1.25-an-hour jobs in local libraries, parks and other institutions." "By the end of

42Ibid., Vol. 86 (October 29, 1965), 22.
June [1966], it will have employed 603,000 boys and girls . . ."

Head Start was designed for preschool children and has "proved the poverty program's best success." There were "560,000 pupils in 2,400 communities attending classes for two months," in 1965. Community Action "was to run local projects 'with maximum feasible participation of residents of the areas and members of the groups served.'" "Its fundamental concept . . . is that the poor can effectively help themselves only by mobilizing their potential political strength."43

In summary, urbanization brought increasing problems in housing, race relations, employment, education, and many other areas of society. Because of a general lack of planning in the past, the federal government developed a crash program to assist the "Great Society," especially its large cities.

Education. McGill not only mentioned race relations, legislation, and city life, he also discussed a topic of particular importance to the NEA, education. To understand the status of education at the time of McGill's oration, one must consider two factors, the increased number of students and financial aid. Increased population in the United States caused educators considerable apprehension. "By A.D. 2000, the U.S. Population will have risen to about 330 million, and nine out of ten Americans will be living in supercities or their suburbs."44 On January 7, 1966, Time, summarized the effects of

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44 Ibid., Vol. 87 (February 25, 1966), 28.
population growth on colleges:

The college crush continues. According to the U.S. Office of Education, 5,967,411 students are enrolled in the nation's colleges and universities this academic year, an increase of 12.2% over 1964 totals. Freshman enrollment last fall was up 18%, reflecting the fact that 45% of 1965's graduating high school seniors continued on to college.45

Although there have been pressing needs in the field of education, progress has been made:

The nation still urgently needs more teachers and classrooms, but much has already been done. Teachers' salaries rose 45% from 1950 to 1960, while the average increase for all jobs was 29%; the pupil-teacher ratio declined from 27.1 in 1954 to 25.7 in 1960; the classroom shortage eased even as enrollment rose. As for the dropout problem, only 53% of Americans in the 25-to-29 age bracket had completed high school in 1950; last year the figure was 69%.46

The federal government, significantly, has taken a more active role in the support of elementary and secondary education. Time reported the progress of the Eighty-ninth Congress, 1965:

The Congress made history with its education bills. One act allows public-school districts to receive federal funds for the first time without specifically detailed directives as to how the money must be spent. Most of the $1.3 billion authorized for elementary and secondary schools will go to districts with 3% of their student enrollment from families making under $2,000 a year—a qualification that includes 90% of all U.S. school districts... A $2.3 billion higher-education bill... allows $70 million for the nation's first Government-financed college scholarships (up to $1,000 a year per student), offers $460 million in construction grants to colleges, sets up funds to finance programs aimed at strengthening developing institutions (particularly small Southern Negro colleges), under-writes

46 Ibid., Vol. 86 (October 8, 1965), 29.
interest on loans for college students from families making under $15,000 a year.

In summary, education, because of increased population and more interest in obtaining degrees, has experienced increased need for funds, teachers, buildings, classrooms, and facilities. There has been a general awareness of the problem, but the federal government probably has taken the largest step toward providing adequate support for public schools. Also, the federal government has continued its support of students and schools.

Historical background, then, has covered racial integration, federal legislation, cities, and education. Each has some relevance to McGill's proposition that educators should plan for increasing problems brought by urbanization. In fact, one wonders if McGill did not borrow his thesis from Time's essay on "The Futurists: Looking Toward A.D. 2000":

Men in business, government, education and science itself [should] realize that they must look at least two decades ahead just to keep abreast, must learn to survive under totally different conditions.

Immediate Occasion

Ralph McGill spoke during the one hundred and fourth annual meeting of the National Education Association, assembled from June 26 to July 1, 1966, at Miami Beach, Florida. To appreciate the situation

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48 Ibid., Vol. 87 (February 25, 1966), 28.
McGill faced, one should study the issues that were on the minds of the delegates to the National Education Association convention and events which took place during the immediate speaking occasion.

**Issues before the NEA.** Delegates meeting in Miami used discussion, debate, and oratory to decide policies concerning such subjects as racial desegregation, federal aid to education, and the extension of education. Racial integration probably received the most publicity. For example, resolutions in that area were advocated early in the week, when

> an overwhelming majority of delegates at the National Education Association's Miami Beach convention Monday moved to blackball racially-divided state and local affiliates by next June 1. Official delegates of the 800,000-member Department of Classroom Teachers, who wield a substantial majority of votes at the national convention, voted that no NEA affiliations will be continued after that date...49

Such opinions were reflected throughout the week, until Friday, when "more than 6,000 delegates" passed an official resolution:

> State affiliates of the National Education Association which are still divided on racial lines were warned Friday to integrate by next June or face expulsion from the nation's largest education organization.50

To further demonstrate issues which were before the NEA, a list of several speakers and their topics will be presented here.

Notice how discussion centered around desegregation and financial aid:

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49 *The Miami Herald*, June 28, 1966, cols. 7-8, p. 2A.

50 Ibid., July 2, 1966, cols. 1-2, p. 13A.
1. Tuesday, June 28, 1966: Richard D. Batchelder, President of NEA, "asked for an end of divisions between Negro and white education associations, between teachers and administrators, and between NEA members and members of the American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)."

2. Wednesday: James H. Williams, NEA's Southeast regional representative, told the National Commission on Professional Standards that only a few southern school superintendents "seem willing to engage in full and meaningful compliance to bring about desegregation."52

3. Wednesday: In the annual report of the NEA's Committee on Educational Finance, chairman Burley Bechdolt stated that, "the most important change in school finance in the school year just ended was the large increase in federal aid for all levels of education."53

4. Thursday: David Seeley, Director of the U. S. Office of Education's Equal Opportunities Division "told 200 delegates" that school administrators "were too 'timid' and too closely 'attached' to local political authority to assume the necessary leadership" for "desegregation of the nation's classrooms."54

5. Thursday: Eugene Methvin, staff writer for the Readers Digest, stated that left-wing and right-wing extremists "employ the same techniques--'totalitarian propaganda, mass manipulation, planned violence and social demolition'--to attack democratic institutions and parliamentary due process."55

6. Thursday night: Ralph McGill

7. Friday: U. S. Postmaster General Lawrence O'Brien said that "a new right has been added to the Bill of Rights--the right to a good education of every American child

51Ibid., June 29, 1966, cols. 1-5, p. 11A.
53Ibid., cols. 7-8, p. 2B.
55Miami Herald, July 1, 1966, cols. 1-6, p. 29A.
regardless of race, economic status or place of residence."56

In summary, the NEA delegates were primarily concerned with civil rights and financial support for education. However, the delegates also discussed extension of education to include free schooling for four-year-olds, and the possibility of additional years of high school training.

Immediate speaking situation. McGill's speech came during the third general assembly on July 30, 1966, at Miami Beach Convention Hall. There were events which took place immediately before McGill spoke that probably had some effect upon his address. Also, the physical arrangements probably had something to do with the way McGill had to speak. Order of business and physical setting, then, are analyzed here. This writer sat at a press table located about twenty-five feet from McGill and situated so as to view both the speaker and the audience. From this position, a record was kept of events which took place before, during, and after McGill's oration.

People began arriving at 7:00 P.M., and at 7:50; when the great auditorium was about one-fifth full, an organist played parade-like music which reached every corner of the hall by means of loud speakers. At 8:06, McGill, Richard D. Batchelder, President of NEA, and other officers were greeted by warm applause as they entered from the wing at stage-left. The march music, obvious rapport among educators, and the Billy Graham-personality of President Batchelder caused a surprising sense of excitement.

56 Ibid., July 2, 1966, cols. 1, p. 13A.
From 8:10 to 8:42, the audience was entertained by grade-schooler, Lynn Chang, a talented young violinist. After Batchelder had begun informally by recognizing how "handsome" and "lovely" the persons sitting on stage were, he gave a hard-to-live-up-to introduction of tiny Mr. Chang. Because of his youth, short height, and obvious talent, Chang won the hearts and admiration of the educators. Playing works by Kreisler, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, he stimulated standing applause with each performance. At 8:39, after Chang had been called back for a final number, he took his seat on stage, the audience left in a responsive and friendly mood. Later, when the commander of the American Legion addressed the educators and referred back to Chang, the audience burst into applause. Also, when Lynn Chang's father, a physician, was introduced, he received applause.

Following the entertainment, an impromptu event took place, which further contributed to the informality of the occasion. A gentleman from Florida interrupted President Batchelder and presented him with a rather gaudy coat of many colors, naming him an "honorary Seminole." This was significant, because Batchelder then removed his white dinner jacket and donned the colorful coat. The audience reacted with friendly applause and laughter, cementing the rapport among many persons present.

From 8:42 to 9:01, L. Eldon James, commander of the American Legion brought "greetings" to the association. After telling his audience that he had been informed in writing not to talk over five minutes, he proceeded to deliver a nineteen minute American Legion-like
oration, which proved to be boring, at least to this listener. Using a passage from Robert Frost (which McGill would later react to), he developed the thesis that the American Legion and the NEA had worked together as all good groups should. His speech, which was too long, probably was the only uninteresting event prior to McGill's oration, as commander James was more interested in praising the American Legion than greeting his guests.

Between 9:01 and 9:07, a variety of events took place, all helping to wake the audience from the deadly American Legion oration. Titles of persons (state officers) sitting on stage were mentioned, and President Batchelder asked permission from the audience to let his "troops" (children) go home. After they had walked the entire length of the stage, and Mrs. Batchelder had finally returned to her chair, the audience applauded that scene, again revealing the family-like rapport among the educators.

With the children gone, Batchelder turned immediately to the task of introducing McGill. His now serious attitude reminded one of a teacher who was saying with his voice and facial expressions that play period was over; the serious and important part of our program has arrived. With considerable poise and speaking ability, Batchelder drew from Emerson's "American Scholar," mentioning Emerson, but not his speech. Batchelder gave a very brief but impressive introduction, when he said something like this:

Emerson said a scholar is a Man Thinking. That certainly describes the man we have with us tonight. But we should
add, that he also is a man acting and a model for all persons in the business of reporting to follow. Dr. Ralph McGill.

It was probably unfortunate that the audience had been required to sit for more than an hour before McGill was introduced. Had the greetings oration, however, been shorter the audience probably would have been less tired. As it were, delegates who had been in sessions all during the day, now faced a thirty minute lecture, beginning at 9:07 P.M. McGill probably faced a weary and difficult-to-stimulate audience. However, the entertainment, music, President Batchelder, and general spirit of the group were probably in McGill's favor.

In addition to order of business, the physical setting was also important to the immediate speaking occasion. Physical conditions will be treated under three general headings, lobby, auditorium, and stage. (See Figure 3.)

When McGill's auditors arrived the night of June 30, they escaped from the rain by entering the lobby, adjacent to the rear of the auditorium. Probably the only significance this setting had was to remind the audience of issues and activities before the convention. For example, in the lobby one saw high above the floor a huge printed sign with the schedule of activities. Campaign posters were taped to the glass entrances, proclaiming "Alonso for NEA President-elect," and "Thelma Davis for NEA Executive Committee." The convention photographer, who was contracted by this writer prior to McGill's speech to take pictures of the speaker, sat among his candid pictures encouraging prospects to order "now." Also the lobby housed several tables covered
with brochures of every color and theme.

Leaving the lobby, educators moved through two large doors to the auditorium. By actual pace, the hall was more than two hundred feet long, and one hundred fifty feet wide. Figure 4, taken during one of the NEA's meetings, shows vividly the setting of McGill's speech. McGill addressed an audience very similar to the one pictured here, but the large front-center area was filled and there were some empty seats around the outer edges.

What were characteristics of the large auditorium? Light brown draperies hung from near the ceiling to the floor, serving as walls at the front (behind the stage) and sides. Numerous light fixtures hung from the ceiling, as if in a larger hanger, providing adequate lighting. The temperature was welcome relief from the rainy Miami weather. Folding seats were not uncomfortable and were arranged close together, probably contributing to the unified response of the audience. Because of the sloping floors, most persons probably had a relatively clear line of sight to McGill, but people sitting in the extreme rear would not have been affected by McGill's facial expressions. Also, there were seats situated at a ninety degree angle to McGill's left and right, which probably did not enable persons to see. (See Figures 3 and 4).

One factor relating to seating arrangement had particular importance. Because the convention had focused largely upon desegregation, there was tension among some persons sitting near state markers. For example, this writer actually heard several Negro delegates who
Figure 4

Miami Beach Audience
came from a Deep South state say, "there is the section reserved for our state." Though one Negro woman thought they should go where the NEA planned for them to sit, several other Negroes in the group won out when they stated they would be more welcome in other sections of the hall. Since this happened only minutes prior to McGill's speech, it can be concluded that issues before the convention, plus the seating arrangements, certainly caused tension among some of the delegates. Consequently, McGill probably had many obstacles to overcome, at least with a minority of the educators.

Besides the lobby and auditorium, the physical setting also included the stage. Figure 4 pictures how the convention symbol, about eight by ten feet, hung before the educators, and the theme, "Free to Teach," was high above the stage, just to the rear of the speaker. Other symbols contributed to the mood, the NEA flag, at the corner of stage-left, and the American flag to the right. Decorative columns, an artificial fountain, flowers, and greenery added color to the stage. The piano used to accompany young Lynn Chang was at front stage-left, and Chang stood between the piano and the edge of the stage.

The stage was large, about sixty feet from left to right and thirty feet deep. A few rows of chairs for state officers ran almost the entire width of the stage. McGill stood in the middle of the stage, close to the front. He spoke from behind a large rostrum, about thirty-six inches from his left to right, twenty-four inches deep and fifty-three inches high. Consequently, much of his body was concealed from the audience, especially those seated to his front. Also, the large
microphone-head probably obscured McGill's face at times; it must have been effective, however, since persons sitting in the rear of the auditorium informed this writer that they could hear McGill easily.

The Audience

McGill's National Education Association audience probably had many beliefs and goals in common, yet, as noted above, there was certainly no consensus concerning race relations. An analysis is made here of McGill's auditors to try to determine the nature of the persons to whom he spoke.

Size of audience. The large number of persons listening to McGill's oration probably affected his delivery. This writer counted 7,460 available seats. As McGill began speaking, taking into account the empty seats around the outer edges of the hall, there were at least 6,500 auditors. Since these persons were seated over an area about one hundred and fifty feet by two hundred feet, McGill, in order to be heard, had to remain within speaking range of his microphone. Consequently, even if he chose to move around, which he seldom does, the need for microphone would have restricted him physically.

Sex. Sex may have been an index of the majority's interests. While McGill spoke to hundreds of men and women, the ladies probably outnumbered the gentlemen two-to-one. This probably meant that many of the delegates were classroom teachers, concerned with such things as increased salaries, "free to teach" (theme of the convention), better
facilities, and recognition of their past achievements. It was cited earlier how "official delegates of the 800,000-member Department of Classroom Teachers" wielded "a substantial majority of votes at the national convention."^7

**Place of residence.** The many locales represented probably made audience adjustment extremely difficult. There were seats designated for delegates from most states, persons from "overseas," Puerto Rico, and Washington, D.C. Other reservations were made for "non-delegates," "ex-officio members," "special guests," and regular members of the NEA; residence in these instances were not identified. Because of this great mixture of states, regions, and countries, McGill had to either use appeals of a universal nature or take a chance on offending some delegates. For example, the presence of delegates, as already mentioned, from Deep South states probably made it impossible for McGill to satisfy all members of the audience when he talked about civil rights and desegregation.

**Income.** Financial status of the educators probably was one of the most powerful forces at work in McGill's audience. Public school teachers usually are unhappy with their income; consequently, they understandably seek ways to improve their economic status. If McGill, then, could mention possible means of accomplishing that goal, he would probably be well received. More important, should he be able

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to combine the issue of financial improvement with his own purpose, his speech probably would be more successful. On the other hand, a traditional plea for increased public spirit and personal sacrifice--divorced from money--may not have been well received.

**Occupation.** McGill's education-centered audience, plus the occasion, probably dictated his general topic. As McGill would probably say, "it had to be about education." McGill, then, could anticipate the general interests of the teachers, principals, and educators. Consequently, McGill had ample opportunity to invent a speech for educators who probably had similar interests, attitudes, and goals.

In addition to educators, there were probably some persons attending from other professions. McGill had been interviewed on a Miami television news program prior to his address, and since the night sessions were open to the public, there probably were a number of guests from the Greater Miami community.

**Educational level.** McGill certainly must have known that he would face a mature audience, one which probably kept informed on important issues of the day. The educators probably averaged at least one college degree, with many having additional educational training. If education can be considered a valid index, McGill probably addressed an intelligent audience, one capable of following close reasoning and appreciating sound evidence. Also, they probably were capable of recognizing poor reasoning, and unreliable data.

**Audience interests.** As indicated under "issues before the NEA,"
there were three topics of special concern to the delegates, education, financial aid, and school desegregation. First, because these delegates were willing to travel to Miami, one would expect many of them to be highly motivated, leaders in their state affiliate, and interested in the progress of education.

Secondly, it is probably true that the NEA was more concerned with financial support than any other one subject. A check of the official Proceedings of the NEA from 1950 to 1965 revealed a constant concern for local, state, and federal financial support. McGill's 1966 audience was no different. They were ripe for appeals to motives of ownership and profit. For example, among the official resolutions passed by the NEA delegates, the day after McGill's speech, was an appeal for "substantial federal contributions" and "teacher pay starting at $8,000 a year."58

It is the contention of this writer that the educators' concern for personal income was greater than their third interest, racial desegregation. For example, the official Proceedings, 1950 to 1965, vividly demonstrates that the NEA, as a body, did not serve as an impetus to social reform. Only after the federal government had enacted laws, did the NEA, as an organization, give serious thought to desegregation of public education. The Proceedings, for example, between 1950 and 1953 (and probably long before) recorded no discussion during assemblies concerning Negro rights. The 1954 Supreme Court

58Ibid., July 2, 1966, cols. 1-2, p. 13A.
ruling caused the delegates, in 1954, to resolve that the NEA go on record in support of "fair play and good will" in regard to the "matter of integration in the public schools."59

The basic meaning of this 1954 palliative policy remained unchanged until 1963. In 1960, the convention "commended" any agent which would see fit to serve the welfare of any educator in need.60 The next year, 1961, the association pledged "continued support of the United States Supreme Court decision on public school desegregation," which apparently meant they would take very little action.61 It is interesting to contrast this gutless official attitude toward Negro rights with that of a few delegates who, during official assembly, offered their opinions. For example, in 1957, after the meaningless "fair play" resolution had stood for three years, George M. Snyder, from California, told the delegates, "we have all sinned . . . I propose that we do not ignore this momentous issue by an innocuous resolution but that we resolve as teachers to do something about it."62

The old resolution stood.


After decades of inaction, and nine years of circumvention, finally, in 1963, the NEA passed a proposal with teeth. Texas, of all states, moved to amend the same old verbiage recommended by the resolutions committee, by adding the words, "extension of the principle of desegregation as it applies to professional membership in organizations affiliated with NEA." Although this policy was accepted in 1963, it took until July 1, 1966, the day after McGill's address (there was no apparent connection), for the NEA to warn state affiliates who were still segregated "to integrate by next June or face expulsion from" the association.

McGill's audience, then, was interested in education, personal income, and desegregation. Audience action, however, probably was determined largely by concern for money. Having tasted the 1965 support from the federal government, the delegates were quite willing to activate human rights programs which had been bred by judicial courts and, now, given life by massive aid. Consequently, if McGill planned to convince or actuate delegates attending the NEA convention, he had better draw his supporting materials from the purse and pocket.

**Attitude of audience toward the speaker.** McGill probably spoke both to admirers and enemies. Educators gathered from across the nation probably were more liberal toward race relations than some delegates from Deep South states. As already noted, there was unrest among

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colored and white delegates from the same state, though this was not outwardly revealed. Consequently, many of the auditors who knew of McGill's activity in human rights, probably approved of his moderate stand, while others probably disliked McGill and his policies intensely. This is confirmed by the position taken by several Deep South states from 1954 to 1965 during heated debate in NEA assemblies over school desegregation. For example, on a number of occasions after the assembly had passed mild resolutions, delegates from such states as Louisiana requested that their vote be recorded in opposition to the policy. McGill, then, probably faced a majority of persons who could be classified as friendly, while other delegates and guests probably opposed him strongly. Of course, some probably had never heard of Ralph McGill.

**Attitude of audience toward the speech topic.** Because no topic was announced prior to McGill's speech and because no manuscript was made available, the audience's attitude toward the particular speech would have had to have been based largely on attitudes toward McGill himself. However, once the audience discovered what McGill was to say, the educators probably enjoyed his treatments of southern change, but were less receptive to his plea for more planning by educators.

**Motives of the Speaker**

Because both McGill's University of Kentucky audience and the National Education Association were closely tied to education, the same motives probably prompted McGill to speak to the NEA as had motivated him to talk in Lexington: (1) he probably thought he would enjoy
discussing social problems and their significance for educators, (2) he probably felt a sense of personal responsibility, (3) he wanted to see the South and the nation progress, (4) he probably had a difficult time saying no when invited by the NEA to speak, (5) McGill particularly enjoys talking to persons affiliated with education. There probably was one additional motivation, the esteem that would go with such an experience. McGill probably considered it an honor to be invited to speak to the NEA.

**Nature of the Speech**

Since McGill relied largely on stock materials used on numerous occasions before, it is difficult to assert what he was thinking when he prepared his Miami Beach address. Speculation, however, can be made on the basis of what he finally did say.

First, McGill probably considered his audience to be an experienced group of professionals, somewhat defensive about their own specialty and possibly skeptical towards idealistic proposals made by outsiders.

Secondly, how did McGill plan to persuade his audience? McGill seemed to be thinking how difficult it would be to counsel experienced educators in their own field. Consequently, before making suggestions, he apparently considered it important to establish good will with the educators. McGill's strategy, then, was to ensure a fair hearing, to present himself as an ally. He sought to accomplish this by convincing the delegates that, though always interested in education, he would
not presume to tell them what they should or should not do.

**Speech Preparation**

How an orator prepares his speech probably affects the effectiveness of his performance. For example, if an address has been carefully conceived, the speaker probably will present his materials as if he knows what he is talking about. Also, his ideas probably will be more easily understood. When preparing his oration, McGill drew from old speeches he had on file, paraphrased an article by Francis Keppel, and apparently wrote some material particularly for the educators.

**Old speeches.** McGill planned an address for the NEA which was similar to speeches given at Emory University, May 7, 1965, and at a Miami synagogue, January 26, 1966. Though it is not known if these were the first times these basic materials were used, they can be analyzed to demonstrate how McGill did rely on used materials. Although the Emory University talk, the synagogue speech, and the NEA address were all delivered extemporaneously, because the following materials were taken from taped recordings, comparisons represent the exact wording used by McGill on all three occasions.

The general purpose of the Emory University speech and the NEA talk were the same, to demonstrate the cause of contemporary conditions, thereby paving the way for possible solutions. Notice how McGill, in both addresses, discussed the boll weevil, using many of the same key terms:
I suppose only grey heads or semi-grey heads like mine will remember the boll weevil. . . . The boll weevil hit, roughly around 1920. . . . to destroy a crop, to destroy a way of life. It was then, in the late 20's when the tenant cabins began to be emptied, their doors sagging, their wooden shuttered windows sagging, stones falling off the old chimney.

McGill continued his description of the changing South, again his ideas and language drawn from previous speeches. Also, it can be seen that McGill often relied on personal observation:

. . . we began to see truck loads and train-loads of people being recruited to go up North and work. . . . I remember . . . seeing the sometimes pathetic efforts to contend with the boll weevil. . . . the wife and the husband and the children, carrying buckets of poison syrup with a stick and a rag tied on the end, and going down the rows of cotton touching a leaf on each plant with some of the poison syrup. . . . I'm sure some of you maybe saw in the '20's . . . how the labor recruiters were here in our area, taking people North to work.

Because McGill repeated the same statistics on different occasions he probably had confidence in data used before the NEA. Notice again McGill's use of first-hand observations:
Emory University  
May 7, 1965

We are still, in the South, a region of . . . small farmers. I can remember when we used to gather here [at Emory University] in 1930, in the '30's and talk and argue, when we did it in the forties, three-fifths of all the farms in the United States, in those years, were in the South-eastern states. . . . Why? Because so many of them were tiny, ten acres, twenty, forty . . . Today, this is changing . . . but we still have a great number of farms.

National Education Association  
June 30, 1966

And I don't know how many of us comprehended at that time that in all of this country over about 72 percent of all of its Negro population was in the Southern states. That, about three-fifths, almost three-fifths of all the farms in this whole great rich nation were in the Southeast. This meant that most of them were small, and that most of them, when the great change came, had been committed always to cotton. And cotton, as a way of life, had ceased.

In addition to the South's changing economy, McGill used materials treated in earlier speeches to show a second cause of out-migration, war:

Emory University  
May 7, 1965

. . . the great migrations were those of the First World War, and they were small compared with those which began well before the Japanese attacked us at Pearl Harbor. . . . Probably the single most dramatic phenomenon of the American people as a whole is their mobility. We are a people that move . . . And you travel America and you see trailer camps by the hundreds and thousands, and you see people on the move.

National Education Association  
June 30, 1966

And when the great tragedy of December 7, 1941, came, and it became necessary for this nation to build up and down its west coast, the great factories of war to build ships of all kinds, transports, liberty ships, landing craft . . . never have I witnessed such a migration. I suppose when historians look back at this nation they will say that one of the great phenomenon of it was its mobility, the mobility of its people. And we got used to trailer camps, and we got used to people on the move, in thousands by the thousands.

McGill likes to quote different sayings and poems; however, research shows that he usually relies on the same stock phrases. For example, notice how he paraphrases the same anonymous writer:
... never before has it [race problem] been so national a problem as now, and chiefly because of the great concentrations in the . . . cities of the nation of people who took with them, as someone said, and I wish that I might have thought of it myself, they took with them hands that were curved to fit plow handles and hoe handles, and little else. They could repair tractors . . . farm machinery, but here they went.

When McGill addressed the NEA delegates, he cited an example described at Emory University, but chose to develop that point with different type statistics:

San Francisco, for example, a city of beauty and ancient cosmopolitan attitudes and of great mixture of races. San Francisco had never had a Negro problem or a Negro population, beyond a very small one, until the second world war began . . . In a period of about ten years, from 1940 to 1950, something like ten cities gained approximately, not quite, but almost a million population, of Negro population, which had moved out of the South in a decade.

To establish his credentials, McGill usually informs his audience that he was born and reared in the South, often right before discussing a need for progress in that region:
No, I'm very proud, as you are, to be in the South. I — born just over the line in Tennessee, I've never lived or worked anywhere else except Tennessee and Georgia... but I ask you to keep in mind that we still are the poorest region, our income is still... the lowest... [Taken from newspaper column and Kentucky address.] we have had so far to go, and we're going and we're making progress... 

McGill apparently has access to Bureau of the Census data, since he nearly always relies on statistics for proof. For example, he told both audiences of the increasing number of youth:

I don't know if you have noticed the statistics, but we old people are getting rather important (laughter) in so far as the percentage of population is concerned. Almost as important, but not quite, as the young people (laughter). Almost forty percent of our total population is young and getting younger.

From the examples cited above, it can be concluded that McGill, when preparing his NEA speech, relied heavily on stock supporting materials and stock language. McGill also discussed many of these same ideas when he spoke before members of the "Congregation from Temple Beth Am and other members of the Greater Miami community," on January 26, 1966, just four months prior to his NEA talk. Only materials used in the synagogue address which were not included in the Emory
University talk, will be compared with McGill's NEA message.

For example, although McGill mentioned San Francisco at Emory University, he did not discuss the statistics cited at Temple Beth Am and before the NEA:

Temple Beth Am
January 26, 1966

. . . the second world war accelerated it [migration] all the more. There are some dramatic examples. We can take - Let's take San Francisco, a great and beautiful city, one of the most beautiful in the world, a city of great cosmopolitan character, with many races there for a long time. In 1940, it had about a Negro population of about 5,000. . . . And in a few brief years the war was over, San Francisco, the population of about 60,000 Negro population.

McGill's habit of speaking extemporaneously, with no apparent immediate preparation, probably affects his use of evidence. For example, within this five month period, McGill cited the same statistics, but credited the president of Georgia Tech on one occasion and the "State Department" when addressing the NEA:

Temple Beth Am
January 26, 1966

We were a region which didn't have the per capita income . . . for one good public school system and we set up two. And we have sacrificed our children . . . Let me use a little statistic which will illustrate it. The Georgia School of Technology, Georgia Tech . . . has been dropping

National Education Association
June 30, 1966

There they went, and the war ended, and they were distributed. One example will do, the beautiful city of San Francisco, the great cosmopolitan population, and with a history of this sort of population, found itself in 1940, '38, with a population of about 5,000 Negroes. The war was ended it was somewhere nearer 60,000.
about forty per cent ... [of its students] a few weeks ago I sat next to President Harrison of Georgia Tech. ... I then asked him ... what percentage of the high schools in Georgia today do not offer the necessary high school math ... chemistry or physics to qualify one of their graduates for Georgia Tech? He said, I'm sorry to say, but about forty-six per cent of the high schools of this state cannot qualify a boy for entrance.

McGill has a few stock quotations which he is able to relate to most any occasion. For example, a few minutes before McGill addressed the NEA, L. Eldon James quoted from a work by Robert Frost. When McGill's turn to speak came, he too relied on Frost, as if he were capable of adapting to most any poetry other speakers might use. While McGill has always liked to memorize poetry, he particularly likes this quotation, especially his own versions:

Temple Beth Am
January 26, 1966

I'm always reminded of a piece of poetry - a line or two from one of Robert Frost's poems: "A road in the woods - in the woods a road diverged, and I, I took the one less traveled by, and that made all the difference." It has been the fate of the, the Old South, let us call it, to always choose the other road. There was always an alternative, alternatives to ending slavery.

Somehow I think we might quote another [in addition to James'] line from Robert Frost. A line in which he said: "Two roads diverged in the wood, and I, I took the less traveled one, and that has made all the difference." Somehow I think this is what we have done, in this nation with regard to much of our education ... .

In summary, McGill drew heavily from materials he had used before when preparing his oration for the NEA delegates. Consequently,
he probably did little immediate preparation for this particular address.

**Article by Francis Keppel.** A second source of McGill's ideas was an article written by Francis Keppel in the *Harvard Graduate School Education Association Journal*. McGill borrowed four individuals cited by Keppel to amplify his contention that there had been a "great educational revolution" during "the past fifteen years." The information had no particular value as proof.

**Original materials.** McGill prepared a small amount of information particularly for the delegates attending the National Education Association convention. However, because McGill depended largely upon ideas expressed on other occasions, his main task in preparing his NEA oration was to adapt old materials for a new situation. For example, McGill relied on fresh ideas to adapt an often used discussion of population trends to educators:

... we see ... what a great weight and burden this policy of segregation put upon the southern people and now, by the great dispersal toward the - into the industrial areas, and into the great industrial cities upon the whole nation. The price will be heavy. It is not yet paid, and I hope that somehow education can speed up the process of acceptance of what must be done, morally, religiously, if you want to put it that way ... .

In summary, McGill's NEA speech consisted largely of information presented on former occasions, a journal article, and some new interpretative material. In fact, McGill simply stood before more than 6,500 educators and discussed issues, statistics, examples, poetry, and personal experiences which many audiences had heard before.
McGill probably was correct when, upon being asked by this writer how his speech was prepared, he stated that "I just thought about it for this audience." When McGill was asked further if he had relied on any particular speech or speeches used before, he made quite an understatement when replying, "Well, I drew out a few things."

Organization

A speech should be developed so as to be easily understood. An audience cannot be expected to respond in a particular way if they do not know what they are to do and why they should do it. An attempt is made here to evaluate the manner in which McGill organized his message for his Miami Beach listeners.

Outline of the NEA Address

The speech given by McGill in Miami may be divided into the following parts:

Purpose: Educators should plan and prepare for the future.

INTRODUCTION

I. Education has generally followed enlightened policies in the past.

DISCUSSION

I. People migrated from the South.
   A. A changing economy caused people to leave the South.
   B. The Second World War caused people to leave the South.
   C. People left without skills or education.

II. Four persons demonstrate the recent educational revolution.
   A. Senator Robert Taft: federal aid to public schools.

C. Pope John: unity of purpose and support of parochial schools.

D. Lyndon B. Johnson: federal legislation.

III. There is much that must be done in the United States.

A. There must be compliance with law.

B. There are problems which were caused by migration from the South.

C. There are riots in the cities.

D. There is inequality among school systems.

E. Educators are aware of the problems.

IV. Educators should prepare for the future.

A. What will be done to meet the needs of the future?

B. Education will have to bear the burdens of the future.

C. The increasing number of youth presents a problem for educators.

CONCLUSION

I. Appreciation expressed for the invitation to speak.

Central Theme

Failure to state a thesis probably limited the effectiveness of McGill's address. If McGill had a specific purpose, he did not reveal it; consequently, the audience probably was unable to connect McGill's general plea for more planning with the rest of his discussion. On two occasions McGill started to tell his auditors what he planned to do, but in both instances failed to complete his sentence:
I am proud of the program which is before you, the extension of school. But I wanted to talk—I wonder—I remember talking with the historian Toynbee . . .

Somehow . . . I think it important that we comprehend—as I'm sure we really do, but I would like to review something [?] that I have seen and watched happen and puzzled over and wept over and thought over.

Method of Arrangement

McGill developed his oration inductively, analyzing the cause of social evils, then offering broad suggestions concerning possible action. Failure to name a problem probably made it difficult for McGill's audience to know what his analysis was designed to do.

The second step of McGill's problem-solution development, analysis, must be evaluated in relation to his three main points. McGill's discussion of out-migration from the South was clearly presented, but not linked to an underlying proposition.

The second major point under analysis was a discussion of four personalities Francis Kepple had considered important to education. This information probably was interesting and easy to understand but, again, McGill made no attempt to connect the four personalities to his theme.

In developing the third point under analysis, McGill digressed to point out the effects of migration from the South. This repetition probably helped clarify McGill's ideas, but it also appeared that McGill was wandering about without direction. Had he connected these effects to their cause when he first brought them up, it would not only have been more economical but probably more meaningful.
McGill's solution, the final stage in his inductive development, was obscure. At the end of his speech, he tried to elevate education to a primary status in his organization, but, by that time, it was too late to relate education to all the materials discussed earlier.

McGill simply did not prepare efficiently to be able to present often used ideas and supporting materials to the educators. Because of a lack of co-ordination throughout the speech, McGill probably did not make it clear what he was trying to prove, nor what he wanted his audience to do.

Rhetorical Order

McGill probably planned to present an introduction, discussion, and conclusion. Though McGill's introduction probably supported his own credibility in the minds of his auditors, it probably did not aid audience understanding of his plan. He emphasized his personal dedication to education, but provided no definition of a problem, no statement of proposition, and no preview.

McGill's discussion can be divided into four points, but discovering their relationship to a particular theme is not easy. McGill wanted to demonstrate how society had reached its present status, then make a few general suggestions for improvement. What he actually did, however, was to clearly illustrate the cause of out-migration from the South without relating the effects of that population shift to a single problem which the educators could solve.

McGill probably had planned no particular conclusion. He told
this writer that he wanted to talk no more than thirty-five minutes; consequently, when he approached that limit, he stated that he appreciated the invitation to speak, reminded his auditors that he had no answers, but did hope they would accept the challenges they faced as educators.

Special Devices

McGill's apathy toward organizational devices probably caused his ideas to be more difficult to comprehend. To determine what action he took to make his message clearly understood, the writer analyzes here McGill's use of transitions between points, his use of guides to indicate to his audience what he is trying to do, and his treatment of rhetorical questions.

Two examples, both located in important positions, will demonstrate McGill's poor use of transitions. The first example came when McGill was about to embark on a detailed analysis of population change. Omission of a transition probably forced the audience to listen to isolated sentences until they could discover what McGill was trying to say. In the following quotation, after a brief discussion of Toynbee, McGill's major point began when he reached the date:

I remember talking with the historian Toynbee...

In 1897, we were moving toward a war with Spain. In February of 1898, a battleship was to be blown-up in the placid peaceful harbor, or seemingly so, at Havana, and within days history had taken another turn.

The second need for a transition came between McGill's discussion of population shifts and the Keppel article. McGill did not move
from one point to the other so as to co-ordinate his theme. Also, McGill failed to link the Keppel article with his proposition. For example, compare McGill's use of the Keppel article with Time's treatment of the same material. Time related the material to a specific purpose:

Frank Keppel names four intellectual influences who contributed to the revolution in education during the past 15 years. "The first," he says, "is Robert Taft . . ." That unlikely batch, in fact, helped quiet fears that federal participation in education meant federal tyranny.

Mr. Francis Keppel . . . said that he thought there were four significant figures in the great educational revolution . . . And he started . . . with . . . Senator Robert Taft . . . And you might have other figures, but he rather thought these four stood out in the past fifteen years.

McGill used guideposts in a few instances to keep his audience oriented. For example, during his discussion of Taft, Khrushchev, Pope John, and Lyndon Johnson, McGill introduced the latter three men with, "Mr. Keppel listed next . . .," "And then . . .," and, "And then he thought his fourth one was . . ." On one occasion, also, when McGill moved from past to present, he stated, "And now, today . . ."

A third technique was the rhetorical question. This was probably effective near the end of the speech, when McGill inquired about future changes: "Will they be as much? Will they be as great?" He also challenged the educators: "So what, what will we do?" "What do we do about that? How do you plan for that?"

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64Time, Vol. 86 (October 15, 1965), 61.
Organization for a Particular Audience

McGill probably made a wise decision in not informing his audience early in his speech of his belief that educators should be better prepared for days ahead. Experienced teachers and administrators probably felt they did not travel to Miami to be told that. If McGill had been able to convince his audience that a serious problem did exist, the delegates probably would have been more willing to listen to a suggested proposal, i.e., more planning for the future. Had McGill followed the problem-solution development carefully, he probably would have established the rapport needed for audience response.

In summary, McGill probably did not organize his speech so as to be easily understood. Because he failed to limit or define his subject area, his purpose probably was not clear. Although McGill supplied a few guideposts and rhetorical questions, his speech suffered from a lack of transitions, internal summaries, preview statement of his central thought, and a conclusion. McGill's ideas were disconnected and poorly thought out, requiring his auditors to search for relationships among parts, purpose, and solution.

Lines of Argument

McGill used both deduction and induction to persuade educators to plan for the next thirty-five years.

Deduction. Two basic syllogisms underlay McGill's total message.
Major premise: If social change causes problems, educators should solve those problems.
Minor premise: Social change has caused problems.
Conclusion: Educators should solve those problems.

McGill focused mainly on his minor premise, that social change has produced social problems. His strategy seemed to be based upon the assumption that if he could convince the educators that a critical problem did exist, they would then follow his suggestion. McGill's case can be stated as follows:

Proposition: Resolved, That educators should plan for the needs of the next thirty-five years, for

I. Southerners migrating to other regions of the U. S. caused social problems, because
   A. Migrating Southerners were uneducated.
   B. Migrating Southerners were unskilled.

II. Much has to be done, because
   A. The policy of segregation burdened the South.
   B. Migration of unskilled and untrained Southerners burdened the entire nation.
   C. There have been riots in the cities.
   D. There is inequality among the schools of the nation.
   E. Many Southern schools are not equipped to prepare students for college.
   F. A generation of students has been sacrificed.

III. Educators should prepare for the future, because
   A. There will be great changes in the next thirty-five years.
   B. The professions (including educators) have not done all they could to prepare for the future.
   C. Education will have to bear the greatest burden.
D. Educators have not given enough thought to the effects of the increasing number of youth.

McGill drew his arguments from a second deduction when developing his final point, that educators should plan for the next three decades. Probably thinking it would be difficult to persuade educators concerning the need for better preparation, McGill worded his argument in such a way as to appear to be speaking about several professions:

- **Major premise:** All social agents should prepare for the future.
- **Minor premise:** Education, journalism, organized labor, and the church are social agents.
- **Conclusion:** They should prepare for the future.

**Induction.** McGill followed an inductive development in presenting supporting details. Using a problem-solution method, McGill attempted to analyze historical and statistical data in order to demonstrate the causes of contemporary social needs.

McGill probably demonstrated how migration from the South led to problems in the city with his step by step description of activity on the farms. However, he probably was unable to link the effects of population trends effectively to education, waiting too late in his oration to confront his audience with his proposition. Also, since he did not define or limit the problem, his audience probably was undecided as to what McGill wanted them to think or do.

**Evaluation of causal reasoning, generalizations, and specific instances,** all of which depend on inductive reasoning, will be presented under forms of support.
Forms of Support

In Public Speaking: Principles and Practice, Gray and Braden suggested that "supporting materials for a speech may serve any one of three purposes: (1) to clarify, (2) to prove, and (3) to amplify."  

Clarification

McGill relied largely on description to enhance the attention and perception of his listeners. For example, he tried to visualize the effect of the South's changing economy during the 1920's:

I can remember how the cotton sharecropper and tenant cabins emptied, some of them burned, leaving the chimneys there like silent sentinels representing something gone, never to return. I saw the others, many of them, hundreds of them, emptied, their wooden windows . . . sagging, the doors sagging . . . the roof broken-in, the old hearth places where people had dreamed, and thought, and perhaps sorrowed, turned over, animals moving-in through the buildings - 1920's.

A second example of description was used to clarify the effect the boll weevil had on southern agriculture; McGill pictured activity on a small farm:

I remember people trying to poison cotton for the boll weevil, and seeing in the field, grandmothers, and grandfathers and wives and husbands and little children even, with a bucket of poison syrup, and a stick with a rag on it, touching a drop of this poison syrup to each plant.

Proof

Scholars usually agree that a speech should be developed with  

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specific facts and valid reasoning. In discussing his beliefs concerning education's role in modern society, McGill relied on testimony, statistics, and inferences.

**Testimony.** McGill drew support from two men, Francis Keppel, former Commissioner of Education, and L. Eldon James, commander of the American Legion. Because McGill cited the author, his qualifications, and the date of Keppel's article, he probably could assume the educators would respect the material. McGill identified Keppel as the "former Commissioner of Education," adding that the work had been published "last year." McGill, however, probably did not use Keppel's testimony to great advantage. As already noted, McGill made little effort to connect Taft, Khrushchev, Pope John, and Lyndon B. Johnson to a need for forecasting needs of the next thirty-five years.

McGill's second use of testimony was an impromptu response to what L. Eldon James, speaking immediately before McGill, had said in his "greetings" to the delegates. The value here was not the facts involved, for it was difficult to recall what James had said, but the attempt to draw support from the immediate occasion:

> I listened as the commander of the American Legion spoke, and I agree, that under this nation we must allow every person to have his dignity, human dignity. And I don't think it's fair that all of the burden should be put on education, but most of it is going to be put there.

**Statistics**

McGill's chief means of proof was statistics. Three examples will illustrate how McGill was more concerned with approximate figures
and trends than with exact data. It would be difficult to assess the effect these approximations had upon the audience; probably McGill's estimates were fairly well accepted.

First, McGill stated that "out of the South in that decade [1920's], there moved over 100,000 persons . . ." While there were "over 100,000," data taken from Census Bureau reports indicate what a drastic underestimation 100,000 was. Probably because McGill did no special research or planning for his NEA audience, he didn't come close to the exact figure. The Bureau of Census' analysis of mobility in the United States shows that only Texas and Florida increased in population between 1920 and 1930. More than 3,000,000 persons left the South during that period. In fact, each of ten states had more than 100,000 persons leaving between 1920 and 1930:

- Virginia = -1,503,531
- North Carolina = -239,634
- South Carolina = -371,559
- Georgia = -583,652
- Florida = +501,875
- Kentucky = -671,113
- Tennessee = -458,167
- Alabama = -382,783
- Mississippi = -403,363
- Arkansas = -183,284
- Louisiana = -116,939
- Texas = +356,355

McGill also used approximate data when pointing out the percentage of the total number of Negroes in the United States which

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lived in the South. Since McGill did not make clear whether he was thinking of the 1920's or the 1940's, figures for both decades are listed here. Though McGill was apparently off a few per cent, he probably was successful in demonstrating the large number of Negroes in the South:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total number of Negroes (Bureau of Census)</th>
<th>Negroes in the South (BC)</th>
<th>% (BC)</th>
<th>% McGill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>11,891,14367</td>
<td>9,361,577</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>12,865,91468</td>
<td>9,904,619</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>15,044,93768</td>
<td>10,225,407</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

McGill cited approximate figures in a third instance, this time to show how the median age of persons in the United States will be even lower in years to come. Compare the data provided by the Bureau of Census with those discussed by McGill:

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### Bureau of Census Predictions 70

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Median Age of Both Sexes</th>
<th>McGill's Dates and Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Series A</strong> (High fertility)</td>
<td>1967 = 30 years or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 = 27.8 years</td>
<td>1972 = 25 years or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 = 26.4 years</td>
<td>1975 = 25.9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Series D</strong> (Low fertility)</td>
<td>1967 = 30 years or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 = 28.1 years</td>
<td>1972 = 25 years or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970 = 27.4 years</td>
<td>1975 = 27.5 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, McGill, without the use of notes, relied heavily upon statistics for support. Though his statistics were not exact, they were not too far off and did seem to indicate a reliable trend. Although his estimate of how many persons left the South was far below the correct figure, even here he was conservative in his estimate and probably effective in demonstrating that Southerners were on the move.

### Inferences

In addition to statistics, McGill tried to support his contentions with materials which would be interesting to the audience. Relying on personal experiences, McGill cited examples of his tours in city slums. He also drew inferences from generalizations, causal reasoning, and analogies.

Examples. McGill chose specific instances to prove his contention that migration of workers from the South had affected the urban centers. If one assumed that McGill's statistics were valid, his analysis of population shifts in San Francisco probably was convincing. However, McGill probably would have strengthened his argument had he supplied data pertaining to the other cities named. Instead, he generalized that the same population trend found in San Francisco also was experienced in other cities:

One example will do, the beautiful city of San Francisco, the great cosmopolitan population, and with a history of this sort of population, found itself in 1940, '38 with a population of about 5,000 Negroes. The war was ended it was somewhere nearer 60,000. Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburg, Tacoma, Seattle, Atlanta. All over the country this was the story.

Generalization. McGill used three unsupported generalizations in developing his ideas. Unless the audience respected McGill enough to believe him on his own merit, the following contentions may have suffered from lack of support. First, McGill made bold claims without use of support:

We see . . . in my region . . . so many people who never had a chance at education, who never had a chance at skills, who never had a chance to learn to be a voter, who never had a chance to participate in . . . community affairs and learn something of citizenship . . .

A second example of unsupported assertion was McGill's statement that "we have discovered in this time of self-examination how very wide the gulf is between the schools of some of our inner-city situations, and those of the suburbs. We know the inequities of tax support."

Although McGill could probably assume many of the delegates would know
of some of the problems he listed, McGill probably would have been more convincing had he been better prepared to provide support.

A third use of unsupported generalization was McGill's personal opinion that three professions (journalism, organized labor, church) had generally done poorly in meeting the needs of society. Not only did he give no evidence, he made no suggestions as to what those agents should be doing.

**Causal reasoning.** McGill followed a problem-solution development; consequently, he hoped to demonstrate what caused existing problems. Specifically, McGill, moving from cause to effect, tried to convince his audience that migration of unskilled and uneducated workers from the South caused social evils. He probably made it clear that the South's changing economy and World War II had caused migration, but probably was too vague in his treatment of specific problems brought about by that population shift.

**Analogy.** In addition to examples, generalizations, and causal reasoning, there was a fourth type of inference, analogy. McGill selected a comparison to convince his auditors that they should adjust to the increasing number of youth, just as manufacturers had done; education was compared with cosmetics, and educators with manufacturers.

We've seen two magazines, supported by teenagers, *Seventeen*, *Mademoiselle*; we have watched great national manufacturers become wealthy, manufacturing clothing, cosmetics for teenagers, and yet we have paid very little attention to what impact this will have on politics . . . on education . . . on the church.
Amplification. In concert with clarification and proof, McGill had two methods of amplifying his ideas, quotations and rhetorical questions. First, McGill quoted one of his favorite sayings, using the passage to present himself as a man of humility and also to extend his idea: "Lord, give me this day my daily idea and forgive me the one I had yesterday (laughter)."

Secondly, McGill used rhetorical questions to amplify his points. Questions used at the end of the address probably were effective in stimulating the audience to consider McGill's contention: "... we can wonder what changes will happen to us in the thirty-five years ahead. Will they be as much? Will they be as great? What are we going to do . . . ."

In summary, McGill chose materials to aid in clarification, proof, and amplification. Description and rhetorical questions probably were effective, but statistics and inferences were used recklessly. Also, failure to co-ordinate piecemeal data with main points, and with a proposition, probably seriously limited the audience's ability to connect McGill's forms of support with a central theme.

Motive Appeals

Effective speakers usually are successful in appealing to the needs, interests, goals, and beliefs of a particular audience. McGill tried to show how the delegates could be of benefit to other people, the opportunity they had to exercise leadership, how his proposal would lead to fair play, and how the educators could increase their material possessions.
Benefit to others. Throughout McGill's address, he conveyed the attitude and belief that something had to be done to help persons in need. Near the end of his speech, he put this concern in the form of an appeal, using such loaded terms as "children" and "sacrifice" to dramatize his point:

... the great job is there. A generation of children in many areas have been sacrificed to very poor quality of schools. This has reached up into the inner-cities, so-called, of most of the cities of this nation, the effect of it, the presence of it is there. And it thrills me, and excites me, that education is recognizing this, and that education is at least, is aware of it, and that the nation, I believe and hope, increasingly has this on its conscience.

Opportunity to lead. A second appeal was a challenge to the delegates to accept the major burden brought on by social change. Because McGill is usually hesitant to make a direct suggestion or criticism, he placed himself on the side of his audience:

And I don't think it's fair that all of the burden should be put on education, but most of it is going to be put there. I don't know how we will do it, how you will do it, unless you could ... somehow summon up more help ... and I hope that somehow education can speed up the process of acceptance of what must be done . . .

McGill, near the close of his oration, repeated this basic appeal for action and leadership:

... it's going to be put more and more upon your shoulders ... and my, I wonder and hope whether you will, and I hope and pray you will have enough help.

Sense of fair play. McGill also appealed to his auditors' sense of fair play, carefully wording his statement to cover different standards upon which individuals could decide in their own mind
whether something were right. In other words, McGill was saying that segregation was wrong whether one judged it on the basis of ethical, spiritual, or judicial criteria:

\[ \ldots \text{we see} \ldots \text{what a great weight and burden this policy of segregation put upon the Southern people and} \ldots \text{the industrial areas}. \ldots \text{I hope that somehow education can speed up the process} \ldots \text{of what must be done, morally, religiously, if you want to put it that way, and legally}. \ldots \]

Ownership. McGill's fourth motive appeal benefited from the audience's concern for personal profit. McGill had been speaking for more than twenty minutes, able only to stimulate one overt burst of laughter. Then, drawing from the attitudes, beliefs, and goals of his audience, McGill spoke one brief sentence which struck a nerve. He didn't have to fill in the details concerning higher salaries, better facilities, and larger buildings; the audience did that for him. A person simply reading McGill's text, probably would never guess what an immediate and meaningful response he got when he said: "It seems to me that we ought to begin to say that taxes are the price you pay for civilization. And--(applause)"

In summary, McGill probably was effective with his motive appeals. His emphasis was upon how the delegates could be of service to their country. He visualized for his audience the great opportunity they had to make an impressive contribution to society. Had he been able to link his theme more with the audience's interest in and need for money, McGill probably would have been even more successful.
Speaker Credibility

Whether members of the audience accepted McGill as a reliable source, probably depended upon their attitude toward him before the speech and their reaction to what he said during the talk. Delegates had at least two sources of information concerning McGill prior to his address, the Official Program and President Batchelder's introduction.

The Program provided an impressive list of credentials, including McGill's travels, newspaper experience, and interest in politics. However, the important part probably was the statement concerning McGill's interest in "young people--their education and future" and his participation "on various education committees." The second source of information available before McGill's speech was Batchelder's introduction. After reminding the delegates of the credentials in the Program, Batchelder stated that McGill was not only Emerson's "Man Thinking" but also a man in action, a model for all persons in the field of journalism to emulate. Before McGill spoke, then, the educators were quite aware of his extensive travels, newspaper work, impressive awards, and interest in education. Consequently, unless a delegate disliked McGill already, he probably looked forward to hearing from such a distinguished southerner.

McGill's ability as a speaker should be determined on the basis of what he did during the speech to aid his own credibility in the minds of his audience. Credibility can be discussed under three headings, character, intelligence, and good will.
Character

An orator's success depends in part upon what the listeners think about him as a reliable source. To portray himself as a man of integrity, McGill attempted to convince his audience that he was humble and that he had benefited from important personal experiences.

Humility. Apparently thinking it would not be easy to speak authoritatively about education to delegates of the NEA, McGill attempted to picture himself as a humble writer. The following statements probably caused the delegates to see McGill as a man of good character and thus a believable source.

First, McGill expressed his own interests in and respect for education, implying that journalists would do well to serve as educators. He was careful to point out, however, that he would not be so bold as to claim the role of an educator:

I have a feeling always that a responsible newspaper writer . . . or editorial columnist is in some sense occupying the role of a teacher. I am not saying they are teachers, but that they fill a somewhat similar role, in that what they write, I think, should stimulate discussion, inquiry, more reading, more study, a seeking for more information . . .

McGill's second attempt to picture himself as a believable source came when he stated again that he would not pretend to be an educator, but was interested in education:

. . . I would not have you think that I am presumptuous enough to stand here in any--with any idea that I am an educator or that I really know anything about education. It is something that has been close to my heart and interests; I have tried to learn something about it. I have traveled a great deal visiting schools and trying to inquire into problems and to learn them.
At the close of his address, McGill repeated his assertion that he really had no answers, but was only a humble writer trying to find a few answers. Because McGill attempted throughout his speech to picture himself as a friend, interested only in seeking ways to progress, his audience probably was more receptive: "Again, I, I'm here as just a working newspaper man. I don't know the answers. I can't find them yet, I keep looking . . ."

McGill also demonstrated his humility in a different fashion, by criticizing his own region, state, and profession. The audience probably reasoned that if McGill were objective enough to evaluate the South, Georgia, and journalism, he probably could be believed when he tackled other issues:

We see now that in my region, which has exported so much, so many people who never had a chance at education, who never had a chance at skills, who never had a chance to learn to be a voter . . .

. . . about forty-six per cent of the high schools in my state . . . can not prepare a youngster to get into Georgia Tech because . . . they don't offer the advanced high school math or the advanced chemistry . . .

I wonder in my own profession which I think has done, on the whole, a very poor job of interpreting this to the nation, with certain notable exceptions.

**Personal experiences.** McGill, when addressing members of the NEA, followed his usual procedure of relying on first-hand observations. Consequently, many of the auditors probably were more willing to believe McGill, since he had actually witnessed much of what he discussed. First, McGill let it be known that he knew his way around among reputable scholars: "I remember talking with the historian
Toynbee, when he came to my city on a visit."

Second, notice how McGill continuously reminded his listeners of his credentials during his discussion of the changing South:

I can remember the boll weevil decade. . . . But I can remember how the cotton sharecropper and tenant cabins emptied. . . . I saw the others, many of them . . . I remember people trying to poison cotton. . . . And I remember watching the labor recruiters . . . never have I witnessed such a migration. . . . I remember one of our writers . . .

A third example of personal experience was McGill's effort to reveal his competence in the area of city life:

. . . in the last three or four years I have spent some time and weeks going to the great cities and seeing what is happening in these areas. Not bad people, some bad people. . . . they are, white, Negro, great white slums too, 15, 20,000 in one I have in mind . . .

A fourth personal experience was mentioned in McGill's stock paragraph relating to his Southern birthright, reminding his listeners why he should be considered an authority on Southern issues:

. . . as a Southerner, born in Tennessee, in Atlanta, Georgia for 37, almost 37 years now, I've known nothing else, in so far as birthright is concerned, but the South. I have a great love for that region.

Intelligence

A speaker's ability to handle complicated issues and factual information is also an index of his credibility. An audience is more apt to believe an orator who appears to know what he is talking about. McGill's use of supporting materials and his treatment of organization, two indices of his good sense, have been discussed above. However, his general ability to handle those canons should be noted here. If
McGill's audience assumed his supporting statistics to be valid, they probably were impressed by his ability to cite numbers without notes. However, those few educators who may have recognized McGill's approximate figures might have questioned some of his conclusions.

Organization probably affected McGill's reputation as a man of intelligence too. Because he did not limit his subject carefully and because he rambled, McGill may not have impressed his listeners as much as he might have with a well conceived message.

McGill's ability to cite personal experiences and to relate those examples to his audience, probably caused his listeners to consider him a well qualified speaker.

**Good Will**

McGill probably demonstrated good will by recognizing the importance of the occasion and audience, by telling of his respect for education, and by complimenting his audience.

McGill began quite impressively, telling his audience of the high esteem he had for the occasion and association:

President Batchelder, officers of this association, ladies and gentlemen. I appreciate your president's gracious introduction. I must say to you in all candor that I appreciate the opportunity of speaking to this organization and this convention more than any other invitation I have had.

Secondly, McGill used a personal note in informing the delegates of his admiration for education. This also probably increased McGill's credibility in the minds of his auditors, since it certainly cast McGill in the role of an ally:
When I was a boy of about eleven my father who had moved from a farm in north of Chattanooga, Tennessee . . . when his first two children were born to get where there was [sic] some schools. He had--That generation had a great passion for education, and a respect and an admiration for it which he transmitted as best he could to his children.

Finally, McGill recognized progress which had been made in the field of education, contributing further to his friendship with the audience, and probably causing them to be more receptive to his proposals: "And it thrills me, and excites me, that education is recognizing this, and that education is at least, is aware of it . . . ."

In summary, other than his careless treatment of statistics, McGill probably was very effective in convincing his auditors that he was a credible source. Particularly did he seem apt at presenting himself as a gentleman of modesty, humility, and deeply concerned with the nation's progress. However, inaccurate statistics, poor structure, and severe criticism of southern states, probably limited McGill's credibility in the minds of many delegates and guests.

Delivery

McGill demonstrated his obvious confidence in himself by speaking to about 6,500 national educators without the aid of manuscript. To determine how effectively McGill presented his address, the writer will consider his method of delivery, his physical appearance while speaking, and his vocal activity.

Method of Delivery

McGill employed an extemporaneous mode of delivery, using no notes. Relying strictly on memory, McGill repeated the same basic
ideas, quotations, personal experiences, and language he had used on at least two earlier occasions. Immediately after the speech, this writer asked to see McGill's notes and he replied that he had used none. When asked why he had glanced down a few times, he stated that it was to check his watch.

Physical Aspects of Delivery

McGill stood at the front of a wide stage and looked directly at his audience. Persons seated throughout the huge convention hall heard him all the time he talked. What part did McGill's physical activity play in the effect of his oration?

General appearance. When McGill spoke before the NEA convention, he was well-groomed, smartly attired, and, for a man sixty-nine years old, appeared in good physical condition.

McGill was appropriately dressed for the occasion. As can be seen in Figure 5, he wore a light, striped coat and, like President Batchelder, a black bow tie, white shirt, and red carnation. His hair was freshly cut and he appeared fresh and clean, as if just emerging from a hot shower. McGill's appearance impressed one as if he were alert and ready to speak. He appeared to be well-proportioned physically, stockily built and quite masculine.

Bodily Actions

McGill used little bodily activity in communicating with his audience. This writer recorded McGill's movements, and was impressed with how little he actually gestured and moved about. He did not move
Figure 5

Close Up of McGill Speaking to the National Education Association
his feet at all, remaining in one position behind the large rostrum and microphone.

McGill usually looked straight ahead, turning his head to the right, then back to the left to emphasize one point, and looking to his right-front only once or twice (Figure 5). He appeared to be particularly conscious of the amplification system, as if he had been instructed to talk "right into" the microphone. Because of this, he generally ignored about two hundred people sitting in small sections to his immediate right and left. Also, he looked only once or twice at 1,000 persons sitting in large sections to his left-front, and the same number to his right-front. If the decision was a choice between looking at those persons and being heard, McGill made the wiser choice by facing the microphone. McGill, however, seemed to be stuck in one position unnecessarily, since persons speaking before him moved freely and were easily understood. During about four-fifths of his address, McGill's physical position was exactly like that shown in Figure 6.

What gestures did this writer observe? In one instance, McGill extended his right arm to his right-front, a couple of inches above the rostrum, palm up, and massive fingers out-stretched toward the ceiling and curved in a relaxed manner, as if holding a softball. On one other occasion he emphasized a point by extending both arms and hands in the manner just described. Then, to further emphasize a point, McGill, his right arm extended to his right-front, a couple of inches above the rostrum, clenched his fist; he did not shake nor move his fist in anyway. This clenched fist came when McGill stated, "I, I
Figure 6

Profile of McGill Speaking to the National Education Association
wish we could take our minds off of the violence . . ."

McGill probably used facial expressions effectively (for those persons close enough to see), revealing deep concern for his topic. He would wrinkle his brow, then close his eyes partially to emphasize an idea, remaining nearly always in a very serious mood. Only in one or two instances did McGill smile, when he mentioned the way "national manufacturers" had "become wealthy, manufacturing clothing" and "cosmetics for teenagers."

Voice

One of the noticeable aspects of McGill's oratory is his voice. Persons who have heard McGill speak often comment upon his raspy vocal activity. His voice activity probably had something to do with the way the NEA audience responded; consequently, it is analyzed here.

Quality. McGill's voice quality probably was at its best during the NEA speech. He had no cold, cough, or laryngitis, and only cleared his throat once or twice. Consequently, his husky, raspy quality sounded more individualistic, than irritating or unbearable.

Pitch. McGill's pitch, like his voice quality, set him apart from other speakers. As demonstrated in Chapter Four, McGill prolongs his vowels, gliding from a low to high level, then down again. Or, he holds a vowel on one level of pitch. For example, in his NEA speech, McGill emphasized the following sounds by use of exaggerated pitch inflections: gave, burn, review, decade, great, move, curved, all, schools, failed, he, mule, improved, Tennessee, chose, and now.
McGill experienced no problem controlling his pitch variety, as had been true on previous occasions. Rather, his inflection demonstrated concern for his topic, and probably made the speech more interesting for the audience.

**Rate.** McGill's general fluency was better during his NEA performance than in recordings of speeches made at Emory University in 1959, possibly because of the formality of the national convention. Consequently, his rate was more uniform, adding to the coherence of his ideas. McGill moved at a very deliberate pace, and most of the delegates and guests probably were able to follow his chain of thought without difficulty. Some of McGill's pauses were meaningful, but others were too long and served no apparent purpose.

**Volume.** Because of an efficient amplification system, McGill was probably easily heard throughout the large hall. Persons sitting in the rear told this writer they had been able to hear McGill, but not some of the speakers who talked earlier in the week. Also, McGill's volume seemed varied, as in normal conversational speech, probably contributing to the interest of his audience.

**Articulation.** During a careful study of the taped recording of McGill's NEA oration, this writer discovered no sign of McGill's inability to form standard southern speech sounds. However, educators gathered from throughout the country may have disagreed with this judgment.
Pronunciation. While McGill's pronunciation was generally good, there were instances of what might be considered substandard Southern speech. For example, McGill said "hanl," instead of "handle," and "what-a," in place of "what do we;" consequently, those words were not easily recognized.

Style

A speaker's choice of words probably determines whether an audience will understand and appreciate his message. Since McGill chose to talk about education to educators, it probably was important that he present his ideas in a fresh style. How effective McGill was will be determined on the basis of clarity and impressiveness.

Clarity

A speaker's word choice should aid the audience in understanding his ideas. To determine whether McGill was perspicuous when addressing the NEA, his language will be judged on the basis of word choice and sentence structure.

Word choice. Three factors contributed to the effectiveness of McGill's choice of words: command of language, referents, and concreteness. In a few instances, McGill's inability to find the right word probably caused his point to be obscure. The first example of McGill's poor command of language came when he attempted to state his purpose. Notice how McGill changed his mind three times in the first nine words of his sentence, and even then, he did not state what he hoped to do: "But I wanted to talk--I wonder--I remember talking with the historian
Toynbee ..."

A second example demonstrates how McGill's poor word choice probably misled the audience. Because his thinking and speaking were not always co-ordinated, McGill sent his auditors off mentally in one direction, then abruptly changed his mind. In this particular example, where McGill was at his worst, he changed directions several times:

But more particularly Pope John because he said there ought to be a united—that the church—the people who worship Christian—in Christian churches, should have more unity, and should approach the problems of their communities in a greater unity.

In addition to language control, McGill had a second problem with word choice, using key terms which had no obvious referent. First, obscure words probably made McGill's causal relationships difficult to follow. For example, after a general description of the South's mobility, McGill wanted to show how population changes had affected large cities. To do this, he referred back to "this sort of population," which probably had little meaning for his audience, since he had analyzed no particular type population.

A second example of vague language affected McGill's proposed solution to social problems. Because of vague words, he actually made no concrete proposal: "... and I hope that somehow education can speed up the process of acceptance of what must be done ..."

Although McGill often had difficulty with word choice and did use some vague terms, his message probably benefited at times by his concrete language. For example, McGill used words which probably conveyed definite meaning when he described southern change:
And I remember watching the labor recruiters get their crowds together in country towns and in cities, and seeing whole train loads, and bus loads of people move out, mostly Negroes, but not all, always a mixture of the poor white farmer who was going.

Secondly, McGill applied concrete language in pointing out the effects of World War II, probably enabling his audience to remember his ideas more easily:

And when the tragedy of December 7, 1941, came, and it became necessary for this nation to build up and down its west coast,--the great factories of war to build ships of all kinds, transports, liberty ships, landing craft, thousands of aircraft, weapons, materials of war . . .

**Sentence structure.** In addition to word choice, a second factor important to McGill's clarity was structure of sentences. For example, when McGill told of his personal experiences in cities, he omitted the subject of the sentence, leaving his audience to search for the main idea. Also, the sentence was too long and covered so many topics that it probably was obscure:

Not bad people, some bad people, but a lot of lost people so to speak who lost their ties to the land which they could never get back again because their way of life is [sic] gone, who were picked up by the great, engines of war so to speak and put down, and there they are, white, Negro, great white slums too, 15, 20,000 in one I have in mind, all with a great deal of pathos.

A second example demonstrates how McGill made his sentences unnecessarily complicated, probably delaying the sense of his statement too long:

And now, today, we see still, not only in the little Southern towns and the big Southern cities, where, still there are some white toughs who will jeer and curse and hurl rocks and stones—we still, we see in some of the great cities, in expansion and
breaking out of riots, in those intolerable slums, that, there is a lot to be done.

In summary, McGill's difficulty in finding the right word and his use of terms without referents, probably served as an obstacle to communication. However, McGill's use of concrete terms when describing personal experiences probably arrested the attention of his auditors.

**Impressiveness**

McGill's ability to handle words artistically will be determined by his application of imagery, figures of speech, and alliteration.

**Imagery.** McGill has repeated his discussion of the changing South so often that he relies generally upon the same ideas and language wherever he speaks. Because of this practice, he probably is effective in painting pictures of the South.

The following examples demonstrate how McGill used several types of imagery: kinesthetic, auditory, olfactory, thermal, tactile, gustatory, and visual:

But I can remember how the cotton sharecropper and tenant cabins emptied, some of them burned, leaving the chimneys there like silent sentinels representing something gone, never to return. I saw the others, many of them, hundreds of them emptied, their wooden windows . . . sagging, the doors sagging . . . the roof broken in, the old hearth places where people had dreamed, and thought, and perhaps sorrowed, turned over, animals moving in through the buildings--1920's.

I remember people trying to poison cotton for the boll weevil, and seeing in the fields, grandmothers and grandfathers and wives and husbands and little children even, with a bucket of poison
syrup, and a stick with a rag on it, touching a drop of this poison syrup to each plant.

I remember one of our writers watching train loads of people leave off of these small farms, out of these emptied cabins, out of the small towns. He wrote of them, that they left, and he seemed to see that their hands were still curved to fit a plow handle or a hoe handle, and that he felt like weeping, because all they were taking with them was a small skill of a small farm, and they had not had much chance at education.

**Figures of speech.** Besides types of images, McGill also adorned his ideas with figurative language, several examples of which will be provided here.

1. **Apophasia.** McGill often serves his own credibility by making modest claims. It is probably true, however, that he "pretends to conceal . . . what he really and in fact declares."71

   "... I would not have you think that I am presumptuous enough to stand here in any--with any idea that I am an educator or that I really know anything about education. It is something that has been close to my heart and interests; I have tried to learn something about it. I have traveled a great deal visiting schools and trying to inquire into problems and to learn them.

2. **Periphrasis.** McGill is very sensitive about mentioning his audience directly; consequently, he will "use more words than what are absolutely necessary, and sometimes less plain words . . . to avoid some inconvenience and ill effect . . . ."72 For example, McGill began


72Ibid.
telling the educators that he would discuss the South so they could better "comprehend" what had happened. After realizing, however, that he might offend the knowledgeable auditors, he changed his mind in the middle of the sentence:

. . . and I think it important that we comprehend--as I'm sure we really do, but I would like to review something that I have seen . . .

3. **Epanaphora.** There was one rather dramatic point, when McGill "gracefully and emphatically repeated"73 words concerning his love for the South, citing his credentials for criticizing his own region:

Now, certainly, as a Southerner, born in Tennessee, in Atlanta . . . almost 37 years now . . . I have a great love for that region. I have a great respect for . . . its progress, but I must most earnestly say that we have far to go, far to go.

4. **Metaphor.** McGill used a metaphor "by which a word is removed from its proper signification into another meaning . . ."74 For example, he probably made the effects of a changing South appear more vivid, when he stated "I hope we see . . . that this [migration] produced the harvest of today." To dramatize one of the causes of this migration, McGill spoke of Southerners "who were picked up by the great engines of war . . ."

**Alliteration.** In addition to imagery and figurative language, McGill employed alliteration as aids to language and delivery. McGill probably tried to repeat the same sound at the beginning of two or more


consecutive words or of words near one another, hoping to adorn his ideas, and make his delivery flow more smoothly. Several examples may demonstrate that McGill probably was effective in using alliteration:

. . . he would have felt that history had happened and he would have felt that it had happened to him and his region.

In February of 1898, a battleship was to be blown up in the placid, peaceful harbor . . .

But I can remember how the cotton sharecropper and tenant cabins emptied . . . leaving the chimneys there like silent sentinels representing something gone, never to return.

I saw the others . . . their wooden windows . . . sagging . . .

. . . most of them [farms] were small, and . . . most of them, when the great change came, had been committed always to cotton. And cotton, as a way of life had ceased.

. . . at a time when we had seventy-two per cent of all the Negroes in America in our region, we chose, out of heaven knows what disaster of decision, to try to have two systems . . .

In summary, McGill probably made his speech considerably more attractive and interesting with images, figures of speech, and alliteration, particular in his treatment of conditions in the South. These tools probably contributed to the overall purpose of his first major point, to describe in detail how migration from the South caused problems in the cities.

**Effectiveness**

McGill's speech effectiveness will be judged on the basis of audience response, craftsmanship, and McGill's own speech theory.

**Audience Response**

A public speech may achieve both an immediate and a long-range
response; however, since McGill's NEA address was only recently presented, evaluation must be based on short-range results. Because McGill made no single proposal, he probably won no particular response. He discussed desegregation, riots, unequal schools, and increased population.

What was the immediate response of McGill's audience? McGill stimulated some laughter and a little applause, but his greatest achievement probably was to hold the attention of a tired audience. Following the address, the audience reacted with standing applause; however, since the educators had applauded everything from exiting children to a gaudy colored coat, applause probably meant no more than a sign of friendship and courtesy. It should be noted, though, that McGill was apparently attended with interest.

Was there a connection between McGill's plea for "education" to "speed up the process of acceptance" of segregation, and the resolution passed by the delegates the following morning (expulsion of segregated NEA affiliates)? No causal relationship was probable, since the delegates expressed strong favorable opinions earlier in the week, before McGill's address.

Evidence shows that McGill favorably impressed at least some members of his audience. Immediately after McGill's oration, this writer distributed five hundred post card questionnaires to persons while they waited to leave the Convention Hall. One hundred and forty-six were returned, including forty-three from Southern states (Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina),
and the rest from outside the South. Results will be listed below, comparing the response of all one hundred and forty-six respondents (including those from the South) with those from the South only.

The writer sought information concerning general effectiveness, clarity, and proof. One hundred and nine of one hundred and forty-six rated his ability to prove his point either good or superior. Also, though McGill's structure, by traditional standards, was generally poor, one hundred and twenty-four ranked him either good or superior. However, since the responses probably reflected personal bias, it may be significant that the one hundred and forty-six respondents, many of whom probably were friendly toward McGill, only ranked him superior as a speaker in thirty-three instances.

If the questionnaires did reflect personal attitude toward the speaker, McGill had some adversaries. For example, although only twenty-nine per cent of the one hundred and forty-six respondents were Southerners, that region accounted for forty-eight per cent of all the ratings in the "poor" and "fair" bracket. However, it must be clearly understood that the sample was not randomly selected, nor was its size sufficient to permit statistical inferences about the 6,500 persons who heard McGill speak. However, restricting all discussion to the one hundred and forty-six persons who did respond, it is interesting to note that McGill was rated very high by the sample group as a whole, while Southerners were largely responsible for the lower marks.
1. On the basis of this speech, how would you rate Ralph McGill as a speaker? Circle one:

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>poor</th>
<th>fair</th>
<th>adequate</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>33</td>
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<td>South (43)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
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</table>

2. Were McGill's ideas presented so as to be clearly understood?

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<th></th>
<th>3</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>64</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How conclusively did McGill prove his point(s)?

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<th>8</th>
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<th>21</th>
<th>57</th>
<th>52</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Craftsmanship

Because McGill apparently used materials he had relied on before, he probably made little immediate preparation for his NEA address; consequently his speech at times was rambling and generally disorganized. Had his message been more carefully conceived and rehearsed, McGill's oration might have been more easily understood.

Delivery probably was McGill's greatest asset, since he spoke with considerable poise and confidence, his voice generally contributing to his communication of ideas. Although McGill did not recognize persons seated in certain areas of the huge hall, he did address his words to the audience, demonstrating a sincere interest both in his audience and his subject. Consequently, as this writer closely observed, McGill arrested the apparent attention of a somewhat tired audience.
McGill probably impressed his audience with his ability to cite numerous figures without use of notes. Though some of his statistics were only estimates, his facts were not too far off and they generally reflected a correct trend. McGill's ability to picture himself as a humble, modest, experienced, concerned, and thus, believable source, probably won him the respect of his auditors. Also, his attitude of inquiry probably caused some members to drop their mental guards, permitting McGill at least a fair hearing.

**McGill's Speech Theory**

McGill did poorly by many of his own standards, but ranked high on others. First, McGill did not prepare a speech especially for the NEA, as his theory requires. Second, McGill did not give enough attention to language choice, forgetting his belief that "words mean quite different things to different people." Third, McGill did not seriously consider ways to make his message easily understood. Fourth, statistics were not selected and adapted for a particular audience. Fifth, McGill did not adapt a well conceived message for an immediate occasion.

McGill did better with other tenets of his theory. First, his speech was adapted to the speaker, particularly his informal, extemporaneous presentation of personal experiences. Second, he was intellectually honest, in that he criticized society objectively, even his own state, region, and profession. Third, McGill definitely used "plain talk," i.e., he presented important ideas in an informal, unaffected manner. Fourth, he did not use a manuscript, thus conforming with his theory. Fifth, McGill did extremely well in speaking with an attitude
of inquiry, admitting he had no "answers," but was still "looking."
Sixth, McGill demonstrated an appreciation for words. Seventh, McGill
took advantage of an opportunity to speak, thus using speaker-initia­tive.

Was McGill effective? Because of his reputation and his abil­ity to appear credible, McGill certainly must have won the attention
and respect of the majority of the nationally oriented educators. Con­sequently, he probably caused the delegates to think seriously about
the problems of the nation and the role they should play. However, be­cause his speech was not well organized, McGill's listeners probably
did not understand exactly what McGill wanted them to do.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Research has revealed Ralph McGill as a man of integrity, good will, intelligence, courage, and purpose. Persons who concur with McGill's concern for human rights have demonstrated great trust and loyalty in the world-known Southerner from Atlanta. For example, twenty-eight of thirty-six people responding to an inquiry pertaining to McGill's speech at Emory University, May 7, 1965, expressed their respect:

I think Mr. McGill is outstanding as a clear thinker on social issues. His perspective of background information about the South is unmatched in my humble opinion.

Fairly complete agreement [with McGill]. It is hard to see how anyone with a sense of fair play, morality, and Christian ethics could feel any other way.

He has shown more "Guts" than practically all Bible-belt preachers put together. He has been a leader of thought in an intellectual desert.1

While McGill's credibility may attract friendly auditors, he is often disappointing in his speaking performance. For example, a teacher, educated in Connecticut and Paris, France, gave her reaction to McGill's Emory oration:

I still considered him a great man but not an orator. In this respect I was a little disappointed. I had very much looked

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1Information sent this writer by three persons attending McGill's speech at Emory University, during a series, "The South in Transition," May 7, 1965, Atlanta, Georgia.
forward to hearing him speak ever since I read the excerpts of his book (The South and the Southerner) in the Atlantic magazine and at the end of the evening I felt Mr. [Calvin] Kytle gave the best speech (he spoke earlier in the Emory series [the South in Transition]).

McGill's speech effectiveness probably has been restricted in two ways: (1) he has not seriously searched for "available means of persuasion," and (2) he has not adapted his messages to an oral mode of communication.

Available means of persuasion. There are probably two reasons why McGill has not worked more diligently toward an art of persuasion. First, McGill has not committed himself to the discipline of oratory. For example, he told this writer that he was "in no sense an orator," nor was he in the "speaking business," but looked upon oratory as a "supplement" to his "work" at the Atlanta Constitution.

Grace Lundy, McGill's secretary since 1946, and the sole helper with his addresses, agreed that he was not committed to the art of speaking. On September 15, 1965, Miss Lundy wrote that "Mr. McGill does not take himself at all seriously about being a speaker . . . ." On July 27, 1966, Miss Lundy made a similar observation, implying that because McGill did not devote more time to speech preparation, he should not be called an orator:

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2Ibid.

3Taped interview with Ralph McGill, Atlanta, December 29, 1965.

4Letter to this writer, September 15, 1965, Atlanta.
. . . Mr. McGill does not commit himself, except most infrequently, to talks that require written manuscripts. He just doesn't have time to get them ready.

In fact, you might say you did your dissertation on a speaker who is not a speaker. Mr. McGill does not consider himself a speaker; he simply goes and takes part on a program to make a talk when he is called upon; he looks on it as more of a participation in community life, but he particularly enjoys meeting with student groups and discussing with them—more than "speaking" to them. He always feels honored to be invited to make lectures, as the universities and colleges and organizations like the Mass. Hist. Society call it; even though he does not call himself a speaker.5

In addition to lack of commitment, a second reason why McGill has not seriously pursued an art of persuasion is his role in society. Because of a speech personality which shuns techniques of the omnipotent crusader, McGill assumes the role of an inquiring social critic. Because of his dislike for "podium prancers" and "spellbinders," McGill takes the other extreme, giving little thought to the art of public speaking.

McGill, then, because of a lack of commitment to oratory and because of his personal role in society, has avoided many available means of persuasion.

Oral mode of communication. McGill's failure to distinguish between oral and written communication has also limited his speaking effectiveness. McGill is able to present ideas in his Atlanta Constitution column, knowing his readers can take whatever time required to comprehend his thesis. However, he probably varies his approach very little when writing a speech. For example, McGill told this writer

5Letter to this writer, July 27, 1966, Atlanta.
that constructing an oration "isn't like writing a news story, but not a great deal of difference between a speech and writing a newspaper article, I don't think." 6

McGill's general lack of awareness of an oral mode of communication is revealed in his consideration of organization. For example, although McGill has written hundreds of speeches, when asked by this writer how he consciously organized his ideas, he had difficulty answering:

Ah--well, I think I--I hadn't thought about that. I think that I probably approach it as I would writing a column or a feature story in that you try to open with something that will attract attention, then if you can--I guess this is what everybody does, so that's no new idea. Then, I don't know, sometimes--it depends on the audience, also on the subject. 7

What is the practical effect of McGill's abuse of oral methods of communication? Sturgis Bates, law student at Emory University, and in his "17th year" of education, pointedly defined McGill's limitation as an oral communicator:

Ralph McGill, to my mind, is one of the giant intellects of the South of today. . . .
I have heard McGill speak on several occasions before. My reactions have not changed since the first time. McGill is a writer, not a speaker. The oratory that flows so easily from some people is almost totally lacking in him. He does not seem to have the "presence" necessary to the truly effective public speakers. The spoken word simply does not allow the presentation of complicated ideas; the reader can stop and think, can gather ideas into a cohesive whole. The listener is denied this. His speaking is directed to a reading

7Ibid.
audience, not a listening one. His thoughts seem to encompass the whole of society and to be too large for a short talk.8

Although McGill apparently has not developed his potential as a public speaker, study of two of his speeches shows that he can be an effective speaker.

For example, his Blazer Lecture at the University of Kentucky was carefully researched and documented. He probably had more than enough statistics to demonstrate how foolish it was for a relatively poor region to consider closing their public schools. Also, when he addressed delegates at the National Education Convention in Miami Beach, he drew upon statistics for support. McGill, then, is quite conscious of the importance of careful research.

In addition to logical proof, McGill probably is most effective in picturing himself as a credible source. For example, in his NEA speech McGill cited numerous personal experiences to show that he had earned the right to speak on social issues. Also, he made a special effort to convince the educators that he was a humble writer who, while having no "answers," did have a serious concern for education. Consequently, the delegates probably saw McGill as a man of intelligence, high character, and good will. Thus, they probably were more willing to accept him as a reliable source and as a wise counselor.

The effectiveness of McGill's delivery is varied and quite unpredictable. For example, several tapes of his addresses reveal a

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8Letter to this writer, July 2, 1966, Atlanta.
speaker who seems unprepared and unsure of what he is to say. On the other hand, the oration observed by this writer at Miami Beach met all of McGill's own requirements for "plain talk." He spoke conversationally and with conviction to more than 6,500 educators.

In summary, McGill is a man of virtue, a prophet with and without honor in his own home. His speeches have served as tools of justice in behalf of men exploited by Man. Persons who share McGill's hope for equal citizenship for all, have often found encouragement and strength in his oratory. McGill's indifference to available means of persuasion and his inability to adjust to oral communication; however, have limited the effect of his plea that, as both he and Abraham Lincoln said at Cooper Union, "right does make might."
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Speech Texts Given to this Writer by Ralph McGill

Open Forum Speech, Daytona Beach, January 3, 1954.


"Send Not To Know For Whom The Bell Tolls," Speech at St. Paul’s Church, Richmond, Virginia, January 22, 1958.
"It Tolls For Thee," Hogate Lecture, DePauw University, Greencastle, Indiana, April 18, 1958.


Speech to Rotary Club, Augusta, Georgia, February 3, 1959.

"To Be Young And A Southerner," The Blazer Lecture, University of Kentucky, Lexington, February 10, 1959.


West Georgia College Honors Day, Carrollton, Georgia, May 8, 1959.


Commencement Address, Duke University, North Carolina, June 8, 1959.


Institute for Education by Radio-Television, Ohio State University, May 4, 1960.

Cranbrook Commencement Address, June 11, 1960. (?)


For Anti-Defamation League (Mailed to persons in charge of the speech on April 18, 1960.) (McGill's secretary and I at this time have not located date nor location of speech.)

Note for talk to United Nations group, Detroit, Michigan, December 12, 1960.

Speech at the Inauguration of Rufus Carrollton Harris, Mercer University, Georgia, March 29, 1961. (Miss Grace Lundy wrote, "This is an example of Mr. McGill's speeches without text.")


Commencement Speech, University of North Carolina, June 4, 1962.


"Look Away, Dixieland," Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech), December 7, 1962.

"Graduation To Commitment," Commencement Address, Oberlin College, Ohio, June 10, 1963.


"A Hundred Years Speak To Us," Carney Hospital Centennial, October 13, 1963.


"Give Ear To Your Drum," Commencement, DePaul University, Chicago, 1965.
Taped Recordings of Ralph McGill's Speeches

"Crisis in Schools," Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, 1959.

"Crisis in Schools," Emory University, Atlanta, 1959.

"Russia Today," Emory University, Atlanta, 1959.

Speech given by telephone to students at six colleges concerning

"South in Transition," Emory University, Atlanta, May 7, 1965.

Temple Beth Am, Miami, Florida, January 26, 1966.

National Education Association speech, Miami Beach, Florida, June 30, 1966.
APPENDIX
Taped Interview With Ralph McGill
Atlanta, Georgia, December 29, 1965

Cal M. Logue: While at McCallie Preparatory School [in Chattanooga] you won the gold medal for oratory and this type thing, and you wrote that Mr. Clarence Wilcox directed most of those activities. I wonder if you could just describe some of the exercises or activities Mr. Wilcox used in training students at that time?

Ralph E. McGill: I don't know that he had any special techniques, except to put us up there and have us declaim or recite something you yourself had prepared. We had there at McCallie School two literary societies, one named for a teacher who had died some years before, the Len White Society, and the Daniel Webster Society. I belonged to the latter. We always had--Dr. Wilcox would always have a critic, one of the faculty as a critic, and he would criticize your enunciation or perhaps your—if you made an error in pronouncing a word or an error in grammar. The critic, at the end of your talk or declamation, would then get up and give this orally so that the whole group could get the benefit of the criticism. This was a very good technique and, other than that, I don't recall. But I had been addicted you might say to memorizing poems. I don't know that anyone really encouraged me to do that but I just did it because I liked to do it. Of course, like most youngsters of that period, Kipling was one of my favorites. So I would often recite some of the Kipling poems, or pieces of narratives from some of Kipling's stories. Then, when I went to Vanderbilt I had English under Edwin Mims, who taught all Freshman English. He had some faults as a teacher, as I learned later. Some of the great talks we had in those days evolved around the "Fugitive Group," and they were sort of in revolt against Dr. Mims' narrow views about poetry, but for me he was a good one, and I think most freshmen. He, too, encouraged you to read poetry aloud and to memorize it. In my freshman year I won a prize which he offered, a very modest little prize, to the person who memorized the most lines of poetry. So I used to be able to declaim large sections or complete poems from Milton, Browning, Keats, Shelley. Dr. Mims didn't think poetry had been written after they stopped writing. He never went into anything more modern than they.

CML: Did you do any other speaking at Vanderbilt, other than mainly memorizing poems--and informal discussions? Was there any formal oratory or speaking outside the classroom or in the classroom?

REM: No, very little. I did represent the Sigma Chi fraternity I joined in two or three speaking engagements, you might call it, at fraternity conventions, but nothing really. I got more interested there in the college newspaper, so I put most of my energies in that area.
CML: What help, if any, do you receive when researching and writing your speeches, Mr. McGill?

REM: Well, I have a very fine secretary, Miss Grace Lundy, who has been with me a good many years. She is a great help in research. We both sort of work at it together, or divide up any area of necessary research. She will find books or articles and I'll find some and then I'll set-in to read and make notes and so forth.

CML: You usually put them [research notes] together?

REM: Yes, yes.

CML: What is the procedure, if any, you usually follow when writing a speech?

REM: Well, I will do a rough draft of it, sometimes in long-hand, sometimes typed, and then I will turn it immediately over to her before I've read it even, and let her find any errors, typographical or grammatical, or any other, or any loose construction. I don't think a person is too good at reading his own copy, at least I'm not. Then when she does that, I will then take it and correct those, indicate the corrections, or make them, and then I always usually find this gives me an idea to eliminate something, or add something. So we'll work it over until it's a pretty marked up manuscript and then she'll do the real draft of it.

CML: I assume this is more for something like the Cooper Union speech? You do often give speeches where it's more or less impromptu or extemporaneous?

REM: Oh yes, as a matter of fact, in the last year or two, I find myself doing fewer manuscripts. I'm going down to Miami, for example, in late January [26, 1966]--a lecture series which one of the large synagogues [Temple Beth Am] down there has, a winter series. And they asked me not to prepare a manuscript. They prefer sort of an impromptu discussion. And I went up a few, two or three, months ago to Washington to one of the monthly seminars which the Department of Labor has in sort of a working agreement with the Brookings Institute, and they asked me not to have a manuscript.

CML: Well, are you implying that before the last couple of years you did use more?

REM: Yes, well I used more. I didn't always have one to be sure.
CML: In what way do you consciously organize your speeches? For example, sometimes you have a poem at the end.

REM: Ah--well, I think I--I hadn't thought about that. I think that I probably approach it as I would writing a column or a feature story in that you try to open with something that will attract attention, then, if you can--I guess this is what everybody does, so that's no new idea. Then, I don't know, sometimes--it depends on the audience, also on the subject. I would approach different audiences, different subjects, I think, with some beginning which I would hope would be suitable to such an audience. Cooper Union, of course, this was a natural; it had to be about Lincoln. That was a real thrill to me too. To stand there at the same little podium which he had used, you felt very inadequate but you still felt a thrill.

CML: What type supporting materials do you prefer, for example, statistics, examples, analogies, historical discussion--personal experiences?

REM: I think personal experiences are the best, if you have enough of them and, of course, one doesn't always have enough; but with some subjects you can provide personal experience. I think they have more weight, a personal experience. I also think that statistics are to be used in a sort of a--as briefly as possible. [With] too many statistics, I think you lose people, but if you can give them just a paragraph of sort of hard-punch statistics to clinch your argument or to illustrate your theme--I can use those. But I try not to have many statistics.

CML: Mr. McGill, you were talking about adapting to an audience; does this, most of the time, does this come while you are writing your speech, or does this come, as a rule, when you get there and find out more about the audience, and do it more or less spontaneously.

REM: Well, I think it really comes when you get there and see the audience, and sort of get a feel of your audience.

CML: Would this mean that most of the speech texts that you have--how closely would they represent the real speech you actually gave?

REM: I don't think--I'd have to generalize. I think in almost every speech you depart from a manuscript in some instances. I can't recall following, oh, maybe once or twice, I could recall that I followed it absolutely. Most of the time you depart from a manuscript. Something happens after you get there, or you meet someone, or there will be some local subject come up that you learn the audience is interested in, and you work in something about that.
CML: What do you find are major differences in writing a speech and in writing for the press, if any?

REM: Well, of course, it isn't like writing a news story, but not a great deal of difference between a speech and writing a newspaper article, I don't think.

CML: What effect, if any, has writing for the press had upon your speeches?--Has it made it easier to write speeches?--Has it influenced your style?

REM: Probably I hadn't really thought about that; I don't know if I could say. I guess it has made it easier to write, the trouble is finding time, now; I have so little time to do a manuscript.

CML: In what way, if any, do you rehearse your speech before giving it to an audience?

REM: I don't rehearse it at all.

CML: Have you ever done this in the past?

REM: No, I never have.

CML: In what way do you usually deliver your speech, read from a manuscript, memorize, extemporaneously, impromptu, both?

REM: Well, I'm able--I started reading--I was taught to read when I was about five years old. I was reading children's books of course, and I became without knowing it a rapid reader. And when I look down at a manuscript or a page of a book, I can take-in a pretty good paragraph, just looking at it. So I don't have to read a line of the manuscript in the sense that a person--you see a person hold it and read it--I don't have to do that at all. I can follow it almost exactly without seeming to be reading it.

CML: And you don't plan this? You just write it, and this comes in the writing? You are so familiar with it after you write it?

REM: Yes, I'm pretty familiar with it after I write it. As I said, I go over it and--

CML: Have you found what Newsweek called your "prodigious memory" to be especially helpful in speaking?

REM: Yes, it has been very helpful. I guess I'm pretty corny about poems and things, and so on occasions, this hasn't happened often, but I can think of four or five times when I would be talking and it would seem to me that a line or so from a poem might be
helpful and I just pull that out of my memory--it wouldn't even be in the manuscript at all--and throw it in. I think memory does help.

CML: You have observed, evaluated, and written about many speakers. How have such experiences affected your own speaking?

REM: Well, I suppose, subconsciously it's been affected, but--certainly the great speakers. I use to just listen to Churchill with great awe. I had the wonderful experience of hearing him in debates in House of Commons before the Second World War began, at the time he was trying to get Great Britain to rearm. Then I heard him during the war and after the war, and of course heard him many times on radio. But I was just lost in awe--you never try to imitate a great speaker I don't think; you would be a fool to do that. It would simply be a poor imitation of the real thing. I suppose any person who talks in public, unconsciously, you are affected by persons you have heard. I couldn't explain it in my own [experience].

CML: This is more relating to some of your speaking experience Mr. McGill. What speaking, if any, did you do while working for the Nashville Banner [1922-1929]--in general?

REM: I did--not too much. I did go out--I was invited out to a number of schools, you know, to talk to classes at schools, but the first several years there, that was about all the talking I did.

CML: Concerning what subjects?

REM: Well, I was writing sports in those days, and then into politics, and so I would be asked out maybe to talk about sports or to talk about Tennessee politics or something like that.

CML: Those speeches probably were never recorded?

REM: No, they weren't, none.

CML: In your work with the Constitution as sports editor, executive editor, editor, and publisher, could you briefly describe when you first became active as a speaker? Approximately at what time?

REM: Well, I, I think I would say it was in the 1930's, in the early years of depression, that I became really pretty active, and this was just sort of an accident you might say. I always enjoyed sports, but I never set out to be a sports writer, although I did write sports for a number of years. But, I was sort of by accident brought into sports writing. But anyhow I had always
maintained an interest in outside subjects and kept on writing about them, even when I was writing sports. I did some articles on the economic effect of the cotton collapse in the depression years, and it had been a collapse which had been going on since the boll weevils of the twenties. But, any rate, in the thirties, I had some friends who were on the faculty at Emory University in political science and economics, and at that time one of the government agencies encouraged communities to set up forum meetings, and I remember going around to some of these with Dr. Goodrich White and particularly, with the late Cullen Gosnell who was head of the political science department, and we would go around and go to towns all over Georgia. Sometimes we went a hundred and fifty miles away, drive there and come back late at night, make talks at these forums. So I got going in that and then, in 1937, I was awarded a Rosenwald Fellowship, the magnificent sum of $1700.00, which was pretty good money in the depression years. The paper gave me a leave at half pay, because I kept writing every day while I was gone. So, they got the same work out of me at half pay, but the half pay enabled my wife and me to go to Europe and we lived very cheaply. I wrote; we were gone about, almost ten months. I kept writing about it, the experiences, and I took on several projects and wrote about those. Then I had the great luck to be in Berlin to see one of Hitler's great demonstrations, and then the greater luck to be able to go into Austria at the time of the Anschluss there in March, in '38, and stay there until the plebiscite in April, on April 10, a Sunday. Well, so I stayed in Europe 'til the Munich agreement, from which Chamberlain came back saying that he had obtained peace in our time. So, naturally, when I came back, there was a great demand from civic clubs and all sorts of organizations to talk about one of these many experiences. I made hundreds—my secretary was telling me that last year, I was astonished at this, but last year I think it was, she's got the figures out there; I turned down two hundred and forty-two invitations.

CML: Last year? 1965?

REM: No, '64. I turned down two hundred and forty-two invitations, I think it was, to make talks, and heaven knows, I must have accepted more than fifty.

CML: Over what period of years has this been going on, where you have really been active as a speaker. Since you came back from Europe?

REM: Now, I think I should make it plain that I can't make too many. I have to turn down—and I'm not really in the speaking business, but I would have to say I think that since the '30's it has been going on, certainly since the European trip. Of course, I've
had many other trips to Europe, such as three years ago this month, I went to West Africa for about three months [on a fact-finding trip for the late President John F. Kennedy].

CML: I have that interview on tape [between McGill and newsmen at WAGA television station, Atlanta, Georgia, concerning the African trip].

REM: And then I made a number of talks about that. Then, I went over during the war; the last year of the war I made a trip clear around the world with two other men, representing the American Society of Newspaper Editors. This was a fantastic experience. The war was still going on. We got into Moscow, Chunking, China, so I must have made a hundred talks about various aspects of this, in the next year after that certainly.

CML: When would you say was the first time, or the first year or few years you first made speeches outside of Georgia and the South? When did this come?

REM: Incidentally, most of those talks [about European trips] would be extemporaneous. I didn't have a manuscript; I didn't need a manuscript, you see?

CML: Yes sir.

REM: Oh, well let me see, outside of Georgia?

CML: On the national scene more or less.

REM: I think you would have to say since 1945.

CML: Do you remember the first few speeches there, that would represent a transition?

REM: Ah, let me see.

CML: I know you made one in the Carolinas to a labor group there, about '46, that was very interesting.

REM: Certainly the first outside of Georgia speeches were in North Carolina, then I remember making a couple in Tennessee. I remember making one in Louisville, ah--

CML: Was there any general theme or subject that you discussed more then?

REM: No, no. I began, I think, I began writing about the Southern scene in 1938, and before really, but in 1938, I was made
executive editor, and I remember after about two months the Ku Klux Klan had a parade around the old [Atlanta Constitution] building over there, protesting some of my things. But, I began to be asked to talk about Southern subjects pretty frequently. So I, it doesn't come to mind, certainly not all of these were on the Southern subject, but increasingly they did become that.

CML: On November 4, 1947, you wrote, "... I cannot be a good crusader because I have been cursed all my life with the ability to see both sides ..." Since then, that's been about eighteen years, how would you just describe generally, Mr. McGill, the role that you have played?

REM: Well, I think I would still have to say this is true. I'm always bothered--I remember--I've always felt a certain sympathy for the average Klan member, for example. He is a poor devil who feels a sense of fear or resentment. He doesn't know how to get in to see the mayor; he has no one to turn to. And here come along these shysters who are after his fifteen dollars, used to be ten. I remember we had a group here that was a fascist type group, called the Columbians. This grew up out of housing problems. And these fellows would go to these poor people who were having trouble about housing, and this was racial problems sometimes then. They would promise them, well we will take care of you, you join; they got ten dollars, and picked up a few other dollars, and of course they did nothing, but maybe except have a little violence and bomb some house or burn it or something. I felt a little sympathy for these people who were illiterate usually, and very poor and they didn't know--so they were exploited. And I've always felt--my indignation has run toward people who do the exploiting. I don't know if that explains it.

CML: What would you say in general has been the role of public speaking? Has it supplemented what you have done in the press? Have you tried to reach a different audience, Mr. McGill?

REM: No, I think it's a supplement. That would be my concept of it.

CML: This is something that I think is very important.... It seems to me that up until about the early 1950's your emphasis in relation to human relations was, we actually--you made a sincere plea that we actually give equal schools, provide equal schools, job opportunities, and justice before the law. In recent years, your emphasis may be said to have been on abiding by court decisions. Was there ever a real change, sudden or slow change, in your thinking concerning human relations, or did you have to adapt your public statements to the historical context in which you were working?
REM: Well, I think the latter certainly would be true. But, then I think that I must say, and I regret to say, but I now will say, namely that—I would not like to mention anybody’s name—

CML: Yes sir.

REM: But there was a period here [at the Atlanta Constitution] when I had a rather difficult time with some of the management which was opposed to me writing what I wanted to write. This took about three years—I continued to do it, but I, naturally, was handicapped and sometimes couldn't say what I wanted to. And there was this continual unhappy, very unhappy period.

CML: Was that in the '40's?

REM: The person now responsible for this died some years ago, so I would just rather not—

CML: Surely.

REM: But—so I can see where a person looking back at some of the things of that period—it was in the '40's—

CML: To me there was no question of integrity; it was just a different emphasis for the times.

REM: Yes, I've always thought that in writing you, you must not get too far ahead of the audience you're trying to reach. Now, if you do, you find yourself writing for just a small group. I hope it isn't immodest, but I think that I have managed to stay—to keep the readership of a lot of persons, you might say the average reader. And they haven't quit reading. They may dissent violently, but they don't quit reading. And I've deliberately tried to do this, to write persuasively or to provide information for discussion. I think—I wouldn't be presumptuous to say that I consider myself to be a teacher, I don't mean that. But I do think, I've always thought, well at least I've thought for a long, long time that a newspaper columnist or editorial writer ought to be something like a teacher, in that you ought to try to stimulate discussion. You ought to provide, when necessary, what seems to you to be the information pertinent to the question, if information is needed. You ought to try to write very—as persuasively as you can. I'm always cheered up when I get letters referring to me critically as a brainwasher. Segregationists write in . . . a number of letters always saying, you are a vicious brainwasher. This would indicate that these people are aware, maybe, of a persuasive quality.

CML: Would you say the same thing about your speaking, in that you try to be informative—
REM: I do, I certainly do, and try to--

CML: and persuade?

REM: And try to recognize their point of view, if you know there is dissent in the audience, and you try to counter it.

CML: Yes sir.

REM: I know I have over in the files, I assume they are still there, copies of the, what was the White Citizens' Council paper; here in Georgia it was called the States Rights' Party, instead of the White Citizens' Council. A fellow by the name of Roy Harris who, president of the Georgia organization, was also national president of the White Citizens' Councils for a while. He puts out a little sheet printed in red ink, weekly, and I was always very pleased—all through the years he has had several articles referring to me as the most dangerous man in Georgia (laughter), because of what he thought was the—he decided was the ability to deceive people.

CML: Yes sir.

REM: He was objecting to, for example, to writing that we can live with the [racial] situation. For instance, rural towns, they have gotten along with the Negro people there all their lives. They know them, like them, they trust them but then when the Supreme Court decision came in '34, the demagogues made these people be enemies, you know, suddenly they became dangerous. So you would try to remind them, persuasively, this is folly, foolish, wrong. You can live with these people. You have done it all your lives, so now this adjustment isn't too bad. Sitting in the school room isn't like—receiving instruction isn't like going to a social engagement. It isn't social mixing to go to school together, and so on, simple, really primer-like stuff. But, I always was made happy by these violent attacks, because it seemed to me that these people were a little afraid of it.

[At this point Mr. McGill was buzzed by his secretary.]

REM: Pardon me.

CML: Yes sir.

CML: You may rather not answer this?

REM: Oh no [go right ahead with your question].
CML: Do you have a policy concerning receiving pay for speaking?

REM: No, I don't. I, sometimes I refuse offers of payment. I try--almost never take money from a school. Now, of course, if a school has a sum of money somebody has given them, you know, and this is for the purpose of paying speakers, sort of an endowment, you know, then I'll take--maybe take this. Or, if it's an organization which has an annual budget of seminars, I take this. But I'd certainly never take money from a school or a class, so it's just a very flexible [policy].

CML: Yes sir.

REM: I went up recently to Boston to talk to the annual meeting of the Clover Club [December 5, 1965]. It's a very--It's an Irish organization, originally. It includes all the very successful Irish people, citizens of Boston, and now they have admitted a great many non-Irish persons. It's just a big--Well, they wanted to pay me, but I wouldn't take it because my column runs in Boston, I have good friends there, the president of the club was a friend of mine and the former, so I just refused any--I refuse more than I take. I'm sure I do. I haven't ever added it up. So I haven't any real rule. I just play it by ear.

CML: Do you usually know something about the audience that you are going to face? For example, at Cooper Union, when this [annual Lincoln Day celebration] is usually free to the public, do you know anything? Do you have any methods of finding out [about the audience]?

REM: No, you don't. And they can't help you much. They say, we always fill it [Cooper Union hall] up, but--

CML: You do ask them about that?

REM: Yes, but they [persons working at Cooper Union] don't--They [members of audience] just come in.

CML: What do you do about that, in trying to adapt? Do you--

REM: Well, there at Cooper Union I stuck to the manuscript except for one or two little departures, simply because, you know, you are behind scenes until you come right out on the platform. You don't know who's going to be there, and they don't know who or how many or anything. But, I do like to know and try to find out when I can what sort of audience it will be.

CML: You say, usually when you adapt this comes more spontaneously, on the moment?
REM: Yes, I'd rather not name this city, and it was a Southern city, an old Southern city, where I was once asked down to speak at a Saint Patrick's Day annual dinner. This was one of the most hilarious experiences. This whole organization, they had a fifth of whiskey between each plate (laughter). And there had been considerable drinking before and during the dinner, and so when the time came for me to speak, some of them were singing at the tables (laughter), and others—they never did get it completely quiet. So, I just didn't even attempt to deliver the talk I had written for that; this was a good many years ago. I just got up and tried to be moderately funny. I'm not very good at being funny. I tell you, I'm a serious-minded sort of person I'm afraid. But, that was the greatest test of a—trying to be heard over all that, and it didn't matter whether you were heard or not. And I often wondered why they had a speaker.

CML: What would you consider to be your better speeches?—What would you list to be your better speeches and why would you think they to be your better?

REM: I don't know; I think of—I think of one I made at Harvard University on Law School Day, the day before commencement. I had a feeling of great satisfaction about that one. It was received well. I--

CML: What about Cooper Union?

REM: Oh yes, this was a great thrill. I felt very good about it. I don't know whether the talk was any good or not. But, as I said earlier, it was a thrill to be there, and I had a sense of excitement all the time I was talking. And ah, I think it went fairly well.

CML: I have a copy of the program the director there sent me, and it seems—a rather formal program. Did you get this idea, and did you have a difficult time there?

REM: No--

CML: You know, they had a choir and they had a baritone singing--

REM: Yes, oh they had a pretty good program, but it went well; it was not dragged out in any sense. It went right off on time. No, I have no sense of that; it was a good evening. Then, I remember with satisfaction a talk some months ago at Louisville, Kentucky. Then, I always feel good talking in Boston. I remember I felt very good about this recent talk at the Clover Club, maybe because I'm a little sentimental. Henry Grady, of this paper... He made a--his last talk was in Boston. And so, I don't know, I
always think of Grady as having been there in 1889; that's a long time ago. And then, for someone from the Constitution to go back now and talk, that always gives me sort of a sentimental feeling about it.

CML: In winding up, Mr. McGill, do you have certain preferences concerning the use of such things as gestures and voice?

REM: I never thought of gestures and I don't make many. If so, it certainly is a natural one that I'm quite unconscious of. As I said, I'm not really a--I'm in no sense an orator. I don't--I get nervous about each one of them, but this goes away once you get going. And, I think it's a good idea, maybe, to be--feel a little tense about it. Sometimes, in speaking to a university audience, you get a feeling of worry whether you are going to be adequate. I remember speaking at the University of Kentucky one year, the Blazer Lecture, and a few of these that you prepare for and then you get worried whether this is correct or not, and try to edit it as you go along. Sometimes you feel you have brought it off, and a few times you don't bring it off. But it is supplementary to my work here and I think of it in that manner.

CML: Do you have any final comments that you would just like to make in general concerning debate and speech in our society and your--your personal speaking?

REM: I think, I don't know, sometimes I have mixed feelings about talks. I think the average civic club speech, say to one of the weekly meetings of the civic clubs, it seems to me that these are largely--only rarely do you get one that has any meaning, I think.

[Jack Tarver came into McGill's office and, upon seeing us said, "Oh, excuse me!"]

REM: I'll be there in just a minute. You all go ahead [to lunch]. I'll be right [there].

REM: It seems to me that those are mostly the most routine, meaningless sort of talks. The audience, they know each week they are going to hear some talker. I would think that maybe they ought to change the format, maybe having a sort of, each time, a little panel, maybe on some subject relevant to their city or to the national issues and so forth. But, on a whole, I think that we all ought to agree that what we have come to call a dialogue is a necessary thing, increasingly as the population grows, and issues become grave, and as we change from a rural to a city-urban country, it's necessary that we have talks and panels and discussions and so forth, very necessary. But I think there is
too much irrelevancy in too many of today's routine talks. I
don't have much faith in a routine, weekly talk. The fellow who
makes it--occasionally you get a great one, of course.

CML: Most of your speaking, has it been done at the invitation of
someone else where you would be--have a more friendly audience,
or have you spoken often with hostile audiences?

REM: Oh, I had a few hostile audiences, but only a few, mostly at
invitations, and sometimes the invitation is from a hostile
source and you know it before you go. They invite you; some­
times you get booed.

* * * * * * *
VITA

Born on July 14, 1935, the writer lived in several towns in Alabama: Eufaula, Greensboro, Evergreen, and Auburn. He was graduated from Auburn High School in 1953 and from Auburn University in 1960. From 1956 to 1958, the writer served in the United States Marine Corps. After completing the Master of Science degree at Florida State University in 1961, he taught speech and was director of forensics at Birmingham-Southern (Alabama) College until 1964. He then served as teaching assistant at Louisiana State University until his appointment in 1966 as Assistant Professor of Speech at the University of Arkansas.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Calvin McLeod Logue

Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Speech Theory and Practice of Ralph McGill

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: May 8, 1967