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An Experimental Study of the Effectiveness of Humor Used as a Refutational Device.

Thomas Winfred Welford
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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HUMOR USED AS A REFUTATIONAL DEVICE.

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural
and Mechanical College, Ph.D., 1971
Speech

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AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
HUMOR USED AS A REFUTATIONAL DEVICE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Department of Speech

by
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December, 1971

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EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to determine the relative effectiveness of a political speech of refutation which used humor and a political speech of refutation without humor. Three political speeches were written by the author and recorded by two graduate students in speech. The first one was a speech of advocacy. The second speech, given by the first speaker's opponent, was a speech of refutation. The third speech was the same as the second, except that seven humorous items were added. The speeches were presented via tape recorders. The subjects for the study were 328 freshmen English students at Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana.

The four null hypotheses were: (1) subjects hearing the serious refutation and those hearing the humorous refutation will not differ significantly in their ratings of the speaker's ethos; (2) the level of the credibility introduction will not significantly affect subjects' rating of the speaker's humorousness; (3) subjects' attitudes toward the topics discussed in the speeches will not differ significantly between those hearing the serious refutation and those hearing the humorous refutation; and (4) subjects' commitment on the topics
discussed in the speeches will not differ significantly between those hearing the serious refutation and those hearing the humorous refutation.

The first null hypothesis was rejected, since the ethos ratings of those who heard the serious refutation and those who heard the humorous refutation differed significantly. Speaker character and authoritativeness were rated significantly higher by subjects hearing the serious refutation.

The second null hypothesis was accepted, since the credibility introductions did not significantly affect subject perception of speaker humorousness.

The third null hypothesis was partially accepted and partially rejected. On the topic of state road improvement and on the topic of reform of homes for the aged, no significant differences in attitude were found between those hearing the serious refutation and those hearing the humorous refutation. However, on the topics of federal revenue sharing and wiretapping, the serious refutation was significantly more persuasive in bringing about the desired attitudinal response.

The fourth null hypothesis was, for the most part, accepted. The lone exception to this statement was on the topic of state road improvement, where the humorous
refutation brought about a stronger commitment than the serious refutation. This was especially true when the speaker using humor had been given a high credibility introduction.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Classical and contemporary rhetoricians have gener­ally conceded the importance of humor as a rhetorical device. Practitioners of the art of public speaking frequently have used humor with apparent success, yet experimental research, in the main, has failed to confirm that the use of humor is advantageous to the speaker. The above statements offer, in a nutshell, the status and limitations of current knowl­edge regarding the rhetorical use of humor.

I. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the present study was to test one aspect of rhetorical theory as advanced by Gorgias, Cicero, and several speech text writers. Specifically, the study attempted to discover whether a speech of refutation with humor was more effective than one without humor. Secondly, the study attempted to follow Pokorny's (41) suggestion that speeches with humor be compared to speeches without humor, while speaker credibility was varied through speaker introductions.
The null hypotheses were: (1) subjects hearing the serious refutation and those hearing the humorous refutation will not differ significantly in their ratings of the ethos of the speaker; (2) the level of the credibility introduction will not significantly affect subjects' rating of the speaker's humorousness; (3) subjects' attitude toward the topics discussed in the speeches will not differ significantly between those hearing the serious refutation and those hearing the humorous refutation; and (4) subjects' commitment on the topics discussed in the speeches will not differ significantly between those hearing the serious refutation and those hearing the humorous refutation.

II. Importance of the Study

The significance of such a study lies in the fact that insufficient and contradictory data now exists in the area of rhetorical theory dealing with the use of humor in public speaking (50, p. 202). The experimental work that has been done has been concentrated in very limited areas. These results fail to confirm many ideas found in classical and contemporary treatises. The effect of humor included as one kind of refutative material in an otherwise straightforward speech has not yet been investigated, nor have the
interactive relationships between speaker credibility and humor.

III. Definitions of Terms

Humor. The term "humor," as used in the present study, will be broad and inclusive. It will include any or all types of the comic—whether these be expressed as puns, turns of phrases, jokes, or humorous anecdotes. No attempt will be made to draw distinctions between "wit" and "humor," or between "irony" and "humor," or between "satire" and "humor." To do so runs the needless risk of becoming "imbedded in a semantic morass" (37, p. 74), and adds little by way of approximating the use of humor by a public speaker. Nor will the present study attempt to employ only one type of humor, to the exclusion of other types. It is doubtful, in the authentic use of humor by a public speaker, that the speaker would first sit down and make minimal distinctions (as many prior studies have done) or place the humorous items in semantic categories before using them. As Bergson (3, p. 2) states, "... We shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition." He (3, p. 1) discusses the problem of defining what is humorous by saying:
The greatest of thinkers, from Aristotle downwards, have tackled this little problem, which has a knack of baffling every effort, of slipping away and escaping only to bob up again, a pert challenge flung at philosophic speculation.

Although no formal definition of humor will be given at this time, an operational definition will be presented at a later point.

**Ethos/credibility.** The terms "ethos" and "credibility" are used interchangeably in this study. Both refer to the perceived authoritativeness and character of the speaker.

**Speech of advocacy.** The speech of advocacy simply refers to the speech delivered by the first "political speaker." It is also referred to as the affirmative speech and the first speech. All subjects heard this speech.

**Speech of refutation.** The speech of refutation is the speech given by the second "political speaker." It was designed to refute the four major arguments put forth by the first speaker. Half of the subjects heard a serious version; half heard a humorous version. Both were exactly alike except that the humorous version contained seven humorous items. Both were delivered by the same speaker.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As early as the fifth century B.C., Gorgias (9) considered rhetorical humor to be an effective weapon. Even Aristotle (2, p. 239), with his major emphasis on logical modes of persuasion, made brief concession to the possible usefulness of humor: "As for the means to laughter: these are thought to be of some value in controversy." Cicero (8, p. 357), who had much to say about the use of humor, commented, "Jesting . . . and shafts of wit are agreeable and often highly effective. . . ." In a more extended statement (8, p. 373) he added:

it clearly becomes an orator to raise laughter, and this on various grounds; for instance, merriment naturally wins goodwill for its author; and everyone admires acuteness, which is often concentrated in a single word, uttered generally in repelling, though sometimes in delivering an attack; and it shatters or obstructs or makes light of an opponent. . . . and it shows the orator himself to be a man of finish, accomplishment and taste; and, best of all, it relieves dullness and tones down austerity, and, by a jest or a laugh, often dispels distasteful suggestions not easily weakened by reasonings.

Modern speech book writers have generally included some reference to the use of humor in public speaking.
Most of their comments can be classified under three headings: (1) the use of humor to gain attention and interest; (2) the nature of humor; and (3) the persuasive function of humor. A wide range of claims have been made under each of these headings.

Most of the speech book discussion of humor falls under the category of attention and interest. White (52) devotes three pages to humor as a factor of interest. Rogge and Ching (45, p. 22) discuss humor as being important in gaining interest. They comment: "Of two situations, one that is humorous will hold interest better than one that is not." Bryant and Wallace (6, p. 95) speak of humor as a source of interest and offer the guides of "relevance, propriety, and freshness." Gray and Braden (16, pp. 99-104) also discuss humor as a way of getting attention and interest and offer eight suggestions for the use of humor in public speaking.

Works dealing wholly or in part with the nature of humor—though most are not speech texts—include the following: Bergson (3), Cox (10), Grimes (17, 18), Gruner (24), Karstetter (27), Mercier (37), and Reid (44).

The persuasive function of humor is frequently discussed by speech text writers in impressive but somewhat vague language. Brigance (5, p. 82) hints at the
powerfulness of rhetorical humor when he says, "...a sense of humor is enduring. It wins the sympathy of those who listen. It earns respect from those who disagree. It leaves a friendly, lingering memory. ..." Monroe and Ehninger (38, p. 383), in commenting on how to answer arguments, advise: "Sidetrack the point with genial humor. Show the funny side of the objection, but beware of sarcasm or ridicule." However, they later (38, p. 384) state:

On rare occasions, it may even be allowable to take an ironical dig at the person asking the question or making the objection. By poking fun at him, you please the sporting tendency in men and reduce the effect of his objection. ... Be especially careful, however, not to use sarcasm on someone who is respected by the audience, or your attack will boomerang.

Marsh (35, p. 207), in his book on persuasive speaking, comments:

Another very effective emotional device, which is often used in lieu of logical refutation, is humor. Reducing an argument to an absurdity or just laughing it off by saying, 'He can't be serious!' is sufficient refutation for some audiences.

Corbett (9, pp. 297-302), in his book Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, discusses four forms of refutation. They are: (1) refutation by appeal to reason, (2) refutation by emotional appeals, (3) refutation by ethical appeal, and (4) refutation by wit. In referring to the use of wit, Corbett (p. 300) states, "Jests, sarcasm, and irony can be
effective tools for refutation, but they must be used with the utmost discretion." He later (p. 301) surmises:

Sarcasm seems to succeed best when it is directed at an individual. . . . That this should be so is rather curious, for of all modes of satirical wit, sarcasm is the one that most closely borders on uncharitableness. . . . Human nature is so constituted that it will tolerate, even enjoy, the vituperation of an individual.

Ross (46, p. 49) observes, "Entertainment, from court jesters to comedy players, has for ages been the vehicle of subtle and effective persuasion."

Not only have classical rhetoricians and modern speech book writers speculated about the rhetorical value of humor, but public speakers for centuries have used humor under the impression that it was an asset. One need not read too widely to discover that speakers such as Gorgias, Cicero, Abraham Lincoln, Robert Ingersoll, Thomas Corwin, Thomas Heflin, Robert Love Taylor, Rev. Sam Jones, Will Rogers, Winston Churchill, and Adlai Stevenson all used humor with varying degrees of regularity and effectiveness. Cox (10, p. 129), in his documented account of the use of humor by politicians from ancient to modern times, indicates that even Webster, Clay, and Calhoun used humor at times in their speaking:

Each of them had this quality of humor, not in that iminent degree which overshadows
the solid parts of the understanding, but ever ready to flash out when that weapon was the proper one for forensic success.

When informed that he was to be opposed by Abraham Lincoln for a senate seat, Stephen A. Douglas (12, pp. 8-9) is reputed to have said: "I shall have my hands full. He is the strong man of the party--full of wit, facts, dates, and the best stump speaker with his droll ways and dry jokes." According to Clayton Fritchey (12, p. 9):

Douglas realized that humor in Lincoln's hands could be a most effective political tool. He was not funny for the sake of being funny. . . . Lincoln told stories to illuminate difficult issues and situations; he made his jokes to resolve bitter arguments, and his anecdotes frequently disarmed enemies and dissolved hostility. In short, he used humor to serious ends.

Thomas Corwin, a lesser known but equally effective user of political humor, appealed to audiences throughout Ohio in the mid-nineteenth century. According to Oliver (40, p. 99), Corwin won fame in his state "... for his legal abilities and for his wonderfully effective irony and humor in stump speeches." A glimpse of Corwin's wit can be seen in some tongue-in-cheek advice he (12, p. 8) gave to a budding speaker: "Never make people laugh. If you would succeed in life, you must be solemn, solemn as an ass. All the great monuments are built over solemn asses."
Thomas Heflin's use of humor is well illustrated by G. Allan Yeomans (54), as Robert Love Taylor's use of humor is demonstrated by Raymond Buchanan, Jr. (7).

Churchill is reported (12, p. 31) to have used humor frequently against his political opponents. About Clement Attlee, Churchill supposedly remarked, "A modest man, but then he has so much to be modest about." And about an opponent named Gripps, Churchill commented, "There, but for the grace of God, goes God."

Most modern speech books contain at least scanty reference to the rhetorical use of humor; some devote extended passages to the subject. However, few would be willing to go as far as Cox (10, p. 127) when he states, "All great wits are not great men, but all great men are witty."

About the only conclusion, then, that can be drawn from speech book writers is that humor is an effective device to create attention and interest, that it is helpful in bringing about persuasion under certain conditions, and that it is very complex in nature.

Most experimental literature on the subject of rhetorical humor has failed to confirm any of the above opinions except that humor is complex in nature. The few experimental studies which have been conducted on the
subject of rhetorical humor seem to fall into four categories: (1) humor and persuasion, (2) humor and information recall, (3) humor and the social setting, and (4) humor and speaker ethos.

One of the earliest experimental studies conducted in the area of humor and persuasion is Lull's (33) 1940 experiment. Four speeches on the topic of state medicine were given at the Universities of Wisconsin and Purdue. Two speeches (one humorous, one non-humorous) were given in favor of state medicine, and two speeches (one humorous, one non-humorous) were given against state medicine. Lull found no significant differences between the humorous and non-humorous speeches as far as immediate or long-range opinion change was concerned. He (33, p. 39) concludes: "Tentatively, the evidence indicates that the optimism of those who stress the importance of humor in persuasive speeches is not exactly confirmed." In addition, he (33, p. 37) found that "... neither the humorous nor the non-humorous speeches were consistently more interesting or more convincing as far as the auditors were concerned."

In 1956 Berlo and Kumata (4) presented a satirical dramatic program over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. It satirized Senator Joseph M. McCarthy, the then well-known chairman of the Senate Permanent Investigations
Subcommittee. The program was an allegorical satire, in which no specific identification was made of either McCarthy or congressional investigations. The conclusions were suggested rather than explicitly stated. Berlo and Kumata observed that their college student subjects' attitudes changed in the expected direction toward congressional investigations, but that the subjects became more favorable, rather than more opposed, to McCarthy after listening to the program. The satire, therefore, was in part successful, and in part it boomeranged.

Gruner (19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 42), who has published more research dealing with rhetorical humor than any other single individual, has also generally found that satire is not an asset to persuasive speaking. In his dissertation study (19) Gruner failed to find a significant relationship between the use of satire and attitude change. He did find that his speech stimulus, which was validated as satire by an expert panel of English professors, was not necessarily recognized as satire by freshmen English students. In a 1965 study Gruner (20) found that a speech satirizing censorship did not change attitudes to a significant degree. As a matter of fact, only twelve out of 129 experimental subjects understood the thesis intended by the writer. Gruner (p. 153) concludes:
This almost complete concealment of the thesis within the satiric context not only is a plausible explanation for the persuasive failure but also is indicative of what may be a major problem in the use of satire for persuasive purposes generally.

In a follow-up study Gruner (21) attempted, in part, to answer the question, "Does satire perceived as such modify attitude?" The answer was again negative. In an experiment satirizing labor unions and our policy of non-recognition of Red China, Gruner (22) attempted to answer the question, "Does the satire of Art Buchwald change attitudes?" Two columns written by Buchwald were presented to one hundred experimental subjects. Gruner found a small, but statistically significant, mean shift. He (22, p. 730) further observes, "... those who were persuaded tended to be those who initially were least in agreement with the satirical thesis, those most in need of persuading." However, it should be pointed out that the subjects in the experimental groups were told the thesis that the writer had in mind. The control subjects were not told the thesis, and most of them missed the point of the satire. The results of the study were also in terms of written material, not an oral presentation, and may therefore have limited generalizability.

Pokorny (41) conducted "An Experimental Study of
the Impact of Satiric Material Included in an Argumentative Speech." The null hypothesis of the study (41, p. 10) was:

The inclusion of supporting material satirizing censorship in the body of an otherwise direct and anti-censorship speech will not produce significantly greater attitude shift toward censorship than the direct speech without the satiric material.

The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the effectiveness of the straightforward argumentative speech and the same speech with added satiric material in ability to change attitude, and no clear tendency favoring either speech as a persuasive agent.

In 1967 Zeman (56) conducted "An Experimental Study of the Persuasive Effects of Satire in a Speech Presented to a High School Audience." The subjects were high school sophomores and juniors. The stimulus used was the speech satirizing nursery rhymes used in Gruner's (19) doctoral dissertation. The main finding was that neither experimental group (one group was given an explanation of satire prior to hearing the speech, the other group received no such explanation) differed significantly from the control group. A significant correlation was found between attitude toward censorship and perceived speaker intelligence. As subjects were more in favor of
censorship, they tended to rate the speaker higher in intelligence. One would expect just the opposite to be true, since the position of the speech was against censorship. Zeman is unable to explain this finding. Perhaps this is just another indication that the intent of satire is often missed by the audience.

Recently (1969) Gruner and Pokorny (42) have again tested the usefulness of satire in a persuasive speech. They found that the inclusion of satiric material as extra support for an anti-censorship speech apparently did not materially affect the speech's impact. The speech without the satire produced greater attitude shift than the experimental satiric speech, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Using a more general type humor, Kilpela (30) tested experimentally the effect of humor on persuasion according to the amount of shifts-of-opinion and recall of information. Two speeches were written on "socialized medicine." They were essentially alike, except that humor was added to one of the speeches. Kilpela (p. 27) concludes:

Humor as utilized in this study has little or no effect in altering opinion. There is no evidence to support, however, that humor is detrimental to shifts-of-opinion. Considering the stilted experimental conditions, this qualification is probably quite important.
The study also indicated that humor did not increase recall with any significantly greater success than non-humor.

A 1970 study by Kennedy (28) tested four major hypotheses: (1) that the explicitly stated intent to be funny will significantly increase the perceived humorousness of the persuasive message; (2) that the use of humorous material in a speech will significantly enhance attitude change; (3) that the use of humorous material in a speech will significantly enhance the ethos of the source; and (4) that the use of humor in a speech will significantly increase the retention of information. Only the first hypothesis was supported by the findings of the study. Three speeches were presented on the topic of movie censorship. One was a serious speech, one was a humorous speech, and one was a humorous speech with a laughter-begging introduction. All three speeches were presented live by the same speaker at different times. The only pre-experimental validation of the humorousness of the treatment materials used in the two humorous versions of the speech was the recording of eleven audible laughter responses by a "trained observer" in a short pilot test. A total of ninety-nine beginning anthropology students served as subjects for the experiment. The explicit intent laughter-
begging introduction version was rated as significantly more humorous than the humorous speech without the laughter-begging introduction at the .05 level. No overall significant enhancement of ethos took place as a result of the inclusion of items of humor. However, the speaker for all three groups was introduced as "another student." The student-speaker, who had been sitting in the audience, then arose, went to the front of the room, and began his speech. It may be that having such a non-prestigious speaker as "just another student" would weaken the findings related to ethos. In no case did the inclusion of humorous material produce a statistically significant shift of attitude toward the side advocated in the speech. Finally, the addition of humor did not produce greater recall of information.

Out of six studies dealing with humor and information recall known to the present writer, only one (14) found that a speech with humor was significantly superior to a speech without humor in producing recall of information. As mentioned in connection with an earlier reference to the study, Kilpela (30) found in his 1961 study, using the topic of "socialized medicine," that a speech with humor did not increase recall with any significantly greater degree of
success than a non-humorous speech. Kennedy (28) also failed to find that the use of humor in a speech was an aid in information recall.

In a study designed to determine the effectiveness of humor in assisting a listener in learning and retaining material presented in an informative speech, Taylor (48) found that the difference between the post-treatment means was zero, that is, the means for the two groups were exactly equal. For the delayed-post-test, a critical ratio of only .58 was found. Thus, it can be seen that no significant differences were found between the speech containing humor and the speech without humor. The topic for the experiment was how the ideas of an eighteenth century minister had affected the thinking of men today.

In two more recent studies, Gruner (23, 25) found that humor in informative speeches failed to produce greater or less information retention than informative speeches without humor. In the second, and more interesting of these studies (25), subjects were exposed to an informative speech on "listening" intended to be either dull or interesting and either humorous or serious. They were tested for recall of information and asked to rate the speaker they heard on ethos scales and the speech they
heard on interestingness and humorousness. The addition of humor enhanced the interestingness of the dull speech but did not produce greater information recall. Contrary to the theory which implies that the addition of humor makes a speech more interesting, the Gruner study found that the rating on interest for the "serious-interesting" speech was actually higher than that for the "humorous-interesting" speech. On the other hand, with the "dull" speeches, the humorous one was rated far higher than was the serious one.

The only study finding a significant difference between informative speeches with humor and informative speeches without humor is the one by Gibb (14). He reports statistically significantly greater gains in knowledge of biology resulting from a humorous lecture compared to a non-humorous lecture on the subject. Eight items of humor were used by Gibb. They were skillfully woven into the text so that they seemed to fit at that particular spot. These items were measured prior to the experiment by five judges (graduate students in speech), and during the speech by an applause meter. Significant differences between the humorous and non-humorous presentations were found at the .01 level. Gibb (14, p. 45) concludes, within the limitations of his investigation:
the speaker who skillfully incorporates humor into his speeches to inform will be more effective than the speaker who doesn't use humor in his speeches to inform.

Although Gruner (23) suggested that this finding possibly resulted from variables other than humor, he is not able to pin-point just what variables. His attempt to account for the difference in Gibb's study by saying that some of the subjects heard the speeches at mid-morning and others heard them as early as 8:15 a.m., or as late as noon, is not very convincing. Some other possible explanations may be: (1) a post-test only design was used--thus avoiding subject awareness of the nature of the experiment; (2) a larger number of subjects (492) were used by Gibb than in most of the other humor studies; and/or (3) the humor used by Gibb may have been more obviously humorous than that used in other studies.

Very few communication studies have considered the importance of the social setting in the use of humor. Most of our knowledge at this point comes from studies conducted in the field of psychology. Malpass and Fitzpatrick (34) conducted a study designed to compare reactions to humor when presented in large group situations (26-30 subjects), in small groups (6-7 subjects), and in individual situations. Jokes and cartoons were used to
represent the forms of humor: aggressive, sexual, whimsical material represented the kinds of humor used. The findings suggest the following conclusions related to rhetorical humor: (1) the size of the group affects reaction to humorous stimuli. Specifically, for jokes, optimal social conditions seem to be large groups and minimal conditions seem to be small groups; (2) the sex of the respondent is a factor in reaction to humorous stimuli. Males rated the overall impact of the humorous stimuli as funnier than did females. However, the only significant difference between the sexes was in reaction to sex-type humor—males rated it funnier than females. Females rated aggression-type humor as slightly more funny than did males.

Levine and Redlich (31) found that among the variables which determine whether or not a given stimulus is enjoyed as humorous is the ability to comprehend the point of the joke, and the emotional impact that the theme of the humorous stimulus has upon the individual. Where the theme of the humor engenders too much anxiety, it is not appreciated as funny, but on the contrary, is reacted to as a disturbing stimulus. This finding agrees with the theories of Bergson (3), Grimes (17, 18), Mercier (37), Karstetter (27) and others. The main purpose of the
Levine and Redlich study was to analyze the influence of intellectual and emotional factors upon the appreciation of humorous cartoons. Five groups of psychiatric patients and one group of normal controls were compared in their performances on a humor test, identified as the Mirth Response Test. Although a high correlation between intelligence and the understanding of the humorous stimuli was found, there was evidence that the psychiatric patients failed to understand many cartoons because of emotional rather than intellectual factors. The authors (31, p. 35) conclude, "... emotional disturbances, particularly those involving anxiety, greatly impairs the ability to appreciate humor."

Priest (43) found that members of a reference group enjoy derogatory jokes about another group more than jokes about their own group.

Young and Frye (55, p. 754) conclude their study of laughter and the social setting by saying:

it is apparent ... that the nature of the social situation plays an extremely important part in determining the individual's appreciation of and responsiveness to various types of humor.

A few studies have been concerned with the relationship between humor and ethos. As mentioned earlier, Kennedy (28) failed to find that the use of humorous
material in a speech will significantly enhance the ethos of the source. Most communication studies (such as the one just mentioned) have generally considered only the effects of humor upon speaker ethos—not the effects of speaker ethos on humor. Some psychology studies have considered both aspects of the problem.

On the assumption that the use or non-use of humor affects speaker ethos, Gruner (23, 25) had subjects rate speaker ethos on scales developed by McCroskey (36). In both studies he found that the use of humor in informative speaking seemed to enhance the character ratings of the speaker. In the second study he found that the addition of humor to a "dull" speech also caused significantly higher ratings of speaker authoritativeness. The addition of humor to an already "interesting" speech did not cause significantly higher ratings on authoritativeness.

In a remotely related experiment, Goodchilds (15) found that in group discussions "clowning wits" were rated as low in influence but high in popularity; "sarcastic wits" were rated exactly opposite on both criteria.

Gutman and Priest (26) hypothesized that the perceived character of the protagonist in an aggressive joke would have a significant effect on the humorousness of that joke. Specifically, it was predicted that a "good"
person's aggressive (hostile) humor would be seen as less hostile and more humorous. Secondly, it was predicted that a victim who "deserved" the hostility he received would elicit more humor than an "undeserving" victim. Both hypotheses were tested by manipulating the perceived goodness or badness of the two protagonists in four experimentally written "squelch" jokes. Both hypotheses were confirmed. In other words, the study indicates that the justifiability of humorous aggression depends significantly on the perceived character of the aggressor as well as the victim. Previous research (43) has shown that when the victim of aggressive humor is clearly a member of the subject's own political, religious, and ethnic group, humor is inhibited. But the Gutman and Priest research shows that identification with a victim of aggression is less related to humor than is identification with the source of aggression.
CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

I. Treatment Materials

Materials used in the study included three taped political speeches, four credibility introductions, and two tape recorders. The political speeches consisted of one five minute "speech of advocacy," one five minute "refutation" without humor, and one eight minute "refutation" with humor. The two refutational speeches were exactly alike, except that the humorous version contained seven humorous items. The speeches were written by the author and recorded by two graduate students in speech at Louisiana State University. Two low credibility introductions and two high credibility introductions were used— a high and a low introduction for both speakers. This information, especially in the case of the two low credibility introductions, served as introductions to the two politicians, but not necessarily the kind of introduction which would have been given in the presence of the speakers. It was, rather, the kind of extrinsic information which members of the audience would have gathered from newspapers, editorials, or other news
sources. Instead of putting the introductions on tape and pretending that they had been given in the presence of the speakers just before they got up to speak, the introductions were presented as written material for each subject to read immediately before hearing each speaker. Since the content of the introductions was intentionally made stronger than the kind of introduction which is usually given in the presence of the man who is about to speak, the written pertinent facts about the men seemed a more believable way to present the material without watering it down. This procedure of having strong, clear-cut credibility introductions seemed justified in the light of the non-significant findings of many earlier ethos studies, and in the light of the finding by Gutman and Priest (26) that individuals given low ethos introductions appeared more deserving of hostile humor than individuals given high ethos introductions. In other words, a strong effort was made by the present author to insure that the subjects who heard the high credibility introductions would perceive them as high credibility introductions, and that the subjects who heard the low credibility introductions would perceive them as low credibility introductions. In many earlier ethos studies the credibility introductions have not really...
been very low—just a little less flattering than the high credibility introductions.

The humor used in the humorous refutation version of the second speech came from a wide variety of sources such as popular magazines, current comedians, speech book sections on humor, humor anthologies, college students (not those used in the study), and colleagues. Such an eclectic approach seemed wiser than consulting only one source as some earlier studies have done. The humor used in the Gruner studies came from humor anthologies, Art Buchwald, and Gruner's own private stock. Gutman and Priest used only humor anthologies. Levine and Redlich used thirty-one cartoons taken from popular magazines such as the *New Yorker*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Colliers*, and *True*. Priest used jokes about Goldwater and Johnson in circulation during their presidential campaign and a few jokes about politics in general. Zeman used satire developed by Gruner in some of his earlier research. A large number of the studies did not specify the origin of their humorous material.

II. Measuring Instruments

The basic measuring instruments consisted of three
sets of semantic differential type scales for measuring speaker ethos, humorousness of the speeches, and subjects' attitude and commitment toward the topics discussed in the speeches. The ethos scales developed by McCroskey (36) were used to measure speaker ethos. Two scales developed by Smith (47), and one developed by Kennedy (28) were used to assess the humorousness of the speeches.

The Ss' attitude and commitment toward the four topics discussed in the speeches was measured with scales developed by Diab (11). These attitude/commitment measures consisted of bipolar, seven-position, semantic differential scales on which Ss indicated their "most acceptable" (X), "acceptable" (A), and "unacceptable" (U) positions. Four pairs of evaluatively loaded, bipolar adjectives (good/bad, safe/dangerous, wise/foolish, and warranted/unwarranted) were used. Ratings were taken of Ss' attitudes and commitment on each of the four topics discussed by the two speakers. The direction of the attitude was arrived at by summing the "X" scores on the four evaluative scales for each topic. In other words, an S who marked an "X" in the second space on all four scales would receive a cumulative attitudinal rating of eight for that particular topic. An S who marked space number six on all four scales
would receive a rating of twenty-four. The lowest possible score for each topic would be four, the highest possible score would be twenty-eight. The same four scales were used for each of the four topics discussed in the speeches. The lower ratings generally indicate a favorable attitude toward the topics, a higher score indicates an unfavorable attitude.

In order to assess the degree of attitudinal commitment, the following procedures were followed: first, the number of "X's" and "A's" were counted and added together. Then, the number of "U's" were counted. Next, the "X's" and "A's" were subtracted from the "U's." The resulting scores constituted the degree of commitment on each topic. It was felt that this procedure gives a more complete picture of attitude than simply having each S mark an "X" in the blank of his choice on each scale.

As a descriptive measure, Ss were asked to pretend that they were registered voters in the state in which the two candidates were running for office (the state was not identified), and to register their vote for one of the two candidates whom they heard.

III. Subjects

The subjects were 328 students enrolled in Freshman
English classes at Southeastern Louisiana University during the summer of 1971. However, class units did not make up the experimental groups. It was felt that certain classes, due to teacher-student interaction or other factors might demonstrate unique characteristics. Each experimental group was therefore made up of approximately four to five members from each of three or four classes. The largest experimental group consisted of twenty-three Ss; the smallest group had fourteen members.

IV. Design

A 3 x 3 x 2 factorial design was used. The three independent variables were humor, first speaker credibility, and second speaker credibility. The humor variable consisted of a humorous refutation and a non-humorous refutation. The credibility variable consisted of three levels for both speakers: high credibility introduction, low credibility introduction, and no introduction. The dependent variables were subject attitude and commitment toward the issues, and attitude toward the speakers.

V. Procedure

Selection of humor. As mentioned earlier, the
humorous items came from a variety of sources. From approximately ninety puns, jokes, etc., the writer selected what he considered to be the "funniest forty." These forty items were then submitted, in written form, to twenty subjects from the same population as the experimental subjects. They were asked to rank the fifteen items they considered most humorous. From their fifteen funniest items, seven were selected for inclusion in the humorous refutation version of the speech. These seven items were selected on the basis of whether they seemed to fit the topics being discussed in the speech or the situation. Incidentally, four humorous items used by Gruner (23, 25) in two of his earlier studies were included in the list of forty items to be ranked. None of them were ranked in the top fifteen. The highest ranked of Gruner's items was 25th. The other three were ranked 32nd, 33rd, and 34th.

After the speeches were written, the chosen humorous items were placed in the appropriate version of the speech. The speeches were then submitted to two groups of subjects (twenty in each group). Group one read the affirmative speech and the serious refutation. Group two read the affirmative speech and the humorous refutation. Both
groups were asked to rate the relative humorousness of the two speeches which they read on three semantic differential type scales found by Smith (47) and Kennedy (28) to measure the humor variable. Using the t test for assessing difference between means, a t of 2.89 was found when comparing the humorous refutation with the serious refutation. With 38 df the above mentioned t score is significant beyond the .01 level. In other words, the subjects did perceive the serious speech as being significantly more serious than the humorous speech and vice versa. All of this was done, of course, just to establish that the humorous speech was in fact humorous before using it on the experimental groups.

Credibility introductions. Four thumbnail descriptions of the candidates—one high credible and one low credible for each candidate—were presented to six college speech teachers prior to the experiment. They were asked to indicate whether they thought the information in each case would tend to establish the speaker as a high ethos source or a low ethos source. Their decision was unanimous in selecting two high credibility introductions and two low credibility introductions. These decisions were arrived at independently. Thus the introductions were judged fit to use
in the experiment as high or low credibility introductions.

Selection of speech topics. As mentioned earlier, the speeches used in the present study were of a political nature—specifically, opposing campaign speeches for the state senate. A political setting was chosen for three reasons: (1) to the writer's knowledge, this area has not been studied experimentally in relation to the use of humor; (2) historically speaking, it is an area in which rhetorical humor has been frequently employed; and (3) it is a situation that realistically lends itself to the use of humor.

The political candidates were not identified as Democrats, Republicans, or in any other affiliatory manner. Neither were the issues dealt with in the speeches such that various members of the audience were likely to be ego-involved. Care was taken at this point because, as Mortensen and Sereno (39, p. 128) have said, "High ego-involvement in a stand makes the stand an anchor around which all other elements in the communicative situation are evaluated." In other words, the identification of the speakers and the content of the speeches was of a harmless enough nature so that the subjects would not be ego-involved in it, yet the content was believable enough to be realistic. The two speeches were centered basically around
four issues or topics. These four issues were selected in the following manner: fifteen potential issues which could conceivably be discussed by political candidates were submitted to twenty-five subjects taken from the same population as the experimental subjects (but not the same ones used in the study). They were asked to indicate their attitude and commitment toward the topics, using the procedures developed by Diab (11), and expounded by Mortensen and Sereno (39) to determine ego-involvement. Subjects were found to be ego-involved in only two of the fifteen topics. From the remaining thirteen topics, four were chosen as issues to be used in the experimental speeches.

Some of the topics used in connection with earlier rhetorical humor studies form an interesting list at this point. Some of the topics used in studies mentioned earlier in this paper were: state medicine, censorship, nursery rhymes, effective listening, a biology lecture, ideas of an eighteenth century minister, a satire of Senator Joseph McCarthy, and a satire against labor unions.

**Administering the treatment.** After entering the designated room, all groups were given the same information about the experiment. They were told that they would hear two taped political speeches, originally given as a radio
debate. Prior to hearing either of the speeches, subjects were also given careful instructions on how to fill out the rating scales at the close of the experiment.

Before hearing the first speaker, the subjects were asked to read either a high credibility introduction, a low credibility introduction, or no introduction (i.e., just a statement such as, "The first speaker you will hear today is . . . ."). Then, the first speech was played. After the speech of advocacy, but prior to the speech of refutation, all subjects were exposed to a high or low credibility introduction or no credibility introduction of the second speaker.

After hearing both speeches, that is, the speech of advocacy and either a humorous or a non-humorous refutation, the subjects indicated their attitudes toward the two speakers on the ethos rating scales, their attitudes toward the humorousness of the two speeches on the humor rating scales, their attitudes and commitment on the four topics discussed in the speeches on the attitude rating scales, and their preference for one of the two candidates.

The entire experiment was conducted in one class period. The two taped speeches took about ten to thirteen minutes to play, depending on whether the group heard the
humorous or the serious refutation. The humorous version was about three minutes longer than the serious one. Most subjects took about ten to twenty minutes to fill in the scales, then were dismissed.

The writer feels that the above procedures were more advantageous than the pre-test, treatment, post-test, and even delayed-post-test designs used by most (about ninety per cent) of the researchers in earlier studies dealing with rhetorical humor. Such obtrusive measures may inhibit further change or may cause the subjects to try to accommodate the experimenter by changing in the direction they think the experimenter wants them to change.

Thus, the present study was not interested in change of opinion per se, but in the persuasibility of a speech of refutation with humor compared to the same speech without humor. The study was also interested in any interactive effects occurring between speaker ethos and humor.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The first statistical test conducted was a comparison of the scores on the humor scale of all the Ss hearing the humorous refutation (hereafter referred to as HR) with the scores of all the Ss hearing the serious refutation (hereafter referred to as SR). Had the Ss not perceived the humor in the so-called "humorous refutation," the rest of the study would have been weakened considerably. However, such was not the case. The mean humor rating by Ss hearing the SR was 15.27. The mean humor rating by Ss hearing the HR was 8.06 (a lower score generally indicates a more favorable rating throughout this paper). A comparison of these means revealed a t value of 93.91, which with 324 degrees of freedom, was significant well beyond the .01 level of confidence.

TABLE I
AN OVERALL COMPARISON OF THE HUMOROUSNESS OF THE TWO REFUTATIONAL SPEECHES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>99.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>8.06</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Not only was the overall humor rating significantly different, but a comparison of each of the nine HR groups with each of the SR groups under the same ethos conditions revealed that in every case the Ss perceived the HR as significantly more humorous than the SR. These differences were all significant beyond the .01 level of confidence.

To this extent, then, the present study was much more successful than many earlier humor studies in which the Ss did not perceive the so-called humorousness of the speech.

The complete results of these comparisons can be seen on the following page in Table II. The various symbols used there and their interpretations are as follows: "H" in the initial position means that the first speaker received a high credibility introduction; "H" in the second position indicates that the second speaker received a high credibility introduction; "L" in the first position means that the first speaker received a low credibility introduction; "L" in the second position means that the second speaker received a low credibility introduction; "N" in the initial position means that the first speaker received no introduction; "N" in the second position means that the second speaker received no introduction. The "SR" and "HR" stand for serious refutation and humorous refutation respectively.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Degrees of Freedom</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HHSR</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>HHHR</td>
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<td>8.83</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>9.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLSR</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.60</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLHR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7.26</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNSR</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.89</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HNHR</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHSR</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.25</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LHHR</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLSR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.79</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLHR</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNSR</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.44</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNHR</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.06</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHSR</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHHR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLSR</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.28</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLHR</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNSR</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNHR</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Apparently, the credibility introductions had little or no effect on the perceived humorousness of the refutational speeches. The mean humor rating when the speaker was given a high credibility introduction (hereafter referred to as HCI) was 8.17. The mean humor rating when the speaker was given a low credibility introduction (hereafter referred to as LCI) was 7.70. The mean when the speaker was given no introduction (hereafter referred to as NI) was 8.42. Though these differences were not statistically significant, it can be seen that the speaker given a LCI was actually rated higher in humor than either the speaker given a HCI or the speaker given NI. Just why this was so is not clear. Intuitively, one would expect a speaker of low ethos to be perceived as less humorous than a speaker of high ethos. However, since the mean ratings were so close, perhaps the slight differences noted were due to nothing more or less than chance. At least, the credibility introductions seem to have exerted no important influence on the humor ratings.

The next, and major statistical analysis of the study consisted of an analysis of variance, run twelve times, once with each of the dependent variables. These analyses were conducted with speaker one authoritativeness, speaker one character, speaker two authoritativeness, speaker
two character, once with S attitude on each of four topics discussed in the speeches, and once with S commitment on the same four topics.

The first analysis of variance, with speaker one authoritativeness as the dependent variable, revealed an F ratio of 12.76, which was significant at the .0001 level. Subsequent t tests revealed that the first speaker's authoritativeness was perceived as significantly different by the Ss exposed to the HCI and those exposed to the LCI. These differences were in the planned directions. The mean rating for speaker one authoritativeness by the 110 Ss exposed to the HCI was 18.27. The mean rating for speaker one authoritativeness by the 103 Ss exposed to the LCI was 22.03. A comparison of these means indicated a t of 8.37, which was significant at the .01 level of confidence.

The second analysis of variance indicated a significant main effect for speaker one character. The F value was 13.01, which indicated a significantly different speaker one character rating at the .0001 level. The mean character rating for speaker one by those exposed to the HCI was 19.76. The mean character rating by Ss exposed to the LCI was 23.75. A t test revealed that this difference was significant at the .01 level of confidence.

It can be seen, therefore, from the above data that
the credibility introductions were successful in producing significantly different perceptions of the first speaker's ethos. These differences were in the intended directions.

The third analysis of variance was conducted with speaker two (the refutational speaker) authoritativeness as the dependent variable. This analysis produced two significant main effects, one with speaker two authoritativeness, one with speaker two refutation. The speaker authoritativeness main effect produced an $F$ value of 28.04, which was significant at the .0001 level. A subsequent $t$ test, comparing the HCI Ss with the LCI Ss, revealed a $t$ value of 14.06, which was significant beyond the .01 level. The second main effect mentioned above will be discussed later.

The fourth analysis of variance, with the second speaker's character rating as the dependent variable, also produced two significant main effects, one with speaker two character ratings, and one with speaker two refutation. The $F$ value for speaker two character ratings was 9.57, significant at the .0002 level. A comparison of the mean ratings of Ss exposed to the HCI and those exposed to the LCI produced a $t$ of 9.72, which was significant at the .01 level of confidence. This indicates that the HCI Ss rated the speaker's character significantly higher than the LCI Ss.
The first four analyses of variance validate the credibility introductions for both speakers. In other words, the use of the introductions did, in fact, establish the speakers as individuals of low or high ethos. This, of course, was as planned.

**TABLE III**

**EFFECTS OF THE CREDIBILITY INTRODUCTIONS ON SPEAKER AUTHORITATIVENESS AND CHARACTER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Type of Introduction</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>HCI</td>
<td>Sp. 1 A*</td>
<td>18.27</td>
<td>8.37</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>LCI</td>
<td>Sp. 1 A</td>
<td>22.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>HCI</td>
<td>Sp. 1 C*</td>
<td>19.76</td>
<td>10.19</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>LCI</td>
<td>Sp. 1 C</td>
<td>23.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>HCI</td>
<td>Sp. 2 A*</td>
<td>13.59</td>
<td>14.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>LCI</td>
<td>Sp. 2 A</td>
<td>19.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>HCI</td>
<td>Sp. 2 C*</td>
<td>13.71</td>
<td>9.72</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>LCI</td>
<td>Sp. 2 C</td>
<td>16.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sp. 1 A = Speaker one authoritativeness  
*Sp. 1 C = Speaker one character  
*Sp. 2 A = Speaker two authoritativeness  
*Sp. 2 C = Speaker two character

One interesting, if unexpected, main effect occurring in the third and fourth analyses of variance was the influence
of humor on speaker two authoritativeness and character ratings. When Ss were exposed to the HR their mean rating for speaker two's authoritativeness was 18.75. When Ss heard the SR their mean rating was 14.26. A t test comparison of these means was not necessary since the F value of 42.17 had already indicated that this difference was significant at the .0001 level of confidence. The above data indicate that Ss hearing the HR rated the refutational speaker's authoritativeness significantly lower than Ss hearing the SR. To a lesser degree, the same thing held true for the refutational speaker's character rating. The mean rating for Ss hearing the HR was 15.67, and the mean rating for those hearing the SR was 14.23. The F value for this difference was 5.14, indicating significance at the .02 level. The above data indicate that Ss hearing the HR rated the speaker's character significantly lower than those hearing the SR.

It can be seen then, that the use of humor in the present study produced significantly lower ethos ratings for the refutational speaker, especially in the case of speaker authoritativeness. The author does not pretend to know the precise reason for this phenomenon, although several possible explanations will be presented in the concluding chapter. These humor effects on speaker ethos may be seen in Table IV on the following page.
### TABLE IV

**EFFECTS OF HUMOR ON SPEAKER CREDIBILITY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>Sp. 2 A</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>1700.42</td>
<td>42.17</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>Sp. 2 A</td>
<td>14.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>Sp. 2 C</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>166.47</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>Sp. 2 C</td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fifth analysis of variance was conducted to determine Ss' attitude toward federal income tax revenue sharing. A main effect $F$ ratio of 6.33 was found on the refutation dimension. This difference between the HR and the SR was significant at the .01 level of confidence. The mean rating for those hearing the HR was 13.26; the mean rating for those hearing the SR was 15.22. Since the position of the second speech was against federal income tax revenue sharing (the first speaker had been for it), a higher rating on this topic indicated a score favoring the second speaker. As can be seen from the above data, the SR produced an attitudinal response significantly more opposed to revenue sharing than did the HR. Another way of saying the same thing is that the refutational speaker who used humor was significantly less effective in persuading Ss than the speaker who did not use humor.
The sixth analysis of variance was conducted with Ss' attitudes toward wiretapping as the dependent variable. A significant main effect $F$ ratio was found for refutation. The $F$ value was 3.62, yielding a probability level of .05. The mean for those hearing the HR was 12.64; for those hearing the SR it was 11.08. In this case the first speaker had spoken against wiretapping; the second speaker for it. A lower score, therefore, would favor the second speaker. A comparison of the HR with the SR showed that the SR produced a significantly more favorable attitudinal response for the second speaker than did the HR.

**TABLE VI**

**EFFECTS OF REFUTATION ON WIRETAPPING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>12.64</td>
<td>189.75</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>11.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neither the seventh analysis of variance, on the topic of improving state roads, nor the eighth analysis of variance, on the topic of reform of homes for the aged, revealed any significant main or interactive attitudinal effects.

The four analyses of variance just discussed (5-8) were conducted to determine the effects of the various treatment conditions on Ss' attitudes toward the four topics discussed in the two speeches. The next four analyses of variance (9-12) were conducted to determine what effects the various treatments had on the degree of attitudinal commitment.

The ninth and tenth analyses of variance, on the topics of revenue sharing and wiretapping, revealed no significant main or interactive effects on the commitment variable.

The eleventh analysis of variance, on the topic of state road improvement, revealed a significant speaker one \( x \) speaker two \( x \) refutation interaction, significant at the .03 level. On this particular topic both speakers advocated that state roads should be improved, but had different plans for achieving this goal. This interaction may be seen in the following table.
TABLE VII
MEAN SCORES FOR SPEAKER ONE X SPEAKER TWO X REFUTATION INTERACTION ON COMMITMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HCI</th>
<th>LCI</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HCI for Speaker One</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker Two</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HC1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HRI</strong></td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>-2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SRI</strong></td>
<td>-2.18</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LCI for Speaker One</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker Two</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HC1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HRI</strong></td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>-3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SRI</strong></td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>-2.20</td>
<td>-1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NI for Speaker One</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker Two</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HC1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HRI</strong></td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>-2.83</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SRI</strong></td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to try to understand the above interaction, in terms of how the speaker’s use of humor affected subject
commitment of the topic, three *t* tests were conducted. First, Ss exposed to a HCI for the refutational speaker and a HR were compared with Ss exposed to a HCI for the refutational speaker and a SR. A *t* value of 2.81 was found here. With 106 df, this difference was significant at the .01 level in favor of the HR. In other words, taking all Ss who were given a HCI for speaker two, those who heard the HR were significantly more strongly committed to the proposition that state roads should be improved than those who heard the SR. Since this was the position advocated by the second speaker, the use of humor seems to have contributed substantially to attitudinal commitment on this particular topic. Second, all Ss exposed to the LCI for the refutational speaker were lumped together. A *t* test comparison of means produced a *t* value of 1.94. In order to be significant at the .05 level, a *t* of 1.98 was required when df = 110. Although not quite reaching the necessary level of significance, this difference was in favor of the SR. So, when the speaker was given an LCI, the SR brought about a stronger degree of attitudinal commitment in his favor than the HR. In the third comparison all Ss who had heard no introduction for the refutational speaker were grouped together and compared on the basis of whether they heard the HR or the SR. No significant differences were found.
The last analysis of variance was conducted to discover treatment effects on the topic of reform of homes for the aged, specifically Ss' commitment on the topic. No significant main or interactive effects were found.

As a descriptive measure, Ss were asked to pretend that they were registered voters in the state in which the candidates spoke and to register their vote for one of the men. Other than a few who wrote in votes for Pat Paulsen and Houdini, most Ss complied with the request. Out of 323 Ss who voted, 83 cast their vote for the first speaker; 240 for the second speaker. It seems probable from this that the second speech and/or speaker was more appealing than the first. However, since the experiment was not designed to compare the first speaker to the second, such a one-sided vote does not damage the study. For this reason no statistical comparisons were made between the first and second speakers. What is interesting to note is the number of "voters" who preferred the politician using humor in his refutation and the number who preferred the politician using no humor in his refutation. Of the 240 who voted for the second speaker, 144 voted for the speaker who gave the SR, and 96 voted for the speaker who gave the HR. A chi square test for comparing the expected means
with the obtained means indicated that this difference was significant at the .005 level of confidence.

TABLE VIII
CHI SQUARE COMPARISON OF VOTER PREFERENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Obtained Votes</th>
<th>Expected Votes</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>X²</th>
<th>Prob.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In every individual group comparison except one (HHHR compared with HHSR) the serious speaker was favored over the speaker who used humor. The difference, just mentioned, in favor of the humorous speaker was not statistically significant.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. Summary of Findings

The first null hypothesis of the present study was that Ss hearing the SR and those hearing the HR would not differ significantly in their ratings of the speaker's ethos. In view of the findings previously discussed, this hypothesis has to be rejected. Both the authoritativeness and character dimensions of speaker ethos were negatively affected by the use of humorous material. The difference between the authoritativeness rating for those hearing the HR and those hearing the SR was significant at the .0001 level of confidence, in favor of the SR. Similarly, the speaker's character rating by those hearing the SR was significantly more favorable, at the .02 level, than the rating given by those hearing the HR.

To the author's knowledge, only Gruner (23, 25) and Kennedy (28) have explicitly dealt with the effect of humor on speaker ethos. The first of Gruner's studies (23) found that humor significantly enhanced the character dimension of speaker ethos. The second study (25) found that character and authoritativeness were both significantly
enhanced by the use of humor. However, both of the above studies were concerned with the use of humor in informative speaking. In the only known study dealing with the relationship between humor, ethos, and persuasion, Kennedy (28) failed to find significant evidence that humor affected speaker ethos. In a remotely related study, Goodchilds (15) found that "clowning wits" were rated as low in influence, but high in popularity. This was in a small group setting, however, not public speaking. In a somewhat related study, Berlo and Kumata (4) found that the use of satire in a radio broadcast attacking Senator Joseph McCarthy (though not by name) lowered the source credibility rating of the network transmitting the program. The findings of the present study go beyond most of the earlier humor studies in finding that not only may humor fail to significantly affect speaker ethos, but that, in fact, it may be detrimental to the speaker's ethos in certain situations.

The second null hypothesis of the present study was that the level of the credibility introductions would not significantly affect the Ss' rating of the speaker's humorousness. Since the mean humor ratings of those exposed to the HCI, LCI, and NI did not differ significantly, this hypothesis must be accepted. Speaker credibility exerted no systematic influence on Ss' perception of humor.
In fact, the LCI Ss gave higher humor ratings to the HR than did the HCI Ss (although this difference was not statistically significant). To the writer's knowledge, no other communication studies have considered this specific problem.

The third null hypothesis of the study was that Ss' attitudes toward the topics discussed in the speeches would not differ significantly between those hearing the SR and those hearing the HR. This hypothesis was partially supported and partially refuted by the present data. On the topics of federal revenue sharing and wiretapping there was a significantly different response by those hearing the SR and those hearing the HR. This difference was significant at the .01 and .05 levels of confidence respectively, in favor of the SR. In other words, the SR was significantly more effective than the HR in bringing about the desired attitudinal positions. On the topics of state road improvement and reform of homes for the aged, no significant differences were found in attitudinal response.

From the above data, then, it can be seen that the inclusion of humor in a refutational speech significantly hurt the speaker's persuasive effect on two topics, and had no significant effect on the other two topics. The finding that humor had no significant effect on persuasion is
corroborated by the findings of Lull (33), Gruner (19, 21), Pokorny (41), Zeman (56), Gruner and Pokorny (42), Kilpela (30), and Kennedy (28). However, the current study is the first one, to the author's knowledge, to demonstrate that humor may have a negative effect on persuasion.

The fourth null hypothesis was that Ss' commitment on the topics discussed in the speeches would not differ significantly between those hearing the SR and those hearing the HR. For the most part, the null hypothesis has to be accepted. The lone exception was on the topic of state road improvement. Here a significant difference (.01 level of confidence) was found in favor of the HR, and when the speaker had received an HCI. A tendency was found in the opposite direction when the speaker had been given an LCI (although the difference did not quite attain statistical significance). It appears then that humor may positively affect the degree of attitudinal commitment when used by a man whose ethos is high, but may have a boomerang effect when his ethos is low. At least this appeared to be the case in the present study. Another piece of evidence supporting this general idea was the finding on the voter preference markings. Overall the SR speaker received far more votes. However, under one condition (when the first and second speaker were both given a HCI) the HR speaker
received more votes. This difference did not quite reach statistical significance though.

II. Discussion

With one exception (degree of commitment on the topic of state road improvement), the use of humor was either non-effective or had a detrimental effect on the speaker's persuasive efforts. Not only was humor detrimental to the persuasion of the speaker, but it also lowered his character and authoritativeness ratings to a significant degree. How are such findings explained? A reliable answer to this question probably will not be available for some time yet, but the writer would like to suggest some possible explanations in connection with the present study.

One obvious explanation, in the light of studies conducted to date, is that humor may be highly overrated as a persuasive agent. Or, perhaps more realistically, it may be that the conditions permitting a profitable use of humor are more limited than we have realized.

Another possible explanation is that the HR version of the speech may have contained too much humor in proportion to its length. The total time for this speech was about eight minutes, three minutes of which was humorous material.
Perhaps, in an effort to insure that Ss would perceive the humorous speech as humorous, the experimenter was overzealous in the amount of humor used. The reason for this was that in many earlier studies Ss had completely failed to see that the speech contained humorous material. At this point, the present study was overwhelmingly successful.

It may be also that humor coming from a tape-recorder is not the same thing as humor coming from a live speaker. However, Lull (33), Gruner (20), and Kennedy (28) all used live speakers and still failed to find positive results with the use of humor. While variables are more controllable using an audio recorded humorous message, the issue of whether the conclusions derived from such experiments can be applied to a live humorous public speaking situation remains.

This brings up another interesting point, namely that some individuals can handle humor more effectively than others. As Lull (33, p. 39) stated thirty years ago, "The same humorous material may vary in humorousness when it is presented by different speakers. . . ." This explanation, of course, offers little that is not already commonly known, but nonetheless may be an important variable in studies dealing with the rhetorical use of humor.
The lack of social facilitation may have had some effect on the use of humor in the present study. That is, the treatment speeches were recorded in isolation. Therefore, when the speaker finished a joke there was no laughter—only silence. It is possible that such conditions might contribute to a weakened or negative impact of humor.

The non-significant or negative findings on most of the attitude and commitment variables on the one hand, and the positive value of humor used in connection with topic number three—improvement of state roads—suggests that there may be a topic variable involved in the use of humor. In other words, some topics may be perceived as amenable to humor and others not. Some informal comments from Ss after the experiment was over indicated that humor did not seem very appropriate with some of the topics.

Another factor which may have affected the present study, as well as most earlier humor studies, is the difficulty in producing spontaneous humor. Canned jokes may lose some of their humor under the rigid conditions of experimental research.

Certainly one important key to understanding the present study is a consideration of the situation in which humor was used. It was a political setting. Perhaps the
general distrust of politicians by college students was only heightened by the use of humor. Some of the Ss made comments to this effect after the experiment was over. One such typical response was, "I never did trust a funny politician." Recent nation-wide polls have indicated a general distrust of politicians by college students. The fact that eighteen-year-olds had just been given the right to vote might have also caused the Ss to be overly wary of being duped by some slick politician. It may be then that the nature of the Ss plays a more important part in humor research than has generally been recognized. In fact, there is some slight evidence to support this point. For example, Kennedy (28) used a day class (made up of young college students) and a night class (made up of older adults) in his study of humor and persuasion. The older Ss tended to rate the humorous speech as more persuasive than the day class, and their attitudes were changed more in the desired direction. This difference did not, however, reach statistical significance.

III. Conclusion

The findings of the present study indicate that it is possible for humor to have a negative effect on the speaker's ethos and also on persuasion. It does indicate,
however, that in some cases humor may aid in securing stronger attitudinal commitment.

As with any experimental study, the setting and conditions of the present study were unique and for that reason may have produced an atmosphere which would not be found in other settings where humor is used.

When we discuss the relationship between humor, ethos, and persuasion, we discover several variables which need further delineation. Much more research must be done in the area before definitive answers are forthcoming. One should not, therefore, be too hasty in reaching conclusions or in generalizing from one particular study. So far, humor research has given us an incomplete and often contradictory picture. The present study has not cleared that picture, but it has added a new dimension, that of the negative effects which humor may have under certain conditions.

IV. Suggestions for Further Research

The suggestions listed below would seem to represent areas in which continued research may prove worthwhile:
(1) A study in which humorous speeches containing various amounts of humor are compared for their relative effectiveness could produce interesting results. (2) Using the
same humorous items on different audiences may answer some questions not presently known about age and other situational differences. (3) It may also be profitable to conduct a study in which three or four different individuals are used to present the same humorous material. It may be that the speaker variable is larger than has been realized in humor research. (4) Another interesting study would be one which presented the humorous material via tape-recorder, one tape including strong laughter after each humorous item, and the other tape containing no such laughter. (5) A study using the same humorous items with different topics may be helpful in delineating what areas may be amenable to humor and what areas are not.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Introduction to the Study

The Political Science Department of Princeton University is conducting a nation-wide survey among college students to determine their attitudes toward various candidates for political office. Following brief speeches by two men running for the state senate, you will be asked to give your opinions about the two candidates and the issues discussed in the speeches. The two recorded speeches you will hear were originally given as a radio debate with no "live" audience present. It may make listening to the two speeches more meaningful if you pretend that you are a registered voter in the state in which the two candidates are campaigning. Since you have no knowledge of either of the two candidates you are to hear, a thumbnail sketch of both men, taken from recent newspaper articles and editorials, will be presented prior to each speech. Please be thorough and candid in your answers. Your cooperation in this study will be sincerely appreciated.
APPENDIX B

Credibility Introductions

HCI for First Speaker

The first speaker you will hear today is the incumbent senator, George Hartwell. Mr. Hartwell has served well in the state senate for the past four years. His program to aid the mentally retarded has resulted in much more effective and humane treatment of these children in our state institutions. He is a firm believer in taking immediate action in curbing air and water pollution in the state and nation. He was recently appointed by the President to the National Council for a Safer Environment. He is a man of integrity with a fair and concerned outlook toward all racial, religious, and political factions within the state.

LCI for First Speaker

The first speaker you will hear, Senator George Hartwell, has served in the state senate for twenty-four years. He is sixty-three years old and a native of this state. He was investigated in 1968 for allegedly using state money to purchase a plane for his own private use. However, the case never came to trial. He is known to his friends as "Big George," and, according to the state auditor's office, is close to being a millionaire. He has been, and still is, a powerful political figure in the state.

HCI for Second Speaker

The second speaker today is Mr. Ralph Johnson. Mr. Johnson is a graduate of the University of Texas, from which he received the B.A. degree, and Columbia University, from which he received his Masters degree. He has served as state chairman of the March of Dimes and has worked on various other community and civic projects. Presently Mr. Johnson is Director of Social Work for our state. He chooses
to run for state senator, in his own words, "because the opportunity to serve the needs of four million people is a great challenge." As one of his former employees described him, "Ralph Johnson is a man with a genuine sense of humor, a tireless worker, and one of the few honest men I know in public service today."

LCI for Second Speaker

The second speaker today is Mr. Ralph Johnson. Mr. Johnson is a graduate of Lakewood High School and presently operates a chain of liquor stores in the state. He has been married and divorced twice, and was recently remarried for the third time. According to newspaper accounts, Johnson's oldest son was recently arrested for the sale and possession of heroin. Mr. Johnson has no experience in public life but feels that this is not a disadvantage. His campaign slogan is, "A vote for Johnson is a vote for progress."
APPENDIX C

Speeches Used in Study

First Speaker

Ladies and gentlemen: I speak to you today as a candidate for reelection to the state senate. I believe that I have served you well in the past—and hope to do so in the future. Those of you who know me personally know that I have the best interests of our citizens at heart. Those of you who do not know me personally have only to look at my record to find this out. I have been a "winner" in past campaigns, and will be a "winner" in the present campaign because you want and deserve continued good government.

We face many issues that are crucial for the well-being of our state. One of the foremost of these issues is how to improve our state roads. With faster and more powerful automobiles being produced every year, worn-out highways are a threat to the safety of our citizens. These highway improvements, however, won't just happen. Someone will have to put pressure on the highway department officials and let them know that the voice of the people demands that they improve our state roads immediately. If reelected, I promise to pester them so much that they'll make the needed repairs just to get rid of me. Also, as a member of the state finance committee I will be able to secure the necessary financing for this project.

Another issue on which I feel I should take a stand is the matter of federal income-tax revenue sharing with state and local governments. State and local governments will be unable to solve their increasing financial problems without this federal help. Let me give you a few facts on the matter. A recent quote from the U.S. News & World Report stated, "Spending on education at the state and local level, now running at 30 billion dollars a year, will climb to 50 billion by 1975." C. J. Gillman said in the Congressional Record that "There is general agreement among economists that there is a continuing need for increased
federal aid to state and local governments." Despite of what has been a heroic tax-raising effort, there are simply not enough revenues to get the job done—such as paying for education, police protection, public projects, and the like. For example, it was disclosed last week that New York City's spending has tripled in a decade, and Mayor Lindsay believes their present budget is still nearly $700 million less than it ought to be. New York's experience is worse than most, but the problem is universal. In short, I favor a program of federal tax-sharing with the states. While I'm talking about the need for money, let me point out without bragging, that I personally saved our state $3,000,000 last year through my work on the finance committee.

Now let me direct your attention to another issue facing the people of our state at this time. It's the matter of wiretapping. At least that's the nice name for it! Let me go on record as saying that I am unalterably opposed to any such methods of snooping on the fine people of our state—or any other state for that matter! This would strictly be an invasion of privacy, and I am against it. If reelected to the senate I will sponsor a bill to prohibit any kind of wiretapping in our state.

In a previous speech my opponent for this office, Mr. Johnson, claimed that our state government, and my committee in particular, had done nothing to improve conditions in our nursing homes for the aged. The reason for this is simple. We have in this state the finest nursing homes available anywhere! I have personally visited two of these institutions and found the patients to be happy and living conditions to be more than adequate.

In conclusion, I would just like to tell you that our state government is not falling apart as some would have you believe. We have made progress in the past and will continue to do so with the proper leadership. That is why I come before you today—to ask for your support and vote—based on my past record and desire to serve you.
Second Speaker

Thank you so much for allowing me to speak to you today about some of the crucial issues facing our state. I seek your support and your vote. My opponent has made reference to his political experience. I have no such experience to fall back on. As a matter of fact, I would rather that you not think of me as a "politician," but as an ordinary citizen who feels that our state senate can be more effective as a legislative body. The word "politician" doesn't fit me very well anyway. I'm reminded of the story of the father who wanted to know what his son was going to be when he grew up. So he put the Bible, a ten-dollar bill, and a glass of whiskey on a table, then left the room. If the boy drank the whiskey, he would be no good; if he took the money, he would be a banker; if he took the Bible, he would probably do religious work. When the boy looked around and saw no one, he drank the whiskey, put the ten-dollar bill in his pocket, tucked the Bible under his arm, and left the room. His father exclaimed, "Oh no! He's going to be a politician!"

The issue of bad roads in our state has been brought up. I agree wholeheartedly with my opponent that improvements are needed. Driving over some of our roads is almost a nightmare. It's not quite as bad as the nightmare that grandpa had the other night, however. He said he dreamed that grandma and Raquel Welch were fighting over him, and grandma won! The real problem in this state is getting something done about the roads. Mr. Hartwell says that if he is reelected he will pester the highway department officials so much that they will make the needed repairs just to get rid of him. He may find that they will not listen to him. Besides, if Mr. Hartwell had been so interested in the roads of our state before this election, why didn't he bring pressure on the highway department during his last term in office?? He surely has had enough time for this already. Also— I would like to ask my opponent just where the money is coming from to make these needed repairs? How, aside from new taxes, can he hope to finance approximately $63 million worth of highway repairs? Just putting pressure on the highway department won't get the job done. Such a proposal reminds me of a plan devised by two morons I heard about. It seems that they had been in prison for some time. One day one turned to the other and said: I'm tired of this place. I've got

My opponent has said that he favors a program whereby federal tax revenues would be shared with the states. Although all states could use the money, I feel that such a program is unwise and unnecessary. Federal bureaucracy would be increased, and according to many experts, only the larger and more populated cities would really be helped. By a more sensible use of the money presently received, ninety per cent of the state's financial problems could be solved. What we need is better management of the people's tax money, not more federal money with all the strings attached. I'm afraid my opponent has given an incomplete picture as far as our state is concerned. As for the $3,000,000 that Senator Hartwell claims to have saved the tax payers last year, I would just like to say that if he saved the state $3,000,000, then some other state politicians certainly must have made up for it by their spending. HIS CLAIM REMINDS ME OF A CONVERSATION I HEARD THE OTHER DAY BETWEEN TWO YOUNG MEN. ONE OF THEM HELD OUT HIS HAND AND SAID: "SEE THIS? I'M GOING TO GIVE IT TO MY GIRLFRIEND." THE OTHER ONE REPLIED: "WHY, THERE'S NOTHING IN YOUR HAND." "OH YES," SAID THE FIRST, "IT'S AN INVISIBLE BIRTH-CONTROL PILL. IF SHE'LL SWALLOW THAT, SHE'LL SWALLOW ANYTHING!"

Another issue which needs to be discussed is the matter of court-ordered wiretapping, which my opponent has repeatedly referred to as "snooping." While it may sound like an invasion of privacy on the surface, let me assure you that our law enforcement officials have more to do than go around "snooping" on innocent citizens. The main purpose for having such court-ordered wiretapping would be to thwart organized crime. U.S. Attorney General John Mitchell has described such wiretappings as "...a particularly effective weapon in the war against crime." As a matter of fact, a 1968 law permits a controlled use of wiretapping by federal law enforcement officials. Why not, then, permit its use by state authorities? Some say that it would result in repression of personal liberties. I say the only thing that would be repressed is crime!
After all, such wiretappings could only take place after a court had been presented with evidence convincing enough to show probable guilt. Innocent citizens would not be molested by such a system. In Great Britain the government may tap wires for the prevention and detection of serious crimes and for the national safety. No mass outbreak of "snoopings" have occurred there, nor would they occur here. FEAR OF SUCH SNOOPINGS ARE KINDA LIKE A LITTLE BOY I READ ABOUT. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS RECENTLY CARRIED THE REPORT OF THE FLOOR NURSE IN A SALT LAKE CITY HOSPITAL. SHE WAS TRYING TO SPEAK VIA THE INTERCOM TO A PATIENT IN THE CHILDREN'S WARD--TO A YOUNGSTER WHO HAD NEVER BEEN HOSPITALIZED BEFORE AND WAS UNFAMILIAR WITH THE ELECTRONIC DEVICE. AFTER SEVERAL ATTEMPTS FAILED TO PRODUCE AN ANSWER FROM THE CHILD'S ROOM, THE NURSE SPOKE RATHER FIRMLY, "ANSWER ME, JIMMY. I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE." A FEW SECONDS LATER, A TINY QUIVERING VOICE RESPONDED, "WH--WH--WHAT DO YOU WA--WA--WANT WALL?"

Now let's move to another topic of disagreement. Senator Hartwell has argued that our state nursing homes are among the best in the nation. I would simply like to point out that his statement does not coincide with the facts. SPEAKING OF NOT COINCIDING WITH THE FACTS, A GROUP OF TECHNICIANS WAS TRYING TO SELL A COMPUTER TO A BUSINESSMAN AND THEY SAID: "ASK IT A QUESTION--ANY QUESTION." HE THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT AND SAID, "ALL RIGHT, ASK THE MACHINE WHERE MY FATHER IS." AFTER THE USUAL SPINNING OF WHEELS AND FLASHING OF LIGHTS THE ANSWER WAS TYPED OUT: "THIS MAN'S FATHER IS AT THIS MOMENT TEEING OFF ON THE GOLF COURSE AT THE GREENBRIAR COUNTRY CLUB." "WELL," THE BUSINESSMAN SAID WITH SOME SARCASM, "THERE MAY BE A GOLF COURSE IN HEAVEN, BUT I DOUBT THAT THEY CALL IT THE GREENBRIAR. MY FATHER IS DEAD." THIS INFORMATION WAS TYPED INTO THE COMPUTER AND IN A FEW MOMENTS ANOTHER ANSWER WAS TYPED OUT: "THE HUSBAND OF THIS MAN'S MOTHER IS DEAD. BUT HIS FATHER IS AT THIS MOMENT WALKING DOWN THE FIRST FAIRWAY ON THE GREENBRIAR GOLF COURSE!"

In a recent nation-wide survey of nursing homes by Ralph Nader, our state ranked 46th out of the 50 states! Think of it--only 4 other states have taken worse care of their old people than we have. That's not something to be proud of. I, for one, would like to do something about this deplorable situation and the other problems which
face our state today. A FEW YEARS AGO, AFTER SOME BANTER-
ING BETWEEN THE SEXES IN CONGRESS, MARGARET CHASE SMITH
WAS ASKED: "WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WOKE UP ONE MORNING
AND FOUND YOURSELF IN THE WHITE HOUSE?" "I WOULD GO TO
THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE AND APOLOGIZE, AND THEN LEAVE AT ONCE!"
The people of this state are past due an apology for poor
government. It's time some politicians moved out and some
new people moved into the state senate. That is why I
ask for your help. Vote for me on election day, and
together we can make a better life for all citizens of
our state.

*ITEMS IN CAPITAL LETTERS WERE USED ONLY IN THE HR.
APPENDIX D

Ethos Measurement

You have become somewhat acquainted with two speakers in the past few minutes. Please rate the speakers you have heard on the following twelve scales by marking an "X" in the blank which represents your attitude on each scale. You will see pairs of terms which could be considered questions about a particular thing. For example, if you consider the speaker to be extremely reliable, you would respond as follows:


If you consider the speaker to be extremely unreliable, you would respond as follows:


If you consider the speaker to be quite reliable, you would respond as follows:


If you consider the speaker to be quite unreliable, you would respond as follows:


If you consider the speaker to be only slightly reliable, you would respond as follows:

If you consider the speaker to be only slightly unreliable, you would respond as follows:

reliable :____:____:____:____:X:____:____: unreliable

If you are undecided or neutral about the speaker's reliability or unreliability, you would respond as follows:

reliable :____:____:____:X:____:____:____: unreliable

IMPORTANT:

(1) Place your X's in the middle of the spaces.
(2) Mark all twelve scales; omit none.
(3) Never mark more than one X on a single scale.

Do not look back and forth through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the test. Make each item a separate and independent judgment. It is your first impression, the immediate feeling about the item, that we want. However, do not be careless, because we want your true impressions.
First Speaker

1. unreliable :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: reliable
2. informed :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: uninformed
3. qualified :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: unqualified
4. unintelligent :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: intelligent
5. valuable :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: worthless
6. inexpert :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: expert
7. honest :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: dishonest
8. unfriendly :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: friendly
9. unpleasant :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: pleasant
10. unselfish :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: selfish
11. awful :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: nice
12. virtuous :__:_:_:_:_:_:_:_:_: sinful
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<td>2. informed</td>
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<td>3. qualified</td>
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<td>4. unintelligent</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5. valuable</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. inexpert</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. honest</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. unfriendly</td>
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<td>9. unpleasant</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. unselfish</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. awful</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. virtuous</td>
<td>____</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Humor Measurement

Please register your opinion as to the humorousness of the two speeches you have just heard by marking "X" in the appropriate blank. Remember that "X's" at either end of the scale mean extremely, those in positions second from either end mean quite, those in the third position from the ends mean slightly, and those in the center mean undecided or neutral.

IMPORTANT:

(1) Place your X's in the middle of the spaces.
(2) Mark every scale; omit none.
(3) Never mark more than one X on a single scale.

THE FIRST SPEAKER

1. light  
2. humorous  
3. solemn  

THE SECOND SPEAKER

1. light  
2. humorous  
3. solemn  

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APPENDIX F

Choice of Speakers

Pretend that you are a registered voter in the state where the two speakers you have just heard are campaigning. Which candidate would get your vote? Please indicate this decision by marking (X) in the appropriate blank.

_____ The first speaker

_____ The second speaker
APPENDIX G

Attitude and Commitment Measurement

Please indicate your attitudes toward the various statements appearing below. Indicate your most acceptable position on the following scales by marking that space with an "X." Then mark "A" in the spaces which are also acceptable to you, but less acceptable than the position marked with an "X." Next, place a "U" on all those positions which are unacceptable to you.

For example: Given the topic "Marijuana should be legalized," you would place your "X" as follows if your position is very closely related to the term "right."

right : X::__::__::__::__::__::__:: wrong

If the next two positions were agreeable to you, but less strongly than the position marked with an "X," your scale may look like this:

right : X:A:A::__::__::__::__:: wrong

Last, you would place a "U" on all of those positions which are unacceptable to you. Leave blank all those positions about which you are undecided.

The completed scale may look like this:

right : X:A:A::U:U:U:
Rate the following topics on the scales which follow: (Remember, "rate" means your position on these subjects).

1. A program of federal income tax revenue sharing with the states should be adopted.
   good: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: bad
   dangerous: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: safe
   wise: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: foolish
   unwarranted: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: warranted

2. Court ordered wiretapping should be permitted in order to effectively control organized crime.
   good: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: bad
   dangerous: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: safe
   wise: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: foolish
   unwarranted: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: warranted

3. State roads should be improved.
   good: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: bad
   dangerous: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: safe
   wise: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: foolish
   unwarranted: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: warranted

4. Measures should be taken to reform nursing homes for the aged.
   good: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: bad
   dangerous: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: safe
   wise: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: foolish
   unwarranted: [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]: warranted
APPENDIX H

Summary of the Twelve ANOVAs

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<th>Sp. 1 C</th>
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VITA

Thomas Winfred Welford, the son of Vivian Blackburn Welford and Thomas William Welford, was born in Citronelle, Alabama, May 3, 1935.

He began his education in Mobile County, Alabama. After graduating from Citronelle High School, Citronelle, Alabama, he entered Howard College, Birmingham, Alabama, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1957. He then entered the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, Louisiana, from which he received a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1960. In September of the same year he enrolled in the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, Mississippi, where he received a Master of Arts degree in 1962. He then attended the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, for two quarters during the 1962-63 school year. He entered Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1966 on a part-time basis.

His teaching experience began as a graduate assistant at the University of Southern Mississippi in 1960. He continued as a graduate assistant at the University of Utah during the 1962-63 school year. In September of 1963 he was appointed an Instructor in the Department of English
and Speech at Southeastern Louisiana College, Hammond, Louisiana. He has taught at Southeastern since that time and presently holds the rank of Associate Professor of Speech and Director of Forensics.

In 1962 he was married to the former Jayne Cleola Stacey of Mobile, Alabama. They have one son, Bradley Cooper, born May 23, 1964.