1974

The Speech Theory and Criticism of James B. Reston.

Bennie Gilchriest Coates
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE SPEECH THEORY AND CRITICISM OF JAMES B. RESTON

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

Bennie Gilchriest Coates
B.S., Lamar State University, 1959
M.A., Texas Technological College, 1964
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ABSTRACT

Since 1953 to the present, James B. Reston, reputedly one of the most influential journalists of the twentieth century, has frequently analyzed the speaking of government officials in the New York Times. The purpose of this study was to describe and analyze Reston's speech theory and criticism and to determine the quality of the service in this area which he performs for the public.

Characteristics contributing to Reston's competence for critical inquiry were established by discussing his education, journalistic career, and speaking experience. Reston's ideas on speech related topics were compiled and evaluated, for although explicit statements on oratory abound in his writing and public speaking, he has never systematically written a theory of speech. Because the office of the Presidency was a focal point of interest to Reston, the quality of his speech criticism was ascertained by examining his evaluations of the Presidential addresses of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson as well as his criticism of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates' speaking during the campaigns from 1956 through 1968.

Research revealed Reston to be intelligent, industrious, knowledgeable, and possessing a strong sense of purpose and intense moral passion. Above all he appeared as a man of integrity who viewed his job as a journalist with a profound sense of responsibility. From self-concern, obser-
votion, and experience, he developed a credible theory of speech and commendably applied it in his criticism of political speaking. As a speech critic he has fulfilled a vital role by urging the improvement of the art of speaking by constantly holding in view its potential for millions of readers. Furthermore his speech theory and its application is valuable because it endorsed and encouraged the application of many of the precepts of both classical and modern educators.

Reston's theory of speech emanated from a desire to preserve democracy and was based on the belief that rhetoric functioned as both a political and ethical instrument. Ethical appeal was designated as the predominant mode of proof, for Reston felt that determining character was the most difficult and important judgment facing the citizenry. In his criticism, he focused particularly on a speaker's ability to instill trust, his integrity, and his courage. The prevailing state of disunity and mistrust in the nation was directly related to national leaders' deficiencies in this area.

Reston scrupulously evaluated the worth and significance of speakers' ideas on the basis of timeliness, scope, and relevance. He denounced speakers for exchanging sound analysis and evidence for the immediate advantages sometimes gained by exploitation of emotions. According to Reston, the debasement of the intrinsic merit of emotional appeal often produced national discord, pessimism, and distraction from primary issues. A speaker was further expected to possess the sense of duty and initiative to educate the public and carry out proposed programs. He attempted to show the relationship between responses to speakers and their ability to determine and adapt
to audience sentiment. The significance of the relationship between the speaker's strategy and the influence of the social setting was provided by reconstructing the scene in which the speaker operated.

Audiences were held responsible to exercise their authority judiciously as final judges in the speech situation. Although Reston expressed faith in people's resourcefulness, he often underscored their shortcomings. Reston advocated training in public speaking and continuous study to facilitate ability to communicate.

Reston's goal as a journalist was to enlighten and help the readers reach a judgment on the facts. His consideration of political speaking appeared to grow out of his concern to assess the quality of leadership in this country and to keep in focus the great issues and thought of the time.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Washington, D.C. is the center of diffusion of political news in the United States. The twelve hundred members of the Washington press corps have been described as a de facto, quasiofficial fourth branch of government. Leo Rosten described this eminence in his study of the influence of Washington correspondents:

They are listed in the Congressional Directory. They have access to conferences with the officers of the government from the President of the United States down. They have special quarters set aside for their exclusive use in all government buildings. Official documents, statements, reports, statistics are made available to them. They receive advance copies of speeches and announcements. . . . They are aware, by virtue of the deference paid to them and the importance attached to their dispatches, that they are factors of political consequence.

Such prerogatives have evolved from the founding fathers' belief that the survival of democracy depended upon the publication of government affairs that would, in Thomas Jefferson's phrase,

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"penetrate the whole mass of the people." In addition to stressing the obligation of the press to serve as this communicator to inform the people, the press was also deemed as critic and overseer of government conduct: "No government ought to be without censors, and where the press is free, no one ever will." While the framers of the Constitution refrained from setting up an official information system, their acknowledgment in the First Amendment of the press, the only private enterprise so distinguished, implicitly linked the press with the machinery of democratic government.

The power wielded by the press in fulfilling its dual responsibility stems from the prerogative to select and interpret. In Washington, on an average day, hundreds of thousands of words are spoken, dozens of events occur. The press decides which of those words and events shall receive the prompt attention of millions of people. The editorial writer is of paramount importance in this selective process, for his function is to expound; to interpret; to clarify what is obscure; and to abstract patterns of significance and meaning.

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4 Ibid.
from the complex and often seemingly chaotic medley of daily events. Editorials provide the best first approximation of the attitude of the person or persons in control of a newspaper; thus their authors share in the sense of authority that newspapers convey. "The editorial writer undeniably shapes for the outside world images of public men and events." Such images are projected in part through references to speeches and speech criticism.

Since 1953 to the present, James B. Reston, reputedly one of the most influential journalists of the twentieth century, has been analyzing the speaking of government officials in weekly columns of The New York Times. Although authorities on speech criticism, such as Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird, recognize the editorial writer in citing sources of contemporary speech criticism, the acknowledgment seldom exceeds brief observations general in nature.

It is the purpose of this study to describe and analyze the speech theory and criticism of James Reston to determine the quality of the service in this area which he performs for the public.

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Plan of the Study

The analysis of James B. Reston's speech theory and criticism covers six chapters. Chapter one, the introduction, provides the plan of the study.

Chapter two, a background study, includes Reston's education, speech practice, and newspaper experience.

Chapter three comprises a compilation of Reston's ideas on speech related topics. This "speech theory" is ascertained from his speaking and writings in books and periodicals as well as in the newspaper.

Chapter four, an analysis of Reson's criticism of Presidential speaking, consists of his evaluation of inaugural speeches, State of the Union messages, and all other speeches delivered by three presidents while in office, with the exception of campaign speeches.

Chapter five constitutes Reston's evaluation of the campaign speeches of the Republican and Democratic presidential candidates from 1956 through 1968.

Chapter six is a discussion of conclusions reached concerning the content and value of James Reston's speech criticism.

Sources

The most useful source in completing this study was Reston's daily columns in The New York Times. Other important sources
include special analyses of speeches also appearing in The Times, articles and books written by Reston, articles written about Reston, speech manuscripts provided by Reston, and an interview with him. Access to his personal files which Mr. Reston gave to the writer deserves mentioning. This included copies of correspondence written and received by Reston since he joined The Times, notes and sources used in preparing speeches and columns, as well as notes and manuscripts used when speaking through the years.

A review of the literature in journalism reveals that the focus on the area of speech distinguishes this study from those on or relating to Reston as a journalist or Washington correspondents as a group. The only formal study on Reston, a thesis entitled James B. Reston and His Influence on the Federal Decision-Making Process is a compilation of personal opinions obtained through interviews with sixty-six journalists, government officials, and colleagues of Reston. A second thesis, Analysis of the Washington Bureau of the New York Times, is an investigation of the use of specialization by the Times Bureau. One chapter is devoted to the development of specialization

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during the 1953-1964 when Reston was bureau chief. Numerous studies reflect preoccupation and concern with the composition, role, and influence of the Washington press corps. The most comprehensive study, Leo Rosten's *The Washington Correspondents*, is a survey devoted primarily to analyzing the social composition of the corps and determining correspondents' attitudes toward specific political issues and toward their jobs. Two additional studies devoted to defining the role of correspondents in the processes of the federal government mention Reston indirectly. These are a Ph.D. dissertation, *The Washington Correspondents and Government Information*, and *The Press and Foreign Policy*.

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10 Rosten, *op. cit.*


CHAPTER II

EDUCATION, CAREER, AND SPEAKING EXPERIENCE

For nearly thirty years James Barrett Reston has been a newspaper critic in Washington, D. C. engaged in a kind of continuous adult education on significant current topics. A portion of this task involves selection and analysis of important speeches of the day. Insight into Reston's approach is suggested in an observation about his colleague, Walter Lippmann:

There is nothing more hazardous than trying to analyze a man who spends his life analyzing others, but what impresses me is that before he analyzed others, he analyzed himself. ¹

This seems to be a fitting point of departure, since some authorities on speech criticism, notably Edwin Black, feel that rhetorical criticism "seeks as its end the understanding of man himself."²

What then are Reston's qualifications for critical inquiry? Criteria


to ascertain this are suggested by Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird, and Waldo Braden in their book, *Speech Criticism*:

The rhetorical critic must be an intelligent man, well versed in his subject. The tools of his craft are appreciation, knowledge, imagination, intellectual curiosity, investigative skill, a sense of emotional detachment, and good judgment.³

This chapter attempts to establish characteristics which contribute to Reston's competence by discussing his education, journalistic career, and speaking experience.

**Early Life**

**Family Heritage.** Poverty and Calvinism are the two notable factors of prevailing influence from Reston's early childhood. James and Johanna Reston were living in a one room house in Clydebank, Scotland, when their second child, James Barrett, was born on November 3, 1909. Prospects for improving their condition were bleak, so in 1910 the elder Reston, a machinist by trade, took the family to Dayton, Ohio. They were forced to return to Scotland a year later after Mrs. Reston became ill. The Restons settled in Alexandria, Dumbartonshire, in a brick tenement near the factory where the father worked.

"There was a great emphasis on religion," Reston remembers. His parents were devout Presbyterians. On Sunday the family walked four miles to morning church services and repeated the trip in the evening for vespers. Meals were eaten cold on Sunday, for there was no cooking on the Sabbath. Although Reston's father only finished grade school, he was a great reader, particularly of the Bible. He would spend hours reading the Bible aloud to the family and instructing the children on proper conduct. Following his return from China in 1971, Reston was reminiscent of his childhood when discussing his trip. The Chinese ethic of hard work and no nonsense sounded a familiar note. "It sounded to me as if I was back in the Wee Kirk listening to the old exhortions to be modest and to be self critical and helpful to others."5

Being fervent Calvinists, the Restons were strong believers in the hereafter. They accepted their poor existence on earth as part of the natural struggle, "the vale of tears" that they deemed life.6 This dim view, however, did not extend to defeatism. Paying tribute to his

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6Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
mother on her ninety-fourth birthday, Reston wrote: "Work was not only essential but noble, and if a man had a decent job, that was about all he could expect in an unfair world."7 She was always admonishing him: "Make something of yourself. It's no sin to be poor, but it is one to stay poor."8

Johanna Reston finished her formal education at fourteen, but was more ambitious for her son. She was proud of her father, a stone mason, who wrote original verses on tombs.9 She attempted to instill a similar love of language by reading poetry aloud to young James. She wanted him to be a minister and, as he says now, "Well, I am."10

His parents' teachings were indelibly imprinted upon Reston, for his speeches and writings through the years reflect a resolute Calvinist conscience, an enormous awareness of duty, and a sense of responsibility. The necessity of belief, a sense of purpose, and the primacy of the family are paramount principles which he always admonishes:

9Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
10Sutton, op. cit., p. 15.
We have not yet reached the point, however, where we are able to express our purpose as clearly as the founding fathers expressed theirs in the 18th Century. Our political system was founded upon religious principles by men who were in general firm believers in the Lord. Consequently, when they spoke of freedom they spoke with great conviction and independence of spirit. A much more complex America does not convey its belief because, I'm afraid, it does not believe. This for the time is our greatest flaw.¹¹

Eleven years later in remarks delivered at the fiftieth anniversary dinner of the Pulitzer Prize he was still searching for a way to "help us believe again, which in this age of tricks and techniques, may be our greatest need."¹²

His editorial columns appearing at Christmas and Easter invariably extol the significance of Christianity. Washington is searching for answers, not perceiving that the answer . . . to its fears lies in the hope of the Easter story, in the triumph of the spirit which Easter symbolizes, in the faith that distinguishes us from our enemies and gives meaning to our society.¹³

Reston usually introduces discussions of belief and purpose with a reference to his religious background:


¹²Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered at the 50th Anniversary Dinner of the Pulitzer Prize, May 10, 1966.

¹³The New York Times, April 10, 1955, p. 10E.
I am a Scotch Calvinist and particularly interested in this question of purpose. The first question in the Catechism of the English church is . . . what is your name. But the first question in the Scottish catechism is: What is the Chief end of Man? There is quite a difference. . . .

A final requisite to adaptation in the present convulsive and crowded world is dependence upon human involvement and commitment;

Personal love and friendship, and some kind of faith will be more precious than in any other generation. Already the family is the one unit of society that makes more sense than any other, and I cannot believe that it is really in your selfish interest to trifle with the values on which the honor and fidelity of the family are based.

Reston believes that adherence to these principles is the pathway to wisdom. "The ultimate wisdom in a nation, as in an individual, lies, not in its ability to wipe out the incongruities of life, but to achieve serenity within and above them." Reston has been described by Russell Baker, a journalist for The New York Times, as representing the Calvinist ethic:

14 Manuscript provided by James Reston, delivered at the Centennial Charter Day Convocation, The Ohio State University, March 22, 1970.

15 Speech manuscript provided by James Reston, The University of Maryland Commencement, College Park, Maryland, June 8, 1968.

He believes in hard work, in thrift, honor your parents, woman's place is in the home, play by the rules, and live clean. He is basically Tom Mix: Be a square shooter, good fellows always win. Scotty believes that to his marrow.  

Formal Education. The senior Restons, recognizing the limits imposed by their lack of formal education, wanted their son to fare better. For five years Reston received a traditional public education at Vale and Leven Academy near Glasgow. He read very little and was not a particularly good student. Here, however, he learned to play golf, a skill which eventually would enable him to rise above his humble environment.

In 1920 the Restons returned to Dayton, Ohio, where the father found work in the Delco division of the General Motors Corporation. The family settled in the industrial section where Reston attended Hoffman school. After several years he went to Stivers High School, a manual training school. The immigrant boy recalls having no particular problems of adjustment. To supplement the family income, he worked as a kitchen boy, delivered papers, laced skates, and caddied on the local golf course.


19Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
Johanna Reston's aspirations for her son led the family to move to a better neighborhood during Reston's junior year in high school so that he could attend Oakwood High, an academic school. Her expectations of improved scholarship were futile, for by this time young Reston's entire interests were sports. He excelled in golf and was hailed as a boy wonder when at fifteen he won the Ohio Public Links amateur title and later the high school state championship. Such achievements thrust him into the limelight and required him to acknowledge trophies with short acceptance speeches. Preoccupation with sports excluded participation in any literary extracurricular activities and resulted in near dismissal from Oakland.

According to Reston, sports played a critical part in his education, for they provided the link to journalism on the sports level and social and intellectual contacts often denied the ruck of the poor.

I caddied for well known men, educated men, and there is something in this country as you know where wherever men of the country club see a boy that does his job well and they think he has talent, sorta gifts that can be developed, they're always trying to help you. . . . So they were always saying 'You must go on to college. . . .' That was all helpful.21

Former Governor James M. Cox, the 1920 Democratic presidential nominee, was one of these men. He gave Reston odd jobs on

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
his paper, the Dayton Daily News. Coverage of Reston's golf triumphs also resulted in acquaintance with sportswriters. Gradually he began phoning in scores and then running copy. Regarding these experiences Reston says, "Right there I knew I wanted to be a newspaperman. It was no intellectual decision for me. No other idea crossed my mind."  

As he began realizing that he wanted to be a journalist, the practical matter of money for tuition confronted him. For a year following graduation, he worked full time as editor of the Delco-Remy-Doings to help meet this objective. Years later Reston writes matter-of-factly about his entrance into the University of Illinois in 1928.

I didn't apply to get in, I just bummed my way there with a neighbor who was a good half back, put down my high school diploma with its straight-C average, paid the forty dollars out-of-state tuition and signed on.

In college, as in high school, Reston's academic record was undistinguished. Sportswriting, rhetoric and composition, soccer football, and cavalry theory were the only courses in which he received

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22Kemler, loc. cit.  
A's. In English courses he earned a B average but fared only average scores in his major, journalism; according to his official transcript the exact courses taken by Reston were as follows:

Rhetoric and Composition; Spanish One; European History; Introduction to Journalism, Economic History of the United States; Hygiene, Sorcor Football, Cavalry Drill and Theory; Narrative and Description; Rhetoric and Literature; Basketball; Reporting; Introduction to Literature; Indus. and Com. Geography; Sportwriting; Swimming; Advanced Reporting; Spanish Two; General Geology; Advanced Sportwriting; History of Russia to 1796; Principles of Sociology, Contemporary Life and Thought [advanced journalism]; History and Practice of Print and Publishing; Newspaper Advertising Copy and Reporting; Advanced Narrative Composition; Introduction to Philosophy; Survey Course in Business Organization; Contemporary Poetry; Ethics of Journalism; Russia and Her Slavic Neighbors; Religions of Mankind; History and Philosophies of Living; Introduction to Philosophy [Second Half]; History of Journalism; Copy Reading, Head Writing, and Make-Up; Introduction to Shakespeare, Exposition, Criminal Law; Religion and the Social Life; Prose-First Half of 17th Century; Copy-reading; Practical Problems of Journalsm; Criminology; Ideas and Forms in English Literature; Religions of Mankind.\(^{25}\)

Fred Siebert, an instructor who taught Reston reporting, recalls,

He was always serious and hard-working, yet with a certain flair. He didn't rush through an assignment, but rather took it easy, picking our words and meanings that gave whatever he did a special flavor.\(^{26}\)

\(^{25}\) Transcript of James Reston received from the Office of Admissions and Records, University of Illinois, July 2, 1970.

\(^{26}\) Kemler, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 76.
Throughout his college career, Reston remained an avid sports enthusiast. He became a member of the Tribe of Illini, an organization of outstanding varsity athletes, as a result of his participation in intramural and intercollegiate golf.

Paradoxically Reston's initiation into the intellectual life of the university was directly related to golf. While playing golf at the Champaign Country Club, Reston met Bruce Wireick, an English professor and golf fanatic. Reston described Wireick as "kind of a character on campus, a rather poetic, a rather eccentric man." Sessions in which literature and philosophy were discussed by some of the most intellectual students on campus were held in Wireick's home. Reston was invited to attend. Although he seldom contributed, he did cultivate acquaintances. Notable among these was his future wife, Sarah Jane Fulton, the daughter of a Sycamore, Illinois lawyer. She was an A student, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and president of her sorority. Reston acknowledges that she lived in a totally different world, that she was well read, and much better educated than he.

In recalling this period, Reston comments that the only other teacher exerting a significant influence on him was Jacob Zeitlan, a Seventeenth Century Prose professor. Reston remembers him as a

\[27\] Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
marvelous teacher and scholar. However, the relationship was not personal as with Wireick.

Career

Rise in Journalism. Following his graduation in 1932, Reston aspired to a position in big city journalism. The early offers which he accepted were intentionally used as stepping stones toward achieving this goal. Vacancies were scarce, so when James Cox offered him a job as sports writer for the Daily News, he accepted. The following year he was appointed athletic publicity director at Ohio State University. In 1934 Larry MacPhail hired him as publicity director of the Cincinnati Reds. Later that year when the Reds were in New York City, Reston secured a position with the Associated Press Feature Service.

His assignment was to write sports features and occasionally a column on personalities in the theatre patterned after O.O. McIntyre. The significance of this column, "A New Yorker at Large," in Reston's development as a newsman was that it carried him again into the world of educated people. According to Reston, while interviewing famous persons such as H. G. Wells,

... there was the beginning of a realization that there are many ways of speaking. One can be slovenly with

28Ibid.
speech or one can be precise and that it was an educated man's job to be able to convey thought through speech to another person or to other people. Meeting people of this caliber, who did speak and could make their points, illustrate their points, reach conclusions, this step began to become clear to me.  

Writing sports was fun, but not challenging enough for Reston's energy and ambition. His marriage to Sarah Fulton in 1935 also enhanced his desire to rise above the sports level in journalism.

In 1937 his chance came when an unusual opening occurred in the A. P.'s London bureau requiring coverage of sports in the summer and the British Foreign Office in the winter. His experience with sports secured for Reston this position which profoundly influenced his life and career. In referring to this instance and life in general, Reston stresses the importance of the role of accident and chance:

I just happened to go as a sports writer for the A. P. to London and just at the time of the coronation and just before the outbreak of war during that enormously crucial period leading up to the collapse of British civilization and the outbreak of the war.

Reston was deeply moved as he sat in the House of Commons and listened to debates:

That was a critical experience because it was a time of great emotion, of historical significance. It was a

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29 \text{Ibid.}
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30 \text{Ibid.}
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time when men were moved by the eminence of war and by the problem of trying to prevent war in the first instance, and then having failed, dealing with the war in terms that got men out of themselves in their thinking about the security and even the life, the independent life, of their country; and therefore they spoke in a way, with an eloquence, a passion that I had never heard before. 31

Reston immediately began concentrating on the embassies and preparing for the opportunities around him. "When I went abroad," he recalls, "I didn't even know what the map of Europe looked like. . . . I had to read, read, read." 32 His ability attracted the attention of the London bureau chief of the New York Times, Ferdinand Kuhn and in 1939 Reston's dream of becoming a Times man was realized. Arthur Krock, whom Reston later succeeded as chief of the Washington bureau of the Times, described Reston's talent in this manner:

I remember Reston . . . as young, good-looking, eager, and gifted with personality, intelligence, charm, and an instinct for asking the right questions of the right people that induced every news source he dealt with, however highly placed or reticent with the press, to tell him what he wanted to know. I remember him as the possessor of an uncanny "nose for news"--the quality that renders a reporter the gestator as well as the chronicler of news before it officially happens. 33

31 Ibid.

32 Profiles in Power, p. 37.

As Reston endured the great aerial Battle of the Blitz in 1940 and watched the British nation rise to greatness, he became convinced "that war can sweep away all pretense from the souls of men and bring them back to the simple realities of life." His deep conviction about the righteousness of the allied cause and intense patriotism were manifest in the publication of *Prelude to Victory* in 1942. Besides out-selling other wartime Jeremiads, the book was significant because it represented Reston's coming of age as a full-fledged philosopher-journalist. In essence the book is an attack upon complacency and social injustice in America: "We cannot win this War until it ceases to be a struggle for personal aims and material things and becomes a national crusade for America and the American Dream." Reston's American Dream is based on the belief that freedom of thought is the secret of happiness and that courage is the secret of freedom.

Moreover--and this is the important thing--it was only when he [man] had mastered this habit of thought, this tolerance of mind, that he acquired those other qualities which we call kindness, and charity, and decency, and

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36 *Prelude to Victory*, loc. cit.
only when he had acquired these qualities that he began to understand the political form of these qualities which we call democracy.

These are the things we are really talking about when we speak of "our way of life;" and these are precisely the things that are at stake in this war.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 34-35.}

His strong Presbyterian moral passion and humanism is apparent, as it will continue to be throughout his career:

\[\ldots\ \text{[T]here is something in the affairs of men, something outside and above reason, something which we call spirit or faith which determines our fate.}\footnote{Ibid., pp. 14-15.}\]

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\]

When each man realizes that his fate is bound up with the fate of the men down his street and in the next street and town and finally in the fate of all good men on his side, then a very curious and wonderful thing happens to the soul of men.\footnote{Ibid., p. 167.}

Following publication of \textit{Prelude to Victory}, Reston's career took a sharp turn upward, because according to the critic, Clifton Fadiman, the publication established Reston as a "valuable propagandist."\footnote{Gay Talese, \textit{The Kingdom and the Power} (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1969), p. 21.}

In the book Reston praised the \textit{New York Times} for concentrating on accuracy and truth rather than entertainment and deemed it a model press fulfilling its responsibility as designated in the Constitution. This loyalty to the \textit{Times} did not go unheeded. In
1941 Reston had been transferred to the *Times'* Washington bureau, and was nearly misplaced in the shuffle by being sent to Boston. However, soon after achieving fame as an author, he was asked temporarily to leave the *Times* to help the United States government reorganize the London bureau of the Office of War Information. Upon completing this mission in 1943 and upon the recommendation of John Winant, U. S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Reston went to New York as *Times'* publisher Arthur H. Sulzberger's administrative assistant and occasional traveling companion. During this time Reston endeared himself to the Sulzberger family by establishing a personal and philosophical compatibility which according to Gay Talese, author and an ex-*Times* employee, was his main source of power in the New York office.  

After about a year with Sulzberger, Reston returned to London as acting head of the *Times* bureau. Almost immediately he confirmed Sulzberger's faith by furnishing the *Times* with Italy's decision to declare war on Germany twelve hours ahead of Prime Minister Churchill's and President Roosevelt's joint announcement. The scoop was hailed as one of the brightest of the *Times* career. He performed so well that he was reassigned to the Washington bureau in the highly coveted

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position of diplomatic correspondent. Arthur Krock wanted him to concentrate on the postwar high-policy-making sector of the government and the diplomatic corps. 43

Reston arrived in Washington just in time for the Dumbarton Oaks Conference in 1944 and scored a major scoop resulting in the winning of the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting with news dispatches and interpretative articles on the conference. He secured copies of all the leading Allied position papers from China and the Times published them in spite of threats from Under Secretary of State Edward Stettinius.

Through the ensuing years he remained a top scoop reporter enjoying increasing prestige:

... [A] small reporter smoked out the season's biggest story three days before it was due. 44 [Reston reported General Marshall's recall and Jimmy Byrnes' impending resignation.]

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The rising star of the bureau is . . . James (Scotty) Reston, who has furnished a large number of the 30 important news beats that the Washington office has turned in so far this year. 45

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43 Memoirs, p. 92.
44 "Smart Scot," Time, 49 (January 20, 1947), p. 70.
In 1954 he broke the story of the Atomic Energy Commission's suspension of Dr. J. R. Oppenheimer. He created a furor by securing the first copy of the Yalta Conference text in 1945, thereby enabling the Times to perform a notable journalistic feat. While most papers were carrying only sketchy Yalta stories, the Times printed the full text of the 200,000 word conference record. He won a second Pulitzer Prize for his dispatches on President Eisenhower's illness in June of 1956. To aid him in his work, Reston kept a "future book" containing dates on which hearings, trials, and issues that sit still for a while are due to reemerge. He has advised other newsmen: "Keep up on the future, ... and you'll scoop this town six times out of seven."

Attractive offers were frequently made to Reston, but his loyalty to the Times remained undaunted. However, in 1953 the offer of the editorship of the Washington Post prompted Arthur Krock prematurely to resign his position as Washington correspondent to make way for Reston. In announcing his decision to the Washington Bureau staff, Mr. Krock said:

I did not want the *Times* to lose his immensely valuable services, and I knew that I was in a position to offer him a strong inducement to stay with the *Times* for life.  

As Washington correspondent he would be making general policy for a thirty-three member staff that operated fifteen hours a day and turned out approximately fifteen thousand words of news. By 1960 the number had risen to thirty-five thousand. In October of 1953 Reston began writing a column each Sunday on the editorial page. On March 1, 1960, he also began writing columns on Wednesday and Friday.

During his eleven years as bureau chief, Reston's prestige soared. His indisputable eminence was due to his talent as well as to his position as the chief embodiment of the *Times* in the nation's capitol. His prominence is typified in such descriptive phrases as "the most influential newsman in Washington,"51 and "Washington's most powerful reporter."52 Such distinction in Washington is tantamount to being "one of the most important political writers in the


52 *Profiles in Power*, p. 77.
The status of the *Times* contributes to the validation of such assertions. The paper's readership has been estimated to include forty-four per cent of all government officials in Washington, diplomats in seventy embassies, fifty per cent of the nation's college presidents, sixty per cent of its newspaper editors, and twenty-eight per cent of its banking executives. Its New York clientele numbers twice as many people in the executive, professional, and technical class as any other paper. Presidents of foreign governments and their people who are curious about the United States pay the *Times* the kind of attention elsewhere afforded an official newspaper. Finally, Reston's column, through the *Times*' syndicated news service, reaches sixty-six other papers all over the world, with an estimated twenty-five million readers.

At his own request, Reston relinquished his title as bureau chief in 1964 when he assumed the position of associate editor. He wanted to devote full time to his columns. The entire news operation

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54G. Lichtheim, "All the News That's Fit to Print; Reflections on the New York Times," *Commentary*, 40 (September, 1965), p. 34.

came under his direction in 1968 on succeeding to the executive editorship, a position requiring him to serve in New York City. In referring to the new rank, Reston said, "I've been asked to do the most important news job on the paper. It's my duty, and a great challenge."\(^{56}\)

The managerial duties of executive editor were time consuming and Reston preferred Washington to New York. He felt that his column had suffered since moving away from his Capitol sources.\(^{57}\) Thus his promotion in 1969 to a vice-presidency, with primary responsibility in the area of news coverage, enabled him to return to Washington while elevating his status in the hierarchy.

The distinction of this ascension is further manifest by the number of awards accrued:

- Three Overseas Press Club Awards
- American Press Club Award
- R. Clapper Award
- Belgian Order of Leopold
- French Legion of Honor Officer
- Chilean Order of Merit
- Norway's Order of St. Olav
- Sigma Delta Chi Fellow
- Newspaper Guild of New York Page One Award
- Joint Defense Appeal Plaque
- Southwest Journalism Forum Award
- University of Arizona Zenger Award
- Missouri University Journalism Award
- Long Island University Polk Award
- and the University of Illinois Alumni Association Award.


Honorary degrees have been bestowed upon him by the University of North Carolina, Brandeis, Columbia, Dartmouth, Rutgers, Oberlin, Colgate, Boston College, Kenyon College, New York University, and the University of Illinois.

**Role of Journalism.** Reston has attained the journalistic pinnacle to which he aspired. An inquiry into his interpretation and practice of journalism fostering this achievement seems relevant for their effect upon his speech theory and criticism.

Reston believes in the primacy of his profession: "Just as the 19th Century was the century of the novelist, so this post-war phase of the 20th Century may be the era of the journalist." Greater opportunity is afforded the journalist, because he does not have to create his audience. He writes when the people are paying attention.

The violent convulsion of the time concentrate the public mind, startle the people out of their normal pre-occupation with family and work, and then for a brief time . . . the reporter is an educator, and the press and television have more effect on public attitudes and assumptions in the nation than all the schools, universities, and books in the land.  

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58Manuscript of speech provided by James Reston, delivered at Columbia, 50th Anniversary of School of Journalism, April 15, 1963.

59Speech, 50th Anniversary of Pulitzer Prize.
To fulfill this responsibility, Reston advises newsman to follow the guides set forth in *The Spectator* which "are to correct the vices, ridicule the follies, and dissipate the ignorance by enlivening morality with wit, and tempering wit with morality." More specifically Reston cites six objectives as imperative to the role of the press:

1. Deal with the causes as well as with the effects of contention and misery in the world.
2. Watch more diligently the increasing power of unions, industry, the government--particularly the Presidency, and big institutions of all kinds.
3. Keep the best thought of the world before the readers and not just the news of physical action.
4. Strive to maintain a sense of perspective so that adversities do not overwhelm achievements and depress readers.
5. Constantly keep in focus the great issues such as change, population explosion, poverty, expenditures on armaments, and the alarming quality of leadership in relation to the responsibilities of our country.
6. Continually remind Americans of the great spirit and purpose of their country.

Reston believes if these objectives are fulfilled, then the news will consist "of all the facts which, in a democracy, the people must have in order to

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61 Manuscript of speech entitled "American Journalism in the World Today" provided by James Reston, delivered before a Symposium on World Journalism, University of Minnesota, May 24, 1967.
reach correct and sound judgments on the conduct of their public affairs. "62 This achievement is the primary obligation of the press and the basis for his reiteration: "My responsibility is to the people." 63 He is grateful that the Times publisher and editors share this view. "... [N]one of them has ever, on any occasion, instructed me to make the facts conform . . . to the editorial policy of the Times." 64

Insight into Reston's concept of newspaper criticism is manifest in his tribute designating Walter Lippmann as the paragon of journalists. In so distinguishing Lippmann, Reston refers to two comments on criticism made by Matthew Arnold which he feels summarize Lippmann's special contributions. First, Lippmann brought thought to bear on politics: "... [H]e provoked thought, encouraged debate, forced definition, and often revision, of policies, and nourished the national dialogue on great subjects for over half a century." 65 "... He put the day's events in the perspective of history, . . . loved truth and reason, and kept in touch with the coming


63 Ibid., p. 93.

64 Ibid., p. 107.

65 Walter Lippmann and His Times, p. 235.
age." Secondly, Lippmann performed the function of criticism in newspapers to reach a wide audience. Again Reston quotes Arnold to define this special role:

The great men of culture are those who have a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have labored to divest knowledge of all that was abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned. . . .

Lippmann, unlike Arnold, doesn't agree with disinterested criticism. Reston shares Lippmann's sentiments by approvingly noting, "Lippmann feels a moral duty to deal with the practical consequence, to parallel what he has criticized with his own alternative." This is necessary, Reston says, because readers are too smart and have too many other sources of information "merely to swallow debating points without asking what the [editorial] writer has to propose instead of the thing he criticizes."

It is mandatory, therefore, that today's editorial writer base his column on a factual foundation. Reston urges the adoption of the

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67 *Walter Lippmann and His Times*, p. 234.


69 Manuscript of speech, "Are American Newspapers Meeting Their Responsibilities," provided by James Reston, delivered at Ohio State University, May 8, 1952.
advice of Felix Frankfurter: "You cannot know all the facts, but you ought to insist on knowing how evidence is gathered and decisions reached." \(^70\) This entails ferreting out contradictions and mistakes, because even though a true working of the democratic system certainly depends in part on the dissemination by government through the press of complete and accurate information on all subjects affecting the common good, the government has never fulfilled this obligation. \(^71\)

An editorial writer's independence and detachment are preferable to unerring party allegiance. \(^72\) As the ideological commitments of the major parties get weaker, Reston believes it becomes difficult to support a party which changes in accordance with the philosophy of its presidential candidate, for "the only certainty now is change, and it seems to me we have to retain all the freedom of action we can get to deal with a world in such flux." \(^73\)

Since Reston feels that each presidential election tests the philosophy and ability of the press, a brief glimpse at his opinion of


\(^71\)James Reston, "Britain Goes Totalitarian For the Duration, New York Times Magazine, (June 2, 1940), p. 43.

\(^72\)New York Times, April 17, 1955, p. 10E.

the political process may aid in understanding his selection of editorial subjects—particularly those referring to speakers and speeches. Ultimately Reston believes as Thomas Jefferson observed that the people are still "the safest depository of power." For example he frequently concludes a derogatory attack on the primary system with Churchill's famous quote, "Democracy is the worst system of Government in the world--except all those other systems." Optimism prevails in the end for he believes that "politicians do change." "Politics is, with few exceptions, a debasing and conspiratorial business. It thrives on pretense and invokes all the myths and demons which most people in their private lives try to oppose." Politics is especially a corrupting business in the early years of a man's political experience.

Young men, scrabbling their way up through the political jungle, are often unfaithful to their deepest beliefs. . . . But politics at the highest levels can be, not a corrupting, but an ennobling experience.76  

74 New York Times, October 28, 1964, p. 44.  

75 Ibid.  

76 Manuscript of speech, "Arthur Vandenberg," provided by James Reston, delivered at the University of Michigan, May 22, 1968.  


78 Speech, "Arthur Vandenberg."
Reston writes, "Ideally, the purpose of an election is to clarify and not to confuse the issues, to destroy and not to perpetuate illusion, to make clearer what we are and where we are." An election is, or should be, not merely a review of the past but a bet on the future; not simply a definition of ends but a statement of the means to those ends. Finally, a campaign is a test of character which forces candidates to disclose their strengths and weaknesses.

Beyond the obvious duty to report accurately and fairly what the candidates and elected officials say and do, Reston believes a columnist must "decontaminate as much political poison as he can." He points out that this involves defining the vast difference between reality and appearance, for the press is not a kind of inanimate transmission belt which should pass along anything a political figure chooses to dump on it. In indicting Richard Nixon's misunderstanding of the function of the press, Reston explicitly elaborates on the relationship between the reporter and politician:

80 Ibid., July 31, 1964, p. 22.
81 Ibid., July 6, 1960, p. 32.
82 Ibid., October 30, 1968, p. 46.
83 Ibid.
This was the root of his trouble with the reporters: Not that they were refusing to report what he said but that they were insisting on reporting all the rest of the picture— not only the words but the techniques, not only the public posture but the private posture, not only the lines of the play, but the elaborate stage directions.  

Armed with these standards, Reston is notably preoccupied in his columns during campaigns in evaluating a candidate's endeavors.  

Reston as Columnist. Analysis of campaigns is only a segment of the political scene which has earned for Reston the reputation of a leading analyst. Although his columns have dealt with diverse subject matters, there is a discernible pattern. The office of the Presidency is the dominant subject. This entails Reston's ideal concept of the position versus the pragmatic actions of the occupant. Strong emphasis is placed on the objectives, achievements and failures of foreign policy, for Reston has been a close observer of the State Department since 1944. Accounts are given of the proceedings of conferences and summit meetings among heads of state, visits of foreign dignitaries and press conferences. Activities of the remaining cabinet members, particularly the Secretary of Defense, are occasionally mentioned.  

84 Ibid., November 9, 1962, p. 34.
Frequent references are made to current questions being debated in Congress and the United Nations and to Supreme Court decisions. Grave public issues such as disarmament, nuclear war, population increase, and civil rights receive attention intermittently, while crises involving countries and individuals receive extensive but temporary focus. Lesser mentioned but noteworthy topics are the value of education, the need for an informed public, the qualifications for leadership, and the role of the press. Each time Reston leaves Washington, he relates narrative or descriptive accounts of the locale visited. In developing these general areas, Reston refers explicitly to speeches in approximately one fourth of his editorials.

Change and man's failure to adapt are reverberated as the greatest phenomena of the twentieth century. However, there is a recurring appraisal of the progress that has been achieved over a specified period of time and an attempt to place events in perspective so as to accentuate the positive. This is reinforced by seasonal acclamations of faith. Optimism is infused repeatedly, for even when Reston "marshals the most somber array of facts on a given subject, rarely does he fail to find a promising exit in the strength of the American system and the sturdy virtues of the American people."  

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Also the tendency towards pervasive seriousness is tempered by an occasional overt attempt through humor to get man to laugh at himself. Marquis Childs, noted literary critic, feels that this reflection of a sanguine temperament and a pragmatic view of life is unquestionably one reason for Reston's wide following.

**Sources and Activities Aiding Preparation**

Enterprising and dedicated are two words most frequently used in describing Reston's practice of journalism. He is driven by the firm conviction that a newsman's duty is to dig out, expose, and criticize by bringing "to public debate the seeds of controversy that government inspires before they're firmly planted."\(^{86}\) Regarding his method of accomplishing this, Reston has simply remarked:

> I have no great philosophy. I have a good pair of legs. I think I know where the brains are in this town. I pick 'em. When I pick enough of them, I can write an analytical piece about whatever the problem is.\(^{87}\)

The remark is typical of Reston. It suggests he is endlessly curious and tireless at questioning. In its bluntness it also suggests Reston's massive self-confidence. For example Reston's astute journalistic

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mind was such that during the last two years of Secretary of State Dean Acheson's tenure "the Secretary was avoiding Reston for fear that 'Scotty' would make an inconveniently shrewd deduction from some casual remark." 88

He is an insatiable digger, especially by telephone, for news and ideas. Arthur Krock says, "He's the industrious type, always working. He'll call thirty people to get a single line in a story." 89

It is commonly conceded that a portion of his security rests partially on the unlisted telephone numbers in his repertory. His top-level news sources have been described as good as those of any other Washington newsman. 90 One of the reasons, for example, that President Kennedy read Reston was for information secured from Reston's intricate network of news sources. 91

Reston prefers to converse with deputies or undersecretaries rather than take up the time of the very top people. 92 He explains,

88Kemler, op. cit., p. 11.

89The Opinionmakers, p. 84.


"I don't believe in getting too close to public officials." Yet he has ready access to most of the State Department's top brass. For example he consulted regularly with John Foster Dulles and William Rogers. Other figures among the high echelons have included Adali Stevenson, J. William Fulbright, Hubert Humphrey, and Mike Mansfield. Acquaintances are also carefully cultivated with foreign diplomats:

... a reporter for a responsible newspaper like the New York Times gets more reliable factual guidance on international issues from the representatives of every other major western country than his own.

In addition to governmental officials and foreign diplomats, Reston seeks to keep abreast by maintaining contact with students, educational leaders, businessmen, and the "common people." This is achieved through informal meetings, travel, reading, and speaking engagements.


95 Manuscript of speech, "The Press and World Affairs," provided by James Reston, delivered as the Third Annual Memorial Lecture Sponsored by the Twin Cities Chapter of the American Newspaper Guild and the School of Journalism, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, May 13, 1949.
Informal meetings. Students from various universities on annual trips to Washington are often invited to converse informally with Reston:

I shall be coming to Washington with the students from Amherst and Mount Holyoke again this year, and I hope that you can have lunch with us, as in the past. I think I do not need to tell you how much the students and I have enjoyed these visits in the past. 96

We were delighted to receive your letter of March 24 indicating your availability for meeting with our group from the University of Wisconsin. . . . I hope we will be able to crowd into your office as we have in the past. 97

Reston in turn also makes numerous visits to colleges and academies, some annually, for informal visits or discussions:

I need hardly drop you a line to tell you how great the enthusiasm has been at Exeter over your visit last week-end. . . . Thank you again for giving so much of yourself while you were here. 98

. . . We hope that you can make your annual pilgrimage to the Athens of America. 99

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96 Letter from Earl Latham, Department of Political Science, Amherst College, Amherst, Mass., March 9, 1964.

97 Letter from James T. Sykes, Program Associate, Young Mens Christian Association of the University of Wisconsin, March 19, 1964.


The benefit from such visits seems to be mutual for in 1960 Reston wrote Francis Sweeney:

"I greatly enjoyed myself at Boston College, I guess because I had the feeling that the people really wanted to know what a reporter had to say and believed that I was trying to be honest in talking about the whole question, including the religious aspect of it. Surely we can't be far off the track when at a moment like this we can still manage to speak in public as frankly as we discussed the issues that afternoon and evening. Again my gratitude to you for a most useful experience."  

**Travels.** Travel to Reston is compelling, necessary, and stimulating. Before leaving for a three week tour of Viet Nam in 1965, he explained, "I feel like a fraud, writing about things in Washington without having seen any of it." There is also the practical side: "It is no longer prudent to leave the editorials to men who have never been abroad and who have had no background in the field of foreign affairs," for now many have studied in the field and devoted years of service overseas. More importantly travel has provided a creative impulse.

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100 Letter from James Reston to Francis Sweeney, March 16, 1960.


102 Speech, "Are American Newspapers Meeting Their Responsibilities," *op. cit.*
As previously mentioned, his assignments in England afforded Reston one of the greatest opportunities of his life. During the early months of the war, as he surveyed it from his window, he wrote, "It was then that I fully began to realize the possibilities of my role." He was privileged to cover the House of Commons and heard Churchill speak many times. Reston acknowledges indebtedness to the impact of this, for to a certain extent there is where he acquired his style.

While Reston and Arthur H. Sulzberger were on special assignment by the U. S. Government in 1943 in Moscow, an unusual experience prompted an inquiry which has become the focal point of Reston's concept of journalism. A tour of the Pravda offices revealed that there was no editorial room. This surprised him since the "city room" is the heart of any American newspaper office. The realization that news was not produced in the Pravda offices and that Russian reporters were mere technicians processing what officials elsewhere decided should go in the paper impressed Reston even though he admits he should have known this was true:

I was still startled by the thought that the press should be the instrument rather than the critic, of the

103 *Prelude to Victory*, p. x.

104 Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
government. I have been fascinated by the different theories of the proper relationship between reporters and officials ever since.105

This fascination has been reflected in numerous speeches and columns and culminated in the publication of Reston's second book, Artillery of the Press in 1966.

In his columns references to additional travel abound. These include trips to Edinburgh, Bruges, Warsaw, Moscow, Berlin, Havana, Paris, Brussels, Bermuda, London, Geneva, Bern, Prague, Vienna, Mexico City, Ottawa, Rome, New Delhi, Saigon, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Rio De Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Uruguay, Iran, and Pakistan.

Since 1944 Reston has covered most of the diplomatic conferences among the Big Four Powers. Accordingly in his columns and speeches, he discusses the objectives, proceedings, achievements, and failures of these meetings. Personal feelings and attitudes of heads of state are often secured in private interviews, and these revelations tend to humanize and enliven the presentation of complex issues. For example in Berlin in 1957, he interviewed Khrushchev privately. Reston later interjected Khrushchev's views on why negotiations were going badly in a column on the failures of the conference.106


106 New York Times, October 13, 1957, p. 10E.
conferences such as those focusing on the European Common Market in 1961 and the conference on the Latin American Open Market in 1967 in Uruguay are also attended by Reston. He is occasionally attracted to anniversary celebrations. For instance he spent two weeks in Cuba during the fourteenth anniversary festivities of Castro's revolution.

The principal event initiating the trip is not Reston's sole concern while abroad. The vantage afforded by personal observation is utilized to reflect on numerous subjects of enduring interest including the image of the United States, mutually related problems, the internal turmoil and progress of the foreign nation, and a physical description of the land and people. For example distance can be distorting. Writing from Edinburgh in 1957, Reston stated:

Everything 3,000 miles away seems a little larger and more ominous. There are exceptions of course, but the main brunt of the news and comment is . . . on the negative--the difficulties, the peculiarities, the failures, and the untypical aberrations of American life. . . .

While accompanying President Kennedy as he visited European dignitaries in 1961, Reston was prompted to discuss reciprocal relations by exploring the problem of race in world politics and the

\[107^*^{\text{New York Times, September 8, 1957, p. 10E.}}\]
\[108^*^{\text{Ibid., December 15, 1961, p. 36.}}\]
possibility that the world and especially the U. S. were moving to
the right. 109

Assertions pertaining to the internal functioning of a country,
such as "Russia is a class society," were often grounded mainly on
first hand observation. 110 If Reston had visited the country pre-
viously, there is an inevitable comparison of change extending even
to the appearance of the skyline, 111 forms of entertainment, 112 price
of a haircut, and countenance of the people: "If only they [Russians]
smiled, the prospect for the future would seem more tolerable." 113

Aside from its human interest appeal, such poignant details
of aliens suggest an abiding dream of international brotherhood.
Foreign confrontations tend to incite the need to reemphasize this goal.
The blame for achieving only small results in conferences is often
attributed to the tendency "to deal with immediate problems of the
moment rather than the enduring relationships of the future." 114

110 Ibid. , July 26, 1959, p. 8E.
111 Ibid.
112 Ibid. , November 24, 1968, p. 12E.
113 Ibid. , December 6, 1964, p. 8E.
114 Ibid. , December 22, 1961, p. 22.
Reston maintains that defiling suspicion and jealousy must be superceded by a "new patriotism" as envisioned by Woodrow Wilson when

... he told the League of Nations Commission that he foresaw a day when a man would be as ashamed of failing in his duty to humanity as he now was if he failed in his duty to his country.\[115\]

An occasional glimpse of the fulfillment of this dream abroad is reassuring to Reston: "Berlin... has a gift for seeing beyond the walls that divide men, a confidence in things unseen, even a childlike belief in the elements of goodness and magic."\[116\]

Travel within the United States is equally significant, and the impetus is principally politically initiated. Presidential campaigns are his specialty. Since the contest between Truman and Dewey, coverage has been comprised of touring during the primaries, attending the Republican and Democratic national conventions, and accompanying both major contenders for at least one or more weeks on the campaign trail. Ensuing discussions of the candidate's personalities, issues, and effectiveness correspond to these excursions. Whenever Reston leaves Washington, D. C., he always takes a personal poll among the numerous people encountered and uses the

\[115\] Ibid., April 30, 1965, p. 34.

\[116\] Ibid., December 24, 1961, p. 6E.
attitudes reflected from these samplings to project generalizations about the political climate in a particular locale. For example his poll in San Francisco in August of 1959 revealed that voters only recognized Nixon, Kennedy, and Stevenson.\footnote{Ibid., August 16, 1959, p. 12E.}

Some trips are made solely to secure the response of the average American to a variety of subjects including the image of the President, bills pending in Congress, and current crises. These accounts are frequently prefaced with a phrase identifying the area covered: "Of the scores of people this reporter has talked to this week from Detroit to Portland, Seattle and San Francisco, . . . ."\footnote{Ibid., November 19, 1961, p. 8E.}

These personal contacts far from the hectic Capitol are basically encouraging to Reston: "Cross this Country today and you will find more pessimism in print and more optimism in person than in any other country in the world."\footnote{Ibid., May 13, 1966, p. 40.}

Keeping abreast of current affairs through first hand experience and being deserving of his fame are matters of great import to Reston. Extensive international and national travel has enabled him to experience events of invaluable historical magnitude. He has
been privileged to participate in an infinite number of associations representing the gamut of mankind. This has affected not only the caliber of his reporting, but also his philosophy of life.

**Reading Habits.** A zeal for knowledge is rooted in Reston's concept of the essentials of reporting. The reporter cannot take away from any assignment much more than he brings to it. Reston proposes that if the reporter brings to his job a sound knowledge of the history of his country and its relation to the world, an understanding of the complex issues of his generation - particularly economic and financial problems - and a willingness to prepare for his assignment with the same industry as the men who are interested in persuading him that their particular side of the story is best, then he is likely to report on it with some degree of accuracy and understanding. Reston expands this idea further by stressing that the reporter

"... necessarily must not only educate himself well but keep on educating himself as he goes along."\(^{121}\) Only this combination enables the reporter to see today's story as well as its relation to the future.\(^{122}\) Reston demonstrates adherence to these precepts, for his

\(^{120}\) The Newspaper: Its Making and Its Meaning, p. 104.

\(^{121}\) Ibid.

\(^{122}\) Ibid.
columns contain numerous references and quotations of diverse origins including politics, diplomacy, business, journalism, philosophy, education, history, and fiction.

He has delved deeply into biographies of presidents, the political figures most frequently cited in his columns, and Woodrow Wilson, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln receive special preference. He considers Wilson to be the most intellectual of our presidents. Reston's concept of leadership appears to have been greatly influenced by Leaders of Men. Reston intermittently endorses Wilson's distinction between the practical and idealistic:

The men who act stand nearer to the mass of men than the men who write; and it is in their hands that new thought gets into translation into the crude language of deeds. . . . The great stream of freedom which broadens down from precedent to precedent is not a clear mountain current such as the fastidious man of chastened thought likes to drink from: it is polluted with not a few coarse elements of the grass world on its banks. . . . 123

Administrative goals and achievements of George Washington, John Adams, Andrew Jackson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Dwight Eisenhower are often used in a comparative manner.

Observations of foreign dignitaries are cited for added perspective when discussing timely international happenings. Premier

Pham Van Dong of North Viet Nam, Charles de Gaulle, Premier Soto of Japan, Foreign Minister Couve de Murville of France, President Sarvepalli Radhakrishna of India, Lester Pearson of Canada, and Willy Brandt of Germany are among those mentioned. Statesmen of previous centuries such as Edmund Burke, Benjamin Disraeli, and Perigord Tallyrand are often used in developing propositions. Winston Churchill deserves special mention, because Reston considers him to be the greatest man of the twentieth century. Familiarity with Churchill's works is evident, for his character, viewpoint, and foresightedness are often depicted.

Cognizance of the manifold proceedings and personalities in the financial world is apparent; some of the eminent leaders mentioned are Eugene Black, former president of the World Bank; Walter Heller, former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers; Dr. Paul Prebisch, Secretary General of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development; Gardner Ackley, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, William M. Martin, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Per Jacobson, managing director of the International Monetary Fund, and Charles L. Schultz, Director of the Bureau of Budget.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{124} The positions of the men are listed as stated by Reston.
Reston, an avid reader in his own field, begins each day by studying the Times, the New York Herald Tribune, the Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, and the Wall Street Journal. Familiarity with newsmen throughout the United States is evident. In 1964 he stated, "The South has produced probably more good newspaper editors in the last generation than any other section of the country." He particularly admires the late Ralph McGill of Atlanta, Hodding Carter of Greenville, Mississippi, and Harry Ashmore of Little Rock. Reston considers another southerner, Edward R. Murrow, as the most influential reporter of his time.

His knowledge of the history of the press, and particularly of the men upholding its great tradition is apparent in his speeches. Frank R. Kent, H. L. Mencken, Gerald Johnson, Price Day, Mark Watson, Tom O'Neill, Phil Potter, and Russell Baker for instance are noted with esteem in Reston's "Frank R. Kent Memorial Lecture." The journalist, however, whom he has observed most

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125 "Man of Influence," op. cit., p. 80.


127 Ibid., January 29, 1961, p. 10E.

carefully is Walter Lippmann, for Reston considers him to be "the greatest journalist of the present age."\textsuperscript{129}

A prevailing influence from extensive reading in philosophy is evident. E. B. White, Jean Monnet, Alfred North Whitehead, Santayana, Walter Bagehot, Alfred Noyes, Albert Camus, Sun Tzu, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Georg Hegel, and Nietzsche are mentioned explicitly. Alfred Whitehead is perhaps the singly most significant of this group for crystallizing Reston's concept of change. In his columns and in countless speeches, Reston proclaims that Whitehead in his book, \textit{Symbolism}, has provided the key which may help us understand and endure the turmoil of this age:

\begin{quote}
It is the first step in wisdom to recognize that the major advances in civilization are processes which all but wreck the society in which they occur. . . . The art of free society consists, first in the maintenance of the symbolic code; and secondly in fearlessness of revision. . . . Those societies which cannot combine reverence to their symbols with freedom of revision must ultimately decay.\textsuperscript{130}
\end{quote}

In order to present representative ideas of various religious denominations on the moral implications of controversial issues, Reston familiarizes himself with the views of eminent men. Those


\textsuperscript{130}Speech, Centennial Charter Day Convocation, Ohio State University, \textit{op. cit.}
referred to are Friar Giovanni; Jacques Marstain; Cardinal Newman; Rev. George Lawrence, the northeast regional representative for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Dr. Eugene C. Blake, head of the United Presbyterian Church; Rabbi Joachim Prinz; Archbishop Karl J. Alter of Cincinnati; Episcopal Rev. Angus Dun; Dr. Paul Tillich, Harvard theologian Dr. Reinhold Niebur; Dr. Billy Graham, and Dr. Jess Moody, First Baptist Church.

Examination of professional literature enables Reston to maintain awareness of developments in the academic world. Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish scholar on American race relations; Kenneth Galbraith, Harvard economist; Herbert Butterfield, professor of geochemistry at California Institute of Technology; John Gardner; and other noted authorities' opinions are intentionally studied. Special reports such as the Princeton University Studies on "Opinion Toward Negroes" conducted by Melvin Tumin and "Atomic Test Ban Treaty" by Freeman J. Dyson are occasionally cited. Timely observations of university presidents are particularly emphasized. These have included Clark Kerr of the University of California, Homer Babbidge of the University of Connecticut, Caryl P. Haskins of Carnegie Institute, James R. Killian of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and James B. Conant of Harvard.
Favored historians are those writing on America and war. References include Richard Hofstadter, Frederick J. Turner, Henry Steele Commager, Arthur Schlesinger, C. K. Webster, Vegetius of the Fourth Century, Plutarch, de Tocqueville, Quincy Wright, A. L. Rawse, and Clausewitz. Reston seldom refers to titles when quoting; however, further insight into the practical cast of his intentions in reading is manifest in those occurring in his columns:


Although Reston reads principally for information, he is acquainted with authors writing fiction. These authors are used primarily to embellish themes aimed toward awakening people and challenging them to new goals. Verbatim quotations of Matthew Arnold, Thomas Huxley, and Walt Whitman are repeatedly used
throughout his career in the following manner. When discussing the preservation of a nation, Reston quotes Arnold, who advises that nations are saved by placing hope for the future in "the remnant" of those who care about knowledge and wisdom.

"We must hold fast," Arnold said, "to the austere but true doctrine as to what really governs politics and saves or destroys States. Having in mind things true, things elevated, things just, things pure, things amiable, things of good report; having these in mind, studying and loving these is what saves States."131

Reston fears that the wise in this age of specialists and managers are so busy dealing with practical problems that they are not defining ends and purposes. Reston proposes that the question Thomas Huxley asked when he visited America for the first time is still relevant today:

Size is not grandeur, and territory does not make a nation. The great question, about which hangs a true sublimity, and the terror or overhanging fate, is: What are you going to do with all these things? What is to be the end of which these are to be the means?132

America, Reston feels, needs a philosopher-poet who can articulate the tradition of the past and the mission of the future as Walt Whitman did in this poem:

131New York Times, April 14, 1963, p. 8E.

132Manuscript of speech provided by James Reston, delivered at the University of California, Santa Cruz, May 3, 1966.
Have the elder races faltered?
Do they drop and end their lesson, wearied
over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the
burden and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers. 133

Whitman is also used when Reston seeks to show that the pessimists
are not always right, and that America has shown great capacities for
change:

Never was there, perhaps, more hollowness at heart
than at present, and here in the United States. Genuine
belief seems to have left us. . . . The spectacle is
appalling. We live in an atmosphere of hypocrisy
throughout. . . . The depravity of the business classes
of our country is not less than has been supposed, but
infinitely greater. . . . The great cities reek with . . . .
robbery and scoundrelism. . . . 134

Reston always concludes the passage with "So much for the good old
days."135

Authors referred to occasionally are Rudyard Kipling, Paul
Valery, William Shakespeare, Joaquin Miller, George Bernard Shaw,
Robert Frost, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Dickens, Henry

133 Manuscript of speech provided by James Reston, delivered
at the University of Maryland Commencement, College Park,
Maryland, June 8, 1968.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.
Thoreau, Vachel Lindsay, Bret Hart, Ethel Barnett De Vito, John
Milton, Mark Twain, Robert Burns, G.K. Chesterton, and Sir
Rabindranath Tagore.

Periodicals providing source material are Foreign Affairs,
Encounter, Economics, Fortune, Saturday Review, The New Yorker,
Presbyterian Outlook, and Orbis- A Quarterly Journal of World
Affairs.

A final and significant means by which Reston keeps abreast
of current events is through reading speeches. The speeches in The
Congressional Record are important, Reston advises, because they
are a reflection of changing moods, judgments, and priorities in the
country. In addition to those referred to in his columns, Reston
consientiously reads speeches in preparing for his own public ad-
dresses. In June of 1970, Mr. Reston gave this writer access to his
"Ideas for Speech" files which contained numerous copies of com-
mencement addresses delivered at institutions throughout the country
during the past decade. Some of these were by President A. Whitney
Griswold at Yale, Admiral H. G. Rickover at Stevens Institute of
Technology, Adlai Stevenson at Michigan State University, and Clare

Booth Luce at Princeton University. Key ideas and quotations were underlined and later used by Reston in his speeches.

Because of these assiduous efforts of continuing education, Reston has been described as "one of America's most scholarly columnists . . . whose writings give much evidence that he knows more history and philosophy than many of his colleagues." 137 "He knows something about virtually everything," J. K. Jessup has observed, "... and the quality of his reporting remains the key to his influence." 138

Public Speaking

Positive Influence. In explaining why he speaks outside of Washington at least once a month, Reston says, "I have to get out and see what the country's thinking. Otherwise I go stale. Being here all the time is like talking to yourself on the telephone." 139 Since winning his first Pulitzer Prize, he has been in great demand as a lecturer and guest speaker. For example this writer counted two hundred and eight letters of refusal to speak in 1968.

139 Rivers, op. cit., p. 84.
He acknowledges, "I learn a good deal about my craft from speaking."\textsuperscript{140} Notably this is that people are interested in wide subjects and philosophy but remain attentive only when the subjects are specifically put into perspective by relating them to contemporary problems with which the people can personally identify.\textsuperscript{141} In order to be able to relate his subjects personally, Reston is assisted by his staff in researching the history of the specific locale to be addressed. For example he would want to know the population of America one hundred years before the date of the speech and the local events occurring that same year which might be interesting. He then attempts to put these into perspective by interweaving them with contemporary events.

The only way you can understand what is going on now and see it in perspective is to broaden your scope about the whole problem recognizing that men and women have been here before and they had problems and this is the only way you can either understand or indeed endure the time of trouble if you do understand it in a broad philosophical vein.\textsuperscript{142}

Speaking enables Reston to equilibrate his viewpoint by emphasizing the positive. It has always disturbed him that the incidents

\textsuperscript{140} Taped interview with James Reston on June 22, 1970.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
dominating the headlines create a grim picture.\(^{143}\) "I must confess that my profession is largely responsible for the melancholy view of our age, for we have concentrated on the news of conflict, contention, disputes, and disasters."\(^{144}\) Instead Reston proposes that the increasing diversity and complexity of the modern world be reduced to identity, "so that the reader can see not only the turbulent waves on the surface of the news but the deeper tides running underneath."\(^{145}\) In his columns Reston too tends to concentrate on the troubled waves even though believing that "... underneath there are broad tides of thought, ... unifying forces loose in the world which are moving and which are more important than the devisive things we see on the surface."\(^{146}\) In his speaking, Reston tends to concentrate on the positive tides.

**Speaking Experience.** Since Reston has had no formal training in speech and acknowledges that he has never intentionally sought information on the mechanics of the subject from a book, his views are


\(^{144}\) Manuscript of speech provided by Reston, delivered at Dickinson College Commencement, June 2, 1968.

\(^{145}\) Manuscript of speech provided by Reston, delivered before the American Society of Newspaper Editors, New Orleans, La., April 19, 1962.

\(^{146}\) Taped Interview with James Reston on June 22, 1970.
derived principally from observation and experience. His successful speaking career entails a varied and imposing array of audiences, subjects, and occasions. These will be discussed under seven headings: The Times, television, government, organizations, journalists, ceremonial addresses, and education.

The only guide adhered to in accepting speaking invitations is negative. With the exception of his church and family affiliations, Reston seldom speaks in Washington, D. C. for fear of becoming too involved. He also refuses to speak to any political or partisan group. He usually asks a fee based upon the organization's ability to pay for his speaking engagements.

The Times. Some speaking is in conjunction with activities of The Times. In 1945 Reston began lecturing in the teachers' in-service course given by The Times in cooperation with the New York State Board of Education. The course is designed to give teachers of English and social studies a background of the news so that they can more effectively use the newspaper in the classroom. Reston's contributions have included appraisals of the state department, presidents, Russia, economic vs. military defense, and the press. In spite of the serious nature of the subject matter, Reston enlivens his presentations and is sometimes depended on to set the tone of the
meetings by being assigned as first speaker. This is characterized by Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger in a letter to Reston: "Your priceless sense of humor is what we need to guarantee future attendance." 147 Prior to becoming Washington correspondent, Reston often discussed current events and conditions abroad at Times' sponsored seminars and luncheons such as the twelfth annual luncheon for automotive and industrial leaders in New York. 148

**Television.** Since 1953 Reston has been participating in panel discussions or interviews on television. Near the beginning or end of the year, he frequently is a guest on The New York Times Youth Forum which is broadcast over station WABD. On these occasions the subject is usually "Another Year--Where Are We Going." 149 Discussion often comprises the potential enactment of key legislative bills. For example on the program in 1967, Reston predicted that if an integration clause were again tacked to the federal school construction bill, it would again be defeated in Congress. 150

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147 Letter from Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger, New York City, December 4, 1951.
149 Ibid., December 15, 1955, p. 33.
Special programs produced by National Education Television feature him occasionally. On "Prospects of Mankind," Reston discussed the ethical, political, and military problems posed by the Berlin crisis. In a broadcast on January 11, 1967, just before President Johnson's State of the Union Message, Reston commented that "a mood of distrust prevailed in Washington," and that he had never seen anything like it since being in the Capitol. This was considered to be the President's most serious problem. Later that year on "News In Perspective," his topic was "The Press and Its Operating Procedures."

He has been a guest on a number of popular panel shows including "Man of the Week," "Wide Wide World," "The Great Challenge," "60 Minutes," and "Meet the Press." The focal point of interest is usually the press. "Is the American Public Getting the Information It Needs," for instance was the question posed on "The Great Challenge." Reston asserted that American people were increasingly passive as a result of complex affairs which often could be understood only by educated people. On "Wide Wide World" he

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151 Ibid., October 16, 1961, p. 59.
153 Ibid., April 6, 1959, p. 27.
accused the government of trying to play up good news and play down the bad. 154 While serving four times as a panelist on "Meet the Press," Reston has defended the press against charges of irresponsibility by Senator Paul Douglas, 155 discussed "Religion and the Presidency," 156 interviewed Prime Minister Nehru, 157 questioned Senator J. W. Fulbright and Sir Jeoffrey de Freitas from Geneva while attending the Pacem in Terris Convocation. 158

Participation on foreign television includes "The Critical Years" where the program was entitled "The Presidency," in Toronto, Ontario, 159 and three visits on "The World Today" in Britain. 160

Government Speaking. Reston's persistent outspokenness on the problem of news management by the government was probably

154 Ibid., April 14, 1958, p. 47.
155 Ibid., December 25, 1950, p. 32.
156 "Meet the Press," June 1, 1958.
instrumental to his appointment in 1952 and 1963 respectively to a Senate and House Subcommittee holding hearings on the subject. In 1959 he addressed inexperienced Congressmen in a session designed for indoctrination. Various governmental organizations have heard his critical observations of current policy. Some of those addressed were the Government Public Information Organization in 1957, 352nd Military Government Headquarters in 1957, the U. S. Information Agency's Annual Conference for Field Officers in 1957, American Foreign Service Association in 1960, and the Senate Press Secretaries' Association in 1962.

Correspondence from representatives of the latter two organizations typify the positive effect of Reston's efforts. Prior to the speech, Benjamin Warfield, Chief of the Training Staff of the U. S. Information Agency, wrote to Reston:

Your distinguished contribution to the program last year aroused much interest on the part of our men who had just come back from many parts of the world, so I am particularly happy that you are going to take part again this year. 161

Following the speech, Clifford W. Patton, Information Officer, wrote:

By all odds your talk was the most outstanding and the most practical we have ever had. I don't recall in our

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ten years of meetings any speaker who really carried the day as you did. I have had several calls, all to the same effect—"The best speaker we have ever had."\textsuperscript{162}

Grover C. Smith, Press Secretary to Senator Sparkman, commented:

"As you may have gathered, you drew the largest crowd since we have been organized."\textsuperscript{163}

Organizations. The constituents of the diverse organizations addressed by Reston represent a cross section of the business world. However, a preference is shown for those involved in economics, public relations, and publishing. A brief description of the size and composition of some of these groups suggests the challenge of adaptability often confronting Reston.

On three occasions when Reston has spoken to the Economic Club in Detroit,\textsuperscript{164} the audience has been composed of approximately five hundred and fifty leading industrialists, financiers, clergymen, educators, politicians, and other civic leaders. A Monetary Conference

\textsuperscript{162}Letter from Clifford W. Patton, Information Officer, January 29, 1957, Washington, D. C.

\textsuperscript{163}Letter from Grover C. Smith, June 26, 1962, Washington, D. C.

in 1958, sponsored by the American Bankers Association, was attended by the active heads of forty of the largest commercial banks in the U.S., a few men from government, and eight distinguished guests from abroad. One thousand delegates, including executives from twenty foreign countries, attending the tenth national conference of the Public Relations Society heard Reston emphasize that the newspaper was the medium that had the best opportunity for educating the public, and "that the greater the power of government the greater would be the need for skeptical questioning by the press."166

Objectivity, careful analysis, and concreteness are attributes of Reston's content regularly commended in responses from organizations. For instance John E. Heselden, Assistant to the Executive Secretary of the New York State Publishing Association wrote the following about a speech Reston gave to his organization:

I think you will find that Mr. Reston carefully qualified most of his statements and pointed out what he considers to be current trends, without being unduly critical of any people in public life or the newspaper profession. I am sure that most of our publishers considered his approach to be very impartial and fair to both the Administration and the Press.167


167 Letter from John E. Heselden to Cranston Williams, American Newspaper Publishers Association, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, New York, January 21, 1953. A copy was sent to Reston.
These sentiments seem to be representative according to the observation of Paul Miller, another member of the audience: "I have seldom heard so much favorable comment, indeed enthusiastic, about a speech. . . ." \(^{168}\) "Superlatively penetrating" \(^{169}\) and "highly informative" \(^{170}\) were terms depicting Reston's performance before the Forty Sixth Annual Convention of the American Home Laundry Manufacturer's Association. The occasional addresses delivered to members of the Judiciary and Bar Association merit similar rejoinders: "As usual you produced a great many worthwhile ideas [international problems] tempered with excellent judgment." \(^{171}\)

A portion of this success may be attributed to Reston's careful analysis of the occasion and audience. Correspondence reveals that he seeks detailed information about the age, education, reading habits, occupations, and interests of potential auditors, as well as background of the organization and reason for meeting. He

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\(^{168}\) Letter from Paul Miller, Executive Vice President, The Gannett Newspapers, January 17, 1953.

\(^{169}\) Letter from Guenther Baumgart, President of American Home Laundry Manufacturers Association, April 18, 1962.

\(^{170}\) Letter from W. L. Hullsie, Merchandising Manager, American Motors Corporation, 14250 Pymont Road, Detroit 32, Michigan, April 14, 1962.

is interested in topics discussed by previous speakers and secures copies when available.

**Journalists.** Reston has always been actively engaged in communicating with newsmen and teachers of journalism. Foreign Policy and constructive criticism for improving his profession are usually the areas discussed. "Interpretive reporting . . . places new responsibilities on the reporter," Reston declared to the American Association of Teachers of Journalism, "because he must know more about what is going on than when he reported only what happened."\(^{172}\) In discussing "The Changing Pattern of Reporting in Washington" before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1955, his consensus was that gathering news in Washington under the shifting conditions of the decade following World War II required methods not applicable to earlier times and circumstances.\(^{173}\) Foreign policy and the need for more aggressive and assertive coverage to counter governmental efforts to shape the news were topics of concern in appearances before the American Press Institute Seminar for Editors and Editorial Writers, and the Southern Newspaper Publisher's Association in 1965.

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Ceremonial Addresses. Apart from university celebrations, Reston seldom engages in this form of oratory. The most notable instance was the address to the Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration of the Pulitzer Prizes in 1966.

At the family's request, he delivered eulogies at the funerals of Times' publishers Arthur Hays Sulzberger and Orville Dryfoos.

Education. Reston uses a variety of modes of address when speaking to students and educators. These include lectures, panel discussions, symposia, and special occasional speeches such as convocations and commencements.

He has been honored by being invited to deliver memorial lectures in tribute to distinguished newsmen including William Allen White at the University of Kansas, John H. Finley at City College at New York, Gideon D. Seymour at the University of Minnesota, Frank R. Kent at Johns Hopkins University, and Roy A. Roberts at Rockhurst College. Indictment against both the press and citizens for failing to adjust to the swift pace of events resound in developing the general theme of the press and society in all the lectures. Reston never despairs over this condition, but invoked encouragement by his faith in peoples' resourcefulness. This is typified in the Frank R. Kent lecture when he called for students to become involved again in national policy:
The universities used the proper form after the war. They devised the case-study method, which defined the problem; gave the main facts; suggested possible courses of action to meet the problem, with arguments for and against each course of action. Then the students were invited to study the problem as if they had to decide themselves what the national policy should be.

We need, I believe, to involve the nation in these questions [Vietnam, balance of payments, population explosion, education, poverty, unemployment, and the health and dignity of the aged] or politics will increasingly become little more than a spectator sport. 174

This same general theme was adapted through the years and used in regular lectures. 175 Other popular lecture topics included "The Presidency" and "Analysis of Campaign Issues." 176

Occasionally when speaking to professional educational associations, Reston discussed the relationship between education and leadership, for he feels America is rich in good managers but is short on outstanding leaders. For instance in a speech entitled "Conversations on Education in a Confused World," Reston advocated a reevaluation of priorities:


175 Speech, "Are American Newspapers Meeting Their Responsibility," delivered at Ohio State University, 1952; Speech, University of Alabama, March 16, 1967.

I want to begin with the simplicities. I want to see us think again about integrity of the mind and precision of speech and the geometric accuracy of words. . . . I cannot believe that our schools, which were founded to develop moral character, are strengthened by their growing indifference to that tradition. . . . 177

A reevaluation is necessary, Reston continued, because "the lack of precision in our public speaking and official writing seems to me a national disgrace and maybe even a menace to our national purposes." 178 The educators seemed to agree, for they gave Reston an unprecedented standing ovation. 179 It is to Reston's credit that he seems to adhere to the principles which he recommends to educators. "Sincerity," "straight-forwardness," and "clarity of presentation" are recurring comments by the knowledgeable members of the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in describing Reston's speaking. 180

177 Manuscript of speech, "Conversations on Education in a Confused World," provided by James Reston, delivered before the 80th Annual Convention of Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, December, 1966, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

178 Ibid.

179 Letter from Elwood C. Kastner, Secretary of Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, December 5, 1966.

180 Letter from Dana M. Cotton, Secretary, New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, December 8, 1951.
Journalism and international affairs are the dominant subjects of the numerous panel discussions and symposiums on which Reston has served. His participation in these events has ranged from celebrated occasions such as the fiftieth anniversary of the University of Minnesota and Columbia Schools of Journalism to informal meetings at the International Student House or in his office. Appraisals of his conduct during the scheduled program and usual ensuing question period indicate a respectful regard:

As a veteran of 251 editor's seminars, . . . I particularly enjoyed the way you handled your session at the International House yesterday. . . . I think the students were surprised--and pleased--because James Reston turned out to be anything but a stuffed shirt and because he took the pains to try to answer, carefully and with respect, even the least thoughtful question.

Regarding Reston's address to a seminar at the Center for International Affairs at Harvard, Henry Kissinger writes, "I think you were the most interesting speaker we had all summer, and I know everyone appreciated, not only what you said, but also your "human qualities." A similar view is expressed by Judy Arnold, who was

181 Speech delivered before the University of Minnesota School of Journalism, May 23, 1967; Speech delivered before the Columbia School of Journalism, April 15, 1963.

182 Letter from John Hohenberg, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University in New York City, March 24, 1964.

a Legislative Intern in Senator Gruening's office when Reston addressed a Yale Summer Intern Program: "As you know, we have been having guest speakers at our seminars all summer, but I feel that you were the most forthright, honest, and informative person we have met." Analogous responses occurred following his remarks at the School of Advanced International Studies of Johns Hopkins University in 1958, World Affairs Forum at the University of Pittsburgh in 1961, and International Affairs Symposium at the University of Wisconsin in 1965.

Genuinely concerned that America is a troubled country, Reston views his occasional speeches as opportunities to talk honestly and hopefully about this problem. He has given commencement speeches at Wellesley, New York University, Smith, Brandeis, the University of Michigan, Williams College, Dickinson College, Kenyon, and the University of Maryland. He has addressed convocations at the University of Chattanooga, Trinity College, University of Illinois, University of North Carolina, and Ohio State University. The latter, the main speech at the Centennial Charter Day Convocation on March 22, 1970, epitomized the primary substance of most of his occasional addresses.

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184 Letter from Judy Arnold, June 29, 1962.
The spirit of unrest in the country, the role of the university, and the art of living through a rebellious era were main points developed by countering the negativism of past and present writers with an encouraging interpretation of historical events at the national, state, and immediate college level. Reston charged that population increase and spectacular scientific advances are essentially responsible for the overwhelming crises of change. His solution was the challenge and paradox of Alfred N. Whitehead's recommendation of maintenance of the symbolic code and fearlessness of revision.\(^{185}\)

In the process of doing this, Reston referred to himself as a Scotch Calvinist interested in the question of purpose and advised the young of the value of faithful friends and the family.

This basic speech plan has served Reston well through the years. Countless letters of response demonstrate that the references to individuals and events occurring in the state and at the university where the speech is being delivered create goodwill:

> Your convocation address at the Ohio State University Centennial was very meaningful. You certainly had researched your subject and were thoughtful to make your remarks personal towards Ohio State and we alumni.\(^{186}\)

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\(^{185}\)Refer to page 53.

\(^{186}\)Letter from Mrs. Robert Arend, 6604 West Shore Dr., Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 23, 1970.
Your remarks were warm, witty, and thoroughly in keeping with the occasion--the moment in time--and the quality of intellect we cherished in connection with this important commemorative event. ¹⁸⁷

In preparing this speech, Reston was aided by his staff in acquiring the historical material. A request for texts of speeches delivered at previous college or departmental anniversary functions was made to the Ohio State University News Bureau, and a program of convocation activities was considered. ¹⁸⁸ This new information was then interpolated in developing the main ideas which had proven to be well selected on numerous previous occasions. The speech was delivered extemporaneously as are all of Reston's speeches. When a copy of the address was requested for publication, he wrote a manuscript. This is the only reason Reston ever writes a manuscript.

Reston's proficiency in public address is borne of conscious effort. This is evident in remarks occurring in his speeches:

The first thing we do on The Times when we are covering a speech is to check the credentials of

¹⁸⁷ Letter from Richard M. Mall, Director of Alumni Affairs, The Ohio State University, March 30, 1970.

¹⁸⁸ Letter from Bill Wilcox, Ohio State University.
the speaker. By what authority does he speak? What
entitles him to take up people's time on the subject? 189

From the sampling of speeches considered, Reston obviously chooses
subjects with which he is familiar and presents them in a forthright
manner. He adapts this material and attempts to put it in per-
spective by referring to familiar local and national events. Auditors
usually characterize his presentations as clear, informative, in-
teresting, and analytically sound.

189 Speech delivered to the Economic Club, Detroit,
September 28, 1953.
"Democracy," James Reston warns, "... is an endowment like life that must be purchased in every generation."¹ The means for achieving this are freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want, and freedom from fear, for "when these freedoms go in any large industrial state of the world, then peace is in jeopardy."² A concern for the preservation of this perpetual process is the source from which his theory of speech emanates. Although this theory is not systematically written, his explicit statements on speech abound. These are discussed under the following classifications: (1) Speech in a Democracy; (2) Speaker's Image; (3) Logical Appeal; (4) Emotional Appeal; (5) Delivery; (6) Speech Situation; (7) Audience; (8) Effectiveness; (9) Speech Education.

¹James Reston, Prelude to Victory (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1943) p. 36.
²Ibid., p. 38.
Speech in a Democracy

In demonstrating the meaning of his definition of democracy, "the flexible and courageous use of cooperative intelligence," Reston focuses on the significance of oral communication:

The main issue is whether we can regain the gift of honest discussion; whether we can be honest and candid again; whether we can trust one another; whether the men who disagree with the present policy will come forward and say why; and whether our political leaders will risk the agony of debate and even defeat.  

Freedom to think as you will and speak as you think are not only indispensable means to the discovery and spread of political truth, but public discussion is a political duty, according to Reston. "The decline in honest argument is the most serious problem because it affects most other problems."

If democracy is to operate effectively, Reston stresses that these procedures of communication ultimately depend upon the inextricable involvement of the populace and their elected officials even

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though each performs separate but vital functions. "American government . . . can move effectively only with the consent of the people. . . ."6

Success . . . in dealing with their common problems rests on their knowledge and understanding of the problems to be solved, and on their intelligence, judgment, and character in meeting those problems. The conclusion drawn from this is that the intelligence, judgment, and character of a majority of the people, if well-informed, will probably produce more satisfactory solutions than any leader or small band of geniuses is likely to produce.7

This process with its inherent opportunities for adaptability has succeeded in America emerging as the only nation capable of defending the great central tradition of the western world.

Many others share her "love of law and liberty, of mercy and charity, of justice among men, and of love and goodwill," but only she has the power equal to the forces that are now challenging these things in the world.8

"The ability of the United States to take the lead . . . cannot proceed much faster than the development of public understanding in this country."9

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6Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered at Urbana, Illinois, September 24, 1956.

7James Reston, "Press, the President, and Foreign Policy," Foreign Affairs, 44 (July, 1966), p. 553.

8Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered at University of Michigan, May 1, 1965.

9New York Times, January 28, 1962, p. 8E.
Here we run into one of the most serious problems of our time: the great public issues are getting increasingly complicated . . . and we have no effective forum at the local level where the facts, the alternatives, and the consequences of action and inaction can be discussed in an orderly way.  

Honest public debate on problems of education, automation, transportation, wage-cost-price balance is imperative, Reston maintains, if the democratic process is to be sustained and strengthened. This can proceed only if information summarizing the president's proposals, together with pro and con arguments, is made available to members of church, school, civic, and service organizations for use in study groups seeking to understand the issues.  

Recognizing the limitations of the public's ability personally to assume responsibility, Reston focuses on political leadership:

It is clear that no man or party has a fool-proof program for dealing with the nation's foreign and domestic problems: therefore, we must have faith in our leaders. We cannot get or absorb all the information necessary to reach reliable judgments on many important issues: therefore we must have confidence not only in the men making them but in the process of decision.  

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11 Ibid.

12 Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered at the University of North Carolina, October 16, 1968.
Trust among the people . . . is the first condition of effective leadership.\(^{13}\)

It is time to redefine the kind of men needed at the top of government, according to Reston, "for the leaders of men are not merely the makers of laws or the mathematicians of the gross national product."\(^{14}\) "They are," in the words of Walter Lippmann so often repeated by Reston, "the custodians of a nation's ideals, of the beliefs it cherishes, of its permanent hopes, of the faith which makes a nation out of a mere aggregation of individuals."\(^{15}\)

He maintains that a vast, continental nation of 180,000,000 is dependent upon its chief executive to instill a sense of purpose. Assertive political leadership, bringing the intellectual and political communities together to define the problems of a new age, is necessary.\(^{16}\) An apt beginning is discussing basic questions on the essential human ends of political life that have troubled men since the days of Aristotle:

\(^{13}\)New York Times, November 19, 1967, p. 12E.


\(^{16}\)New York Times, April 17, 1960, p. 38.
What sort of world is this where men aspire to good and yet so often achieve evil? Where lies the source of authority: In the laws of man or nature? What of the relationship of the individual to the community, to the state, and to the eternal? What is man's place in it all, and how are his ideals, and his values, related not only to an increasingly complicated and crowded world but to the universe? \(^{17}\)

In addition to a discussion on the fundamentals of our society, a debate is needed

... on the reasons for our involvement in the world, on the responsibilities and purposes of our alliances, on the new interdependence of the races, the regions, the free nations, and the state and federal government, and on the problems of a rapidly growing, increasingly urbanized and secularized society ... in the midst of a political, social, and economic revolution. \(^{18}\)

"The more complex our problems become, the more dangerous they become, then the more they must be explained to the people. ..." \(^{19}\)

Therefore, he urges that a constant need exists to use the Presidency as an educational forum to give a regular account of problems, policies, and implications of new developments. \(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\) *New York Times*, July 22, 1964, p. 32.

\(^{18}\) Ibid.


\(^{20}\) *New York Times*, July 22, 1956, p. 8E.
An exceptionally articulate man is needed to discharge these and other responsibilities. In Reston's opinion Woodrow Wilson defines such a man:

A great nation . . . is not lead by a man who simply repeats the talk of the street corners or the opinions of the newspapers. A nation is led by a man who hears more than those things; who, rather, hearing those things, understands them better, unites them, puts them into a common meaning; speaks not the rumors of the street, but a new principle for a new age, a man to whom the voices of the nation . . . unite in a single meaning and reveal to him a single vision, so that he can speak what no man else knows, the common meaning of the common voice.21

Presidents have the power, particularly when first assuming office, "to change the tone and mood of the nation . . . by what they say and how they act."22 In expanding on this proposition, Reston quotes Walter Bagehot's conclusion on why some nations progressed:

A new model in character is created for the nation. Those characters which resemble it are encouraged and multiplied . . . in a generation of two the look of the nation becomes quite different, the men imitated are different; the result of the imitation is different. A lazy nation may be changed into an industrious, a rich into a poor, a religious into a profane, as if by magic. . . .23

22 New York Times, January 8, 1961, p. 10E.
23 Ibid.
"This is why," says Reston, "the language and melody of the new administration are so important, particularly in the early days when the nation and the world are listening."²⁴

In interpreting the governmental process, speech evolves as the powerful center. "The quality of life is the main objective of government."²⁵ Likewise it serves as impetus for the revolution of modern man which essentially is the revolt against things as they are when there are ways of doing things better; a revolt against all the forces which hinder man in building a better life.²⁶ The chief hindrance, communism, places first claim on the energy and interest of all. This means subordinating private interest to the paramount public interest. It also means employing the economy more for uses which would train and inform our minds, promote the health of our society, and keep our country free.²⁷

The concern which the American people give to the factor of excellence in our society is a vital one. "It is basically important that

²⁴Ibid.


²⁶New York Times, January 4, 1959, p. 10E.

²⁷New York Times, November 22, 1959, p. 10E.
we achieve a greater respect for learning, a greater pride in intellectual achievement. "\(^{28}\)

For it is not true that the American character has been debased. It responds to what it hears. . . . But somebody has to strike the note, clearly and steadily, and appeal to what is best in us instead of what is worst. \(^{29}\)

Reston leaves no doubt that this someone is the chief executive and those who aspire to the office: "The first duty of a leader is to find and express the things that unify the nation, that are practical and manageable. . . ."\(^{30}\)

Reston attributes the unique position of the United States as the only world leader capable of defending the great central traditions of the western world to her democratic form of government founded on the realization that men can govern themselves through free discussion. A sense of responsibility is indispensable to the preservation of this liberty of expression. Thus Reston views speech as a useful art closely allying oratorical ability with citizenship and statesmanship.

\(^{28}\)New York Times, January 4, 1959, p. 10E.

\(^{29}\)New York Times, November 22, 1959, p. 10E.

\(^{30}\)New York Times, October 25, 1964, p. 10E.
While the complexity of modern society limits the citizen's power to participate personally in deliberative situations, Reston nevertheless expects each man to be acquainted with current happenings as well as being knowledgeable of the principles whereby men seek to influence him so that he can be as competent as possible in exercising his role of citizenship. Recognizing that as the people's power of direct participation in government proceedings decreases there is a corresponding increase in the power of the nation's leaders, Reston stresses the particular gifts of oratory which are vital to a statesman, particularly the president.

Speaker's Image

The efficacy of ethical proof is of chief concern to Reston:
". . .[T]he primary thing is to convey by speech to the audience a feeling that the speaker is an honest man. They may not have to or they may not agree with him at all."31

The implications of this resolution extend back to the foundation upon which society must rest. Reston, alarmed at the existence of widespread doubt in the public mind about its leaders and institutions, feels that the major crisis of modern man is one of belief.32

31 Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.

The moral condition of a nation is surely no less important than its economical condition. The ultimate test of any society is the character of its people, and the people are obviously influenced by the standards set at the top.\textsuperscript{33}

The intensity of this belief is evident in an observation about the 1968 presidential campaign:

The main objective in this election is to get a man of character and integrity. Nobody in the race has the answer to the problems of peace abroad and civil order at home; therefore, we have to rely on the faith and trust in the man in the White House. Mr. Nixon and Mr. Humphrey have different political arguments and different policy tendencies on questions of arms control and welfare, but in the end the main problem is personal and the issue before the voter is how to judge the character of the three men in the race.\textsuperscript{34}

Character, then, is pivotal in Reston's discussion of the composition of an effective image which also entails personality, prestige, intelligence, good will, and speech preparation.

Character. To have a desirable character is to possess above all else integrity. Churchill was right, Reston proclaims, when he asserted that "there is only one duty, only one safe course, and that is to try to be right and not fear to do or say what you believe


\textsuperscript{34}\textit{New York Times}, October 11, 1968, p. 46.
to be right." Men adhering to this principle are scarce today, and Reston readily praises those who do even though he may disagree with their policies:

He [Charles de Gaulle] was the opposite of what we have now. He was a man who knew what he wanted and not a committee giving us a "consensus."36

Dean Acheson may be right or he may be wrong, but the main point is that he is almost the last of the free spirits in Washington who says bluntly what he thinks and says it with clarity, ardor, and style.37

Reston has learned to secure a hearing from even a hostile audience by establishing early in a speech that he is searching for the truth: By not persuming to appear to tell listeners "this is the way it is," the reaction of the audience is that "... this guy is not trying to sell us something. He is trying to be honest with us. Then I can talk to them."38 The possession of similar ability by others is readily acclaimed. "He [Senator Richard Russell] had that gift, so rare and important now, of making people believe in his integrity as a person even when they disagreed with his policies."39

38 Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
To be straightforward is to be courageous, and yet this infrequent occurrence still evinces esteem. An example was Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's visit to the Capitol in 1969:

He had the ... courage to tell us that he differed with us on may other questions; and the reaction in Washington was precisely what it always has been when somebody comes here with the guts and ability to say what he thinks. Prime Minister Trudeau had a kind of triumph in the process ... and demonstrated here that simple honesty, vivid personality, and plain talk are still powerful forces ... .

Sincerity, a sign of a speaker's conviction, accompanied by a real desire to communicate, is a desirable and influential attribute which can even offset some speech handicaps. A case in point is former Ambassador to England, John Wynant, whom Reston recalls as "the most tongue-tied man on a platform I've ever seen." Wynant, however, kept the audience on the edge of their chairs because he so earnestly and desperately tried to convey his ideas.

Manifestation of sincerity often distinguishes a speaker by deeming him capable of arousing an overt response: "And it is precisely because he [Barry Goldwater] feels this so strongly and expresses it with such vigor that he is the one man in this convention

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41 Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
42 Ibid.
who can make the galleries jump and scream." Even though sincerity is a useful tool in the persuasive process, Reston carefully underscores that it cannot be equated only with that which is good. It must be tempered by sound sense. This is demonstrated by another reference to Goldwater:

The attractive thing about Goldwater is that he pretends less than most of the others, but he is honest about the most dreadful things... This is the main question--not whether he is more pleasant or more honest but whether he is right.

A framework of values contributing positively to a speaker's character can be assembled from Reston's critical evaluation of speakers. Goals of human effort which stabilize and give meaning to character are based on concepts of liberty, justice, and brotherly love. The simple idea of brotherhood is articulated by regarding the ideals of pity, generosity, and equality. Equality to Reston means cherishing the precept, "the free development of each will lead to the free development of all."

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43 *New York Times*, July 12, 1960, p. 10E.


46 Notes of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered to the National Convention of Christians and Jews, Fontainebleau Hotel, New Orleans, February 18, 1957.

The plight of modern man dictates certain attributes as requisite:

The foreseeable future . . . will be a curious twilight world of neither total war nor peace, of alarms and rebellions and threats of violence: therefore . . . patience and perspective, some means of judging first and last things, and if possible some saving spirit or belief [is needed].

"Without faith, all else avails us little." As the masses grow conscious of their own power, the more they need to live by reverence, modesty, self-control, perseverance, and a sense of duty. Despite aggressive skeptics, Reston asserts that these ideals of personal conduct still reach back to religious beginnings.

Finally Reston prefers a display of optimism in keeping with the great tradition of American oratory. For example he is quick to warn those so greatly impressed by talk such as Churchill's "blood, sweat, and tears:"

. . . The bombs were already falling then and this melancholy phrase blurs the fact that Churchill

48 Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered at University of Michigan, May 1, 1965.

49 New York Times, April 6, 1958, p. 8E.


was an Olympian optimist, who never missed an opportunity to convey to the people his faith that the job could and would be done. It is this sense of confidence, even exuberance, in adversity that is missing today.\textsuperscript{53}

The natural belief in the perfectability of man is preferable to cynicism. \textsuperscript{54} "No man," Reston quotes Dr. Paul Tillich, "likes to foresee and foresay the doom of his own period. It exposes him to a terrible anxiety within himself, to severe and deadly attacks from others, and to the charge of pessimism and defeatism on the part of the majority of the people."\textsuperscript{55} Genuine happiness is relevant to a man living "by hope, by his belief in the power of good to triumph over evil. . . ."\textsuperscript{56}

**Personality.** Personality is instrumental in propelling a speaker to distinction and so, particularly when describing the attributes of a new candidate on the national scene, Reston usually mentions readily discernable features such as self assurance, appearance, magnetism, physical stature, and voice. The purpose of this description is to advise his audience:

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{New York Times}, October 19, 1961, p. 8E.


\textsuperscript{55}\textit{New York Times}, October 9, 1960, p. 10E.

\textsuperscript{56}\textit{New York Times}, April 10, 1955, p. 10E.
You're saying to the reader, here is a new candidate. . . . This is what he looks like, . . . and you had better pay attention to this man because he has a presence. It isn't only what he says, but the factor in his coming into the front center of the political stage is not only what he says but how he says it. 57

Reston exemplifies the impact which an extraordinary personality is capable of creating in observations about Dwight Eisenhower and Eugene McCarthy. Dwight Eisenhower's "inspirational quality flows from simple faith, extraordinary self-confidence, and a kind of personal magic." 58

They [voters] are clearly taken by the President's personality. They like his looks, his obvious sincerity, and his smile. . . . Women in particular, refer to him as a 'good man' . . . who will always try to do the right thing. 59

Peculiar personal traits are among the reasons which Reston states for the rising eminence of Senator McCarthy in 1968:

He is so different in appearance and manner from the stock political types. . . . This contrast is obviously helping him, particularly with the women. . . . He meditates as he talks and even seems to think before he speaks, . . . and it may be that this air of detachment . . . is a relief to sensitive people who are affronted by the tumult of the age. 60

57 Taped interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.


59 New York Times, September 30, 1956, p. 10E.

These personality attributes are so influential that they are regretfully sometimes the deciding factor in presidential campaigns.

It has been a long time around here since we have had in the White House both energy, grace of looks, speech, and manner, not indeed since Roosevelt. The intellectual quality of Kennedy's speeches is far below what was expected of him. . . . Nevertheless, if he wins it will not be because of anything particularly new he has said, but because of the urgency and spirit, the daring and grace of his appeal.61

And in a similar vein in the campaign of 1968, Reston writes of Hubert Humphrey:

Anyway, no Republican . . . is likely to minimize the importance of Humphrey's personality in this election. Oddly, it does not come through on television with the same impact as it does in the flesh, but it is there and it could easily prevail in the end, despite the policies he says he supports.62

Prestige. Prestige and reputation undoubtedly influence listener acceptance and belief, according to Reston. "Each candidate naturally advertises himself. . . . But the subjective news of candidates and parties is not necessarily the objective truth for the nation."63 Thus Reston warns against hanging political labels on the Presidential candidates and dividing them into heroes and villains.

61 New York Times, November 6, 1960, p. 10E.
This labeling operation is part of the story-telling and myth-making industry in Washington—a vast enterprise—and is a great convenience because it enables the voter to avoid thinking or dealing with the facts. Thus, the partisan Democrats tag Vice President Nixon as "Tricky Dick;" Adlai Stevenson of Illinois is ticketed as a wise-cracking Hamlet, and Governor Averell Harriman of New York as Mr. Moneybags for the big city bosses. . . . 64

Nevertheless, as Reston points out during the 1960 Democratic national convention, the cultivated image is prominent in assessing the strength of the candidates:

... Kennedy is a symbol of many things in American life. He is representative of the spirit of an age which has emphasized good looks, personality, and techniques all of which he has in abundance. He is representative of an age which glorifies efficiency, good management, and a kind of uncommitted intellectual detachment.65

The picture in the American mind about renowned people can be very misleading.

The power politics demands that every speaker on the platform pretend, particularly on television, that he is supremely confident. . . . There is a great difference between the brassy confident TV image of the candidates, . . . and the attitudes and confessions of these same men and their supporters in private.66

64 New York Times, October 9, 1955, p. 8E.
65 New York Times, July 10, 1960, p. 10E.
In the 1968 campaign Reston cites a second reason for the unreliability of reputations.

The reality of today is not the same as the reputation of yesterday. Time has not changed all the rest of us and not affected Humphrey, Nixon, Rockefeller, Kennedy, and McCarthy. . . . All of them are different from what they were when their reputations were formed, some better, maybe some worse.\textsuperscript{67}

Even though he recognizes that personality and prestige are factors of reckoning, Reston laments that "the nation admires personality more than it does wisdom. . . . The nation has concentrated on the mastery of techniques often to the detriment of substance. . . .\textsuperscript{68}

Intelligence. The intellectual stature of the speaker, a quality establishing speaker credibility which is valued second only to integrity by Reston, is manifest by knowledge, precision, wisdom, discretion, and moderation. Reston is disdainful and appalled by ignorance in high places.

I have heard secretaries of state propounding policies for the Black Sea states, who were not able, upon questioning, to state what countries were on the Black Sea. I have discussed the issues of the day with candidates for the Presidency who could not distinguish between modern socialism and modern communism.\textsuperscript{69}


\textsuperscript{68}\textit{New York Times}, June 22, 1958, p. 8E.

\textsuperscript{69}Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered to a private boys' school. No other information given.
Inadequate preparation is a frequent target of condemnation:

... Barry Goldwater refuses to look at the official foreign policy and security information President Johnson has made available to him. As a result of this refusal, he continues to make serious charges, based on wildly inaccurate information, which opens him up to counter attack and makes him look ridiculous. 70

And earlier in 1960 similar charges are leveled against other presidential candidate hopefuls. "The recent speeches of Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Nixon clearly indicate the need on both sides for time for reflection." 71 For instance a foreign policy speech of Senator Kennedy is labeled as "a grab bag of ideas that raised more questions than it answered." 72 Nixon's speeches are described as thin and similar as a pack of cigarette papers," and Reston is concerned that "the candidates persist in believing that motion is a substitute for thought." 73

"... One factor even more important than the lack of factual knowledge ... is that, in our great debates on issues that affect the

72 Ibid.
whole world, the quality of patient, dispassionate, connected thought is largely lacking. Wisdom, according to Reston, lies in the ability to relate facts so as to gain a guiding perspective:

There are men . . . who embrace in their minds a vast multitude of ideas, but with little sensibility about their real relations towards each other. . . . They abound in information in detail, . . . they speak of everyone and everything only as so many phenomena which are complete in themselves and lead to nothing: not discussing them, or teaching any truth, or instructing the hearer, but simply talking.  

In asserting that the quality of public speaking in Washington has declined from that of the nineteenth century, Reston focuses on the need for precision.

I am not talking about the decline of the old windmill Chautauqua oratory, . . . but about the unconscious obscurity, the slouching mental futility of men who simply will not learn and value words, or who cannot or will not be precise and brief.

To counter speakers' lack of precision in the nineteen fifties, Reston created a fictional organization, The Society for the Exposure of

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74 Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered to a private boy's school.

75 Ibid.

Political Nonsense, which was "against the deadpan circulation of political trash, quackery, lies, phony slogans, and all other form of political hooey. . . ."77

The exemplary speech conduct of American politicians in the eighteen nineties described by Lord Bryce in The American Commonwealth is reiterated by Reston in unfavorable comparisons of the senate debates in the nineteen fifties. He especially admires the qualities of mental stature, moderation, and discretion which Bryce attributes to the American orators.

There is more fluency, more readiness, more self-possession. Being usually quicker and nimbler in mind than an Englishman and feeling less embarrassed on his legs, an American is apt to see his point more clearly and to get at it by a more direct path.

He is less frequently confused and clumsy, less prosy also, because his sympathy with the audience tells him when they begin to tire, and makes him sensible of the necessity of catching and holding their attention.78

In conclusion Reston cautions that determining intelligence is an intricate, delicate, and positive art. He demonstrates by evaluating Lyndon Johnson's "know how:"

The problem is to know where the wires of power lie, who are the key men, what one group wants that another opposing group can be persuaded to accept.

77 New York Times, November 6, 1955, p. 8E.

and a third group is likely to tolerate, however, unwillingly. . . . It involves mastery of the details of a vast variety of bills. It requires great knowledge of every parliamentary rule and trick in the book. It demands an intuitive understanding of human nature and enough experience to know what arguments will move one man but not another, and precisely when to speak or be quiet. 79

**Good Will.** A speaker's skill in educing good will is a final means of enhancing a favorable image. Reston's observations of successful devices utilized by speakers include (1) identifying with the background, beliefs, attitudes, and heroes of the audience; (2) referring to the deity, family, or country; (3) praising the audience; (4) associating his opponents with that which is undesirable; (5) displaying a sense of humor; (6) stressing points of agreement; (7) considering opposing points of view; (8) inducing others into viewing obstacles from the speaker's position. In commenting on President Johnson's tour of the South in 1964, Reston notes his proficient application of most of these precepts.

"... His stories, his reminiscences of the past, his emphasis on family and friendship, his fantastic personal recollections of local and state politicians, were all so genuinely Southern that nobody could possibly challenge him. But his point was unmistakable. 'Justice,' he said, referring to the motto of the state of Georgia---Wisdom, Justice and Moderation---'means justice among the races. . . .' When he talks about civil

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rights he quotes not Northerners but Southerners like Atticus Haygood, the president of Emory College, who said in 1880: 'We in the South have no Divine call to stand eternal guard by the grave of dead issues.' When the President talks about poverty, he says: 'Over my bed in the White House in Washington I keep a picture of the tiny three-room home where I was born, the son of a tenant farmer who worked on the halves. . . . It reminds me every day where I came from. But, more important, it reminds me of the people I serve.' He knows the history of the South and he tells them exactly what role Georgians played in the writing of the Constitution and how many went to the last three wars and how many died. He knows they still respect Franklin D. Roosevelt and he has Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr. on the platform with him. He knows most of them oppose his program of equal rights, yet he says, using the Biblical idiom of the South: 'In God's praise and under God's guidance, let all of us resolve this morning to help heal the last fading scars of old battles. . . .'

The highly personal technique employed by both Presidents Johnson and Nixon of portraying their own predicaments is effective in off-setting antagonism: "He [Johnson] has that rare gift . . . of forcing them [men] to face the larger problem, as if they were sitting in his chair." Reston describes the method:

Johnson . . . puts his case, at great length, with numerous stories along the way, and then he begins to tell you his troubles and he'll tell you about Cyprus, . . . and Viet Nam, and Cuba, and Brazil,

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81 New York Times, April 12, 1964, p. 8E.
and Panama, and he'll weep on every story. And when he finishes, he'll say, "Can I count on you." President Nixon employs the same procedure which is particularly successful in quelling suspicions about a speaker's motives:

You notice President Nixon for example is always saying to his audience, of course in this situation I could have looked at this from a wholly political point of view. The easy thing for me to do politically would be just to pull out of Cambodia, pull out of Indo-China. People would, you know, they want to be rid of the killing. I know that. But then he builds a picture of himself as the poor harassed man who out of the nobility of his character finally comes out with the solution that we must go on fighting. Well this does put the audience in the President's position. I think it is very effective when President Nixon does it.

Humor and praise help alleviate audience hostility and adeptness in their application contributes to a self-confident image:

He [Robert Kennedy] is turning into an accomplished public speaker. He starts each political talk with the same kind of selfmocking wit, [as John Kennedy] quiet, brief, and conversational. He says he is glad to see such a big crowd, but as Churchill remarked, the crowd would have been twice as large for a hanging. Noting the youngsters, he jokes about wanting the voting age lowered to fifteen. Observing that the President, the Vice President and the Congress are all out of Washington, he says he has just had a wire from his brother Teddy: 'Everybody's gone: Have just seized

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83 Taped interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
control,' Much of this is carefully contrived, but he is quick and deft at turning aside hostile questions with a gibe or a wisecrack. . . . [H]is progress is significant. He is growing in experience and poise. 84

A speaker's discriminate association of his objectives is a reputable device, but too often it is exploited as Reston points out in one of President Johnson's speeches on Viet Nam.

. . . Mr. Johnson went on to one of the oldest political techniques in the book: this is to identify the opposition with the unpopular extremists; to attack "the cussers and the doubters" and the flag burners as if they were the only opposition to the war. . . . This is one part of the theme: those who back his policies in Viet Nam are the doers and the builders who have the courage to face adversity; those who oppose the killings are the 'cussers and the doubters.' 85

In addition to discussing the positive effect which may be achieved by competence in assimilating these various combinations, Reston sometimes refers to detrimental reactions. Responses which particularly undermine a speaker's image are feelings that a speaker is inconsiderate, uncompassionate, and relentlessly ambitious. 86

Speech Preparation. A consideration of speech preparation, and ghostwriting in particular, enters into Reston's judgment of a

speech primarily because of his concern with assessing character. A distaste for ghostwriting is manifest in his advocating a live confrontation between Kennedy and Nixon. "We will know a lot more about both candidates when it's over, and that's more than can be said about many of the ghostwritten and stage-managed campaigns of the past." A second reason for this distaste of ghostwriting is "that it could lead to a situation where the most impressive candidate in a Presidential race is not the man who has the most to say out of his heart and mind to the voters, but the man who can put together the best team of speech writers. . . ."

Because of overwhelming schedules, Presidential candidates inevitably are forced to "mouth the writings and ideas of other men, . . ." and Reston feels that the audience should be aware of this:

No Presidential candidate of our time actually wrote so many speeches or so many good speeches as Governor Stevenson. . . . But even Mr. Stevenson, who has worked eighteen hours a day ever since the middle of September, was not able to do more after the first of October than add a paragraph here and a peroration there to the work of other men.

The idea persisted to the end that he was writing all his own speeches, but it wasn't true. The soaring

\(87^{\text{New York Times, August 12, 1960, p. 18.}}\)


\(89^{\text{Ibid.}}\)
speech he delivered in the Mormon Tabernacle in Salt Lake City—probably the noblest document of the campaign—was almost entirely the work of Herbert Agar, the former editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal. . . . And throughout the campaign, he drew upon memoranda from probably the most brilliant stable of writers ever gathered together in a Presidential campaign: Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Archibald MacLeish, Bernard Devoto and Kenneth Galbraith of the Harvard faculty; Robert E. Sherwood, the playwright, and Judge Samuel Rosenman, formerly of the speech-writing staff of President Roosevelt; James Wechsler, editor of The New York Post, and David Bell and Clayton Fritchey. . . .

General Eisenhower did not even attempt to write his own speeches or contribute much to them, even at the beginning. He relied, not on the Harvard faculty but on the staffs of the big Eastern magazines for his scripts—Stanley High from the Reader's Digest, Gabriel Hauge from Business Week, C. D. Jackson from Time, and Emmet Hughes from Life for almost all his prepared addresses.90

This practice is relevant to the speech critic, for judgments made solely on the basis of speech content may be misleading. For instance Reston maintains that Eisenhower's writers "wrote speeches often out of keeping with his own sentiments."91 Evaluation of John Kennedy's rhetoric is similarly challenging:

He was not one for big plans and grand designs, though contemporary writers often professed to see such things in some of the speeches of Ted Sorensen. Incidentally, it was always difficult to tell where the soaring rhetoric

90Ibid.

91New York Times, September 16, 1956, p. 12E.
of Sorensen's bolder and more liberal mind left off and the more cautious Kennedy picked up. . . .

The public relations aspects are a final phase of preparation exerting significant influence. Today speeches are often launched with all the care of a major advertising campaign. This is evident in Reston's examination of the techniques employed by Robert Kennedy prior to the delivery of a foreign policy speech:

Once the areas of political opportunity are identified, the scholars are mobilized. The evening seminars continue at his country home in Virginia. The speech writers are brought in. . . .

His speech to the Senate on Latin America was first sent out for review to Latin American experts in the Universities, in the State Department (Assistant Secretary Lincoln Gordon) and even in the White House (Walt W. Rostow).

It was then split into two parts, one for delivery on Monday and the other on Tuesday. It ran to 54 pages of single spaced typewritten copy on legal folio sheets, complete with six other pages summarizing the document for indolent scribblers. 'The Speech,' said the instructions to reporters, 'is in seven (7) numbered sections, with an introduction and a conclusion . . . and . . . not for release before delivery, 6 P.M. on the actual day the speech is concluded. . . .'

Nothing was overlooked. The whole packet was delivered to reporters days in advance, the networks advised, and video tapes cut on the key passages, all in time for the national news shows on each day of delivery. 94


94 Ibid.
Logical Appeal

The basis for critical observations of Reston such as "this election campaign has not produced a single noble speech,"95 "memorable speech,"96 or the "best and most sensitive speech of the whole session [of Congress]"97 reveals that worthy ideas, logical reasoning, and validity of support are essential.

Worthy Ideas. To be discriminating in selecting ideas is to choose those that are timely, relevant, universal, and socially responsible. Man is engulfed in change, therefore Reston is always impatient with speakers dwelling in the past and on trite, outdated ideas.

The headlines make it appear that an exciting debate is in process. . . . No vision could be more inaccurate . . . [A] great deal of the time the senators have nothing to say or insist upon saying--at interminable length--things that have been said many, many times before.98

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
It is true that every generation . . . is an 'era of transition.' But the transition is faster now in everything but in politics. The diplomats are talking about the past when the future is

96New York Times, November 6, 1966, p. 10E.
97New York Times, August 24, 1958, p. 10E.
upon them. The battleship Wisconsin is in mothballs, but politicians' arguments and issues far more obsolete are still on the front pages of . . . newspapers. 99

Reston frequently utilizes instructive comparisons when reprehending poor performances.

The quality of candidates for Congress this year, [1966] while no worse and probably a little better than a decade ago, is still mediocre. In very few cases do they compare favorably in knowledge and wisdom with the best brains in their own states or districts. The level of debate in this campaign, of rational discussion of the monumental issues before the nation, is not only poor, but in many ways worse than it was a generation ago. . . . On the whole, most of the candidates have avoided any fundamental challenge to the extraordinary and even revolutionary policies of the last 24 months. 100

Timely ideas are also essential because they off-set indifference:

The residents of this political hive [Washington] may be able to hear better, but they're not listening. They are talking but not communicating. They are debating but not persuading. . . . Same thing in world politics. . . . The explanation of the massive indifference is fairly obvious. Nobody on the world scene is saying anything that hasn't been said a thousand times before. . . . And that is precisely the trouble with most of the rest of the statements these days: they are words which lead nowhere. . . . This is bound, however, to come to an end before too long. It is impossible for so many candidates to make so many

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99 *New York Times*, March 9, 1958, p. 8E.

100 *New York Times*, November 6, 1966, p. 10E.
speeches over so long a time without one of them saying something. And when that happens, the country will not only hear but begin to listen. 101

In order for ideas to be meaningful, they must be related to the world of reality in which Reston reiterates the central challenge is the revolutionary speed of social, political, scientific, and military change. 102 Reston maintains that realization of this by a speaker affects his priorities and sense of what is essential. For instance in the 1960 Presidential campaign, Reston expresses concern over the unsatisfactory trend of secondary issues overwhelming primary issues:

All you have to do is look at the papers to see the westward and northward expansion of the Negro race, to see the movement of Communist power and influence from Asia and Eastern Europe to Africa and the Caribbean, to see the dangers of extreme poverty and fabulous wealth in the hemisphere, to see the conflict between our political aims in Africa and our political struggles over the Negro in the South, to see the rising menace of Communist China arguing with Moscow that the way to world communism is not through "peaceful coexistence" but through war.

These . . . are the issues that touch on the fate of the nation. . . . The central issue is . . . which coalition of political forces can deal best with this tumult of change. 103

102 New York Times, October 14, 1962, p. 8E.
103 New York Times, September 4, 1960, p. 8E.
Reston further believes the practice of not addressing men's minds and their best instincts but their passions, emotions, and prejudices is unworthy and unbearable. Dangerous fissures in our society deepen when "everyone speaks with unbridled anger in behalf of his point of view or his party or his people." Reston calls for a transformation to universality of appeal and underscores Edith Hamilton's observation, "What is permanently important in a man is what unites him to the rest of mankind."

Shunning pragmatism as a useful tool but a poor guide, Reston offers Robert Burns' noble but difficult philosophy as a guiding principle:

Whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness of others; This is my criterion of Goodness.
And whatever injures Society at large, or any individual in it; This is my measure of Iniquity.

Reston is quick to commend objectives aimed in this direction.

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106 New York Times, December 20, 1964, p. 8E.
107 Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered at the 50th Anniversary Dinner of the Pulitzer Prize, May 10, 1955.
It is not easy to reconcile 'the truth the spirit knows with the truth the mind knows,' but there is a yearning spirit here [Washington] at the end of the year. So far it [Johnson Administration] has concentrated mainly on material things and on national goals, as if personal or national security could be achieved without reference to the rest of the physical and spiritual world; but at least there is now movement and aspiration in this direction.108

Recognizing that the ends to which speakers address themselves are highly significant, Reston's expectations comprise a hierarchy of speaker responsibility arising from the growing interdependence of people within a nation and among nations. Reston emphasizes the scope and breadth of ideas of those occupying the pinnacle of power within a government.109 For example in analyzing John Kennedy's transition from senator to President, Reston points out that Kennedy's weakness "is in his longrange vision. He looks good but he doesn't look far... Big plans and grand designs seem to bore him. He lives in the now. He is a tactician more interested in political manipulation... and this leaves him without a goal to which the day-to-day decisions can be related... What great idea does Kennedy personify? In what way is he a leader of thought?"110

Reston commends Charles de Gaulle for having what Kennedy lacks. "He has a policy. . . . He does know what he wants and relates every speech and act to a single purpose."  

On the other hand, Reston rebukes De Gaulle's scope, for scope entails not looking at what is clearly an international and interlocking problem from a purely national point of view.  

Both the weakness and greatness of Charles de Gaulle . . . is that he is so sure he is right. He is . . . the most eloquent voice since Churchill's, but that is just the trouble. For he insists, not in using his eloquence like Paul Valery, to express the universality of France but to flaunt the nationality of France.  

Reston also expects consistency of ideas from a leader, for his "conclusions influence all the policies and priorities at home and abroad."  

For lately each speech by the . . . Secretaries of State and Defense has seemed to stand by itself without any relationship to any guiding principle or policy. . . . McNamara on Capitol Hill defends everything, but McNamara at Montreal before the editors, emerged as the philosopher, criticizing the trend of power, as if he were Senator Fulbright. . . . McNamara's remarkable

112 New York Times, April 27, 1958, p. 8E.
speech . . . was true to his personal philosophy and has been repeated many times in private, but it was almost an open criticism of the policies he has defended for years: an appeal for a new approach to China, a proposal for a new form of national military and social service which bears no resemblance to the Administration's plans. 115

An observation about the Eighty-fifth Congress shows that lower echelons of leadership are responsible first of all for considering ideas affecting the national interest.

From the First Congress to the Eighty-fifth, the charming scoundrels have been confused by a dilemma: whether to tell the people what they wanted to hear or whether to tell the truth; whether to concentrate on the needs of their limited constituencies or on the needs of the whole nation. The Eighty-fifth did what most Congresses do: it compromised between the two. It struck a balance between the two. It struck a balance between what was necessary and what was expedient. That is why . . . it is still aware of a gap between what it has done and what remains to be done. 116

This personal and partisan approach in dealing with the politics of an issue rather than the issue itself is despicable to Reston. 117 His condemnation is almost vehement: "[T]he last thing the country needs . . . is more expedient politics." 118


116 New York Times, August 24, 1958, p. 10E.


Accountability is the final requisite of a speaker's social responsibility which Reston stresses and includes the duty to correlate public pronouncements with private sentiments. Regretfully a speaker's publically stated ideas often do not coincide with those expressed confidentially in Reston's opinion, and so he calls attention to the exception: John Kennedy "has started the campaign by talking in public precisely as he talks in private, and this in itself is something new and hopeful."\textsuperscript{119} In a similar vein he observes, "The Capitol and even the cabinet are well populated these days with influential men who say one thing in private and something quite different in public."\textsuperscript{120}

Second, Reston insists that a speaker is responsible for his proposals. This entails considering the consequences and implementing or establishing the practicality of proposed policy. In 1966 Reston critically observes:

The National Security Council and the Cabinet seldom meet now except in an emergency, and statements and speeches are made at the highest level without any collective judgment about their possible consequences.\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{119}New York Times, July 17, 1960, p. 8E.

\textsuperscript{120}New York Times, April 23, 1971, p. 37.

\textsuperscript{121}New York Times, May 20, 1966, p. 46.
If a speaker is in a position of power, he is obligated to implement into policy those objectives uttered in public in Reston's opinion:

Again the President [Johnson] has recently been saying on the commencement circuit . . . that the Negroes must be taken out of the slums and given jobs and housing that will make their new legal rights a reality. . . . Again the objectives are expressed in eloquent words, but not carried out in public policy. 122

A third way in which Reston expects those aspiring to positions of leadership or seeking to influence public opinion to be accountable is to avoid disparity between ends and means. It is inadequate for a speaker to focus simply on a definition of ends, according to Reston, for general agreement exists about ideal goals. However unanimity gives place to uncertainty regarding the means leading to the goals, and this is the proper area of emphasis through clarification and justification. 123 In the 1964 Presidential campaign, Reston states:

The danger in all the current ideological talk is that it will divert the mind of the country from the practical to the theoretical, from what is attainable to what is merely desirable. 124

In determining the effectiveness of a speaker, Reston especially stresses aptness in choosing ideas. This formulative

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122 *New York Times*, June 6, 1965, p. 10E.
124 Ibid.
process involves capacity to recognize timely issues, discern relevance, aspire for universality of appeal, and evince responsibility by projecting sufficient scope, being consistent, promoting national interest, and being personally accountable.

**Reasoning and Evidence.** Asking people to think and face facts is highly distasteful. Accordingly politicians usually tell the people what they think the people want to hear, whether it is accurate or not. Regretfully "truth is the first casualty of every election campaign." Reston calls for abandonment of this easy way out and adherence to Lincoln's warning: "Reason--cold, calculating, unimpassioned reason--must furnish all the materials for our future support and defense. Let those materials be molded into general intelligence and sound morality." Reston believes that this is imperative in the present age of uncertainty and anxiety when a man


128 *New York Times*, February 16, 1958, p. 8E.
cannot be as loyal to his prejudices as he was in the past. "The
skill that must be learned now is the skill of forming objective
judgments on the basis of a great deal of evidence, carefully weighed
by critical minds."  

Terming the quality of public speaking over the past two
decades "a national disgrace," Reston longs for the caliber reflected
in the nineteenth century:

Nothing is more revealing than to read the debate in
the House of Representatives in the Eighteen Thirties
on Greece's fight with Turkey for independence and the
Greek Turkish debate in the Congress in 1947. The
first is dignified and eloquent, the argument marching
from principle through illustration to conclusion; the
second is a dreary garble of debating points full of
irrelevancies and bad history.

To further exemplify the decline, Reston suggests reading the
Congressional Record for an hour and then compare it with the
parliamentary reports in Hansard: "You will get a shock."

129 Manuscript of speech provided by James Reston,
delivered to National Cathedral School for Girls, January 17, 1950.

130 Ibid.

131 Reston, op. cit., Speech entitled "Conversations on
Education in a Confused World."


133 Reston, op. cit., Speech entitled "Conversations on
Education in a Confused World."
In his consideration of evidence, Reston also discusses the need to adapt support to the audience, to avoid generalities, to be specific, to discriminate in selecting examples and statistics, and to define intelligibly. His personal experience attests that audience adaptation is an inherent factor in selecting supporting material:

I never go and make a speech anywhere that I do not adapt to the audience. I find it frankly quite offensive to go to a university commencement and have a speaker usually out of Washington come here to an event which is terribly important to the graduates and particularly to their parents and tell them all about the foreign policy of the U. S. without any reference to the fact that it's their day. . . . To ignore this seems to me to be bad manners. 134

Even though rational appeal is a prerequisite, Reston asserts that it tends to be more effective when presented in combination with emotional appeal. For instance Reston attributes President Kennedy's frequent inability to communicate his convictions to failure to merge his appeal:

He has touched the intellect of the country but not the heart. 135

[H]e seems to touch everything and tackle nothing. There is something too cool about it all. He gives the country statistics about the Negro--17 per cent Negro unemployed in Chicago and only 5 per cent white, etc--but he doesn't convey the humiliation or the ache in the heart. 136

134 Taped interview with James Reston June 22, 1970.
Diversity of events creates an aloofness which the speaker must overcome:

The more the politicians shout about the mysterious world of missiles and economics, the balance of power and the balance of payments, the more the people seem to turn away from the complicated big world into the more tangible and understandable world of the family and the community. ... 137

He prefers specificity to generalities:

I believe if you go and speak to an audience in generalities it doesn't work. But if you come before an audience with the same general points that you wish to make but you relate these points to them, to their institutions, then you get their attention as the old man said as he hit the mule over the head with the two-by-four. 138

In being specific, however, Reston cautions against excessive concentration on complex details.

I wouldn't go out ... and talk to an audience about the intricacies of the Cooper Amendment on presidential power and give them all the ins and outs of who is for this and who is for that. First of all, I would find it a bore and I think the audience would find it a bore. But if I talk to them about the great struggle between the chief executive and the legislature which has gone on from the days of the Federalist papers right down to the Cooper Church amendment of the present time and how first the president had been supreme or dominant in the struggle and then the congress, they find that all very interesting. ... And if you can bring it down to the contemporary problem which is that presidential

137New York Times, September 23, 1962, p. 10E.

138Taped interview with James Reston June 22, 1970.
power has greatly increased through the invention of the atom bomb and the intercontinental missile which means that our country could be destroyed before you could ever get the congress together--let alone get them to vote. Then they are interested. But too many small points, intricate points, too many statistics I think turn people off.\(^{139}\)

The qualifications for the use of examples in argumentation ascertained from Reston's refutation indicate that he expects examples to be typical and that a sufficient number of examples should be described. His reliance upon examples when challenging John Kennedy's negation of the indications of Catholic bloc voting in the Wisconsin primary in 1960 illustrates his use of examples adhering to these standards:

It is true that nobody can prove beyond a doubt why over 1,000,000 people voted the way they did in Wisconsin. It is also true that all Catholics did not vote for Kennedy there and all Protestants for Humphrey. But the presumptive evidence of bloc voting is strong.

In the ten Wisconsin counties with the highest Catholic population, some of them traditionally Republican, Senator Kennedy won all of them, six of them by a margin over Humphrey of 2 to 1 or better. And in the ten counties with the lowest percentage of Catholics, Humphrey won all ten.

In the Democratic convention of 1956 Kennedy's staff prepared and circulated with his consent a 3,000 word memorandum which purported to show not only that there was a "Catholic vote," but where it was located, how it could be organized and why it would be decisive in winning the election for the Democratic party.

\(^{139}\)Ibid.
The memorandum showed how strongly the Catholic candidates had run in Catholic districts and concluded: 
"The above indicates that a Catholic Vice-Presidential candidate could begin a new era of Democratic victories. If he brought into the Democratic fold only those normally Democratic Catholics who voted for Ike (in 1952), he would probably swing New York, Mass., Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Illinois--for 132 electoral votes. If he also wins the vote of Catholics who shifted to the Republicans in 1948 or earlier, he would also swing New Jersey, Minnesota, Michigan, California, Wisconsin, Ohio, Maryland, and maybe even New Hampshire--for a total of 265 electoral votes."  

Realizing that definitions should augment understanding, Reston frequently attributes the breakdown in this process to failure in stressing distinctive attributes, distinguishing all items properly contained within a subject, and excluding the extraneous. For instance Reston attributes the difference between Republicans and Democrats on the state of the Union in 1961 as stemming from confusion in the definition of progress.

In his last State of the Union Message this week, President Eisenhower defined progress in terms of a catalogue of improvements over what we had before. Thus he cited the phenomenal rise in the productivity of the nation, with more guns and butter, more people employed at higher wages and with more Social Security than ever before. The Democrats do not challenge these facts, but they have a different definition of progress. When they talk about our "decline," they are speaking

relatively, not about where we are now in relation to where we were internally eight years ago, but where we stand in relation to our external problems.\textsuperscript{141}

Reston continues the distinction by quoting John Kennedy's viewpoint which reflects Bernard Shaw's definition of progress:

He is not saying we have not improved in many ways, but that improvement is not necessarily "progress" in Spencer's terms, that we have improved but not enough to adapt to our revolutionary environment.\textsuperscript{142}

In addition to admonitions on audience adaptation, generalities, examples, and definitions, Reston's view on a final form of evidence, testimony, deserves mentioning. Although Reston seldom disputes the testimony employed by others, it is one of his favorite means of reinforcing his viewpoint. Apparently degree of expertness is the predominant characteristic influencing his choice, for as indicated earlier in discussing his preparation, he studies or speaks with leading authorities in the various areas on which he writes.\textsuperscript{143}

The process of proceeding from premises to conclusions entails establishing relationships among discernable facts. Reston often explores this use of inference if he feels a breakdown has occurred in the speaker's method. For instance some of the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[141]New York Times, January 15, 1961, p. 12E.
\item[142]Ibid.
\item[143]See pages 50-59 in Chapter II.
\end{footnotes}
qualifications expected by Reston when a speaker argues deductively are apparent in his analysis of two enthymemes employed by President Johnson. The major premise of the disjunctive syllogism, either we win in South Viet Nam or lose all of South East Asia, is invalid according to Reston, because the alternative possibilities mentioned are not exhaustive. This is evident, Reston continues, in the rejection of the same proposition by both Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. 144

If you're patriotic you support Johnson's Viet Nam policy is a major premise of a hypothetical syllogism which Reston confutes on the basis that the minor premise denies the consequent and therefore the conclusion must deny the antecedent. A denial of the antecedent does not make possible the realization of a reliable conclusion. 145

Reston warns of the intricacy and importance of establishing causal relations, a second type of argument:

We shall never succeed . . . until we give up our ambition to find a single cause for all our ills. . . . We shall never deal effectively with our human problems until we follow the example of natural scientists and temper our

144New York Times, October 1, 1967, p. 12E.

longing for rational simplification by the recognition in things and events of a certain residue of irrationality, diversity, and specificity. 146

Reston expresses dissatisfaction with this tendency of oversimplification in specification of causes as well as the one of confusing effect with cause, in his analysis of an interuniversity and governmental committee discussion on Vietnam.

[T]his debate between the intellectual and political communities of the country is still unsatisfactory. It is still dealing primarily with the effects of the disorder of the world and not with the causes. Vietnam, which was the main subject of this weekend's discussion, is not a cause but merely one effect of the problem. The cause is the poverty, misery and resentment of most of the human race and the exploitation of these things by the cunning techniques of Communist subversion. Another cause is the failure of the Western World to devise means of dealing with these facts. 147

**Emotional Appeal**

The potential forcefulness of emotional appeal is a factor which Reston recognizes: "It is always dangerous to ignore emotional issues that touch on the innermost needs, aspirations, or prejudices of human life." 148 In the political realm, Reston argues, the inciting effect is influential in actuating non-voters and instigating part political and part ethical movements.

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146 *New York Times*, October 11, 1959, p. 10E.
The independent voters, who give no allegiance to a single party but swing from one to another, are probably not as numerous as the non-voters who go to the polls only when some striking figure like Eisenhower or some impassioned controversy like the race issue, touches the family and the community.  

In almost every great transformation in the lives of nations, it has usually been a small, ardent minority that has prevailed over the indifferent majority. It is not at all clear that a majority of the people favored the Civil War or even the War of Independence, or the French Revolution, or the unification of Italy or the liberation of Ireland or India. Nor is it clear that a majority of the people favored the Nazi conquest of Germany or the Communist take-over in Russia or China. In all these cases the movement was led by what Jacques Maritain calls "the prophetic shock-minorities" which were protesting against something, and had the zeal and energy to prevail over a divided or disinterested majority.

Conversely excessive emotional appeal can also have a deadening effect:

It is now obvious that racial politics have almost paralyzed the Federal Government's efforts to give aid to schools. The appalling debate in the House of Representatives this week illustrates... how completely the question is overwhelmed by emotional and political considerations.

Reston appreciates the value of emotional appeal when properly utilized, and declares that it is essential in achieving inspiration - a

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149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 New York Times, July 8, 1956, p. 10E.
step in persuasion. For instance he feels that President
Johnson's ability "to not only tell men how he thinks they should feel
but of making them feel it" is of immense value to the nation. This is a principle factor in Reston's attributing Johnson's chances
for getting Kennedy's program through Congress as being greater
than Kennedy's.

However, experience with political speakers has led Reston
to maintain that their debasement of the application of emotional appeal
is too prevalent. In his criticism his chief concern is to censure
speakers who take advantage of the troubled spirit of times by making
speeches manipulating anxieties for their own self-glorification or
self-concern solely for votes. Reston abhors this practice because
serious analysis of issues suffers. Thus in the 1968 Presidential
campaign, Reston accuses Richard Nixon of exploiting the reactions of
public caution against the killing in Vietnam, the protests of the Negroes
and the campus rebels, the welfare programs and aid to the under-
developed countries.

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152 *New York Times*, November 15, 1963, p. 34.
153 *New York Times*, April 12, 1964, p. 8E.
154 Reston, *op. cit.*, Speech entitled "The Political World
Around Us."
155 Taped interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
156 *New York Times*, November 3, 1968, p. 16E.
157 Ibid.
He is saying we are in deep trouble at home and abroad, which is true, and blaming all the trouble on Mr. Humphrey, which is false. He is in a good political situation. He is appealing to everybody who has a complaint and wants change.  

Reston questions Nixon's ability to remove the complaints and bring about the change because of his failure to analyze how he would deal with these issues. He even ventures that Nixon is proving himself unworthy of winning by his appeals to the emotions and prejudices of the voters in the name of law and order.

Such exploitation is easier than logic, Reston notes, and often reaps immediate success as in the case of George Wallace in the same campaign.

... George Wallace is getting more emotion from his audiences than anybody else because he is denouncing everything and everybody in sight. It is going to take a whole lot more than George Wallace's verbal violence, however, to get us out of our present pickle. He no doubt appeals to the nothing's-good mood of the moment.

A final misuse of emotional appeal which Reston denounces is the use of fear.

The most powerful force in world politics today is fear. ... The domination of fear prevails, partly because it is justified, and partly because all politicians have learned

158 Ibid.


that it is easier to frighten their people than to persuade them. . . . All of them (Johnson, Brezhnev, Podgorny and Kosygin, Mao Tsetung) know it is easier in their political situation at home to point to the foreign devil, to increase the military budget, to appeal to national pride and prejudice, than to break away into new patterns of thought and policy and move towards a better life for their own people and the whole world. 161

This debasement Reston finds alarming, for with every campaign new ways appear to increase the influence of deception. 162

Prejudice is now computerized. The candidates make the most careful studies of the voters in the critical districts. They know precisely how to play on the special interests and prejudices of those districts, whether to talk about Vietnam or avoid talking about it, whether to appeal by radio or television, what kind of slogans to peddle. The bull horn, the sound truck, the radio and TV are now at the command of men who know all the arts of political illusionism, and can appeal to all the fears and demons decent men and women usually try to drive out of their lives. 163

"Politicians seldom reform what wins." 164 A vigilant electorate must counter this situation. 165 Reinforcing this


162 Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, "This Country's Noble Ideals Are Under Challenge," delivered at University of North Carolina, October 12, 1968.

163 Ibid.


165 Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered at Centennial Charter Day Convocation, Ohio State University, March 22, 1970.
admonition by quoting Lincoln Steffens, Reston repeats: "The People are not innocent. . . . If our political leaders are to be always a lot of political merchants, they will supply any demand we may create." When the people fulfill this responsibility Reston is quick to acknowledge it.

The big news in the world today is not what the politicians and statesmen are saying but what the people are doing. Almost everywhere the activities of Governments are running behind the activities of the people. In short, the minds of the Western leaders, which have been bent on stopping bad things for years, are now beginning to concentrate on doing good things, and the pressures from the people have had a lot to do with it.

In stressing the power of emotional appeal to provoke intense feelings capable of rousing indifference, of strengthening beliefs, of instigating political movements, as well as paralyzing action, Reston admonishes its judicious application. Unfortunately its legitimate and beneficial use to reinforce belief in credible ideas is often exploited, and Reston concentrates on expressing abuses whereby speakers indiscriminately manipulate anxieties solely for selfish gain.

While he deems speakers accountable for devious appeals, Reston ultimately holds the people liable for the effectiveness of such

appeals and advocates that the people's response can prompt speakers to employ emotional appeal wisely.

**Delivery**

Even though he constantly contends that there is too much concentration "on how to say things rather than on what to say," Reston feels that delivery very definitely affects an audience and is an integral part of the revelation of character. Thus when he mentions delivery in his speech analysis it is usually for these two reasons. For example, after observing Fidel Castro's fourteenth anniversary speech in Havana, Reston writes:

> Now nearing 40, he is heavier and somehow more impressive. He has a magnificent head and Old Testament beard, a good but not a powerful voice and a wonderfully expressive face and pair of hands. When he cuts loose with his exhortations to the young, the whole stand seems to tremble.

He admits that he also often observes speakers without commenting on their delivery because he didn't feel it was relevant to the subject

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168 *New York Times*, March 18, 1956, p. 10E.

169 Taped Interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.

170 Ibid.

matter or significant enough to justify the additional space. The
identity of the person is a primary consideration.

For example if I were going out now to look at Muskie
or young Senator Bayh of Indiana, I would look at them
as potential presidential candidates and therefore how
they spoke, what their manner was. Muskie for ex-
ample is a big, rather laconic figure with a great deep
voice and a certain majesty to his delivery. That is
relevant and maybe more. . . . It's like reporting on a
new actor. You wouldn't merely quote from one of the
great speeches of King Lear. If you were talking about
the new performance of King Lear, the new central
character, you would report on the techniques by which
the words were delivered. 172

In such a report Reston may refer to a speaker's confidence,
enthusiasm, movement, gestures, voice, and mode of delivery. Ex-
perience has taught Reston the value of projecting confidence. "I
think the audience picks up the mood of the man. If I come in tense
and nervous, . . . they will turn me off." 173 It is essential, es-
pecially in the beginning to establish a relaxed atmosphere:

First of all I assume that people have to get used to you.
They have to stop rustling their chairs first of all. They
have to get used to your voice and the pace of your voice.
I try quite consciously to put them at their ease--primarily
to put myself at ease--and to get over my own stagefright
at the beginning. 174

172 Taped interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
Reston does this by employing humor, usually at his own expense. He forces himself to speak extemporaneously in order to establish contact directly with his audience. ¹⁷⁵

He emphasizes the merit of a confident manner in political speaking: "Style and manner have always been important in political life and it is here that Kennedy has scored so heavily . . . with the independents, . . . who obviously like his spirit and self-assurance."¹⁷⁶ Such self-assurance must appear to be spontaneous and not devised as for example was the case of Richard Nixon in the 1960 gubernatorial race in California: "Everything seemed to be contrived, even the appearance of naturalness."¹⁷⁷

A deep conviction conveyed enthusiastically is in his opinion usually consequential. These are the qualities Reston finds so entrancing in the speech of the seven original astronauts.

We have had a lot of fancy visitors around here this year making the best speeches money can buy, but nobody as exciting as these intelligent, plain-speaking small-town fliers. What made them so exciting was not that they said anything new but that they said all the old things with such fierce conviction.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶New York Times, November 6, 1960, p. 10E.

¹⁷⁷New York Times, November 9, 1962, p. 34.

¹⁷⁸New York Times, April 12, 1959, p. 8E.
These traits also are usually partially accountable for a striking entrance into the national limelight. For example Reston considers these in his discussion of Charles Percy as a possible Vice Presidential nominee in 1967. "[H]e is a handsome and attractive television personality, full of confidence and energy and just intelligent enough to recognize the lack of genius in the Senate, and just shrewd enough not to show it."\(^{179}\)

His interest in physical movement and vocal variety stems primarily from their influence in securing and sustaining attention. A description of President Johnson typifies the potential effect of physique, movement, and gestures:

> It is not that he does not impress them; [a live audience] quite the contrary--he overwhelms them. Seen for the first time in person, he seems larger and more formidable than on the screen, and when he is unleashed in a crowd, ... he is an elemental and awesome figure." On the platform he is obviously the head man, and when he is at his shouting best, arms waving like a helicopter, he not only commands but almost stuns his audience.\(^{180}\)

This is excessive, but Reston admires Johnson's ability as an accomplished storyteller "with a remarkably expressive face and hands ... off-screen."\(^{181}\)

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\(^{179}\) *New York Times*, April 23, 1967, p. 10E.


\(^{181}\) *New York Times*, April 17, 1964, p. 34.
A speaker's voice may be a distinctive asset in enhancing interest. Reston points this out by sparing a few exceptional speakers on this basis from a sweeping denunciation of the decline of oratory in the Senate in the nineteen fifties.182

Senator Walter George of Georgia has a voice like an organ and combines it with a quiet personal majesty that makes the Senate pay attention. . . . Senator Eugene Millikin has a kind of funeral nobility of expression, touched with ridicule, which is extremely effective. . . . Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen . . . looks and sounds so impressive that the eye robs the ear of his meaning . . . .183

A reporter spends much of his time observing speakers, and as a result of this experience Reston hates a manuscript delivery.

We sit and listen to the laudatory introduction of somebody who's supposed to be famous; and then these men invariably get up and read speeches. . . . We sit in the press box and we do two things: First, we run a poll, a betting poll, on how long this character will go on. And second we speculate on who wrote his talk and whether he understands it.184

He is often openly disdainful of such approaches as his description of the late Senator Estes Kefauver indicates:


183 Ibid.

He was reading a speech which he seemed never to have seen before, . . . and maybe even Daniel Webster would have had trouble putting a zing in a "which clause," but the Tennessee Senator droned on as if he were even boring himself. . . . 185

Reston believes that extemporaneous delivery not only stimulates attention, but it is a better means of revealing character. His preference for this mode of delivery is apparent in his earliest critical observations.

The committee meetings [United Nations Assembly in London] are more hopeful too. . . . [T]he delegates are not reading speeches designed to sound well particularly to constituents back home. . . . This is much better. . . . They are speaking out what is in their minds instead of what somebody else has written on a piece of paper. 186

Finally the ability to speak extemporaneously is so useful and yet so rare that Reston frequently uses it in judging individuals: "[John F. Dulles] is well informed. He is the hardest-working man in Washington. He is patient and precise in extemporaneous speech." 187

Speech Situation

Since oratory is an integral part of public affairs, the understanding of events surrounding a speech is an essential part of


criticism. Reston's concern with establishing this relationship is exemplified in his analysis of the strategy of President Johnson in presenting his voting message to Congress.

His tactic is to strike at the highest possible moment of public attention. This is what he did with his voting message. He waited out his critics. He let the television clips of the riots in Selma make their own impression on the whole country. He allowed the demonstrations and appeals for counter action to build up. . . . His timing has been superb. . . . [T]he problems of the home front have accumulated. . . . Without an informed order of priorities, without a plan of action, and without a shrewd knowledge of the House and Senate, however, the present program of education, medical care, manpower retraining, law enforcement, housing and urban development, and equal voting rights would be in trouble on Capitol Hill. 188

The relevance of the impact of historical incidents is apparent as Reston enumerates why the prospects for acceptance of Johnson's proposals are favorable.

Imaginative fiscal and tax policies have kept the economic boom going and provided new money to finance new social programs. The White House has been used as an educational forum to dramatize the condition of the schools and the poor. A new class of vigorous young Negroes has captured the revolution of their people and forced their problems on the conscience of the rest of the nation. . . . For without their vicious and extreme opposition, carried into homes across the nation, by new instruments of communication, public opinion might still be indifferent to the Negro revolt. President Johnson's contribution has been to channel all these emotions and struggles into legislation at the right moment. 189


189 Ibid.
In emphasizing that historical incidents may be capable of motivating a speech as well as influencing its effect, Reston establishes that consideration of social setting is inherent to speech criticism.

_Audience_

The audience is central in Reston's theory of speech. The final judgment lies with the people, who make up their minds by watching and listening to their officials, following the arguments of the political opposition, listening to the news on the radio and television, and reading the reports and comments in the newspapers and magazines.¹⁹⁰

Generally Reston is optimistic about the ability of the people, for after years of observation and study of human nature, his conclusion is the same as that of Thomas Jefferson who said he knew of "no safe depository of the ultimate power of society but the people themselves."¹⁹¹

This great faith which Reston has in the American people is not based on blind adoration: "They follow self-interest and party interest, but still long for what is right and what is possible."¹⁹²


These basic tendencies are strengthened by a desire to believe. "The spirit of hope is not dead, and because it survives there is some genuine happiness in the world today."\(^{193}\)

Reston finds it alarming that adherence to these principles becomes increasingly difficult as men's "tangential desires and ingenuities have created a world that gives any simple thing the look of obsolescence--as though there were something inherently foolish in what is simple or natural..."\(^{194}\) "Still," Reston says, "the simple and natural things are not destroyed, and... symbols and ideals still have more influence than most men admit."\(^{195}\) Likewise the American of past decades was optimistic,\(^{196}\) however, Reston recognizes that presently there is a "mood of uneasiness, if not anxiety,"\(^{197}\) a feeling of "helplessness,"\(^{198}\) and a sense of "loneliness"\(^{199}\) among many. Nicholas Berdyaeff's description of this state is often cited by Reston:

\(^{193}\) *New York Times*, December 25, 1960, p. 6E.


\(^{195}\) Ibid.

\(^{196}\) Reston, *op. cit.*, "The Political World Around Us."

\(^{197}\) *New York Times*, October 29, 1961, p. 8E.


There is something shaken and shattered in the soul of modern man. We are entering the realm of the unknown and unlived, joylessly. . . . We are witnessing the end of the Renaissance, and of the humanism which was its spiritual basis. . . . This is a time of spiritual decadence, of loneliness and dereliction.200

Reston attributes the feeling of helplessness as arising from a sense of being overwhelmed by the magnitude and complexity of current problems.201 "People seem to be stunned by the torrent of contradictory information. . . . It isn't that they don't have enough "facts," but that they are drowned in "facts" and soaped over with half-truths and half-lies and don't quite know who or what to believe."202

Reston admonishes speakers to counter this situation by heeding Walter Lippmann's advice.

The particular projects which we debate are not so important. The fate of the nation does not hang upon any of them. But upon the power of the people to remain united for purposes which they respect, upon their capacity to have faith in themselves and their objectives, much depends. It is not the facts of the crisis which we have to fear. They can be endured and dealt with. It is demoralization alone that is dangerous. . . . A demoralized people is one in which the individual has become isolated and is the prey of his own suspicions. He trusts nobody and nothing, not even himself. . . . He sees only confusion in himself and conspiracies in other men.203

200 New York Times, April 6, 1958, p. 8E.
202 Ibid.
According to Reston, "this is new in our national life--something very dangerous to the American character, something to be approached with sympathy and a reconciling spirit."\(^{204}\)

In this condition people are more vulnerable to deceptive tactics, and Reston holds the speaker accountable for dealing responsibly or nobly with them rather than narrowly or cleverly. For example in the 1970 congressional campaign, Reston accuses President Nixon of employing the latter technique:

\[\text{[H]e is using their anxiety for partisan gain and arguing the preposterous proposition that the moral confusions of the age are somehow a party issue, and that human frailty, human violence, human selfishness, war, crime, drugs, and smut are somehow the fault of the Democratic Party and can be removed or minimized by the election of the Republicans.}\(^{205}\)

In spite of this vulnerability of some, and the confusion on moral and political questions, Reston claims that "it is still not easy for politicians to put over their outrageous exaggerations.

Fortunately, the American people are not . . . stupid, and democratic inflammation is a self-limiting disease. They live in a world of bombastic advertising, of verbal violence and the restless optic noise of neon signs, of tall stories and advertising jingles--so in the end they are immunized and skeptical, especially about politicians.\(^{206}\)


\(^{205}\)Ibid.

\(^{206}\)New York Times, October 25, 1964, p. 10E.
You can fool them, but not for long and not everywhere. They are practical, allergic to big ideas, ... on the whole fair and sensible.\textsuperscript{207}

Also the American people are too busy occupied with earning an honest living and trying to make their kids better than themselves to speculate on the exaggerated claims of various speakers.\textsuperscript{208}

"[P]eople who have had to deal with the realities of serving parents and raising children know a great deal about the difference between the dreams and actualities of life."\textsuperscript{209} Thus Reston claims the soaring exhortations of speakers such as Barry Goldwater depicting the ideal world, in which hard work, individuality and courage would restore purpose, substitute for religion, establish personal responsibility, restore full employment and stamp out Communism and all other enemies, usually entices only the very young and the very old.\textsuperscript{210}

Notable among the redeeming attributes which Reston finds reassuring is his opinion that people "are at their best when things really get tough. They are silly in prosperity, but sensible in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[208] New York Times, October 25, 1964, p. 10E.
\item[209] Ibid.
\item[210] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
adversity. . . "211 In noting "the refusal of people to face facts until they are confronted with a crisis,"212 Reston proposes that a "crisis in the nation is a time of opportunity as well as danger."213 "It's only in moments of crisis . . . that you can talk sense to them."214 This is illustrated in his comments during the racial crisis in June of 1963:

The country has been startled by the conflict in the streets. It is now paying attention. The opportunity therefore, has come for leadership at every level--national, state and local--to break the barriers of prejudice and indifference and sweep away the intolerable injustices to the American Negro.215

This praise is tempered with caution, however, when the crisis involves a communist nation.

For this country, despite all its opulence, is still nearer in spirit to the frontier than the world supposes. . . . There is this stubborn idea in the American mind that we ought not to let people down, or permit anybody to shove us down.216

211 New York Times, November 26, 1969, p. 44.
It may not be wise in this day of atomic and hydrogen weapons, Reston warns, that American psychology "is the psychology of the frontier that believes anything is possible, abhors compromises over what it regards as its rights, hates war, but if pressed on what it regards as a moral issue, is quite capable of using every instrument in its arsenal to wage war. 217

"The human race is a pugnacious, cantankerous outfit." 218

"Old ideas and concepts die hard." 219 "It is edged along only very slowly by the cooperative effort and unremitting clash of conflicting forces." 220 This is because "people do not like change, especially the people who come to the top of institutions under the old system." 221

In spite of this, Reston still believes that Americans are a "resourceful" and "adaptable people." 222 This is evinced this century in the revolutionizing of their foreign policy to counter aggression in the constant defiance of the communist challenge. 223

218 Manuscript provided by James Reston, delivered to University of Illinois, September 24, 1967.
219 New York Times, October 11, 1959, p. 10E.
220 Manuscript of speech provided by James Reston, delivered to University of Illinois, September 24, 1967.
222 Ibid.
223 Manuscript of a speech provided by James Reston, delivered to University of Illinois, September 24, 1956.
Through distinguishing the positive and negative use of motive appeal, particularly in political campaigns, Reston establishes it as a significant part of audience analysis.

The public attitude is usually passive, but is aroused by threats to security of family, community, and country:

If you start with speeches that scare the daylights out of people before you have a clear policy and the means of carrying it out, you are asking for trouble. It is possible to be wrong about Berlin, or Laos, or even Cuba, but if you are wrong or even fuzzy about things that touch on the physical safety of one family and stir up family anxiety and family rows, brother you are dead politically.  

Reston observes that "people have a tendency to concentrate on local issues." For instance when former Governor of Virginia, J. L. Almond, threatened to close schools admitting Negroes, Reston comments:

Public indifference seems to be the rule of the day on other questions. But the public school down the street is something different, just because it is down the street. . . . Politicians . . . cannot count on the indifference of the people--particularly the women--when they talk about closing the schools.

\[225\textit{New York Times}, November 9, 1958, p. 8E.\]
\[226\textit{New York Times}, August 31, 1958, p. 8E.\]
This desire for the preservation of self, family, and community extends to country: "The will to cooperate in anything 'to keep our country free' is still as strong in America as it ever was."227

While the world may be dismayed by life in Washington, D.C., Hollywood, and Madison Avenue, Reston proposes that religious influence still exists:

There is still another America, far larger than the world imagines, where the family, the church, and the community are still the center of their social lives, and this is an aspect of America that is too often overlooked.228

In Reston's opinion man is not driven solely by self-interest, for his altruistic nature is evident in his desire to help the aged and the needy, and to achieve equality for all.229 Generosity of spirit is deep in the American tradition, and Reston notes that observations such as the following by Lyndon Johnson are effective appeals at home: "The struggle is . . . to end the violence against the human mind and body, so that the work of peace may be done and the fruits of freedom won."230 However, Reston warns, "serious doubts have arisen about applying this assumption of America to the rest of the world."231

227 New York Times, November 22, 1959, p. 10E.
228 Ibid.
229 New York Times, April 17, 1964, p. 34.
230 New York Times, February 27, 1966, p. 10E.
Additional attributes which Reston recognizes as desirable are good looks, money, power, success, love, and fame. Thus he proposes that effective campaign themes are prosperity, employment for the working man, profits for the investor, and stable prices for the consumer. People also "like peace, good news, . . . and smiling faces." "Men desire to hear good tidings and the masses listen to those who bring them."

Finally Reston notes that "people pay attention to a fight." Action, conflict, the human interest element are intriguing, and Reston observes that dullness prevails in their absence:

It [Nixon administration] is engaged in some of the most exciting conflicts in the history of the republic, but it has somehow managed to reduce them all to the level of a mathematical equation . . . . It has all the figures but very little poetry. It deals with "poverty" but never quite manages to convey a sense of pity about the poor . . . . It talks in graphs and trends and slogans, and somehow leaves out the human element and the dust and roar of life itself.

233 New York Times, April 17, 1964, p. 34.
235 New York Times, October 9, 1960, p. 10E.
Effectiveness

As previously mentioned in discussing ethical appeal, Reston's major test for an effective speech is based on results of audience response. "An effective speech is one which sends the audience away believing in the man and the themes they have seen and heard."\textsuperscript{238}

In addition to this principal criterion, further measures of merit often appear in Reston's critical assessments. These include immediate response, long-range effects upon the course of events, the farsightedness of the speaker and ability to put ideas into perspective, and stylistic excellence. For example in his appraisal of Senator Arthur Vandenberg's speech of January 10, 1945, repudiating the policy of American isolationism, Reston touches on all of these facets.

The response was sensational. The speech was acclaimed on Capitol Hill; it was praised not only in the so-called internationlist press but by papers in the Middle West that had long opposed such action. . . . Vandenberg . . . announced that 'our oceans have ceased to be moats,' called for world leadership, denounced the Russians, but produced a positive and generous policy for removing their fears and testing their faith.\textsuperscript{239}  

\textsuperscript{238} Taped interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.  

In essence Vandenberg proposed that the United States enter into a binding treaty with the Soviet Union to take military action on the continent of Europe against any future German aggression.

It was well-documented, vividly expressed, and entirely fair. . . . He had the gift of finding language to accommodate the opposition and the personal ability to persuade his isolationist comrades. . . . [I]t wasn't that his proposals were particularly new. I and many others had written about the Russian fears of future German aggression and how to moderate those fears, but nobody paid any attention. It was only when Vandenberg, the symbol of isolation, came forward with the idea that it became a major factor in American and world politics. . . .

As a result of the response to the speech, Reston projects that Vandenberg's career was drastically changed and he emerged as a principal molder of the nation's foreign policy. Reston concludes that personality and accident then, often play a larger role in world affairs than is generally realized.

Undoubtedly Reston feels that many speeches have produced such momentous effect upon history: "Great events often have modest beginnings. . . . The Marshall Plan started with a speech by Dean Acheson in Cleveland, Mississippi."
Finally insight into Reston's basis for effectiveness is evident in his choice of Winston Churchill as the greatest orator of the twentieth century.

[H]e foresaw and articulated the mission of the English-speaking people more eloquently than anybody else. He remains a symbol of the triumphant human spirit, . . . and in the end it will probably be his spirit, his gift of language, his courage, and his joyousness that will endure.  

Speech Education

Believing that speech is an art which can be taught, Reston stresses the value of formal training.

If I had anything to do with mandatory classes in school, . . . I would insist that no senior go out of high school without a course in simple reporting and simple public speaking. . . . I think that I could convince any group of children that there are two things that are absolutely fundamental when they leave school--no matter what work they're going into--whether they're going into a garage to fix a car or going into medicine, or law, or to higher education--and that is simply to learn the arts of accurate observation and accurate speech because . . . he ought to be able to explain himself so that a man can understand. The higher up the ladder he goes and the educational scale of course the more important that is.  

Reston regards the decline of debate in schools and colleges as a great tragedy because it contributed to the weakening of a great heritage of public speech and of the integrity of argument.  

244 Taped interview with James Reston, June 22, 1970.
245 Ibid.
Because in the old debating classes and competitions you did have to give form and substance to speech, and you had to deal with the other man's arguments. One of the great problems of debate in the Congress of the United States today is that a series of adversary positions are put up by both sides and the poor public is left in the middle merely with two arguments but the two arguments never meet. 246

The application of a man's speech education goes beyond formal schooling:

It is not enough merely to listen to lectures— the fastest-growing spectator sport in America today. The need is for widespread study (1) of the facts in a given situation . . . and (2) for analysis of alternative sources of action, as if each individual had to decide what was best for the nation himself. 247

Conclusion

James Reston's theory of speech is based on the belief that rhetoric functions as both a political and ethical instrument. Recognizing that speech is the practical means by which politicians seek to realize their chief end of securing the endorsement of the people and that, as practical men, they often rely on expediency in employing all available means of persuasion to achieve their goals, he imposes restraints upon their use of the power of public address.

246 Ibid.

Reston expects a speaker to possess a guiding ethic or set of principles, and to direct his judgment in perceiving the difference between right and wrong, in presenting truth rather than error, in avoiding deception through promises that cannot be fulfilled and through exaggerated emotional appeal, and in conducting his behavior by appeal to moral standards. This expectation presupposes that a speaker is knowledgeable of national and international issues and that he demonstrates competence in formulating ideas to promote the common cause.

These restraints are essential according to Reston, if men are to continue to have the rights guaranteed by a democracy. Indeed a fervent faith in democracy and concern for its preservation underlies the necessity for responsibility which he deems inherent in free expression.

Possession of this sense of responsibility is not only expected of political speakers, but of every citizen as well. To promote success in meeting the obligation thrust upon a citizen immersed in the complexity of modern society, Reston advocates training in public speaking to facilitate his ability to transmit ideas clearly, to analyze alternative arguments, and to interpret facts in a given situation. His consideration of human behavior reflects a firm belief that in spite of
numerous weaknesses, the common people are competent enough to exercise the power invested in them by the constitution to balance the political operation of government.

This dual responsibility of speaker and citizenry to employ oratory to preserve democracy and enhance the quality of life influences both Reston's conception of the speech tenets and standards for effectiveness.

This is especially apparent in Reston's justification for designating ethical appeal as the predominant mode of proof. Trust in the speaker is essential because of the present crisis of belief in the leadership and institutions of the United States and because those persons in high governmental positions must make decisions on the basis of information not available to the people. Thus Reston especially stresses the importance of character. Indeed, his chief concern with speech preparation and delivery is to reveal this attribute. In addition he recognizes the impact of personality, intelligence, prestige, and the necessity and means of securing good will.

After measuring credibility in applying standards for effectiveness, Reston evaluates a speaker's farsightedness and ability to put ideas into perspective, along with the long-range effects upon the course of events. A thorough examination of logical appeal,
including the merit of ideas, sound reasoning, and validity of support, precedes this judgment. He also establishes the relevance of the stream of events in which the speech occurred.

The audience, described by Reston as having final judgment, is central to this concept of speech and effectiveness. Recognizing that adaptation is essential in securing the desired response, Reston's perceptive remarks on human nature and motive appeals underscore people's resourcefulness, especially in times of crisis, their altruistic tendencies, and desire to believe, even though conceding that indifference, vulnerability to prejudice, and self-interest often exist.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSES OF PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHES

In James Reston's concept of journalism, public speaking, and theory of speech, the office of the Presidency is a focal point of interest. This chapter evaluates his criticism of the presidential addresses of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson.

With the exception of the State of the Union Addresses, the number of speeches of each President which Reston considers is proportionately about equal. The reader is reminded that during most of Eisenhower's tenure, Reston wrote only one column a week. In 1960 when he began writing three columns a week, the number of speeches analyzed increased correspondingly.

Reston's selection of speeches for consideration reflects his intention as a journalist to provide the public with information imperative in the formulation of their judgment on the conduct of public affairs, as well as his expectations of the responsibilities which a President must fulfill in order to be effective.

Dwight Eisenhower

Introduction. Reston never pronounced final judgment of the speaking effectiveness of Eisenhower as he later did about Presidents
Kennedy and Johnson. However, his analyses of Eisenhower's speeches reflect a gradual disappointment with the Chief Executive's ideas, lack of imagination, and initiative in coping with the fierce transition of the time.

In a special analysis of Eisenhower's technique as a politician and leader written near the end of Eisenhower's first term, Reston provides the basis for his gradual shift of opinion. Applying his often quoted criterion of measurement by result, he concedes that Eisenhower achieved his publicly announced main objectives.

[He has regained control of the Government for the liberal wing of the Republican party. He has used his power to defend the principle of collective security and has conserved what he and the Republican liberals regard as the best parts of the New and Fair Deals. On this Washington is generally agreed.]

Reston is uncritical as he notes that Eisenhower's "public themes have changed very little. . . . War and depression were his great enemies then and these are still his principal topics of public conversation today." However, in his ensuing discussion of how Eisenhower's personality continues to dominate the scene, Reston expresses concern that a "personable hero" and an "attractive mediator," who was desirable "after a generation of contention, of

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2 Ibid.
war, of depression, of acrimonious divisions of the nation . . . may not be enough for four more years of increasingly rapid change.\textsuperscript{3} This concern, manifest in negative reprisals particularly during Eisenhower's second term, is presented later in this chapter under the heading of logical appeal.

The change in Reston's attitude may account for his increased number of references to Eisenhower's speeches during the second administration. Of Reston's twenty-nine speech analyses of Eisenhower, eleven occur during the first term. Four of the eleven are State of the Union Addresses, five concern Eisenhower's speaking in general rather than focusing specifically on a single address, and the remaining two refer to speeches delivered to the American Bar Association and at the Illinois State Fair.

The eighteen speeches referred to by Reston during the second administration include four State of the Union Addresses, seven speeches on foreign policy, four of which refer to the Middle East crises, five addresses to predominantly partisan audiences, and two speeches to the Foreign Service Institute and Economic Mobilization Conference.

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.
In criticism of these speeches, Reston underscores the relevance and import of ethical appeal. He usually emphasizes logical appeal, the situation, audience attitude and response. Speech preparation receives occasional reference, whereas, the remaining speech tenets receive nominal mention.

**Ethical Appeal.** In evaluating Eisenhower's effectiveness as a speaker, Reston stresses the overwhelming superiority of the influence of ethical appeal over the remaining canons of rhetoric. According to Reston the causes lie in the people, the times, and, of course, the man himself: "The more complicated the political issues become, the more the electorate seems to turn to individuals who have the gift of conveying a sense of personal integrity."4 Reston then observes that this is precisely the gift which carried Eisenhower through all the political pitfalls of the U. S. Army, the united command of the alliance during the war, the leadership of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, and the Presidency.5

"A remarkable psychological situation" is how Reston describes the soaring height of the regard for the President:

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4*New York Times*, November 8, 1953, p. 8E.

5Ibid.
The popularity of President Eisenhower has got beyond the bounds of reasonable calculation and will have to be put down as a national phenomén.

Whatever the President does now is automatically wonderful. If he goes to Geneva and cries peace, even when there is no peace, he is proclaimed throughout the world. If he counters the optimism of Geneva six weeks later with stern warnings to the Communists nobody asks why he didn't think of that before but hails him as a scourge of the appeasers.\(^6\)

In analyzing Eisenhower's technique after four years in office, Reston points out that the Chief Executive provided the key to his popularity the first day he came home on June 1, 1952:

He did not pretend then to know the answers to many of the great problems facing the nation. He frankly conceded his weaknesses on policy. But what he lacked in the way of policy, he more than contributed in terms of personality and this personality is still carrying the day. . . . Eisenhower just goes along doing what comes naturally to him and succeeds politically, regardless of whether he is consistent or whether he operates in accordance with a carefully thought out plan.\(^7\)

Apparently Reston feels that this dominant ethical appeal prevailed, for in pondering its influence following Eisenhower's address to forty thousand Republicans in Chicago just prior to an eight day speaking trip through the Middle West and West in behalf of Richard Nixon in 1960, he predicts that the President's ethos "is bound to produce a considerable emotional impact":

\(^6\)New York Times, September 11, 1955, p. 8E.

Next Tuesday he will be older than any man ever to serve as President of the United States. . . . In human terms, it is a glorious story. He has stayed the course. He has survived three serious illnesses. He has endured the shafts and arrows of history with dignity and even good cheer. And despite many ups and downs, he goes into the last four months of his second administration with as much popularity as any President ever enjoyed so near the end of his term. 8

Eisenhower not only commanded support, according to Reston, but affection as well. "There is something very personal about his following," and Reston attributes much of it to what he assesses as the President's greatest strength: "He can tune in on the deepest instincts of the American people. He approaches problems in moral terms. . . ." 9

He believes that good morals are good politics. The Eisenhower view is that, after twenty years of class bickering at home and a generation of war and uncertainty abroad, the deepest longing of the American People is for unity and a sense of security. 10

Eisenhower naturally and spontaneously reverts to the simple and attractive faith that good policies and good morals are the best politics, Reston claims, following one of the President's news conferences:


He believed, he said, in the common sense of the American people, even when they were licking the Republicans. He believed the Government not only had to inform them as to the basic facts -- some of them rather stark and disagreeable facts -- but that the Government had to devise and enact a program that the mass of the American people would say was a good one. Finally, he observed, he didn't know any other way to win votes or to deserve votes.

It is impossible to watch the President developing this theme and doubt that he believes it with all his heart, or to question his intentions.  

For example, while covering Eisenhower's speech in Springfield, Illinois, in 1954, Reston underscores the importance of the Chief Executive's ascertaining and stressing not what Washington thinks but what the people think. Reston gathers that most people do not sympathize with the bickering and pessimism of Washington, but prefer talk of happiness:

The President did, and this is clearly part of the reason for his popularity in this part of the country. . . . When the President talked about ending the war in Korea and maintaining prosperity . . . he had their attention and their enthusiasm.  

On the international level Reston stresses this same aptitude for adaptation. "A masterful stroke," is his estimate of the President's speech before the United Nations in 1960 when Eisenhower proposed

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11 *New York Times*, November 8, 1953, p. 8E.

that the ideals and national interests of the United States are closer to the ideas and interests of the small nations than are the national interests of the Communists. In expanding on the estimate, Reston focuses on Eisenhower's successful motive appeal in adapting to the small nations:

The small nations look to the U. N. for their security: The President went further today in offering to use American power through the U. N. than any other President in the history of this organization.

The small nations want aid from the rich and powerful nations without national intervention: he offered aid without intervention and proposed that the other big states do the same.

The small nations want more military power behind the U. N.: The President not only offered it on behalf of the United States but suggested that U. S. funds could be used to help defray the expenses of national forces held in readiness for U. N. use.

Reston unquestionably esteems this proficiency and the natural endowments responsible for Eisenhower's extraordinary ethical appeal:

He is . . . an honest man who has proved that simple goodness is still a great force in national and world politics.

In a city and a world that have lately been rewarding men for their bad qualities rather than their good qualities--for slickness rather than genuineness, for glibness rather than sincerity, for appearance rather than for substance and character--this just happens to be about the most important contribution a public man can make.

To puff him up into a genius, . . . blurs his true quality. . . .

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14 Ibid.
This is the realization that the American system of government will work under the leadership of a man who is faithful to the ordinary decencies and durable principles of American life and that the people will instinctively prefer such a man to more brilliant and profound competition.

The success of his simple honesty is startling, and overwhelms numerous other defects.15

Logical Appeal. In his criticism Reston delves more thoroughly into this canon than any other. In addition to delineating the theme and main ideas of the various speeches, he also assesses their merit. He bases his evaluations on depth and farsightedness of ideas, ability to project ideas and educate the public, creativity and relevance in planning, along with initiative to follow through and implement policy, and the validity of reasoning and evidence.

On the informative level Reston painstakingly presents the theme and main ideas as the following depiction of the Sixth State of the Union address illustrates.

. . . General Eisenhower called for a balanced program of military strength, and foreign economic aid and trade. "There are two tasks confronting us," he said, "The first is to insure our safety through strength. But we could make no more tragic mistake than merely to concentrate on military strength. For if we did only this, the future would hold nothing for the world but an age of terror."

This was his central theme and he combined it with three appeals:

15 New York Times, January 22, 1956, p. 12E.
To Congress: To provide more long-range missiles, more missile-armed submarines and cruisers and more understanding of the need for foreign aid and trade policies.

To the Soviet Union: To reopen the search for disarmament and to join with the United States in an effort to stamp out disease and turn the skills of science to peaceful pursuits.

To the officials and officers of the Department of Defense: To stop their rivalries and help him produce "unified direction" in the Pentagon. 16

During the first administration Reston's critical evaluations of Eisenhower's ideas and objectives are prevalently positive, although tempered with queries into validity. Since these queries are usually presented in conjunction with favorable effects of previous speeches of achievements, their derogatory influence is somewhat minimized. For instance, in rendering the third State of the Union address more "prudent" than the first, Reston's comparison, while entailing endorsement of Eisenhower's theme and acknowledgment of achievements, also refutes the inadequacy and feasibility of proposed policy.

[Eisenhower's first] . . . State of the Union message reflected the views of a naturally optimistic man, hopeful that he could not only contain the Communists, but liberate the satellites. It echoed the bitter 1952 Presidential campaign in which the economics and loyalty of Democratic office holders were widely questioned. And it held out hopes of "winning" the "cold war," balancing the budget, and unleashing Chiang Kaishek to attack the China Mainland.

The administration's attempts to implement this promise led it into increasing difficulties. It had promised to do more than its predecessors with less money, it implied that it was going to "roll back" the Communist tide while at the same time it was cutting the military budget, reducing the Army, and "detaching" its garrisons overseas. And the inner contradictions of these promises compounded its troubles. 17

Reston observes that two years later Eisenhower is more "modest" in his claims:

. . . [T]he slogans of the past were absent: no promise of "liberation," no talk of "massive retaliation," no reference to "winning the cold war," no partisan recriminations, and only the fleeting reference to his dream of a balanced budget. 18

In spite of this, Reston emphasizes that the Eisenhower administration can make certain claims for its first two years:

. . . [I]t has, nevertheless, maintained and extended the alliance, greatly improved the situation from Trieste to Teheran, achieved its main objective of preventing the big war, and diverted the Communist energies from open aggression to a vast war of subversion all over the world. 19

Reston then proceeds by agreeing with Eisenhower's theme in the third State of the Union but disputing the feasibility of his proposed policy by pointing out "that there is still an element of contradiction. . . .


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.
[The President talked about the "cold war" in religious terms. The issue, he said, was no less than "the true nature of men."]

It is, therefore, he added, "a struggle which goes to the roots of the human spirit, and its shadow falls across the long sweep of man's destiny. This prize, so precious, so fraught with ultimate meaning, is the true object of the contending forces in the world."

Yet the President, seeking so fundamental a goal, proposed cutting the Army, and held out the hope that we could wage such a war effectively without the loss of life or prosperity (and maybe even get a tax cut next year).

Since the armistice in Korea, the Administration has struck a better balance between military defense and economic defense... Nevertheless, neither Washington nor London has found the answer to the "proxy war" waged by the Communist satellites or the underground war which is gradually engulfing Southern Vietnam. There is agreement that policy should rest in that middle area between intervention and massive appeasement, but nobody has yet found the solid ground between the two points. 20

However, toward the end of the first administration and extensively during the second, Reston no longer mitigates negative indictments as he increasingly criticizes the lack of depth and vision of Eisenhower's ideas and his lack of initiative in conveying them to the public: "This is the challenge of 1955: to give to the nation not only a program to deal with the war of subversion... but to give it a philosophy and a sense of perspective against which it can test its legislation and its progress." 21 Three years later Reston is still projecting a similar plea:

20Ibid., p. 61.

It is a long time since Eisenhower . . . has come forward with any large Churchillian concept of future policy, or even with any clear definition of the scope and nature of the deeper problems of the non-communist world.  

Alarmed "that the United States is marking time in a period of great change and opportunity," Reston feels that the President is responsible for changing the reluctant attitude toward the new cold war because the President has the facts.  

And having the facts . . . [he] has the primary obligation for educating the Congress and the country on the implications of the new developments in the world-wide struggle.  

Congress cannot be expected to initiate policy in this field, according to Reston, and it looks inevitably to the Chief Executive for leadership in foreign policy. He maintains that their tendency is to hold back, to do merely what was done before, unless the President makes an overwhelming case for change.  

Reston expresses surprise that Eisenhower received as much money for the cold-war programs during his first administration as he did without making a case convincing to the legislators:

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22 *New York Times*, April 27, 1958, p. 8E.

23 *New York Times*, July 1, 1956, p. 8E.

24 *New York Times*, July 22, 1956, p. 8E.

25 Ibid.
If you spend time among the Senators and Representatives . . . in a surprising number of cases the members . . . will tell you that they went along merely because they were asked, or because they were doubtful, but not because they were convinced. 26

In addition to foreign policy, Reston also urges that:

The need to use the Presidency as an educational forum on such widely misunderstood questions as . . . the school segregation decision of the Supreme Court, and the sorely needed education bill is more urgent than ever before. 27

When Eisenhower does begin to re-evaluate past assumptions, particularly regarding the relationship of the United States and the Allies, Reston praises the refreshing trend:

It is now recognized that some policies, good in their day, have run their course and must be replaced and that others must be altered. Consequently what was sadly lacking a year ago is now present: there is some ferment of new ideas at last, and this is at least the beginning of a new spirit, if not of a new policy. 28

As the second term progresses, Reston becomes increasingly critical of Eisenhower's creativity in planning and implementing the proposed programs of his speeches. For example in 1957 in the wake of the launching of Soviet earth satellites, Reston criticizes Eisenhower's defensive tactics of substituting motion for thought when he commences a speaking campaign to appease the public. Following a

26 Ibid.

27 New York Times, April 15, 1956, p. 8E.

28 New York Times, December 23, 1956, p. 6E.
speech by the chief executive in Oklahoma City, Reston proposes that Eisenhower is in trouble not because of a lack of motion and appearance of leadership but because of a lack of "vision," "imagination," and "drive" to adjust policies to the scientific, political, and social revolution of our time.\(^2\) This same indictment is prevalent in his analysis of the State of the Union addresses of the second term. Just prior to the delivery of the address in 1959, for instance, Reston accuses Eisenhower of "dwelling on narrow themes," and, following the address, exclaims that the question now is: "who has the energy and political skill to transform dreams into plans and plans into laws. Speeches and committees do not change the State of the Union."\(^3\) Six weeks later Reston condemns Eisenhower's lack of initiative in implementing the proposed policy of this same speech:

What is now perfectly clear is that the personal qualities that win elections most easily are not necessarily the qualities essential to the effective conduct of the Presidency in the last half of the twentieth century. . . .

Personal popularity . . . is not the same as Presidential leadership. What the Administration lacks . . . is not personal charm -- it is loaded with it -- but vitality and political skill at the center. It is not that there are no ideas in this Administration, but they are not rising to the top -- there is little exchange

\(^2\)New York Times, December 8, 1957, p. 10E.

\(^3\)New York Times, January 11, 1959, p. 10E.
of ideas, for example, between the President and his younger aids. . . . and there is a shortage of executive energy and political skill in putting over those ideas that do come to the top.

Nobody here doubts the President's sincerity on the inflation issue -- he is almost obsessed with its danger to the country -- nor does anybody question his interest in the need for expanding the national economy. But he has not yet articulated it effectively to the country, though he tried, and he has not yet appointed the committee to study national goals announced with such conviction six weeks ago. 31

Again five months later Reston accuses Eisenhower for this same failure:

Earlier in the year he announced that he was going to appoint a committee that would report to him before he retired on the long-term goals of American society. Incidentally that was six months ago, and he hasn't appointed the committee yet. 32

In conjunction with choice of ideas and implementation of policy, Reston consistently criticizes Eisenhower's reasoning and evidence when he considers it inept. For example, in a speech on the danger of war in the Far East in 1958, Reston accuses Eisenhower of over-simplification in his central hypothetical syllogism, of dubious analogies, and of relying on guilt by association:

Mr. Eisenhower reduced the debate to a very simple and tidy proposition.


32 New York Times, June 14, 1959, p. 10E.
This was that if you were in favor of fighting Communist China to keep Quemoy and Matsu out of Communist hands, you were for peace, freedom, justice and world order. But if you were not, you were an appeaser. He talked in a scornful manner about "misguided persons" who have said that Quemoy was nothing to get excited about, and added that they said the same thing about South Korea, Vietnam, and Lebanon.

He used all the familiar inflammatory words and symbols of the pre-war foreign policy debate: "appeasement," "Munich," "timidity" in the face of "powerful despots," etc., and suggested that failure to defend Quemoy and Matsu was equivalent to the failure to oppose Hitler in the Rhineland, Austria and Czechoslovakia. Maybe this is good history and fair tactics but a lot of people here honestly doubt it.  

Reston frequently designates casualty as a major fallacy in Eisenhower's speeches dealing with Communist threats of intervention. This is apparent in his critique of Eisenhower's appeal before a joint session of Congress for support of a new economic-military commitment to oppose Communist armed aggression in the Middle East in January, 1957.

More important, the President's appeal does not deal with the root causes of the problem, for the Middle East crisis is merely one more effect of the collapse of British and French power in the world, and this Administration, . . . has not faced up, even now, to that transcendent development. Both the Democrats and the Republicans have underestimated this decline for the last ten years -- it is perhaps the most serious miscalculation of American foreign policy since the war.

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33 New York Times, September 14, 1958, p. 10E.
The question, therefore, is whether the new world is going to continue to assume the responsibilities of the old, whether the Government in Washington, which is trying desperately to hold off its overseas expenses, is prepared to assume new costs with every crisis; in short, whether Washington is going to deal with these questions piecemeal at the point of danger, or to get to the heart of the crisis, which lies not in the Middle East but in the divisions and weaknesses of the Atlantic Community, and particularly in the failure of the British to replace their old system with the political and economic unity of Western Europe.34

Since Reston believes that the President's use of questionable facts undermines confidence in United States' leadership in the world, he emphasizes such occurrences as in the following speech on the same crisis in the Middle East a month later:

. . . [T]his speech [February 22, 1957] contained several things that have added to the sense of uneasiness about the conduct of American foreign policy. The President implied that it was no argument to say that the U. N. should not put pressure on Israel since it did not put pressure on the Russians in Hungary. But last November he proclaimed after the invasion of Egypt: "We cannot subscribe to one law for the weak; another for the strong... There can be only one law or there will be no peace."

Also, the speech not only contained a factual error suggesting that Ben-Gurion had broken his word to Mr. Eisenhower, but put the President in the position of inciting the U. N. to put economic pressure on Israel before the possibility of negotiating a compromise had been exhausted. . . .

34 New York Times, January 6, 1957, p. 10E.

35 New York Times, February 24, 1957, p. 8E.
Along with presenting Eisenhower's themes and ideas to his readers, Reston invokes judgment not only upon the choice of ideas but upon the validity of the line of reasoning and material content as well. In the process he challenges Eisenhower's capacity for formulating ideas encompassing the major pressing problems of the time as well as his capacity to incorporate proposed policy into functional existence.

**Situation.** Reston usually enriches this presentation of subject matter and critical interpretation of logical appeal of Eisenhower's speeches by describing the international and national political climate in which the speeches occur. The exceptions are speeches delivered away from Washington to special interest audiences, particularly G.O.P. gatherings. Queries occurring at the conclusion of these descriptions indicate Reston's belief in the relevance of such information to speech preparation and response. For example just prior to the presentation of a State of the Union address, Reston usually depicts the situation, as he does for December, 1956. He proclaims that the basis for hope for peace has improved by contrasting the present friendly overtures of Prime Minister Nehru toward the United States against the triumphant return by Premier Bulganin from India and elsewhere in Asia the previous year. He proposes that the United States has greatly increased its influence in
Asia and in the Middle East in the last few months and believes the Hungarian revolt demonstrates "that a decade of absolute Soviet control of the satellites has not killed man's love of freedom and . . . that even the worst of Communist tactics cannot force obedience on proud people is clearly the most important development of the year." Consequently, he adds, Washington is no longer assuming that Eastern Europe was lost to the Communist empire and that military power and occupation in Europe were the only answers in that divided continent.

Despite the differences within the Atlantic alliance, Reston admonishes that the atmosphere is better because Washington is no longer assuming that its allies will follow its lead regardless of the effect on allied national interest. According to Reston this has resulted in the much needed reevaluation of past assumptions. He closes the description by focusing on its significance: "Thus the main question is what the President will do with the new opportunities and atmosphere. . . ." Against such a background the content of the forthcoming State of the Union message is more meaningful.

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36 New York Times, December 23, 1956, p. 6E.
37 Ibid.
Audience. A consideration of the audience's attitude and the inclusion of the audience's response in Reston's analyses manifests in practice, the central position of the audience reflected in his theory of speech. The evaluations of two representative speeches, the 1954 State of the Union Address and a foreign policy speech on the Middle East, exemplify his regard for these tenets. In referring to the former speech, Reston states:

The main opposition to President Eisenhower . . . lies with the conservative Republicans who tried to beat him in the Republican Convention of 1952.

He is, of course, going to have trouble from both wings of both parties, mainly because he did not limit his requests but laid out a detailed program which no Congress could hope to get through in an election year. The primary opposition, outside of farm and defense appropriations, however, is expected to develop on the Republican right.

The President's program has gone a long way to maintain the continuity of the New Deal programs, both at home and abroad. It is a conservative modification of most of those programs, and as such will not satisfy the extreme New and Fair Dealers, but the extreme New and Fair Dealers are not in charge of the Democratic party in Congress. . . .

. . . [M]any of the powerful Republicans in this Congress [are] more conservative than President Eisenhower. This is particularly true of the Republican committee chairmen in the House of Representatives. . . . And most of them think the program is too New Dealish at home and too devoted to Allied collaboration abroad. 38

When Eisenhower delivers a speech to Congress, Reston regularly relates the responses of the various segments of that body

38 New York Times, January 10, 1954, p. 8E.
as well as those of foreign leaders of nations referred to in the speech.

In relating such responses, for instance, to a speech on the Middle East, Reston discusses the hostile reaction of certain Democrats to portions of the address:

A movement developed within the Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees of the Senate over the weekend to place two limitations on the Administration's new military and economic plan for the Middle East.

The first of the restrictions proposed . . . would put a two-year, or at most a four-year, limit on the President's authority to use United States troops against any Communist aggressor in the Middle East.

The second would restrict the President's authority to spend Middle East foreign aid appropriations by insisting that Congress pass on major economic aid projects in that area. 39

After identifying various senators backing these proposals, Reston goes on to show that "the Democrats are in a somewhat waspish mood, about the Administration's plan." 40

He usually underscores proposals receiving general endorsement: "There is no evidence on Capitol Hill of any attempt to refuse to go along with a proclamation that would promise United States military support to any Middle Eastern Government asking for help 'against overt armed aggression' by any state 'controlled by


40 Ibid.
international communism. Likewise he also identifies portions which both parties find questionable:

Senators and Representatives on both sides of the aisle are also showing considerable interest in one section . . . that has escaped much analysis. This is the part that seems to foreshadow a larger flow of United States arms into the Middle East regardless of whether there is any actual Communist aggression in that part of the world. 42

In this particular speech, Israel stood to be a benefactor, and Reston notes that "Israeli officials in Washington are clearly pleased with the President's new plan." 43

Aside from establishing the prominence of the audience in the speech act, Reston sometimes uses the significance of audience response as a stepping stone to delve into Eisenhower's motivation. A case in point is the response of Congress to the 1959 State of the Union address described by Reston as "attentive but relatively undemonstrative." 44 The reaction of the Democrats, he adds, "was that this was just another speech, signifying nothing particularly

41 Ibid., p. 10.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
new. "Congress on the whole took his message as honest
yearning, but turned away to other things." Reston then empha-
sizes that "this may be a mistake."

The President has gone through a rough period in the
last few months. . . . He has been fighting sharp,
limited, political battles, but his intimates report that
this is now changing: that he is beginning to think in
larger terms of the future instead of the past; that he
now recognizes that only by the aggressive use of
Presidential power can he keep from being over-
whelmed by a Democratic controlled Congress; and
that he is now talking not only of exercising more
leadership at home but of going to Europe in the spring
and perhaps even to India later in the year.

If this is true, the possibilities in the next year of
a revitalized domestic and foreign policy may be better
than they have been for some time.

Recognizing that speech is a response-getting activity, Reston
seeks to establish a casual relation between Eisenhower's words and
the attitudes and reactions of the audience. Even though he is occupied
primarily with presenting the immediate influence, Reston's concern
evines regard for speech as an instrument of social progress.

**Speech Preparation.** In addition to speaker motivation, Reston
enhances insight into the range of the speech process even further by

45 Ibid.

46 *New York Times*, January 11, 1959, p. 10E.

47 Ibid.
his concern with speech preparation. He particularly focuses on this toward the end of the first administration and during the first two years of the second when he regrettably notes "that the fireside chat, used with such political effect by Roosevelt, is no longer a regular occasion, though the need now to use the Presidency as an educational forum ... is more urgent than ever before."

Reston attributes the decline to Eisenhower's inability in five years "to put together an effective speech-writing team in the White House." This failure, according to Reston, was also a contributing factor in Eisenhower's decision to abandon plans devised in 1956 to do more speaking to the world in an attempt to hold the free world coalition together and keep neutrals out of the Communist camp.

In discussing the subject Reston not only indicates his belief that the President is entitled to all the help he can get in the increasingly arduous job of policy making and execution, but attempts to show that such help is essential. For example when Arthur Larson, Eisenhower's literary ghost, resigned, Reston uses the departure

48 New York Times, April 15, 1956, p. 8E.
49 New York Times, December 1, 1957, p. 8E.
50 New York Times, April 15, 1956, p. 8E.
51 New York Times, December 1, 1957, p. 8E.
to underscore the assistance which such intellectuals provide
Eisenhower, particularly in the area of clarifying and projecting
policy:

It may seem odd to make this point [Larson's resignation]
during a week when . . . President Eisenhower . . .
delivered one of the best speeches of his career. . . .
Ironically, this performance merely emphasizes the point.
For the ideas in this speech . . . were very largely
the product of Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold's
fertile mind, and the speech was put together at the last
moment partly by summoning C. D. Jackson from Time,
Inc. to do the writing. 52

Mr. Larson's departure is only one incident in many, Reston continues,
as he makes a final observation on the crucial role played by this in-
tellectual and his fellows:

The atmosphere is no longer congenial to intellectual
speculation and planning here as it used to be, so the
intellectuals are going away. And they are departing
before the new directions in foreign policy are defined
and before the Administration has made clear just what
Modern Republicanism is. 53

Conclusion. In his consideration of the speaking of Eisen-
hower, Reston acclaims the character and personality of the
President as he designates these two attributes to be the most notable
of the speech tenets in exerting a positive influence. Unerring

52 New York Times, August 17, 1958, p. 8E.

53 Ibid.
admiration for Eisenhower's display of integrity, faith, optimism, and sincerity, however, does not prevent Reston from carefully scrutinizing how well the chief spokesman discharges his responsibility in originating, articulating, and implementing policy vital to the preservation and advancement of the nation.

This inquiry, in which Reston concentrates on testing the integrity of Eisenhower's ideas, reveals disappointment with their depth, scope, and relevance as well as disenchantment with the President's initiative to instigate action imperative in executing his projected policy. By exploring the speech situation, composition and response of the audience, and speech preparation, Reston manifests understanding that a speech is a totality of multiple interrelated aspects.

**John F. Kennedy**

**Introduction.** The closing statements of Reston's analysis of President John F. Kennedy's first State of the Union address indicate that his judgment of Kennedy's effectiveness depends on results: "He is convinced that basic changes are essential and now all he has to do is to convince the country that he is right."\(^{54}\) In Reston's estimation, Kennedy failed in this respect, for in the final

\(^{54}\) *New York Times*, November 15, 1963, p. 34.
editorial referring to Kennedy a week before his death, Reston concludes: "He is admired, but he has not made the people feel as he feels or lifted them beyond their private purposes to see the larger public purposes he has in mind."\textsuperscript{55} Intermittently between these observations, Reston's assessments of twenty-one speeches delivered by Kennedy aid in qualifying this final indictment.

The speeches which Reston considers may be grouped into four categories. The State of the Union addresses compose the first group. Secondly, are those speeches dealing with the national defense, including speeches on the crises over Laos, Cuba, and Berlin as well as two on nuclear testing. The third group consists of speeches seeking implementation of policy. These include two nationally televised speeches, an economic report to the nation in 1962 and an extemporaneous review of his first two years, and speeches delivered at the Universities of North Carolina, Washington, California, and Yale. Finally, there are speeches delivered to Democratic rallies and fund raising affairs in Chicago, New Orleans, Atlanta, Seattle, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles.

\textsuperscript{55}Ibid.
State of the Union Addresses. The analyses of Kennedy's State of the Union addresses differ from those of Presidents Eisenhower and Johnson in the conscientious effort which Reston makes to compare the three addresses. Because the effect is a sense of continuity and follow-through which Reston usually does not achieve, his consideration of the three addresses is treated separately from Kennedy's remaining speeches. In examining the speeches, Reston focuses on the merit of ideas, capacity to conceive and execute policy, effect of Kennedy's attitude, the situation, audience attitude and response, and Kennedy's efforts at adaptation.

On an informative level, Reston conveys the essence of the content of these addresses by either repeating themes and main points or citing excerpts reflecting them. Referring to the first address, Reston says:

President Kennedy . . . called for great new exertions to reverse what he called the present "unfavorable tide" in the "cold war."

He not only announced new steps to increase the nation's missile, nuclear submarine, and limited-war airlift capacity, but announced new programs to promote "the ultimate freedom and welfare of the Eastern European people. . . ." [T]he address promised more defense, more aid to the underdeveloped nations, more to Latin America, more for the unemployed, more for the depressed economic areas of the nation -- all with a sound dollar, though not, he implied with a balanced budget. 56

In a similar vein Reston enumerates main points of the 1962 address. "President Kennedy asked the Eighty-seventh Congress today to give him new authority to reduce tariffs, cut personal income taxes in an economic emergency and strengthen the welfare programs of the nation. . . ." In addition to informing, this exposition serves as a basis for critical evaluations. The selection of main ideas and the attitude of the President in a State of the Union address are particularly significant, according to Reston, for "to govern is to choose, . . . and how President Kennedy chooses . . . will no doubt set the mood for the rest of the year." Values of ideas are judged primarily for farsightedness, relevance, and feasibility. These criteria are applied successively to all three addresses through comparison. While the second State of the Union address is not rated as "great" it is judged to be more "balanced" and "durable" than the first:

Without minimizing the problem overseas, President Kennedy has placed them in a different perspective and focused attention, not on the communist problem we can do little about but on the great constructive problems at home and in the rest of the free world that we can do something about.


This is not a turning away from world responsibilities, but a recognition of the fact that, in the long run, once a balance of military power is established, as it now is, the first priority lies in the development of a strong, progressive and stable America, and the second priority with the creation of a world partnership of the free. . . . President Kennedy struck a better balance this week. . . . The point . . . is . . . that the allocation of time and energy is now overweighted on the side of the cold war problems which will never be solved unless we do a better job at home and in the rest of the free world.59

In the second address, Reston concludes, Kennedy "is starting with a clearer sense of direction and priorities than he did a year ago."60

Reston agrees with Kennedy's emphasis again on the internal problems of the United States in his 1963 address, for

Most of the problems he identified in the campaign of 1960 remain. The education of our people is still lagging behind the requirements of the time. The economy is sluggish and uneven. The balance-of-payments problem remains extremely serious. The transportation of the country is a disgrace.61

Although progress has been made in almost every field, Reston concedes, the balance remains about the same because of the mounting challenge of new people and new problems.62 


progress is still not equal to the pace of history," and so Reston calls
for greater effort and stress on the details and implementation of
policy.63

The presentation of the proposals in a State of the Union ad-
dress is only the initial step toward gaining approval:

The Congress, however, is not moved by speeches alone.
It is by nature a hell-raising outfit that assumes that a
President isn't really serious about programs if he
merely defines them and doesn't fight for them. It will
listen politely to his State of the Union speech but cut his
program to pieces unless he demonstrates that this
might be a highly dangerous political procedure.64

The sequence urged by Reston is for the President to educate the
country about the political, economic, social, and scientific revo-
lutions of our time rather than concentrating on manipulating halfway
measures through a conservative Congress.65 "Unless the conse-
quences of these revolutions are dramatized by the President, the
people will leave the job to Washington, and Washington is now hell
bent to fight a scoreless tie."66 It is regrettable to Reston that

63 Ibid.


66 Ibid.
Kennedy was inclined to take "half-a-loaf" from Congress rather than go to the people. 67

Because of the broad scope of the topics and the time limit, Reston does not expect the President to delve deeply into proving his propositions:

Seldom in recent years has a President placed before Congress such a long catalogue of requests. There were so many of them, in fact, that though he spoke for just under one hour, he still did not have time to do more than say what he wanted and promise to spell out the details later. 68

However, he does occasionally question the validity of assertions which prompt immediate mixed or hostile reactions. His method, citing the passage and then identifying weaknesses, is exemplified in his analysis of the Trade Expansion Act in the 1962 address:

The bill will permit the gradual elimination of tariffs here in the United States and in the Common Market on those items in which we together supply 80 per cent of the world's trade. . . . On other goods, the bill will permit a gradual reduction of duties up to 50 per cent -- permit bargaining by major categories and provide for appropriate and tested forms of assistance to firms and employers adjusting to import competition. This passage not only raised complaints from protectionists and low-tariff advocates, but also brought charges of vagueness from both.


For example, the question was asked here, why the President chose to introduce at this point specific percentages of world trade, and how this percentage of world trade was to be calculated. Would 80 per cent of world trade, it was asked, be calculated as of the present time, or when the United States trade bill was passed or when? And would it later take into account the changing patterns in world trade when nations such as Japan increased production?

Accordingly much more will have to be disclosed before the trade debate can proceed without misunderstanding arising on both sides.69

As Kennedy presented these programs, Reston usually follows through and analyzes them in a similar manner. Because of the complexity of public issues, Reston always pleads for taking the argument out of the hands of the economists and turning it into a popular national debate: "It is important that the general public understand what the President is proposing."70 This is not the case, Reston admonishes, and the tax question in 1963 illustrates the point:

The President's budget ... totalled 1,195 pages. His economic report had 268 pages and there were ... mystifying clarifications of the whole thing by various qualified officials.

These documents on the whole are admirable, but they amount to an economic history of our times and it is a life career to get through them.71

69 Ibid.


71 Ibid.
In addition to enhancing understanding, Reston urges Kennedy to take his message to the people to alleviate the hostile response of Congress. For example, in spite of the compromise proposals of the President's education bill, Reston notes that "the reaction of Congress was so sharp and critical that it is already obvious that his main, perhaps his only hope, . . . is to revive the fireside chat and take the issue to the country."\(^{72}\)

The attitude which the President conveys in presenting his points is also instrumental in affecting the response, and Reston emphasizes this in all three addresses:

There was an odd paradox in the President's first State of the Union message. It was full of soaring rhetoric, but underneath there was a foreboding roll of drums and a vaguely melancholy of strain of doubt. . . . "Before my term has ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation organized and governed such as ours can endure. . . ."\(^{73}\)

Reston notes with pleasure Kennedy's departure from these "solemn" and at times "almost funeral" terms in the first address to a "hopeful" and "positive" attitude in the second and even an "optimistic" and "confident" approach in the third.


\(^{73}\)New York Times, January 12, 1962, p. 34.
This emphasis on the somber aspects of the world has encouraged a sense of frustration and impatience in the country, and . . . these things in turn have encouraged a belligerent and at times even warlike mood in the nation. 74

"The case for optimism is that if the President does not reflect hope, the country might despair of the endless burdens of the cold war." 75

Reston attempts to place the speeches in perspective by briefly describing the situation, as in the following depiction of conditions and attitudes in 1961.

Most men agree that the revolution in communications, the revolution in the weapons of mass destruction, and the political and social revolutions in the underdeveloped regions of the world are creating unprecedented problems for all the Western nations and especially the United States. . . .

Beyond this, we have the public statements of Khrushchev, who has been as blunt in stating his objectives as Hitler. He is directing the energies of the Communist empire toward the clearly stated goals of the Soviet State . . . .

Where the difference lies is in what these facts . . . mean for the United States. The new men who have come to Washington think it means drastic changes; they believe there must be more authority at the center, more allocation of the nation's resources for public welfare, education, and defense. . . .

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

A very large minority of the Congress and the nation—perhaps even a majority—does not believe it is true. 76

74 Ibid.


76 New York Times, February 1, 1961, p. 34.
In interpreting Kennedy's strategy in confronting this situation, Reston considers his attempts to appease hostility, his motive appeals, and, indirectly, his style.

On the main innovation of his program—the request for broad authority to cut tariffs—the President was clearly trying to minimize the opposition of the powerful protectionists bloc in Congress, but in the process raised serious doubts among the Western Europeans.

The main thrust of his argument on this subject was for lower tariffs, but at the same time he spoke in such a way as to give the impression that the new partnership with Common Market countries could be worked out without too much sacrifice.

This pleased the protectionists on Capitol Hill but not the European embassies. 77

Fear and altruistic appeals are the dominant motives which Reston identifies. He interprets Kennedy's primary use of fear in his first address as an attempt to jar Congress which "is so accustomed to the recurring crisis of the past war period that it will not vote $100,000,000,000 budgets unless it seems to be on the verge of imminent disaster." 78 The intensity, Reston feels, is excessive: "Our problems are critical. The tide is unfavorable. The news will get worse before it gets better. And while hoping and working for the best,


we should prepare ourselves now for the worst." Reston observes that Kennedy, recognizing the ill effects of this defeatist pose, switched to ideals generally cherished:

"The world was not meant to be a prison in which man awaits his execution." There was "great promise" in the hemisphere; "steady progress" in the new developing nations; the Atlantic Community has "flourished." "We in the free world are moving steadily toward unity and cooperation . . . at the very time when . . . rumbles of discord can be heard across the Iron Curtain." Reston implies that the choice and stress of these emotionally loaded words creates "the mood . . . of a certain glory in the struggle . . . ."

Finally, the immediate responses of the audience in general and to various segments of the three addresses are cited:

The President . . . was well received by the democratic majority in Congress. The Republicans, however, showed little enthusiasm for what they obviously regarded as a liberal election-year shopping list. . . . There is some feeling in the Washington diplomatic corps that he was too optimistic both about the Alliance for Progress in Latin America and the North Atlantic alliance.

80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
In his analysis of the President's State of the Union address, Reston positively assesses Kennedy's ability in discerning the essential ideas of the day and establishing their priority. However, he strongly indicts Kennedy's inability to project and execute policies capable of achieving his aims. Although Reston does not usually probe into the development of ideas by examining the reasoning and factual support, he does do this when Kennedy later submits the proposals in legislative messages to Congress.

Reston attributes part of Kennedy's ineptness in achieving his aims to his failure in countering conservative congressional opposition by educating the people on the revolutionary changes of the time and by translating the complex issues into a level of dialogue capable of being understood by the masses.

Notable comparisons of Kennedy's attitude reflect Reston's concern over the negative influence which he feels results from the early display of exorbitant pessimism.

In attempting to interpret Kennedy's strategy to alleviate hostile attitudes, Reston discusses the situation, motive appeal, language usage and the ensuing immediate audience response.

Other Presidential Speeches. Similar areas of investigation emphasized by Reston in his consideration of the State of the Union addresses also dominate his inquiry into the remaining nineteen speeches
delivered by Kennedy. These include the situation, logical proof
ethical appeal, role of chief spokesman as educator, and the audience.
In addition, Reston also discusses the locale of speeches, lack of
emotional appeal, and the accountability of the American people.

In Reston's analysis of these speeches, the situation from
which the speech evolves receives the most detailed treatment. This
thoroughness is indicated in his analysis of a speech in which Kennedy
proposed bold and expensive new measures to expand non-nuclear
military strength:

In politics as in physics, every pressure produces a
counter-pressure. . . . It is an old story, and the
President's call for more arms . . . today is merely
the last of a long series of counter-moves to match
the thrust of Communist power.

This was not inevitable. Only a few short weeks
ago, Kennedy was searching for means of reaching an
honorable accommodation with Moscow on the control
of nuclear weapons, disarmament, and the genuine
neutralization of disputed areas close to the
Communist borders. . . . 84

Reston goes on to show how Communist moves in Laos and Geneva
forced reexamination of Kennedy's policies by citing equipment, supplies,
and military technicians sent to Laos from Moscow.

Meanwhile, the Communist negotiators at the nuclear testing and Laos talks here in Geneva have made their strategy clear. . . . [He interprets this strategy as an attempt] to block, not only U.S. intervention against Communist expansion in Laos and elsewhere, but to paralyze international control of disputes in Laos, the Congo, the United Nations and wherever else the Communists have any interests at all . . . . The representatives of the U.S. here [Geneva] are now reluctantly coming to the conclusion that the communists will accept no international control of anything, since Moscow and Peiking are insisting on a veto over the administration of every international dispute.

In short, these men . . . are backing the President in his move to try to deal with the problem by larger military appropriations. 85

In conjunction with the depiction of the situation, the central thought and usually the main ideas presented by Kennedy are cited, as the reports on a speech delivered to the Democrats in Chicago in May, 1961, and an address at Yale in 1962 indicate:

[T]he President was saying in effect that the American people were unwilling to do what he thought essential to defend the nation . . . . If this is true, it is a serious indictment, . . . . [f]or it was made soon after the Russians had put the first man in space, immediately after a humiliating defeat in Cuba, and right in the middle of the Laos crisis. 86

President Kennedy went to Yale University and called on the nation to abandon the myths of the past in order to deal more effectively with the urgent realities of the present. . . . [H]e talked about three great "illusions" 85

85 Ibid.

that prevent effective action in the country today: the question of the size and shape of Government responsibility; the question of public fiscal policy, and the matter of business confidence in the Administration. . . . He has touched in this "myth" vs. "reality" theme on what is probably the central question in our political life.  

As the brief critical judgments accompanying these presentations of theme and main ideas suggest, Reston regularly evaluates Kennedy's choice of ideas, although his efforts to ascertain the validity of factual support is nominal. Whereas Reston generally approves of Kennedy's choice of ideas reflecting the pressing problems of the time in the State of the Union addresses, in the remaining speeches he often challenges the Chief Executive's judgment in analyzing the bearing of the problems on the social setting and lack of innovating ideas pertinent to solution. The following indictment, occurring early in Kennedy's administration, seems to remain throughout as the crux for Reston's dominantly negative criticism of this canon: "The trouble is that the Government has been speaking before deciding, and promising more than it has to give, and acting without a set of priorities."  

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87 New York Times, August 10, 1862, p. 18.

Reston charges that as a result there is a lack of understanding on the major question of the nation's strategy in the cold war.

The civil population cannot see its duty in Cuba or Laos or how to produce boosters that will get a man in space. They are baffled about all the legal and scientific mysteries involved in these questions, . . . The problem therefore lies with the President himself. He has deluged the people with facts. He has defined the Communist menace in general terms. He has dealt skillfully with the internal consequences of the Cuba defeat. . . . What he has not done is to make clear what he would have the people do to help the country out of its present difficulties. . . . 89

Reston accuses Kennedy of this same failure to specify and defend concretely his policy in two speeches on the subject of Berlin:

[N]ow that he has made his military position clear, the main political question still remains unanswered: Is there any possible new basis for an agreement that would preserve Western rights in Germany, guarantee the freedom of Berlin, and still enable Khruschev to say he made progress toward his objectives?90

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

President Kennedy's speech and performance at the United Nations were well received, but he did not remove the confusion here over Berlin and Germany. . . . The duty . . . now is to remove the ambiguity on both sides and avoid this critical impasse before it gets beyond reason.91

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A major criticism of the speeches dealing with domestic issues is Kennedy's failure to use his power to take the lead in initiating action toward achieving his goals. For instance in referring to the three points of the Yale speech previously cited, Reston says:

These are valid points, but President Kennedy dropped the debate there, ignoring quite a few other similar issues.

For example, is the Administration's enormously expensive military aid policy in Latin America, Asia and even Europe really based on "reality" or is it based at least partially on "myths"? Is the President applying to these programs the hard pragmatic tests of present-day military facts? . . .

On labor policy, is it really true that the President does not need new legislation to serve the national interest, or is it merely more convenient to go along with the outmoded but politically effective practices of the past? . . . He has defined the problem but has not acted on it himself. He has made a speech but has not followed it with a policy. 92

"[I]n the field of publicity, which is the battleground of Presidential politics," Reston points out that Kennedy overwhelms his opposition, but misuses the advantages afforded him by his soaring prestige. 93

He claims that Kennedy benefited politically from the increasing power of nationwide mass communication by dominating the

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political news on national television, by his royal treatment in the
mass circulation magazines, and by the addition of nationally
syndicated columns originating in Washington to local papers as they
increased their coverage of national and international news.

The opposition can continue to express its feelings on
the floor of Congress, probably in the presence of a
handful of members and spectators, but the President
has an audience of millions at his command any day
he likes. 94

However, "[i]n the last eighteen months, when the people were willing
to listen, as they always are to a new President, he has dramatized,
not the issues, but himself." 95

By mid-1963 Reston's disillusion with Kennedy's strategy
increases, and he is particularly critical of his failure to use the
Presidency as an educational forum to instill a sense of purpose and
to unite the people with common ideals. Part of this disaffection is
attributed to the chief executive's inept analysis of his audience,
choice of locale for presenting major issues, and lack of emotional
appeal.

There is something wrong with his leadership on the home
front. Something is missing in his speeches, his press
conferences, his trips and his timing. He is not communic­
ating his convictions effectively, and it is important to

94 Ibid.

95 New York Times, July 29, 1962, p. 8E.
try and analyze why. The President's appeal, somehow, is to the mind of the nation and not to its heart. He defines the problems of race, unemployment and education, but doesn't come to grips with them. He is a tactician but not a teacher. . . . President Kennedy has never seemed to believe much in appealing to the spirit of the whole nation. He thinks in blocs. He concentrates on institutions, on the leadership of associations, and on the representatives of the people rather than on the people themselves.

He is, in short, political rather than philosophical, more given to manipulation than education. But the fact remains that manipulation has not succeeded. The people like him but do not quite believe in him enough to support him openly. The Congress admires his political skill but does not follow his policies. 96

Reston illustrates this by referring to a speaking trip by Kennedy into the West in the midst of a racial crisis in June of 1963.

The main thing on his mind when he left here was the racial crisis, in which he needs the support of the people and of the Republican party. But he did not concentrate on the race issue, but mixed it up with military policy and a Democratic fund raising political rally in Los Angeles.

The result of this is not to inspire disinterested concentration on the central race question or direct the attention of the whole nation to the race problem, but to disperse an enormous amount of personal energy over local audiences and different subjects, including the raising of funds to defeat Republicans whose support he desperately needs in Congress if he is to get any Civil rights legislation at all. 97

Feeling that the decisive question on the racial issue is who is going to dominate the public discussion, Reston criticizes Kennedy for


97 Ibid.
not speaking out more to the nation and for considering new coercive legislation before exhausting persuasion:

It is in his hands to lead the moderates and dominate the debate, to visit the South and provoke open discussion of the problem, to tour the Northern cities where hypocrisy about the Negro is worse than in the South, and thus to give direction to the quick uncommitted majority of the people. 98

This same call for a national audience when presenting major policy recommendations and for an organized debate for the clarification and concrete defense of proposals occurs frequently. For instance, President Kennedy's choice of a college commencement as the place to present key economic policy draws a strong reprisal from Reston.

President Kennedy has called for a "sober, dispassionate and careful discussion" of national economic policy, but it is not taking place. . . . Under the parliamentary system of government, Kennedy's speech would not have been made at a university commencement, but at the opening of a three-or-four-day discussion in which Kennedy's five main economic questions would have been carefully dissected and analyzed. Such a debate illuminates the problems before the nation. The best brains on both sides of the aisle talk to the central point, and at the end, the Opposition's questions have to be answered by the leaders of the Administration. . . .

Our system is flexible enough to permit a version of such a debate to happen. . . . The future economy of the country, which affects everybody, is too serious to be left to commencement speeches and disorganized arguments in Congress. . . . The issues have to be laid out before the whole nation in a way to command the attention of a much wider audience. The President and the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress can do more than they have to bring this about. Beyond this, there is still a need for

more orderly discussion at the local level. The people of the country are interested. The trouble is that they have difficulty in getting clearly and concisely (1) a statement of the facts, (2) a definition of the central questions, (3) a summary of the main courses of action proposed, conservative and liberal.

As things now stand, the voter is confused by a babel of partisan arguments, misleading summaries and mystifying "clarifications." What is at issue is the test of whether a democracy can reach a consensus on highly complicated modern economic questions, and the thing will not be done until a more orderly and objective procedure is devised for getting and discussing the facts.99

However, in the final analysis, Reston has the impression that Kennedy will be reelected regardless of these weaknesses and of the lack of belief in him:

It is not easy to explain this paradox. Part of it is that the opposition is divided and weak. Part of it is that he is an attractive personality dealing with problems beyond the wit of normal men. And part of it is that the more people feel that the big complex problems of government are beyond their comprehension the more they are inclined to go along with the man in the White House no matter who he is and even if they don't understand what he's doing. . . . (provided he doesn't get into a big war).100

Reston notes this tendency frequently in commenting on the immediate response of the audience. His disapproval of it is especially apparent in his analysis of Kennedy's speech announcing the resumption of nuclear testing:

100 New York Times, November 15, 1963, p. 34.
The reaction to his decision in the country has been sympathetic. Some troubled citizens have protested but most have left it to the President, without either facing the problem or understanding it. And this raises Jefferson's question. . . . "If we think them [the people] not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them but to inform their discretion by education."

This is what the President was obviously trying to do when he explained to the country his reasons for resuming tests, and he seemed to carry most of the people and the political opposition with him. But it would be overly romantic to believe that the Jefferson ideal prevailed. Even the press, which usually pretends to know everything, . . . left it to the White House. But that wasn't what Mr. Jefferson had in mind. 101

The President in Washington, according to Reston, seems a world apart.

He talks about things like the balance of payments, and international "liquidity," and multilateral forces, and the "saturation" problem of antimissiles, and all this sounds important, but mysterious and remote. Or so it seems after an informal survey from Alabama to the Canadian border. 102

The result, as Reston points out following a speech given by Kennedy in Seattle, is that "the people seem to turn away from the complicated big world into the more tangible and understandable world of the family and the community." 103 Reston urges Kennedy to adapt

102 New York Times, November 15, 1963, p. 34.
103 New York Times, September 23, 1962, p. 10E.
by making "his program tangible in personal and local terms."  

Ultimately Reston interprets Kennedy's major problem to be how to govern and, as his criticism indicates, public speaking figures prominently in this procedure.

He is simply better known than anybody else, and this will probably be enough to assure his reelection, but this is a far cry from the atmosphere he promised when he ran for the Presidency in 1960.  

Reston's final observation that Kennedy failed to direct, inspire, and convince the nation of the necessity of his proposals occurs after a careful analysis of numerous speeches in which he not only focuses on inherent weaknesses, but offers explicit suggestions for improvement. Among these are recommendations for Kennedy to discharge his duty as chief spokesman by devising plans to fulfill his objectives and then in turn to educate the public. This can be better achieved, according to Reston, if Kennedy changes his strategy and concentrates on national audiences rather than local blocs, seeks to inspire by going beyond the informative level and also appealing to the heart of the nation, and adapts his language more to the common man.

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104 Ibid.

Although Reston does concede that Kennedy wisely recognized and defined the problems of the time, these exhortations indicate his recognition of the inadequacy of analysis failing to exceed this level. In spite of this, Reston feels that Kennedy will be re-elected, principally because of his prestige, personality, and the tendency of the public. Reston manifest his disappointment in this situation in reprovals of both the public and the President.

Lyndon B. Johnson

Introduction. Just prior to President Johnson's departure from office Reston states: "In private conversation, he was one of the most eloquent and persuasive advocates of his generation, yet somehow he failed miserably to get his ideas across to the American people." However, occasional qualifications of this grim conclusion are reflected in some of Reston's evaluations of speeches which deal primarily with domestic rather than foreign issues.

The severity of this concluding judgment of Johnson's effectiveness is based principally on his assessment of speeches regarding Vietnam. Twenty-one of the twenty-eight speeches which Reston considers deal with this subject. Therefore, in presenting

Reston's procedure, references to the subject of Vietnam dominate, for as he points out in the analysis of the 1967 State of the Union message:

Vietnam, with its 20 billion-a-year budget, touches everything else: the budget, the deficit, the politics of the new Congress, the tax increase, the division in the nation, the funds for foreign aid, the problem of food and population. 107

The analysis of a presidential speech in 1966 further emphasizes the prevailing significance of the subject of Vietnam and reflects Reston's consistent approach in evaluating speeches on the subject. Notably this is respect for Johnson's sincerity and ultimate aims but condemnation of his policies of implementation.

His speech to the Freedom House audience at the Waldorf Astoria was a symbol of the tragedy of his Administration. He started out to express the continuity in American aspirations. He talked about Roosevelt's Four Freedoms--freedom of religion, freedom of speech and expression, freedom from want and fear--and when he talks about these things, even the glass teleprompters and his monotonous voice could not cover up his obvious sincerity. But there was Vietnam.

Always Vietnam. He wanted to say there was something else going on in the world, but he couldn't leave it alone, and even if he had tried, the picketers outside and the protesters in the opulent ballroom would not let him or the audience forget it.

His remarks on Vietnam were full of contradictions. He was angry with his critics but eloquent

about the right of dissent. He was fighting for limited objectives but promised General Westmoreland whatever power was necessary to win the war. And yet, though his reach may exceed his grasp, it has to be said for him that he is a yearner after great ideals. 108

The twenty-eight speeches may be divided into four groups. First, are eleven addresses delivered to Congress consisting of a speech following John F. Kennedy's death, five State of the Union messages, four appeals for domestic legislation, and, finally, his farewell message. The second group, comprising eight speeches, deals primarily with national defense and usually Vietnam in particular. Four of these were delivered to local audiences in Detroit, Baltimore, San Antonio, and New York City, while the remainder were nationally televised from Washington. Speeches composing the third group are those delivered to Democratic groups in Chicago and Omaha. Finally, four special occasion addresses include three commencement speeches and a Lincoln Memorial speech at the Lincoln Monument.

In evaluating these speeches, Reston is most thorough and consistent in examining logical proof. Ethical appeal, the situation, audience response, and speech preparation are usually considered, whereas, delivery, organization, and language usage receive only occasional mention.

Logical Appeal. Along with delineating the theme or main ideas of each speech, Reston incorporates his estimate of their merit as he did in his analyses of the speeches of Eisenhower and Kennedy. The qualifications for measuring the integrity of ideas which Reston uses are (1) existence of a guiding principle, (2) soundness in discriminating that which lies at the center of issues, (3) relevance to the times, (4) avoidance of disparity between ends and means, (5) credibility of argumentative development, and (6) sublimity of expression.

During the first two years of Johnson's administration, Reston criticizes the speeches of the President and his Cabinet members for failing to exhibit any guiding principle in the field of foreign policy.

The National Security Council and the Cabinet seldom meet now except in an emergency, and statements and speeches are often made at the highest level without any collective judgment about their possible consequences. . . . Lately each speech by the President and his Secretaries of State and Defense has seemed to stand by itself without any relationship to any guiding principle or policy. 109

Underscoring the significance of this prevailing result of a lack of a guiding principle, Reston states:

Seldom . . . have there been so many confusing and conflicting reports in the Washington diplomatic corps about American policy in the Atlantic and Pacific . . . . He is not making clear to his friends abroad, or even his fellow countrymen, where he stands on Vietnam, the Atlantic Alliance, the U. N. or the monetary problem.

He has not found time to clarify his foreign policies or the proper form in which to articulate them, and this is hurting his Administration both at home and abroad.\(^{110}\)

Reston offers guidelines for a foreign policy speech after accusing the President of not "stating his purpose or assuring his audience" in a nationally televised speech on a crisis in the Dominican Republic.\(^{111}\)

It is not the sort of thing he [Johnson] can grab by the lapels. It requires great precision of speech, a sense of history, and a feeling for the nuances and sensitivities of life, and these have never been his most prominent characteristics.\(^{112}\)

In citing the effects of the speech, Reston indirectly attacks Johnson's procedure of determining policy:

But the problem of confidence in his methods of decision remains. Nobody is very worried about the Dominican Republic, but the feeling persists that


\(^{112}\)Ibid.
disorderly policy-making or capricious personal judgment could one day cause much more serious trouble elsewhere. 113

As the President revealed his policy on Vietnam in speeches, Reston accuses him of focusing on tangential issues rather than discerning the crux of the problem. For example, he questions Johnson's recurring use of historical parallels as presented in a speech in February, 1968, to justify his decisions:

And more and more the justification for present policies lies not in demonstrating that the policies are right and the critics wrong, but in the sad reflection that other great men were misunderstood and vilified in the past

... ...

[H]e leaves no room for the possibility that he may be wrong. In some strange way, the people who oppose the killing are characterized as "moral isolationists" who are hurting their country, whereas, those who want more and more war are "sad but steady" patriots like Lincoln.

This is a dangerous procedure. For if you do not argue the case as it is, and take refuge in the sorrows and dissents of other men in other times, it is possible to justify almost anything. 114

In his criticism of a speech delivered to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Detroit six months later, Reston again condemns Johnson's failure to sense that which lies at the center of the issue in Vietnam:

113 Ibid.

This is what is so offensive about Mr. Johnson's formulation of our present dilemma. He may be right, and he is undoubtedly sincere, but he talked in Detroit—and not for the first time—as if his policy alone cared for the lives of the American fighting men, and the honor of the nation, and the security of South Vietnam.

The debate is not between the men who have compassion for the soldiers, respect for the nation, and pity for the Vietnamese and men who do not. It is a grave and honest difference over where the national interest and honor lie. 115

Reston's expectations and objectivity appear consistent, for occasionally, as in his analysis of the 1967 State of the Union, he underscores Johnson's judgment in discriminating the essential:

President Johnson said so many controversial things... about Vietnam, taxes, poverty, and foreign aid, that the central unifying theme of his address is in danger of being lost.

He was trying to say a very important and even noble thing. This was that the spirit of domination in political affairs was dead... It is easy to argue about many of his specific programs for Vietnam, the economy, the tax structure, and the cities, but this overriding principle should not be lost. In the midst of all the arguments between the independent forces at home and abroad, he has seen the general principle of interdependence, and is reaching out to the Governors, the Mayors and the leaders overseas for help.

This is something new. 116

The importance which Reston attaches to relevance as a criterion in appraising the integrity of ideas is apparent in his praise

115 New York Times, August 21, 1968, p. 44.

for Johnson's recognition of pressing problems of the time in his 1965 State of the Union address:

President Johnson has at least lifted the level of political discussion here in the last few days, . . .

This is the chief merit of the President's annual State of the Union message. Regardless of how men differ about it, it deals with fundamental issues. And this week it has focused attention on the security, health and education of the nation, the quality of American life, and even the problems of the world's rapidly growing population. 117

Reston's negative evaluations of the relevance of Johnson's ideas often occur in conjunction with accusations of disparity between ends and means. This is evident in his reaction to the Chief Executive's speech in New York in 1966:

The gap between the evangelical rhetoric of official Washington and the political realities of the world is getting wider all the time.

The controversy here is not whether the President's objectives are desirable, but whether they are attainable; not whether the yearnings in his heart and the pictures in his mind are bad, but whether they are relevant to the world as it is; not whether he is sincere in wanting victory in Vietnam, but whether he has calculated and is willing to pay the price. 118

Reston goes on to paint a bleak picture of disorder all over the world and then questions Johnson's reliance upon the idealistic idiom of the American past as justification for attempting appeasement.


118 *New York Times*, February 27, 1966, p. 10E.
Against this somber background, President Johnson's rhetoric sounds rather strange. "Whether in the cities and hamlets of Vietnam, or in the ghettos of our own cities . . . the struggle is the same. It is to end the violence against the human mind and body, so that the work of peace may be done and the fruits of freedom won."

This generosity of spirit is deep in the American tradition. It is effective politics at home, but is it really practical under present circumstances. This is the question that is dividing the President from the influential critics within his own party and elsewhere. 119

Reston often points out this same conflict between ends and means in speeches on domestic issues and condemns the practice for undermining public confidence. For example, this is the notable weakness which he ascribes to Johnson's handling of the race question in a commencement speech in 1965.

Yet on this question, as on Vietnam, the disparity between ends and means is startling and disturbing. For the means proposed to achieve the solution of the problem are clearly inadequate, and this is what creates the uneasiness over what is said in Washington and what is done.

Therefore, if there has been a decline in American optimism it is not only because we do not know how to solve our problems, but because we do not yet know how to discuss them. The politicians insist on pretending that everything is solvable--that we can achieve almost unlimited ends with limited means--and, while the people would like to believe it, they increasingly have their doubts. 120

119 Ibid.

120 New York Times, June 6, 1965, p. 10E.
The credibility of Johnson's use of evidence and argumentative development is a frequent point of attack. Judgments such as "the Omaha speech is a mishmash of bad history and dubious logic" are common, particularly in speeches on Vietnam. In accusations prior to Johnson's withdrawal from candidacy for re-election, Reston often intimates that the President was approaching the problem in "personal and partisan ways", and was "not dealing with the problem but merely with the politics of the problem." Reston's consideration of a speech delivered in October, 1967, illustrates this point:

He didn't say that it was important to oppose Communist aggression with an American expeditionary force of half a million men, and that Eisenhower and Kennedy had refused to do so and therefore had underestimated the problem. This would have been a defensible policy. But instead, Mr. Johnson tried to give the impression that he was merely carrying on the same policy as Eisenhower and Kennedy, which is manifestly untrue.

Mr. Johnson's proposition at San Antonio this weekend was that committing American power and prestige to holding Vietnam, no matter what the cost in men and money, was essential to the security of Southeast Asia and even to the security of the United States. This is precisely the proposition that President Eisenhower rejected when the French and his own Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, and his own Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Radford, proposed it during the crisis of Dienbienphu.

121 New York Times, July 3, 1966, p. 6E.
122 New York Times, October 1, 1967, p. 12E.
President Johnson is trying to have it both ways. He presented himself at San Antonio as both the bold Churchill, defending Western American expeditionary force into a war on the continent of Asia. He argued that the failure to do so would not only lose South Vietnam but might lose all of Southeast Asia and lead to a World War, which is precisely the proposition Eisenhower rejected when he refused to follow Johnson's policy of intervention and escalation. 123

Such denunciations of the Chief Executive's motives and use of evidence and logic often cede to approbation when the issues are domestic. This is aptly represented in Reston's evaluation of Johnson's proposals on education presented to Congress in 1965:

President Johnson has been condemned often enough as an artful dodger, but there are times when a little artful dodging serves the nation better than anything else.

His education message... is a masterpiece of evasive action, neatly designed to lift the lower levels of education in parochial as well as public schools without inflaming the state-church issue in the process.

This he has done to a remarkable degree by paying attention to the failures of less political men in the past. The history of Federal aid to primary and secondary schools is that the broader the program is, the louder will be the controversy over the separation of church and state...

Accordingly, Mr. Johnson avoided the general approach, and aimed the bulk of this program at assistance to public elementary and secondary schools serving children of low-income families. He proposed not to deal with the whole problem but only with the worst of it. He suggested, in effect, that poverty and ignorance be treated like an epidemic of smallpox, and that most of the money go to the poorest schools as if they were disaster areas...

123 Ibid.
Primarily, he utilized a moment when there is much talk of the very poor segment of the nation as a device for improving education and attacking poverty at the same time. . . .

It is easy to demonstrate that the President's message rests very largely on a series of evasions, but it is also easy to show that only through the use of these devices of "special-purpose aid" and all the rest has the Federal Government been able to help the struggling schools.

The devices, in short, have kept the constitutional question on the side and centered the dispute on social and political policy. As Homer Babbidge, President of the University of Connecticut, has remarked: "It is surely true that no society . . . has ever been able to afford the luxury of facing squarely all the issues that divide its people. The use of fiction as an instrument of cohesion is an indispensable social tool."

And he might have added that nobody is better at using it than Lyndon Baines Johnson. 124

According to Reston the challenge to the Chief Executive to speak "the common meaning of the common voice" is occasionally successfully met by Johnson--notably in the 1967 State of the Union address. 125

There was in this speech a measure of the majestic sweep of America's problems, of its conscience, of its yearnings to deal with the misery in the cities, of its longings for the unity of the human family, of its belief in regional cooperation, of its desire for peace and equality, and above all of its decency, and its determination to preserve the privacy of the individual and the dignity of the races. 126

125 See Chapter II, p. 6.
However, Reston says that the unity of the people which is the essential and usual effect derived from attaining these sublime heights eluded Johnson: "Yet the promise of it all, the unspoken thing that divided the Chamber of the House of Representatives tonight was still the immediate division of the war."\(^{127}\)

In his evaluation of the 1968 State of the Union, Reston emphasizes the basis for his demand for a guiding principle, discrimination of the crux of issues, relevance, practicality of solutions, credible argumentation, and sublime expression in presidential addresses:

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\ldots [T]he\ country\ will\ still\ be\ listening\ for\ a\ voice\ that\ can\ unite\ the\ people\ for\ purposes\ they\ respect.\ For\ the\ leaders\ of\ men\ .\ .\ .\ are\ the\ custodians\ of\ the\ nation's\ ideals\ and\ of\ its\ enduring\ faith.\ On\ this\ level,\ Mr.\ Johnson's\ speech\ was\ something\ less\ than\ a\ triumph.\ ^{128}\]
\]

**Ethical Appeal.** The significance which Reston attaches to ethos is apparent in his analysis of Johnson's first State of the Union address.

The President's State of the Union message is usually formal and useful, like a report card from the headmaster, but the reader or viewer should not be mislead.

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\(^{127}\)Ibid.

It is not the whole story. It is the beginning and destination of the journey without a road map, and it tells little . . . about the State of Lyndon Johnson. This is an important omission. 129

Reston then proceeds to describe the Chief Executive's character, intellect, personality, and motives and in the process contrasts him with former President Kennedy.

Mr. Johnson's qualities are energy, boundless confidence in his intuitive judgment about what men will and will not do, a shrewd gift of anticipating trouble ahead, and a tireless almost nagging, persistence in following things through to a decision.

President Kennedy's eloquence was designed to make men think; President Johnson's hammer blows are designed to make men act. He is not concerned with the fastidious refinements of speech. He is a vivid, earthy talker who either persuades or stuns his hearers.

The preparation of a Kennedy budget or speech was a calm and sophisticated debate; the preparation of a Johnson budget is a wrestling match. Intellectual Europe and America preferred the Kennedy style, not because it was typically American, but because it wasn't.

President Johnson, on the other hand, is a representative American, one who represents our popular characteristics. In this sense he is now starting out on a journey that will test not only him but the efficiency and temper of the American character and system. 130

In depicting Johnson as possessing the characteristics of a frontiersman, Reston writes approvingly of the traits of optimism,


130 Ibid.
faith in majority opinion, and patriotism which are reflected in his speeches. Johnson's attitude toward his government reserves a faith, which according to Reston, was once more popular than it is today. "He retains the old faith that the ... people and their representatives if presented with the facts, will find reasonable solutions ... [and] not the President along." Reston supports this assertion by quoting Johnson in his second State of the Union message:

    A President does not shape a new and personal vision of America. ... He collects it from the scattered hopes of the American past. ... The Presidency brings no gift of prophecy or foresight and the President's hardest task is not to do what's right but to know what's right. The answer was waiting for me in the land where I was born. ... It was once a barren land ... but men came and worked and endured and built. ... There was a dream ... a dream of a continent to be conquered, a world to be won, a nation to be made. ... Remembering this I knew the answer.  

Reston then affirmatively concludes that "the pessimism and complexity of the modern world, accordingly do not bother him. Unlike many of his intellectual critics, he is not paralyzed by excessive contemplation or doubt."  

132 Ibid.
133 Ibid.
The manifestation of respect by Reston for these traits is evident even when condemning Johnson's position. For example when denouncing the contradictions of Johnson's Vietnam policy in a speech delivered in 1966, Reston concludes:

This is not mere speech-making to Lyndon Johnson. His language sounded unrealistic to many in the audience, and the passages on Vietnam overly optimistic and even sentimental to many others, but he remains a believer in an unbelieving and cynical world. . . . He looked troubled and sounded harried in New York, and no wonder, for he is bearing all the dreams and lost causes of the century. 134

In his analyses Reston's description of the President's technique often counters the popular caricature of Johnson as a manipulator:

He is a shrewd and knowledgeable man, an elemental force of nature who commands respect and even a certain amount of fear. . . . His technique works but it hurts. He can make men do but he does not make them like him in the process. 135

According to Reston, Johnson views politics as an exercise in adapting oneself to all sorts of people and situations, of discussing and bargaining with legitimate groups in search of consensus. For instance, following the passage of Johnson's Farm Bill and the Food

135 Reston, op. cit., "What's He Like? And How Will He Do?"
Stamp Bill in Congress in 1964, Reston depicts a successful exercise of Johnson's technique of persuasion:

He used every technique in the book. He appealed to their patriotism, to their self-interest, to the political needs of his own party, to his personal need for their friendship and support, and in the end he prevailed. . . . It [Johnson's technique] is directed in such a way that it cannot be ignored. It is highly personal and it is aimed directly toward personal honor . . . .

This city is still muttering negatively about Johnson's style, but the complaints are really about appearance. If style in government is not merely the art of pleasing but the technique of getting things done and making stubborn men put the general interest above their special interests then President Johnson has plenty of it.

There is another point. . . . The emotional content of the Johnson appeal, the total absence of ideology, the passionate insistence on the general welfare. . . . the vivid earthy American language and optimistic faith that problems can be solved—all this is highly effective under Johnson. 136

While stressing that the highly political, highly pragmatic, and ceaselessly industrious approach irritates a lot of people,

Reston always underscores Johnson's sincerity:

He is not so much a cunning and calculating man, despite all the publicity to this effect, as an idealistic and passionate man. He really believes in all the sonorous platitudes, soaring fancies, and Chautauqua rhetoric that have come out of the White House in the last few years. 137

136 New York Times, April 12, 1964, p. 8E.

Situation. The relevance of existing attitudes and conditions which may affect the reception of Johnson's speeches is usually cited. Evaluations of a speech on Vietnam delivered to the Veterans of Foreign Wars and one on poverty to Congress illustrate this. The former speech was delivered following the Soviet attack on Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The President is convinced that stopping the bombing without some equalizing countermove by the enemy would lead to more American casualties, and again he may be right; but many others, including his own former Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara think he is wrong. . . . [Reston describes the Soviet attack on Czechoslovakia]

The Soviet invasion of Prague, however, will now influence the whole debate on Vietnam. It will be seen as a justification of Mr. Johnson's refusal to make concessions to the Communists. It will also strengthen the arguments of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who have never really favored a de-escalation of the war.

In short, another startling event—like the attack on the American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin, which led to the bombing of North Vietnam in the first place—has now cut across the whole debate on Vietnam policy.

Last night, Mr. Johnson's speech sounded unrealistic and even jingoistic, but after the savage move by Moscow against Prague, the Soviet move strengthens his position.138

In referring to the speech on poverty, Reston charges that Mr. Johnson's proposed "funds are lamentably inadequate to the
gigantic scope of the problem. "139 He then concedes, however, in depicting the prevailing circumstances, that an adequate proposal would probably be defeated anyway:

On Capitol Hill the war on poverty has become a political slogan to many members and a nuisance to many more. . . . In the present mood of the Congress and state of the budget, it would obviously do little good to ask for appropriations equal to the scale of the problem. They simply would not be voted, for the President has not yet convinced the country of the dangers he sees ahead in the urban slums, or persuaded the Congress that poverty is a burden not only on the poor but on the nation as a whole, or adjusted his own order of priorities to deal with the cities. . . .

The Congress and the bureaucracy, and the war in Vietnam have cut his war on poverty back to a skirmish. . . .

Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania is now trying to dramatize the poverty problems in a series of hearings, but elsewhere in Congress the poverty question is discussed as if it were merely a troublesome administrative and budgetary headache. 140

These presentations of speeches as activities occurring in the stream of social events signify Reston's concern to portray the multiple facets of public address.

Audience. Early in President Johnson's administration, Reston observes: "In the end he will be judged, of course, like all

140 Ibid.
Presidents, by results,141 Thus in estimating Johnson's influence, Reston often refers briefly to the audience. Such references to the immediate audience response usually occur in conjunction with the presentation of main points and motive appeals. For example following a speech presented in June, 1967, in which Reston says that "Johnson's main problem is to finesse the bloodshed in Vietnam," he then cites how Johnson successfully dealt with this problem:

This will not be easy, but he has three ways of approaching the war—he inherited it, he points out; he is trying to stop it, and the commentators are exaggerating it. On the whole, this seems to work fairly well. The Junior Chamber of Commerce in Baltimore apparently loved it.142

Another part of Johnson's approach, Reston continues, is to charge that we should not concentrate on what's wrong but on what's right with America. Our education, health, and standard of living are not only far better than they were a few years ago, but infinitely better than in most countries. . . . This, of course, is the old doctrine of "you-never-had-it-so-good," with vague warnings that we mustn't let the foreigners take it away from us, and nobody should be fooled. The President bellows it out with great effect. . . .143

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143 Ibid.
Reston often attributes negative audience response to questionable choice and support of ideas. In the 1968 State of the Union address for instance, after asserting that Johnson underestimated the spiritual bewilderment in America and that its derivation is not solely economic, he concludes:

President Johnson's third State of the Union message was a calculated decision not to decide between extremes. . . . He did not choose between Secretary of State Dean Rusk's diplomatic strategy for Vietnam and Under Secretary George Ball's diplomatic tactics for Vietnam. He adopted them both. This duality was not accidental. The President did not want to choose so much as he wanted to give the Communists a choice. The speech was a faithful map of his mind. He does not see any contradiction in the Rusk and Ball approaches; he believes them both.

The result is that everybody got something out of the President's speech, but nobody on the extremes of the Vietnam controversy is quite satisfied. Those who wanted him to start the bombing of North Vietnam and those who wanted him to put the main burden of fighting the war on the South Vietnamese are disappointed, but in the Western embassies here, where he has often been criticized in the past, there seemed to be general agreement that it was a balanced and skillful speech opening up new possibilities of negotiation with all the Communists. . . .

The President's emphasis on improving trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, on stepping up the population control policy, on using American agricultural resources to increase the production of food, on the control of armaments—all this reassured those who wanted to hear Washington emphasize peace and constructive moves toward interdependence. . . . It is easy to say that it covered
everything and decided nothing, but actually it
decided against a lot of things... Sometimes
to govern is not to choose, and the President
evidently thought this was such a time.144

The significance which Reston attaches to audience response
and the particular problem that it posed to Johnson throughout his
administration appears in a concluding observation of his analysis
of a commencement speech delivered by Johnson in 1964:

At least, the faces of the young men and
women on the Ohio University campus this morning
were alive with sympathy when the President spoke
of the poor. When he talked about the people who
had been passed by, when he mentioned civil rights
and equality, and opened up the prospect of "the great
society of the future for America"--even when he
condemned the "cool generation"--he got a wonder­
fully enthusiastic response.

His problem, however, is precisely what he
said it was earlier today. He can touch the conscience
of an audience, but how does he touch the conscience
of "the entire nation?"145

Speech Preparation. Following Johnson's first speech after
succeeding to the Presidency, Reston expresses hope that the new
chief executive will continue to utilize the late President Kennedy's
speech writers. After noting that "President Johnson demonstrated
in his speech this week to the Congress that he has the ability to


blend their writing talents into his own spirit and political strategy, "Reston underscores the necessity of such help and re-
inforces his opinion by quoting Woodrow Wilson. 146

The men who write and the men who act at the highest levels of political life in this country have always tended to differ, and nobody recognized this better than Woodrow Wilson, that most intellectual of all our Presidents.

"The men who act," President Wilson wrote, "stand nearer to the mass of men than do the men who write; and it is at their hands that new thought gets its translation into the crude language of deeds. The very crudity of that language of deeds exasperates the sensibilities of the authors. . . . The men who write love proportion, the men who act must strike out practical lines of action and neglect proportion." 147

Two months later Reston defends the President's ceaselessly industrious approach by describing the elaborate system of checking and double checking which Johnson uses to ascertain all sides of the question before moving. For example Reston states: "He has a catalogue of persons with whom he talks on each subject, some in and some out of government." 148 He then identifies many of these persons.

147 Ibid.
The only remaining references to speech preparation occur when Reston feels that Johnson later begins to fail to utilize the assistance available to him. This results in inconsistency and a lack of a guiding principle, as Reston stresses in the following consideration of two speeches by Johnson:

The Johnson system here is based on the assumption that men can do whatever they have to do, and keep on doing it year after year. It is a dubious assumption. The pressure is unavoidable and eventually unbearable, and the President's insistence on managing everything himself is only making things worse.

He is not only the Commander in Chief and the principle executive officer, but the central spokesman, legislative pilot, chief greeter and toastmaster and top money raiser for the Democratic party. His outbursts before the party faithful in Chicago the other night was not the result of any careful staffwork by his foreign policy advisers. They were as surprised and dismayed by his remarks as anybody else.149

Reston goes on to point out inconsistencies by stressing that "Johnson at Princeton wooed the intellectuals and Johnson among the politicians and lobbyists in Chicago condemned the intellectuals."150

The occasional references to the remaining tenets of delivery, organization, and language usage are brief and usually unsubstantiated. Their importance, however, is implied for Reston

frequently refers to them in the beginning of his analyses as illustrated in the following passages referring to speeches which Johnson delivered to Congress and the nation.

President Johnson is never more impressive than when he is speaking about the poor. He feels their humiliation, and maybe because he is a proud and aggressive man he seems to sense the danger of poverty in the city slums. This sense of both outrage and apprehension comes through very briefly in his latest disjointed poverty message to Congress. 151

In initially praising the timing of Johnson's voting message, Reston observes that the message is also perhaps "his most eloquent speech before the television cameras and the Congress." 152 Conversely negative impressions such as these recorded in response to a speech on foreign policy in which Reston accuses Johnson of "garbling his script" and not "stating his purpose" also occur. 153

Conclusion. In evaluating the public speaking of Lyndon Johnson, Reston's judgment of effectiveness appears to be based ultimately on the achievement of the general objectives of unity among the people for purposes they respect and enhancement of the nation's

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ideals and faith. Reston asserts Johnson's failure to attain these objectives principally in his analyses of logical appeal in the President's speeches on Vietnam.

Regardless of this indictment Reston's criticism generally evinces respect and admiration for Johnson's sincerity, ideals, and intellectual prowness as reflected in successful adaptation to local audiences and to the Congress in speeches on domestic issues. While Reston acknowledges the contributing influence of speech preparation and the situation in which a speech occurs, he seldom delves into the significance of language usage, delivery, and organization.

**Inaugural Speeches**

To Reston the inaugural address is a distinctive type of oratory possessing its own special requirements dictated by the occasion: "Nothing in American life expresses the ideals and aspirations of the Republic like the inauguration of a President." In describing the majesty of the scene, Reston depicts the subject matter expected during such a moment:

Everyman who stands under the classic portico of the Capitol at this moment, regardless of his talents or antecedents or party, is the successor and inheritor of Washington and Lincoln. Therefore,

the individual who takes the oath of office, expresses, not the policies he hopes to follow in the future but the dreams and traditions of the Republic of the past. 155

Reston's primary concern in analyzing three inaugural addresses is to depict and evaluate how each chief executive developed his theme. In achieving this, Reston particularly stresses language usage and emotional appeal. He also points out the relevance of the setting, and contrasts the speaker's noble pronouncements with the attitude and response of the audience. Only brief reference is made to ethos and delivery.

According to Reston's succinct judgments, each president rose to the occasion. For example he terms Eisenhower's second inaugural speech as "noble, eloquent, and generous, combining the most optimistic qualities of the idealistic President and his high-minded speech-writer, Emmet Hughes."156 Of the three, however, he praises Kennedy most exuberantly: "The evangelical and transcendental spirit of America has not been better expressed since Woodrow Wilson, and maybe not even since Ralph Waldo Emerson."157

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155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
After these brief judgments Reston proceeds to cite the main points, and in the process contrasts the ideas with those of past inaugurals and with reality. This is illustrated in his analysis of Johnson's address.

Change is our problem, said the 36th President of the United States; reason and faith our shield; unity our only hope.

The echoes of past Presidential inaugurals were unmistakable today. "The problems are new," said Teddy Roosevelt..., "the tasks before us differ from the tasks set before our fathers who founded and preserved this republic."

"These dark days," said Franklin D. Roosevelt in his first depression Inaugural address, "will be worth all they cost us if they teach us that our true destiny is not to be ministered unto but to minister to ourselves and our fellowmen."

John F. Kennedy said it better in his famous statement, "Ask not what your country can do for you--ask what you can do for your country."

And Lyndon Johnson reiterated the same thing today. "Each of us," he said, "must find a way to advance the purpose of the nation, and thus find new purpose for ourselves. Without this, we will simply become a nation of strangers... Is our world gone?... We say farewell. Is a new world coming? We welcome it--and we will bend it to the hopes of man."

This optimism and idealism which characterize the themes of all the addresses, according to Reston, does not reflect the attitude of the audience nor the national and world situation:

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Obviously, a weary and disillusioned world does not believe that America will bend this radically changing world to the "hopes of man" or that Lyndon Johnson or anybody else can liberate the human race or produce "justice and unity: upon earth." 159

Reston pursues this conflict more specifically by describing the attitudes and situation confronting each president as his portrayal of the difficult circumstances facing Eisenhower indicates:

For President Eisenhower's second inaugural address today was strikingly different from the tone and mood of the Government as a whole and this is bound to create fundamental problems in the future. . . . It proclaimed, indeed, a kind of new deal for the undernourished nations of the earth, going well beyond the domestic New and Fair Deals of his two immediate predecessors. . . .

The mood of the Government as a whole, however, is far less confident, generous, and idealistic. In the last week Congress has been taking a decidedly hostile attitude toward new economic commitments or even modest adjustments in the foreign aid program. And the Secretary of the Treasury, George M. Humphrey, reflecting powerful influences in the Executive branch, has been calling, not for more generous attitudes or expenditures toward the world, but for much more rigid economics.

Thus, in the first day of the second Eisenhower Administration, the old conflict between the President's idealism and his economics has emerged more clearly than ever. And this is likely to be the political background within both the Executive and the divided Congress over the new four years. 160

159 Ibid., p. 17.

After depicting such a perplexing state of affairs, Reston warily reports the positive immediate audience responses as indicated in the following remarks referring to Kennedy:

The reaction to President Kennedy's speech was even more remarkable than the speech itself. Everybody praised it, from the conservative Republicans to the Communists in Moscow, which is quite a distance.\(^{161}\)

Then after citing Kennedy's objectives and interjecting that this does not mean less national service, or lower taxes, or higher wages, or greater profits, or more protection against imports, Reston muses: "It would be interesting to know whether all the people who praised all this are willing to go along with the sacrifices implied, particularly those who praised him in the United States."\(^{162}\)

Reston does follow the supposedly positive response through and, for example, uses the fight a week later in the House of Representatives over enlarging the Rules Committee to dramatize that despite of the new atmosphere in Washington, the contrast between ends and means is still extremely sharp. Almost everybody has approved the goals stated so eloquently by President Kennedy, but the Administration's means of achieving those goals are running into heavy opposition. ... This is the first real test of all the eloquent hurráhs on Capitol Hill for Kennedy's beginning. To a man, the Republicans

\(^{161}\)New York Times, January 22, 1961, p. 10E.

\(^{162}\)Ibid.
and the conservative Southern Democrats have praised his ends, but they are now demanding the right to define the means by which he shall reach those ends.\textsuperscript{163}

In spite of his skepticism over the lasting effectiveness of the immediate audience responses, Reston still proclaims that an inaugural speech is a time for talking for instance as Lyndon Johnson did about "the uncrossed desert and the unclimbed ridge, the star not reached and the harvest sleeping in the unplowed field."\textsuperscript{164} He praises such idealistic appeals in the addresses and writes approvingly of their eloquent composition. For example, after designating Kennedy's speech as "remarkable," Reston notes that "maybe we ought to settle for the revival of the beauty of the English language."\textsuperscript{165}

Finally in addition to eloquence, Reston praises the addresses for their "moralistic and even religious" overtones.\textsuperscript{166} This is especially notable in his analysis of Johnson's address:

\begin{quote}
In a poignant moment of commitment he went back to the eternal things: justice, liberty, and unity. . . . He was asserting that the faith of the old frontier
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{165}\textit{New York Times}, January 22, 1961, p. 10E.
\textsuperscript{166}Ibid.
could be relevant. . . . And he went beyond this:
He asserted that in a land of great wealth, families
must not live in hopeless poverty . . . children
must not go hungry . . . neighbors must not suffer
and die untended; that in a nation of learning, young
people must see the glories of knowledge. . . .
"The American covenant," he said, "called
on us to help show the way for the liberation of man." 167

Reston appears to approve of this approach as he interjects,

What he was saying was said many years ago by other
men in other times. "And I saw a new heaven and a
new earth for the first heaven and the first earth
were passed away," it says in Revelation. 168

"The rest of the world," according to Reston, "having
lived longer and suffered more, may think it is all a little naive,"
but such appeals are the essence of an American inaugural,
"namely, that America is still young enough to hope, and dream
and believe." 169

168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSES OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES' SPEECHES

In a summation of the 1968 Presidential election, Reston presented a list of failures which indicate his expectation of such campaigns.

The best thing about this election campaign is that it has finally come to an end. It has not produced a single noble speech. It has not clarified but confused the great issues of our time, and has not united but divided the nation... .

There has not really been a serious analysis of how Mr. Nixon or Mr. Humphrey would deal with these issues, with the Congress or the cities or the war in the next four years, or even a fair comparison between the characters and abilities of the two principal candidates.¹

Reston provides an audience-centered basis for this criticism emphasizing the character, abilities, and issues of the candidates as conveyed chiefly through their speeches during the 1960 campaign when he urges the press to fulfill its critical function "to help the voters reach a judgment on the facts."² He urges objectivity by pointing out

¹New York Times, November 3, 1968, p. 16E.
²New York Times, October 2, 1960, p. 10E.

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that the press was not set aside with special privileges under the First Article of the Bill of Rights in order to be a cheer leader for one party or another. The gravity with which Reston views the situation is further apparent as he echoes the sentiments of a principal minister at the Geneva conference in 1959: "The American election is the single most important political event in the western world today."3

These objectives and attitudes undoubtedly influence Reston's coverage of the Presidential campaigns from 1956 through 1968. The purpose of this chapter is to ascertain the quality of his criticism during these four elections by examining his treatment of ethical appeal, speech preparation, delivery, logical appeal, emotional appeal, speech situation, and the audience in determining the effectiveness of the two major candidates.

Reston attended both the Republican and Democratic national conventions during the respective election years. Material examined commences with coverage of these two events and terminates on election day.

**Ethical Appeal**

Ethical appeal unquestionably reigns supreme in Reston's estimation of the importance of the speech tenets. His assessments

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3*New York Times*, May 31, 1959, p. 8E.
of the main issue in each election invariably focus on the significance
of the candidates' ethos, as is evident in his references to the
campaigns of 1960 and 1968.

The gut question in this election [1968] is not law
and order, or Viet Nam, or the races or the cities, or
ideology, or interest rates--but trust in the man who
has to sit in the White House and pass judgment on these
issues. 4

Before identifying the key question of the election of 1960,
Reston first establishes the basis for his opinion.

. . . America has now reached the point of general
agreement where it can begin to think, not of party
government, but, for the first time in its history, of
National Government.

Both candidates differ in method and degree
about social security at home and collective security
overseas, but they are closer to one another on these
points that they are to the extremists in both parties.
Both have got caught in debating points about Cuba,
Quemoy and Matsu, about states' rights and civil
rights, but nobody who really knows them both really
believes that their difference on these points is as
great as their arguments in the TV debates would indicate.

The leading members of both parties are not
really divided on fundamentals. The question,
therefore, is which of the two candidates, Nixon or
Kennedy, is best able to mobilize the good minds in
both parties in a national rather than a party
administration.

This is a question of judgment, on which
well-informed men can easily differ, but my own
feeling is that Kennedy is more interested in ideas
than in parties, more inclined intellectually and

more free politically to take a McCloy into the Treasury or a Dillon into the State Department across party lines than is Nixon to appoint distinguished Democrats.

What is clear is that the best minds we have in both parties are none too good to deal effectively with the problems we face. If Nixon and Kennedy have proved anything in the last two months, it is that they badly need help to deal with the problems ahead, and the help they need is the best we have, regardless of party labels, which mean less today than ever before in the history of the nation.®

As these two excerpts suggest, the personal issue is complex and judgment entails consideration of numerous attributes. Thus, in seeking to aid the voter in evaluating the candidates, Reston above all diligently attempts to reveal character. He also attempts to clarify the role and influence of personality and prestige.

Character. One of Reston's few positive observations about the achievements of the campaign system is that it does "test character."6 Revelation of character is dependent upon the electorate having "the opportunity of seeing and hearing the candidates as they actually are."7 He advises that a candidate's method of presentation, particularly his willingness or refusal to confront his opponent in debate, is an indicator of his self-confidence, courage, integrity, and ability to instill trust.

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5New York Times, October 30, 1960, p. 10E.
Reston strongly advocates debate where "the voter has a much better chance to observe each candidate, not as a . . . blob reciting a set speech, . . . but as a human being, under extreme pressure, responding to sudden movements of a discussion that cannot be anticipated." 8

Thus when candidates do engage in debate, he especially commends their courage, regardless of how they fare. This is notable in his analysis of the televised debates of Kennedy and Nixon in 1960 and of Hubert Humphrey's debates in 1968.

If courage is grace under pressure, as Ernest Hemingway describes it, both [Kennedy and Nixon] gained on this score. Both were under extreme pressure. Both were courteous and dignified. It may be doubted that Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower would have done any better, and this could help stem the unfortunate impression that the electorate has somehow been asked to choose between two quite inferior candidates. 9

Even though Reston states that Senators McCarthy and McGovern scored heavily against Humphrey in debates at the National Democratic Convention in 1968, he praises Humphrey for at least not minimizing the differences between them and dealing squarely with the opposition and facing hard questions from the California delegates. 10

Humphrey, in Chicago, at least faced his opposition . . . in direct confrontation with McCarthy and McGovern, . . . and this produced the most honest and illuminating debate of the entire campaign of 1968. 11

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9 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
On the other hand Reston reprimands those who refuse to debate. He charges Barry Goldwater with this offense in 1964 by first of all denouncing the lack of deliberation at the National Republican Convention.

Senator Goldwater . . . arrived as the triumphant hero. His assumption, which is probably right, was that the delegates were here not to consider him but proclaim him, not to begin the careful process of selection of a Presidential nominee, but to end it. Their [Goldwater and his managers] strategy is clearly to avoid a convention fight. . . .

Following the convention Reston again focuses on this point.

He insists that the issues of the campaign must be debated as widely as possible, but his men who ran the convention delayed the only real debate of the Convention over civil rights, extremism and the control of nuclear weapons for two hours so that it would come so late that it would not be heard in the most populous Eastern section of the nation.

He concedes that of course this is traditional, realistic political strategy, but points out that it is quite different from Goldwater's main argument of the past; "His appeal has been that he was not concerned with what was expedient but what was right." In proclaiming the merits of debate, Reston attacks the various modes of presentation which candidates use, particularly on


Although his emphasis on this subject does not begin until 1960, he does condemn such practices prior to this date.

Also, in the past most paid television appearances have been carefully calculated in advance. Either they have been taped and edited to make a specific point, or they have been speeches before audiences of party workers, or "news conferences" with carefully selected questions.

In this way, television can be used not to disclose the truth but to conceal it, not to respond to objective questions but to take advantage of easy partisan questions, not to engage in debate, but to avoid debate.  

He seems to share the concern of the intellectuals of the college campuses over Eisenhower's tendencies in his television appearances to exploit the personal issue rather than candidly discussing major issues.

Many people in these communities are troubled about the glorification of Eisenhower. They think it is not only false but undemocratic. They believe it is not dispelling but perpetuating illusions about American life. And they are deeply disturbed about the application of mass advertising techniques and personality appeals in a campaign for the political leadership of the United States.

Reston links exploitation of "packaged broadcasts" with the question of "trust which is important and closely allied with inspiring popular enthusiasm." He fervently pursues this

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16 New York Times, October 21, 1956, p. 10E.
association in seeking to point out the fundamental difference between Humphrey and Nixon.

The Democrats may differ with Humphrey on Vietnam. Many of them think he has been wrong and even silly in his defense of President Johnson on the war, but for all their doubts and criticisms, they believe in him as a person. . . . Humphrey inspires personal respect and even affection from . . . his Democratic opponents.

The Republicans, in contrast, may agree or differ with Richard Nixon on Vietnam and on other policies but their personal feelings toward him are not the same. 18

The reason, according to Reston, lies partly in Nixon's method of operation of relying on the new political techniques in regulated situations.

He has calculated the political problem much better than Humphrey. He knows precisely where to talk about Vietnam and where to avoid talking about Vietnam, where to talk about inflation and emphasize crime; whether to do it on radio or television. 19

Reston deplores Nixon's adroitness in regulated situations carefully contrived to give the appearance of spontaneity. He attempts to rectify this misleading impression by pointing out how many of Nixon's television appearances were managed "with the questioners carefully chosen, the questions solicited from whole states or regions, but carefully screened."


Mr. Humphrey . . . submitted to questions by C.B.S., but Mr. Nixon sent tapes of replies made in his carefully prepared broadcasts. And his refusal to debate Mr. Humphrey on television is merely one more incident in a long campaign of packaged broadcasts.

It is easy to say that this is not a model of democratic discussion, but it is hard to say it has failed. It takes a natural, confident, experienced and even wise man to grapple with the hard and often unfair questioning of the press in public, and he decided to duck it and he is apparently doing all right.

Yet it is fairly clear at the end that more people are going to vote for him than believe in him, and more newspaper editors than newspaper reporters are going to endorse him. It has been true of Mr. Nixon ever since he came into public life, and it helps explain the anxiety in the country today even among the people who will probably put him in the White House.20

Assessments characterizing President Johnson's image as his chief obstacle to victory and Goldwater's sincerity as his major attribute further reflect the importance which Reston delegates to belief and trust in the nominee. At the outset of the 1964 campaign, Reston regards the credibility gap as Johnson's chief problem.

The democrats are . . . supposed to be unbeatable but they are uneasy. They talk big publically, but privately the are worried. . . . Part of the reason for this lies in the political success of Eisenhower, and part of it in the personality of President Johnson. Ike convinced them of the political potency of personality and moral yearnings, allied to television.

They look back convinced that Eisenhower . . . licked them badly even in 1956 after two severe illnesses, and without any really effective political skill or organization.

Johnson, in contrast, is a political master, but he does not arouse the same affectionate emotions as Eisenhower or project the same warm television personality as Goldwater. LBJ is as efficient and mechanical as TWA and he is clearly in command of the Democratic party; but this convention, while it respects and follows him, does not really like him as a person so much as it dislikes the policies of Goldwater.21

However, at the end of the campaign, which according to Reston "disillusioned and divided the people, revived their ancient feelings that politics is a dirty business, raised doubts about the integrity of the press, and even cast a shadow on the White House," he rebukes the President's contribution to this sad situation by failing to be forthright:

This country is not likely to establish the principle that a President is responsible for the misdeeds of all his friends or associates, but it is likely to expect him to be more candid than President Johnson has been about his television ventures and about Baker and Jenkins.

It would be difficult to underestimate the number of people who are going to vote for the President next week with a profound sense of uneasiness, not because he has removed their doubts or convinced them or exalted them, but simply because he is the only alternative to Goldwater.22


In Reston's view Goldwater's tactics in his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention began the steady erosion of belief in his motives, which in turn eventually forfeited his primary appeal. Regarding the acceptance speech Reston points out Goldwater's failure to reconcile his 'New Morality with his old-fashioned, anything goes power politics. . . .

He stressed the importance of "order" in our society six times in his acceptance speech, but concluded that speech with two remarkable and disturbing sentences that are almost an incitement to disorder. . . . He proclaimed: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. . . . And moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

Yet he must know that most of the extremist tyrants of history, from Caesar and Napoleon to Hitler and Stalin, acted in the name of liberty and justice. The Birchers and the Ku Kluxers think they do the same, and so do the white extremists in Mississippi and the black extremists who follow Malcolm X.

If "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice," then surely the Negro extremists are justified in their civil disobedience. And if "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue," then obviously Negro moderate leaders are to be condemned. . . .

This sort of thing has hurt Goldwater's cause much more than is generally realized. There is a point at the start of every campaign when all serious people watch to see whether the awesome responsibility of nomination for the American Presidency will make a man more thoughtful and careful.

But Goldwater's defense of extremism in the middle of a social revolution at the very beginning of a savage and emotional election campaign has disturbed and even frightened many of those who came here prepared to believe that he was sincerely seeking the Presidency on moral grounds. 23

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Reston asserts that Goldwater's continued failure to exemplify in practice his own exhortations compromises his credibility.

The more he has called for higher standards, the more the standards of his own campaign have declined; the more he has talked about principles, the more he has indulged in personalities; the more he has talked about morality, the more he has lost the support of the most influential moralists in the nation.

The reason for this is fairly clear. His campaign has not been faithful to the higher morality he has invoked.

But when the Republican candidate for the Presidency appeals to the voters' longing for a higher morality in American political life, he had better live up to it himself, and this is what Goldwater and his aids have not done. . . . Barry cannot have it both ways. To condemn the corruption in a nation is a duty; to appeal to its noblest qualities, to try to exalt it is admirable; but to condemn expediency in Johnson and then to use it yourself, is hypocrisy. . . . In the process, the Republican candidate has lost the one issue that might have helped him more than any other. He is right that there is both moral decline and moral anxiety in the nation, but he and his Vice-Presidential candidate, William Miller, have merely dramatized the disease they have condemned.24

A final requisite of character which excites special praise from Reston is the display of not only the courage to defend one's views in face-to-face confrontation, but also the courage to innovate and present new and unpopular ideas. This was one of the distinctive

attributes of Adali Stevenson, whom Reston describes as "eloquent, high-minded, courageous to express ideas and objectives regardless of what the party bosses, the labor-union leaders, or the Legionnaires thought."\(^{25}\)

It is also the quality which Reston praises above all others in assessing John Kennedy following his acceptance of the nomination for the Presidency.

It is obvious that aside from all the help he has had, he is a remarkably gifted young man: experienced well beyond the normal expectation of his years, at home in both the intellectual and political institutions of the nation, articulate particularly in the give and take of modern television discussion and debate, industrious, energetic, and above all courageous. . . . Kennedy has in short shown the capacity not only to mobilize the considerable material, physical, and institutional assets at his command, but has demonstrated firm nerves and a more determined purpose than any other man in his party.\(^{26}\)

Methods of presentation used by Presidential candidates are of paramount interest to Reston in his efforts to reveal their true character. He depicts trust as the primary indicator of their possession of character and courage as being inextricably involved with a man's willingness to counter his opposition in a face-to-face

\(^{25}\)New York Times, October 21, 1956, p. 10E.

exchange and to speak extemporaneously in an uncontrolled situation. Belief in a candidate regardless of sentiment or issues, political skill, or organization is characterized by Reston as potent enough to be the determining factor in elections. If a candidate fails to align his conduct with his admonitions, the damage to his credibility is irretrievable. Finally Reston praises a nominee's boldness of spirit in daring to innovate and project new ideas.

**Personality.** Reston agrees with the significance which all the nominees attach to the impact of personality. Along with projecting the power of this influence, he shows how it is relative to the strategy of the campaign.

The attitude which Reston purports in his analyses of all the campaigns underscores the candidates' own conviction that personality can be the deciding factor. For example Reston says that the motivation behind Kennedy's and Humphrey's avid attempts to arrange television debates with Nixon was their belief in the magnetism of their personalities. "Humphrey is confident that a clear campaign against Nixon will be seen more in personal terms than anything else, and that in such a contest he can win."²⁷ He reports similar claims made by the Kennedy camp:

²⁷*New York Times*, September 1, 1968, p. 10E.
The stock explanation . . . is that the greatest political weapon Senator Kennedy has is Kennedy. His aids concede that he may be outpointed by Nixon in debate, but that his personality and intellectual qualities will not only answer the charge of "immaturity" but prove more popular with the voters in the end. 28

Regarding the first instance, Reston agrees that "when Humphrey and Nixon begin debating the issues the personal impression of the two men, regardless of past assumptions about them could be decisive." 29 In defending his opinion that Kennedy stands to gain from debate with Nixon, Reston focuses on personality traits:

He has been laboring under the popular impression that he is too young and immature for the Presidency. So long as he remains alone before the TV camera or on a platform studded with paunchy old political pros, he stands out like a youthful Harvard don at a boilermakers' picnic.

But once he gets on the same screen with Nixon, this age difference of four years seems less important. 30

In races where the personality appeal of one candidate is particularly dominant, as in the case of Eisenhower, Reston shows how this not only becomes a major issue but also affects others.

"It is apparent," Reston notes, when accompanying Stevenson on


29 *New York Times*, September 1, 1968, p. 10E.

speaking tours in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, that "there is little prospect that he will, by personal appeal, create a mass movement that will drive Eisenhower out of the White House." Reston derives the reason for this from audience reactions. Following a Stevenson speech in Milwaukee, Reston observes: "The voters concede he is intelligent, that he has 'ideas,' but they complain about his 'manner:' too formal, too 'Eastern,' they say out here, and sometimes 'too English.' Stevenson's appearance, too, lacks distinction, Reston remarks after a "flat performance in New Jersey. . . .

On a big platform, Mr. Stevenson has a way of getting lost among the candidates for sheriff and county solicitor. People in the crowd are always saying, "Where is he?" On the other hand, attitudes which Reston encounters while accompanying Eisenhower in the Midwest lead him to conclude that "Eisenhower, despite his age, his illnesses and his farm programs, still seems to have a great deal of personal appeal." In interpreting this appeal, Reston ascribes personality traits as being

responsible. An analysis written after spending a week with Eisenhower in Iowa illustrates this:

In intellectual terms, this trip was almost wholly devoid of new or stimulating ideas but in human terms it was an exciting experience.

This is what the people obviously see in Ike above everything else: a warm and friendly human being who talks in language they understand, who is attentive to his wife, who almost always has something good to say about everybody.

They may or may not like his policies and for all I know they may vote against him, but they still like Ike because he is like them, and because he genuinely likes them. 35

Disappointment with the effect of this situation on the objectives of both candidates, particularly Stevenson, prevails in Reston's evaluations. He condemns Stevenson's strategy of "concentrating almost entirely on trying to cut down Eisenhower's popularity." 36 In Stevenson's exploitation of the assumption that the "electorate will not re-elect Eisenhower if the Democrats succeed in making the President responsible for, and identifying him with the Republican party and its policies," Reston charges that he concentrated on purely political audiences several times a week and as a result "the tone and quality of the speeches declined." 37

35 New York Times, September 23, 1956, p. 10E.
36 New York Times, September 30, 1956, p. 10E.
Instead Reston strongly desires for Stevenson to concentrate more on the major question of the leadership of the future even though conceding in the middle of the campaign that Stevenson's tactic of focusing on negative association has succeeded in strengthening the Democratic party and the enthusiasm of those who must round up the party vote. For, in spite of Eisenhower's failure to talk concretely about the future, Reston concludes "President Eisenhower is popular and the Democratic emphasis on policies for the future is popular, and the election may very well turn on the electorate's choice between these two."  

In addition to discussing the positive and negative attributes of personality and their powerful potential reflected in the nominees' strategy, Reston frequently considers the specific techniques employed by the candidates in their efforts to enhance their image. When a candidate's efforts to counter a negative stereotype are responsible, Reston commends him:

Vice President Nixon has clearly started out to disprove all the charges leveled against him as a political opportunist. His first trip through the West was a model of energetic but fair campaigning. He

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38 Ibid.

followed the Eisenhower line of moderation and generosity to his opponent, and his critics of the past should be the first to commend his efforts. 40

Personal growth reflected in the men's reactions to the savage pressures of the campaign is important to Reston, who maintains that it affects ability to secure good will. A display of a sense of humor is indispensable in this struggle Reston claims in showing that its exhibition by Kennedy enabled him to establish "a greater rapport with his audiences than Nixon." 41 He illustrates by contrasting the two men's reactions to hostile portions of audiences.

Yesterday, the unemployed among the Democratic opposition hoisted anti-Nixon signs in the Vice President's rallies in York and Altoona, Pennsylvania. "Welcome to the ranks of the unemployed," they said. Nixon ignored them.

Today, some amusing anti-Democratic signs appeared in Kennedy's crowds in Illinois. "We Don't Want Bobby, Either," said one. "Stevenson was bad, but Egad!" said another. Kennedy welcomed the hecklers. "Glad to have you with us," he said at one stop. "Don't be self-conscious about being for Mr. Nixon. We know how it is." 42

The notations by Reston of the candidate's use of altruistic appeals, reference to the deity, family, country, and stressing points

40 New York Times, August 7, 1960, p. 8E.


42 Ibid.
of agreement reiterates the success of these devices. Such portrayals, as one referring to a Labor Day speech of President Johnson in Detroit, usually denote a positive audience response:

He's now giving them heaven. In the great society which Johnson's Boswells are now proclaiming, Henry Ford and Walter Reuther are going to be buddies, the Republican lions are going to lie down with the Democratic lambs. . . . Lyndon Johnson was shouting: "I call for national unity. . . . We no longer struggle among ourselves for a larger share of limited abundance. We labor together to increase the total abundance of all. . . . I plead for brotherhood among men and understanding among nations. . . ."

The President really got to them . . . when he tacked on to his speech a very personal, calm and moving soliloquy about the dreams of his boyhood and his hopes for the future. Then, for a minute or two, his role and his personality and the old Biblical cadences came together, with wonderful effect. "The least among us will find contentment, and the best among us will find greatness, and all of us will respect the dignity of the one, and admire the achievements of the other. . . .

And then people shall say to people: There on this earth, as in the eyes of God, walks my brother . . .
Well, this is my dream. . . ."43

Regardless of the success of the appeal, Reston criticizes a candidate's erratic accommodation of his point of view in attempting to ingratiate himself. His attacks on a statement by Goldwater in a speech to Republican leaders at Hershey, Pennsylvania, exemplifies his distaste for such procedures.

Goldwater said: "The Eisenhower-Dulles approach to foreign affairs is our approach. . . . A Goldwater-Miller administration will mean an immediate return to the proven policy of peace through strength which was the hallmark of Eisenhower."

This is an important statement if it can be taken at face value, for the Eisenhower years . . . were essentially years of accommodation and compromise with the Communist world, and this is precisely what Barry has been condemning in the past.44

Although Goldwater denied that the speech was conciliatory, Reston points out that Eisenhower's own people helped draft the statement, that Governors Rockefeller, Scranton, and Romney, who had opposed his nomination, now found these views different and acceptable. After assailing Goldwater for saying everything that can be said on both sides of the main questions of the campaign, including being for Ike and for policies Ike opposes, Reston concludes: "At the start of the year we thought we knew fairly well from his writing and his votes what he believed. Now all we know is what he says."45

While Reston acknowledges that personality traits can be a positive asset, he is critical of their power to dominate and indeed influence the choice of issues. Effective campaign speaking

45Ibid.
necessitates speaker adjustment to off-set a negative image and to lessen open hostility. Reston appreciatively notes fair attempts in this direction along with proficient use of such standard methods as indentifying with the audiences' beliefs and aspirations, referring to God and country, praising the audience, and stressing points of agreement. He opposes infringing upon the power of association when points of agreement stressed are contradictory to the speaker's often repeated beliefs.

Prestige. Along with asserting that a long, hard campaign reveals character and ability, Reston reiterates prior to the election in 1956 that it may produce some surprises dispelling preconceived notions:

For the history of American politics is full of men who seemed shallow and inadequate at one period in their lives who changed out of all recognition later on. . . .

After all, Eisenhower put more spin on the ball in the 1952 campaign than Johnny Podres did in the world series, yet he won the respect of both parties and has proved in the last two years that fairness and goodness can be an immense power in both national and international politics.46

Besides the fact that men change and thus the nature and reputation of the man does not always correspond, Reston relegates

46 *New York Times*, October 9, 1955, p. 8E.
reputation or prestige to secondary importance because, as his comparison of Nixon's and Kennedy's assets versus Eisenhower's indicates, reputation doesn't necessarily mean capability to achieve results.

After all, the problem is not "who can stand up to Khrushchev" but who can organize the nation and the alliance in such a way as to command Khrushchev's respect. Eisenhower with all his personality and maturity, did not have much influence on the Soviet dictator, but Kennedy or Nixon in their efficient way might mobilize the energies of the U. S., which are more important than any personal reputation in the field. 47

Reston's primary concern in considering reputation is to dispel the influence of the half-truths of caricaturing and thus lessen the injustice of misrepresentation. Recognizing that misrepresentation is standard political procedure, he usually condemns the practices of both parties, as his criticism in 1960 illustrates.

The opening skirmishes in the Presidential campaign have centered on a distorted, if not wholly false, picture of Vice President Nixon's powers.

The main Republican theme at the moment is that Mr. Nixon is a world statesman who should be given credit for all the good things done by the Eisenhower Administration in the last eight years.

The Democratic theme, in contrast, is that Mr. Nixon is a politician with no "basic beliefs" who should somehow be blamed for everything that has gone wrong in the last eight years. . . .

47 New York Times, July 31, 1960, p. 8E.
[T]he fact is that both assertions rest on a wildly exaggerated view of the Vice President's past duties and responsibilities. ⁴⁸

Reston then proceeds to clarify the extent of Nixon's influence and duties as Vice President. In spite of such efforts to eradicate distortions, Reston stresses that dramatization of popular fears and illusions hurts candidates. President Johnson in particular was a victim of this situation and was damaged more than he deserved, in Reston's opinion, "simply because in appearance and style, and by reputation he is the arch symbol of the professional politician." ⁴⁹

Because of discrepancies often inherent in a man's reputation, Reston advocates that prestige is an unreliable guide. He is particularly concerned with revealing these differences and minimizing intentional distortion.

Speech Preparation

Reston expects a speech to reveal the man rather than indicate who has the talent to assemble the most talented writers. He notes that grueling campaign schedules which exhaust the ideas of candidates weeks before election day necessitate the preparation of

speeches by teams of writers who often inject views conflicting with those of the candidate. Reston underscores the effect of exhaustion on the speech planning process in his analyses of the speeches of Nixon and Kennedy a week preceding election day.

As the campaign has gone on, Mr. Nixon has sharpened his arguments, until now his basic speech almost amounts to saying that a vote for Kennedy is a vote for war, higher prices, and inflation, and fiscal disaster, and government by political and labor bosses.

Add to this his suggestion yesterday that the Kennedys are trying to drum up a bloc vote by the Catholics, throw in a crack or two about Kennedy's money and you have a picture of Mr. Nixon's last quarter offensive. Compared to this his original speech at the beginning of the campaign was a Sunday School testimonial. . . .

Kennedy's basic speech remains about what it was when he started, and by now he must be thoroughly bored with it. He talks intermittently about our decline in national prestige, and on our lagging steel industry. And he promises things which he does not show how to finance. 50

While conceding that assistance is essential, Reston still longs for the candidates to assume a more dominant role in the preparation of their speeches. This is especially apparent as he discusses the reverse trend in Eisenhower's and Stevenson's preparation in 1956. Prior to 1956, Reston holds Stevenson in high esteem because of his gift for speech writing and for his constant

questioning and searching for new ways to express things. He is complimentary in noting that this interests the Democratic nominee more than any other part of electioneering.

In 1952 Stevenson took time out to reflect. He was comfortable then in the role of the eloquent political scientist, communicating his ideas in careful speeches, defending policies he agreed with and avoiding politicians he didn't agree with.  

Conversely he accuses Eisenhower of spending his time in the back car of a campaign train with unfamiliar politicians, while others wrote speeches often misrepresenting his sentiments.

In 1956 Reston commends Eisenhower, whom he describes as being impressed by the literary qualities of Stevenson's speeches in 1952, for pacing himself more carefully and for diligently organizing a well-informed artists' and writers' committee "to work on things he wants to say." He criticizes Stevenson for deserting his goal to win high-mindedly, and for concentrating "on party organization and old fashioned bare-knuckle infighting" resulting in an "intellectual slump" characterized by speeches sprinkled with misleading half-truths.

51 New York Times, September 16, 1956, p. 12E.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
Occasionally Reston praises the influence of a speech writer, and identifies portions of the speech contributed by him. For instance he is optimistic when George Ball decides to devote six weeks to Humphrey's campaign and describes him as an asset:

He is likely to give a new dimension to the Vice President's discussion of foreign policy problems . . . by helping lift the campaign debate on foreign policy out of the present rut of slogans and trivialities into a much more serious discussion of the realities and priorities of America's present position in the world. 55

When analyzing a speech given by Humphrey the following week, Reston points out that the Vice President is making a credible effort in opposing President Johnson's position on Vietnam by quoting items from the first draft of the speech. He credits Ball with assisting in drafting the statements.

"First, " he said, "as President, I would stop the bombing of the North as an acceptable risk for peace, because I believe it could lead to success in the negotiations and thereby shorten the war. . . . "
"Second," he added, "Now if the Government of North Vietnam were to show bad faith, I would reserve the right to resume the bombing." 56

Reston's preoccupation with discerning character affects his treatment of speech preparation. Believing that the speech should

reveal insight into the speaker, he praises those who are conscientious in writing or overseeing the preparation of their speeches, but criticizes speakers who are overdependent on writers with views that do not coincide with those of the speaker. Although he rarely singles out a speech writer to acknowledge the positive influence which he exerts, such instances indicate Reston's willingness for a candidate to seek expert help. Reston often presents views on ghost writing in conjunction with examining weaknesses in the campaign system.

**Delivery**

Believing that the chief value of delivery is the revelation of character, Reston most frequently evaluates the self-confidence and sincerity of the speaker. Occasionally he notes the discrepancy between content and manner and indicates a preference for extemporaneous expression.

The importance which Reston attaches to self-assurance is apparent in his advocacy of television debates in 1968:

The point of changing the Federal Communication Act to permit debates among the candidates was to allow voters to see them together and judge how they reacted under pressure. It is, admittedly, a brutal test,
but so is the Presidency, and the test of TV debate is undoubtedly better than the tests we now have.⁵⁷

In evaluating the Nixon and Kennedy debates and in comparing their delivery near the end of the campaign, Reston focuses on self-possession.

[Kennedy] He is immensely confident. His flow of words is not as good as Nixon's but he is quick and adept at staying on the offensive. The Vice President looked tired last night. . . . He seemed restless and taut. . . .⁵⁸

Just prior to election day, Reston again contrasts the poise of the two men: "The Vice President is still painfully self-conscious, while Kennedy is increasingly self-assured."⁵⁹

Reston frequently criticizes a candidate's loss of confidence resulting from a lack of time for reflection. He characterizes this as being true of Stevenson:

At no time in the 1952 campaign, hectic and new to him as it all was, did he ever seem more ill at ease than in his widely advertised nationwide television address Thursday night. He made an undistinguished speech. His voice was high and thin. He was popeyed in his race with an erratic mechanical teleprompter and so nervous that he even mispronounced the name of his running-mate.⁶⁰

A speaker's manifestation of genuineness is essential to Reston. A severe arraignment occurs if he suspects the contrary. He accuses both Nixon and Johnson of attempting to convey an air of total sincerity in their communication with members of the press and in their speeches.

... Mr. Nixon's and also Mr. Johnson's way, is to try to manipulate, to pretend to be candid in private conversation, but to use every trick in the book to get them [members of the press] to fill the headlines and front pages with calculated trash. ...

Mr. Nixon's . . . television performances are masterpieces of contrived candor. He seems to be telling everything with an air of reckless sincerity, but nearly always in a controlled situation.61

In addition to passing judgment on the sincerity of a candidate, Reston often notes its inciting effect. He attributes the intense overt response which Goldwater evokes to the Senator's energetic display of strong convictions.62 However, Reston cautions that this can be a problem if the speaker's content is questionable. He focuses on this in evaluating Goldwater's speaking at the Republican National Convention:

Nobody who has watched him carefully . . . over the years can attribute his statements to a kind of offhand impulsiveness. . . .

62 New York Times, July 12, 1964, p. 10E.
It is time to be frank about this. This is a serious, strong-willed man with a fierce anti-Communist zeal, a fascination with military power, and the conviction that we must destroy or transform Communism, or be destroyed by it. 63

Occasionally Reston refers to a candidate's voice, gestures, and bodily action when they do not appear to correspond with the content.

There is something contradictory about Lyndon Johnson's pacifying role on the one hand and his appearance and manner on the other. He is a healer in the garb of a warrior. He tells us to "reason together" at the top of his voice. He is a whirlwind who wants to calm the waves.

Ironically Goldwater is precisely the opposite. He is a warrior with the calm manner of a healer. He says the most outrageous things in the most serene way. He, and not Johnson, should be the Thunderer—but he whispers. 64

Reston seldom condemns the mode of delivery of a specific speech of any candidate, but his distaste for set speeches is manifest in his high regard for debate where the candidates reveal themselves in extemporaneous exchanges. 65

Although he does not regularly evaluate delivery extensively, Reston does consider whether the candidates are

63 Ibid.


self-confident and sincere. Occasionally he notes their voice and bodily action, especially if the manner and content appear to be contradictory. His main concern, however, is to show how delivery manifests character, which he believes is best demonstrated in extemporaneous delivery.

**Logical Appeal**

The importance which Reston attaches to logical proof is obvious in his excoriation of the press for not exerting its critical judgment to the full in the 1960 campaign. After accusing the press of "saying very little about the truth or falsity, the wisdom or folly of the main issues," Reston asserts that as a result "it's getting a little difficult . . . to tell the difference between the important and unimportant." 66

In his consideration of the speaker's choice of issues, reasoning, and validity of support, Reston usually adheres to the challenge which he extends to the press for "detached and objective" criticism:

> For one reason the issues now are more serious and more complex. Even the careful, studious voter is baffled by all the new problems of military, economic and social science.

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66 *New York Times*, October 2, 1960, p. 10E.
He hears wildly contradictory assertions about all these things, and naturally seeks a nonattached source of information and judgment somewhere between the committed extremes. 67

In Reston's judgment the finest representation of campaign oratory arises from a speaker imbued with a sense of duty and endowed with ability to concentrate on the central issues of the time. In his analyses the selection of central issues is a major source for praise and blame. For example in 1964 when Reston accuses Johnson and Goldwater of failing to deliver a single distinguished speech, he focuses on the choice of ideas in comparing their speeches with those of previous campaigns:

It is startling to compare the quality of the speeches delivered in this campaign even with the speeches of the Kennedy-Nixon campaign. And when they are compared with the Stevenson speeches of 1952 the contrast is almost ludicrous.

One by one, the major economic, political, foreign policy and even philosophic questions before the nation were discussed by Stevenson in that campaign twelve years ago. . . 68

In judging the candidates handling of these issues, Reston underscores their ability to perceive the effects of the crucial currents of change. He respects the men who meet the challenges

67 Ibid.

68 New York Times, October 4, 1964, p. 10E.
resulting from change by calling for more action, more
determination, and more imagination. For instance this is the
object of Reston's exuberant praise for Kennedy and Stevenson
at the outset of their campaigns:

Senator Kennedy has not taken the easy or the
traditional way, but has moved quickly to give a clear
impression of new initiative and energetic action. . . .
[A]t the outset of his acceptance speech he promised
not more security but more sacrifice, not less Gov­
ernment action but more. His emphasis was not on
continuity but on the certainty of change. . . .
This indicates the tone, direction and strategy
of the Democratic campaign. . . . It is based on the
thesis . . . that the nation can solve its domestic and
foreign problems only if it takes a more conscious
direction of its affairs. . . . He is moving and acting,
and the sound of new brooms is at last being heard in
the land. 69

In a similar vein in 1956, Reston notes that Stevenson's
"particular gifts of definition and eloquence can be of great value,
for he has come upon the world scene when the Western nations are
sorely missing the voice of Churchill and lacking the talent to
articulate their purposes." 70 Reston is convinced of the need for
fundamental change as he further describes the revolutions in popu-
lation, industry, and politics among both the Communist world and
relations of the allies:

69 New York Times, July 17, 1960, p. 8E.
The United States has reached another one of those points in History where the major problem of government is not to consolidate the gains of the past but to innovate, to go forward with new ideas and new plans to meet these new problems at home and abroad. 71

Reston anticipates that these problems can be more skillfully articulated by Stevenson, for he expects little "imagination," "intellectual persistance," "or bold exercise" of Presidential powers from Eisenhower, whose administration he characterizes as having been largely a holding operation which was useful for a time. 72

He is persistent in his expectations and positively appraises any candidate for seeking to deal with the future instead of dwelling in the past. His commendation of Eisenhower at the time of his nomination for emphasizing not the past but the present and future, 73 and his reproof of Kennedy's tour of California six weeks after his acceptance speech illustrate this.

How he sounds out there on his whistle-stopping train in California will have to be left to others to report, but back here he sounds like a stuck whistle.

All week he has been talking, primarily, not about the horizons of the New Frontier but about the issues of the old backyard, not about the continents but about the local communities, not about the future but about the past, not what he proposes to do but about what President Eisenhower has not done. 74

71 New York Times, October 21, 1956, p. 10E.
72 Ibid.
73 New York Times, August 26, 1956, p. 8E.
As this indictment against Kennedy indicates, Reston evaluates the merit of ideas not only on the basis of a candidate's perception of change and its relation to the future, but also on its relation to scope, relevance, and practical means for implementing goals. At the outset of all the campaigns, Reston praises the candidates for the high level of discussion in their speaking, but as they go along he invariably labels them as running true to form, which is to say becoming increasingly petty and personal. For instance he is enthusiastic over the early preoccupation of Kennedy and Nixon with the broad and fundamental questions of national purpose, the role of the federal government, the growth of the nation's economy, and the state of its mind, health, education, and welfare, but critical when they become diverted by secondary issues:

Maybe these larger issues will prevail again, but for the time being, we seem to be drifting back into the same old arguments about religion, Joe Kennedy, Ezra Taft Benson, "The Old Nixon," and "The New Nixon." In Reston's opinion philosophical questions which have concerned thoughtful men since the birth of democracy pose a special challenge. Such issues, according to Reston, are still timely and

76 Ibid.
the establishment of their relevance can contribute to a "useful" and "illuminating" campaign. The significance of this is most apparent in the 1964 campaign when Reston commends Goldwater for including in his acceptance speech such basic questions as the source of man's authority, the purpose of man, the relationship of his values in his associations on the interpersonal, community, state, and national level, and the reasons and responsibilities of our involvement in the world:

It will not do, therefore, for the Democrats merely to debate the Senator's voting record and ignore his philosophy, to denounce his allies and scoff at his moral yearnings. For he is at least talking about the essentially human ends of political life, and even if you think he is talking nonsense, somehow he has inspired an emotional personal response that no other active political figure in America can equal. 77

As the campaign progresses, he criticizes Johnson for ignoring these basic questions.

The Democrats . . . are still talking mainly about "peace and prosperity" and leaving the philosophical argument to the opposition. This of course is standard Democratic party procedure, and it may be good enough for their immediate election purposes, but the purposes of the nation are somewhat larger. 78

78 Ibid.
In his analyses of specific speeches, Reston often expresses dissatisfaction with the scope and relevance of a candidate's ideas. For example this is the basis of his criticism of Humphrey's handling of the Vietnam question early in the campaign:

Mr. Humphrey has not been able . . . to impose upon that controversy any consistent and wide range vision of the nation's overseas problem. Until this week, his foreign-policy speeches have lacked that sense of scope and scale so essential in Presidential pronouncements, and beyond that, he has often seemed to be talking as if he were running for the Senate rather than for the Presidency. 79

Following the Vice President's foreign policy speech midway in the campaign, he praises Humphrey's comprehensive grasp of the range of the Vietnam problem and his recognition of the relevance of the vital issues of arms control and the diversion of military funds to civil purposes to a solution. 80

On a corresponding level he denounces the political expediency of candidates who avoid key issues:

Mr. Nixon is exploiting it [Vietnam issue] very shrewdly. He is simply saying it's a mess, which it obviously is, and holding Vice President Humphrey and the Democrats responsible for it . . .. He is merely refusing to discuss it on the ground that this might interfere with the Paris peace talks, and meanwhile putting out campaign T.V. ads showing

dead American soldiers on the battlefield while a voice cries it is time for "new leadership." Mr. Nixon has not given the voters the slightest inkling of how his "new leadership" would end those corpses he shows on his T.V. clips, . . . [and] his evasions are almost as unfair as Mr. Johnson's Vietnam deception of the last campaign, and must at some point be openly and candidly discussed. 81

In addition to stressing the merit of essential political, economic, philosophical, and foreign policy issues on the basis of timeliness, scope, and relevance, Reston also expects candidates to demonstrate the means for achieving goals. He warns that ideological talk must not be allowed to "divert the mind of the country from the practical, from what is attainable to what is merely desirable." 82 Thus, when candidates are concentrating merely on desirability of goals, as occurred in the midst of the 1964 campaign, Reston calls for a shift of emphasis:

In this situation it might be useful if they got down to the hard questions, not about why the country feels so good and so bad at the same time, but what they propose to do about the Negro demonstrations, the insecurity of the streets, the shortage of jobs, the growth and chaos of the cities, the war in Vietnam, the disunity of the alliance, and the constant probings of the Communist. 83

81 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
Reston's regard for explicit policy proposals is a continuing point of focus. In 1956 it dominates all other issues.

Eisenhower and Stevenson were demonstrating in their acceptance speeches why they are the natural leaders of their parties by emphasizing the main issue of the election. This is: Which party has the best answer to the problems of the present and the future. . . . But neither of them has spelled out what he would do, and this is the serious task that now remains to be done in the campaign. 84

As policies are presented, Reston frequently describes the substance as inadequate even though he may praise the goals. This is notable in his evaluations of the platforms which the candidates endorse and which guide their speech preparation. For instance in 1968 Reston praises the Republicans for being "spectacularly progressive" in their goals for peace abroad and in the cities at home, but "lamentably defective in how to achieve their goals."

They say nothing about taxation to pay for their goals, or accommodation with the Soviets to limit the arms race. In fact, they concentrate on more arms and devote only an ambiguous paragraph to disarmament, which is the key to financing the whole antipoverty program at home. 85

84 New York Times, August 26, 1956, p. 8E.

In both a candidate's interpretation of issues and projected policy, Reston questions the validity of causal relationships more often than any other form of reasoning. His consideration of Nixon's and Humphrey's treatment of the problem of violence illustrates this:

We are now seeing the reaction to all this violence and lawlessness in the Presidential campaign... which has created an alarming sense of insecurity and a longing for order at almost any price... Mr. Nixon is talking about the effects of the violence--the insecurity of the cities--while Mr. Humphrey is at least talking more about the causes of the violence--the economic and spiritual poverty of the underclass in the slums.

Neither of them, however, is generating much enthusiasm for neither has yet put forward a convincing program for dealing with the scope of violence. Mr. Nixon is offering us more cops and more war. Mr. Humphrey is offering us more Lyndon Johnson...

The overriding question is how to get at the cause of violence now loose in the world. In the short run this means keeping the right of dissent and public protest short of physical violence...

In the longer run, it means taking risks for peace, so that the cost of military arms can be reduced and substantial sums of money can be diverted to the causes of poverty and violence.  

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Reston concludes that Nixon's promise of more "cops" and a hard line toward the Communists provides an appealing platform for the campaign. However, he still holds Nixon accountable for this emphasis on effects rather than causes:

Neither the violent protesters nor the aggressive Communists are popular, and many voters confuse the two. But it is a poor platform for governing the country, for it foreshadows more cold war abroad when we need peace, and more division at home when we need reconciliation. 87

Toward the latter stages of the campaign as issues rise in prominence, Reston designates one to a central position and evaluates the significance and validity of its major premise. At the same time Reston attempts to show the underlying method of analysis used by the candidates in determining their position. His identification and evaluation of Nixon's central theme in 1960 typifies this procedure.

The impression he wants to leave, and does leave, with his audiences is that the nation is doing very well in the cold war. 88

... But are we? This is the central question. If Mr. Nixon is right in saying that we are, then much can be said for the rest of his program in both domestic and foreign affairs. But if Mr. Kennedy is right in

87 Ibid.

88 New York Times, October 2, 1960, p. 10E.
saying that we are not, that we are approaching a crisis in our foreign policy just as we faced a crisis in our economic policy in 1929, then there is much validity in his demand for innovation and change. 89

Expert testimony is the primary mode of proof used by Reston in refuting the premise.

This issue has been studied more in the last couple of years than any other question of national concern. It was studied by at least three Presidential commissions. It was analyzed by the Rockefeller brothers' committee. It was subjected to the careful scrutiny of a number of Congressional committees, and to the objective analysis of teams of experts at Harvard, Columbia, Princeton, Pennsylvania, . . . and various other universities. These reports numbered over a score, yet not a single one of them supported the optimistic analysis now being presented to the country by Mr. Nixon.

Every one of them expressed the most serious anxiety about some aspects of our foreign policy, and called for important changes in the conduct of our affairs. 90

Reston then interprets the fundamental difference between the two men's approach to their position:

Kennedy is basing his campaign on the spirit of the intellectual leaders of the nation; Nixon is basing his campaign on the assumption that they are wrong or at least that they overstate their case, that they are unduly pessimistic in their analysis of where we are now and what needs to be done in the future. . . .

89 New York Times, October 9, 1960, p. 10E.

90 New York Times, October 2, 1960, p. 10E.
He is doing what most politicians do in the absence of war and depression. He is bearing good tidings; he is prophesying victory without war abroad or upheaval at home.  

In spite of disagreeing with Nixon's viewpoint, Reston believes it affords a distinct psychological advantage. He points out that in the past the electorate voted against men like Kennedy because their forecasts of doom and prophesies of what must be done to save the nation expose people to feelings of anxiety, pessimism, and defeatism:

In this situation the record tends to go against the movers and the changers. History in the end redeemed James Cox, John W. Davis and Al Smith, all of whom, like Kennedy, were calling for new policies and new exertions, but the voters sided with Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover.  

A final area of logical appeal which Reston judges is accuracy of factual information. Reston applies this test indiscriminately to all candidates. His chagrin is apparent in the following criticism of Adlai Stevenson:

Stevenson, impressed by the Republican organization and slashing tactics of 1952, is now concentrating on . . . party organization and the hurly-burly of handshaking, . . . and rally rousing. . . . [T]his is against his nature,

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91 New York Times, October 9, 1960, p. 10E.
92 Ibid.
and so are the misleading halftruths of standard campaign rhetoric with which his recent speeches have been sprinkled. 93

When Reston feels that a candidate has misinformed the public, he adduces evidence to justify his rejoinder. His refutation of Goldwater's suggestion that tactical nuclear weapons in the North Atlantic Treaty command be controlled not by the President but by the NATO commander exemplifies this:

"Let me stress," he said in a speech in Cleveland, "that these small conventional nuclear weapons are no more powerful than the firepower you [Veterans of Foreign Wars] have faced on the battlefield." This is not the sort of subject . . . a Presidential candidate should trifle with. . . . But as a matter of fact, the smallest operational nuclear weapon in Europe today--the Davy Crockett or the 8-inch nuclear howitzer for example--is ten times more powerful than the biggest conventional blockbuster of the last World War. 94

Reston charges that if Goldwater checked with the Senate Armed Services Committee, he might realize how fantastic it is to talk of the average tactical nuclear weapon as if they were either "small or conventional."

The average-sized tactical nuclear bomb in Western Europe today has an explosive power of 98 kilotons, which is five times the yield of the first


atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in the last war. This means that just one of those modern tactical bombs has a force equivalent to 100,000 tons of TNT...

There is a powerful case to be made against the foreign and defense policies of this Administration, but Senator Goldwater is spoiling it by shooting from the lip.95

Even when a candidate's misinformation receives a favorable response, Reston will challenge the speaker's accuracy. He notes such a situation toward the end of the 1960 campaign:

Neither [Kennedy nor Nixon] has made a single speech that has impressed the world, yet in the last few days a strong feeling has developed that more people are going to vote against Nixon than are going to vote against Kennedy.

Ironically, this feeling has developed precisely when Senator Kennedy made what is probably his worst blunder of the campaign. His statement this week on Cuba, publically calling for Government aid to overthrow Castro, is a clear violation of the inter-American treaty prohibition against intervention in the internal affairs of the hemisphere republics.96

From the 1956 election campaign onward, Reston notes the paradox that both candidates do better with their weak arguments than with their strong:

The President [Eisenhower] is winning votes with his foreign and defense policy arguments, though his claims in these fields are more dubious than in any other part of his record.

95Ibid.

96New York Times, October 23, 1960, p. 10E.
At the same time he is losing votes on his farm policy, which was probably the most necessary and courageous innovation of his entire administration.

Adlai E. Stevenson, likewise, has been wowing the voters with an essentially phony argument that Eisenhower is a captive of big business, while the Democratic candidate's solid and justifiable thrusts against the Administration's Middle East record, its educational record, and its Government personnel record seem to have made very little impact.97

Reston expects a nominee for the position of chief spokesman of America to possess the ability and sense of duty to select and concentrate on the central issues of the time. He believes that recognition of the effects of chance is central to the analysis of these issues. Reston directs his criticism primarily toward evaluating the extent to which such recognition influences the scope and relevance of ideas and prompts the candidate to emphasize the future rather than the past.

In the process he frequently considers the validity of the speakers' reasoning and use of evidence.

Even though his observations are generally negative and indicate that candidates often succeed in spite of failing to adhere to these high standards, Reston is still optimistic about the potential at the outset of each election campaign and steadfastly holds the men accountable.

97 New York Times, September 30, 1956, p. 10E.
Emotional Appeal

Believing that the great issues at stake in a campaign naturally provoke violent emotions, Reston concentrates primarily on their improper channeling in his analyses. He attacks the misuse of emotional appeal when it contributes to national disunity, defames character, blots out progress and underlying consensus by exaggeration and distortion, or detracts from primary problems by exploiting public sentiment rather than focusing on solutions.

Reston frequently manifests concern over the negative effects on national unity produced by the abuse of emotional appeal. His supplication to the leading contenders for the judicious use of emotional appeal even before their nomination underscores the gravity of his regard.

The most difficult and yet the most serious question in the Presidential election [1956] is how to keep the political struggle from adding to the already solemn divisions in the nation over racial segregation in the public schools.

How this issue is debated, however, and by whom are extremely important. If one or the other candidates sets out to exploit it for purely partisan objectives, the campaign can do irreparable harm. If, on the other hand, it is debated fairly and responsibly, it may be possible to avoid great damage. 98

98 New York Times, April 29, 1956, p. 8E.
In summarizing a campaign, Reston often deems the national discord arising from the abusive provocation of emotions as the most detrimental effect. This was particularly apparent in 1964 when Reston characterized both nominees as being vulnerable to low political tactics. 99

Anything that stains the reputation of America, or weakens the confidence of the people or the world in her institutions, injures mankind. And this election has done just that.

No matter who wins on Tuesday, the nation has lost something. For the campaign has disillusioned and divided the people, revived their ancient feelings that politics is a dirty business. . . . 100

Reston regards the calumniation of an opponent as one of the most offensive political tactics contributing to discord. For instance he censures Goldwater's use of personal attacks in speeches during his tour of the South.

He tells crowds that there is "something wrong" about our lives; that he can't quite put his finger on what it is. . . .

Meanwhile, he tells ghost stories about evil men in far off places, most of them in the North. There are nine of them on the Supreme Court of the United States, destroying the character of the people and the equal powers of the Government. There is "Yo-Yo" McNamara shuttling between disasters in

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100 New York Times, October 30, 1964, p. 36.
Vietnam. There is Bobby Baker and Billie Sol Estes, those two Northern scoundrels, . . . but most of his personal shafts were aimed at Humphrey and at the dreadful designs of that ominous intellectual conspiracy, the Americans for Democratic Action. 101

Reston also condemns public relations gimmicks such as stickers on buses proclaiming "Humphrey is a Man You Can Trust." According to Reston these are a Madison Avenue trick suggesting the same cannot be said for Nixon. 102

Reston deplores appeals to fear which blur America's position and achievements: "Election campaigns . . . are a series of battles, some of them sham, and they should not be allowed to blot out the progress and consensus that lie underneath all the shouting." 103

Unfortunately, he contends,

Elections almost always emphasize the worst. They exaggerate everything, including our national weakness for overstatement, and in the process they destroy what they are supposed to clarify.

Thus, it is not enough for the Democrats to say that Barry Goldwater is a pleasant, well-meaning, but rather shallow and archaic man whose views would split the country and the alliance. Somehow they feel


103 New York Times, August 30, 1964, p. 10E.
that they must also imply that he is the reincarnation of Hitler and hellbent for war.

Likewise, it is not sufficient for the Republicans to condemn Lyndon Johnson as a political opportunist with very little demonstrated knowledge of world affairs. They must also attribute to him every vicious habit in the annals of political corruption.

Under this system, misdemeanors are transformed immediately on the hustings into felonies, reverses in Vietnam into imminent disaster for the whole of Southeast Asia, public school integration into miscegenation, juvenile delinquency into total depravity and decadence. 104

According to Reston the resulting pessimistic syndrome seems more ominous than reality.

We always seem to be "losing" something every four years: some country or continent, usually to the Communists. John Kennedy ran on what he called our "lost prestige." Barry Goldwater is running on what he perceives to be our lost honor and twisted character.

Thus by this same habit of extravagant public excitement, the blemishes on the face of the nation are made to appear urgent and fatal. 105

As a self-labeled "student of hypocrisy in the nation's capitol," Reston, observing that nobody is immune to the diseases of politics, notes that eventually candidates seek the advantages gained from bypassing sound analysis and stoop to profit by taking

104 New York Times, October 25, 1964, p. 10E.

105 Ibid.
advantage of public sentiment. He reproaches Kennedy and Nixon for yielding to this temptation in 1960.

When Senator Kennedy appeals to the special prejudices of the farmers, the unions, the Zionists, or the protectionist textile interest of New England, he wows the local audiences. When he asserts, with more conviction and logic, that our foreign policy is leading us deeper and deeper into trouble the crowds are less enthusiastic.

Similarly, when Vice President Nixon tells the boomsters and jingos that we are the strongest nation in the world they whoop for joy, but when he insists on a sensible farm program or a larger foreign-aid program, they sit on their hands.

Reston is contemptible of these techniques, contending that they lead inevitably to a trend where secondary issues designed "to comfort the people overwhelm primary issues which enlighten the people."

Reston chastises Nixon on this same count again in 1968. After describing the public mood which produced the peace movement and a reaction against black protesters and campus rebels, Reston denounces Nixon for "exploiting all these reactions."

He is saying we are in deep trouble at home and abroad, which is true, and blaming all the trouble

106 New York Times, June 4, 1956, p. 8E.
108 Ibid.
on Mr. Humphrey, which is false. He is in a good political situation. He is appealing to everybody who has a complaint and wants change, and the only question is whether he could remove the complaints and bring about the change if he got into the White House. 109

Even though Reston usually deplores the candidates' use of emotional appeal, he occasionally acknowledges its intrinsic merit. In acclaiming both Nixon and Kennedy for their acceptance speeches, for instance, he attributes part of their success to respectable utilization of emotional appeal:

Nixon . . . struck all the right notes of modesty, love of country, compassion for the inexperienced Democratic enemy, defiance of the wicked Communists, family affection, and religious conviction.

Kennedy was likewise ready with a soaring speech ending with an assist from the Bible. "Give me your help, your hand, your voice, your vote," he said. "Recall with me the words of Isaiah: They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary." 110

In like manner he praises the high ideals projected by Goldwater in a speech at Prescott, Arizona:

The Republican nominee’s speech . . . is an exercise in moral philosophy. It is full of the noble words of the English language--honor, hope, faith, vision and purpose.


110 New York Times, July 31, 1960, p. 8E.
It invites the voters to join him "in a good and noble cause," to clarify and purify our lives, to seek "greatness and purpose, to reject easy morals and uneasy ethics," to acquire "greatness of heart and self-restraint. . . ."

In doing so . . . he touches a wistful longing in the American spirit. 111

In summarizing the 1968 campaign, Reston quotes Adlai Stevenson to reinforce his own sentiments on addressing men's emotions and prejudices rather than their minds: "The hardest thing about any political campaign . . . is how to win without proving that you are unworthy of winning." 112 In his analyses Reston acknowledges the power of emotional appeal, but condemns its abuse for political and partisan gain. The short term gain afforded by such exploitation, he believes, is minimal, while the ultimate effect is national discord, pessimism, and distraction from primary issues.

Reconstructing the Social Setting

An integral part of Reston's criticism is determining the nature of the setting in which the candidates operate. Reston especially stresses the relationship between the speaker and his social setting when he feels that a speaker is distorting the true


picture, is ignoring primary issues, and is failing to consider the scope of the situation in his proposed solutions. Secondly, Reston considers the influence of the situation upon the speaker's broad strategy of selecting topics and locales for speaking. Finally Reston always allows for the influence of chance and unforeseen incidents in projecting the probable success of a speaker's strategy.

Recognizing that the candidates operate within a framework of social events, Reston expects their declarations and interpretations to reflect understanding of the meaning of these events. When he feels that candidates misconstrue the meaning and significance of social occurrences, Reston attempts to establish perspective by describing alternative conditions. For example during Goldwater's tour of the South in 1964, Reston felt that the Senator ignored the actual progress being made by the South toward achieving civil rights. In Reston's opinion this progress was also overshadowed by the avid response which Goldwater's denunciations of the Supreme Court and Federal Government aroused among predominantly white audiences. Thus, in his criticism of the speeches of the tour, Reston focuses on minimizing this distortion by depicting the actual situation.

The Presidential election distorts the true picture of the South. The campaign is noisy, pugnacious and divisive, but if you wander away
from the Goldwater caravan you see another South that is bounding ahead economically and gradually adjusting socially to the realities of the modern age.

While Montgomery, Ala., was preparing this week to greet Barry as the reincarnation of Jefferson Davis, Tuskegee was having an election. It voted into office the first two Negro councilmen since Reconstruction days.

While Goldwater was condemning the Federal Government, the president of the all-Negro Tuskegee Institute . . . was preparing for what he called "the most hopeful academic year in almost a century," . . . and many . . . school districts were quietly accepting Negro pupils for the first time. . . .

There are now 574 desegregated public school districts in the South, or roughly one-fourth of all the 2,255 school districts . . . [which] is an indication of trend.

It is not, however, the court orders or the recently passed Federal civil rights bill that is transforming the South. These things are influential but marginal. It is economics and not politics, businessmen and not judges or politicians, that are having the major impact for change on the Old Confederacy.

Reston further depicts conditions in the South in an effort to show that the scope of Goldwater's subject matter is limited and that the Senator is overlooking the primary issue of economics. In asserting that Goldwater is failing to heed the impact of an economic revolution that is transforming the South from its predominantly agricultural past into the industrial future, Reston cites the important role and potential of the South's natural resources and geography.

113 New York Times, September 20, 1964, p. 10E.

114 Ibid.
Reston emphasizes the significance of the economic revolution, noting that the South imports less from the North than it produces at home and that it is developing its own capital.

Its unemployment rate is lower and the growth in its production and income are higher than the national average, and all that is dramatically illustrated in the look of the cities. . . . They are symbols of the economic revolution of the South. 115

However, when Goldwater spoke in Atlanta, Reston observes, "he was full of elemental gloom, pining over the sad decline of his fellow countrymen, and not at all impressed with the visible progress all around him" as he proclaimed the theme, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul."

And yet . . . Atlanta itself didn't look exactly like the Capital of a crumbling civilization. Barry landed at a new airport and drove into town on vast new highways financed largely by the wicked Federal Government he denounced.

He spoke in a little square under a soaring complex of geometric new buildings erected by the downtrodden free enterprisers, and talked again to another vast crowd at a shopping center as opulent as the competitive dreams of both Macy and Gimbel. 116

"In the end," Reston predicts, "the economic revolution will undoubtedly prevail" over Goldwater, "a symbol of the political counter-revolution." 117

115 Ibid.
117 New York Times, September 20, 1964, p. 10E.
When the candidates concentrate on secondary issues and brush aside critics' supplications to raise the level of discussion, Reston often describes some of the critical occurrences on the national and international level in order to focus attention on primary issues. For instance in the sixth week of the 1960 campaign, he denounces the deterioration of what began as a broad debate on the large issues of national purpose. In the field of foreign policy, he accuses Nixon of perpetuating illusion "by saying that if we just stay steady on the same course everything will be all right," and Kennedy for abandoning legitimate queries in favor of less challenging but more popular topics. Reston relates the seriousness of the foreign situation to encourage the candidates to reorder their priorities:

Khrushchev . . . is in Finland and will be in New York courting the new African leaders later in the month. . . . Premier Fidel Castro announces that he will recognize Communist China, threatens to expel the United States from its naval base in Guantanamo Bay, and warns that he will accept "rocket support" from Moscow if Washington intervenes directly in Cuba. . . .

Soviet trucks, planes, pilots, mechanics, and interpreters have landed in the Congo to provide Premier Patrice Lumumba with air and surface

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118 *New York Times*, September 4, 1960, p. 8E.

transport for a possible invasion of the Congolise province of Katanga, now under protection of the United Nations.

Yet, a divided American Government, with an Executive in the hands of one party and a Legislature in the hands of the other, cannot agree on a program to deal with the international or national situation, and Kennedy's criticism of the Administration's foreign policy is getting a cool reception. 120

In criticizing a speaker's proposed solution, Reston often depicts the complexity and seriousness of circumstances confronting the nominee. 121 His interpretation of the inciting effect of the scenes of violence during the 1968 campaign illustrates the relevance which he associates between the speaker and his social setting. This emphasis on the magnitude of the situation confronting Nixon and Humphrey serves to reinforce his indictment of their inadequate proposals for dealing with the problem.

What seems to be happening with increased regularity now, is that some minorities are claiming for themselves what the Constitution denies even to the majority --the right to coerce, the power to paralyze a whole school system, to interrupt the orderly processes of an entire university, to exercise free speech while denying the same to others.

This is what has sent a shudder through the nation and raised for the first time since the depths of the economic depression of the early thirties the fear of civil disorder and even of anarchy.

120 Ibid.

We are at a delicate and even dangerous moment in American history. A minority on the right, using the Supreme Court as a whipping boy, and a minority on the left, using the Vietnam war as its main target, are pressing hard on the vast majority in the middle, and the reaction has already set in.

It is having its influence in the Presidential election campaign. The recent demonstrations at the Democratic convention in Chicago, the counteraction of the police, the closing of the schools in New York have all added to the anxiety of the majority and worked against Mr. Humphrey and the party he represents.

The danger is that this "tyranny of the minority" will lead in turn to a "tyranny of the majority" and to extreme repressive measures, which will not lead to either order or reconciliation, but to more disorder and division.

For the first time in many years, one hears thoughtful and unemotional men wondering whether the extremists of the right and left will be able to paralyze the majority in the center, as they did in Germany and Italy in the thirties, leading to powerful but repressive governments of the right. 122

Reston then proceeds to show that both candidates' proposals for reducing this sense of insecurity fail because of a preoccupation with effects rather than causes. 123

In all the campaigns, Reston considers how each speaker's view of the state of affairs in various sections of the country affects his planning. For example, after noting Stevenson's frustration in

securing support for his foreign policy views, Reston analyzes the reasons prompting the Democratic nominee's change in tactics:

He is trying to put together a coalition of states where there is either an anti-Republican party tradition or a current grievance against some of the Republican policies.

He is confident that the South will go solidly Democratic this time, and he hopes that he can pick up the additional 100-odd electoral votes necessary to win by concentrating on Northern states in which he believes there has been a powerful defection in the Republican ranks.

That is why he is going whistle-stopping in Pennsylvania next week.

After looking over the situation in the solidly agricultural plains states, he is convinced that he will pick up a lot of votes in such states as Iowa but probably not enough to carry the state.

Accordingly, rather than trying to achieve a sixteen per cent turnover in the predominantly farm states, he is going to carry his farm argument to states such as New York and Ohio, where a three or four per cent defection in the farm vote might be decisive for the Democrats. And he will be paying a lot of attention to New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, West Virginia, Washington and California. 124

When Stevenson travels to these key states, Reston analyzes the situation in greater detail.

This is one he has to take if he is going to win. . . . In Pennsylvania, more than in the other "target states," . . . conditions favor him. Governor George M. Leader, a Democrat, controls the patronage in Harrisburg. The popular former Mayor of Philadelphia, Joe Clark, is running on the Democratic ticket for Senator.

124 New York Times, September 30, 1956, p. 10E.
The Republican's organization in the state is split, and of course, Mr. Stevenson has powerful labor support under David Lawrence in Pittsburgh.\footnote{\textit{New York Times}, October 4, 1956, p. 19.}

In describing and establishing the significance of the social setting in which a speaker operates, Reston is always careful to allow for the influence of chance and occurrence of unforeseen incidents:

This election, like those of the past, is likely to be decided by the white, middleclass values the young intellectuals are protesting against. Both Nixon and Humphrey know this and both will be making their major appeals to this vast majority in the middle.

Nobody can tell now--not even the pollsters--what the response will be. What happens in the war and the peace talks in Paris between now and November could change the present mood, and when Humphrey and Nixon begin debating the issues the personal impression of the two men, regardless of past assumptions about them, could be decisive.\footnote{\textit{New York Times}, September 1, 1968, p. 10E.}

Reston establishes the relationship between the speaker and his social setting by reconstructing the scene in which the speaker operates. He refers to external events primarily to broaden the reader's perspective, so that the reader can understand the basis for his evaluations of the speaker's meaning, choice of issues, and
proposed solutions. These references also provide insight into the effect of the speaker on the audience as well as the effect of the situation on him and his strategy.

**Audience Analysis**

At various intervals during each campaign, Reston accompanies the candidates to observe personally the interaction between speaker and audience. On these occasions he usually relates the influence of external factors, particularly the setting, the audience's general characteristics and attitudes, the immediate response, as well as adaptation efforts of the speaker. Reston's consideration of these components is illustrated in his analysis of some of Goldwater's speeches delivered in the South.

In the Alabama capital of Montgomery, hours before Barry arrived, the atmosphere was alive with excitement. The radio was exhorting all listeners to be at the stadium for the rally. The cops were streaking up and down the rolling streets with Goldwater banners flying from the aerials of their motorbikes. Young men were brandishing brooms and promising at the top of their voices to sweep Lyndon out of the White House. There was a mammoth barbeque in process across the street from the stadium, where the faithful could fortify themselves in various ways and listen to anti-Johnson songs over the loudspeaker.

By the time Barry arrived, over 20,000 people had jammed the stadium, each of them armed with a Goldwater banner on a stick. On the field, covering the entire expanse from one goal post to another, were seven hundred young women in virginal white formal dresses waving American flags, and above in the clear night sky an
airplane circled slowly with a moving electric sign reading "In Your Heart You Know He's Right--Barry Goldwater. . . ."

It was part fashion show, part revival meeting, held appropriately enough, on the field where the North and South football stars replay the Civil War every autumn, and when Barry arrived the place was jumping with excitement.127

These events, according to Reston, indicate something about the drift of the campaign:

Goldwater has a strong appeal everywhere in the South. His views are undoubtedly more representative of majority feeling in the Old Confederacy than Johnson's but nowhere does he inspire greater mass emotion than at the very center of the white supremacy movement.128

To verify this interpretation, Reston delineates Goldwater's adjustment to his audience and their responses.

He got only a medium hello from the Montgomery crowd for his promises to end the draft and stamp out inflation, but when he mentioned President Johnson they booed, and when he attacked the Supreme Court of the United States, they howled and roared with delight.

He urged the young people to believe that the Republicans would restore state's rights and

127 New York Times, September 18, 1964, p. 34.
128 Ibid.
the principles the old Democratic party had abandoned. He told them that the military could handle the situation in Vietnam if only they were encouraged or permitted to do so. And he asserted that no people had ever lost their freedom through invasion.\textsuperscript{129}

Discussing Goldwater's speeches in Atlanta and Winston-Salem, Reston describes the crowds as larger than those that greeted Nixon four years earlier. "They were friendly and seemed ready for deliverance if not repentance," he notes in relating the response to Goldwater's denunciation of the Democrats "for the debasement of our immortal souls; He put the old biblical question in different words. What were prosperity and justice without freedom? he asked. But he didn't mention the Negro, who is a little short on all three."\textsuperscript{130}

Reston concludes that "there is clearly enough sentiment for him to use his time to good advantage."

Never mind if he traveled thousands of miles through the Southland and seldom mentioned the Negro or even saw many of them, the trip was undoubtedly a success wherever he went.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{131} \textit{New York Times}, September 18, 1964, p. 34.
Reston frequently notes a speaker's failure to adapt and relate general issues to the needs of his immediate audience to explain an unenthusiastic response. For example he identifies this as the basic shortcoming underlying the undistinguished performances of Nixon in the industrial hill towns of the Pennsylvania Alleghenies and of Kennedy in the northern and western suburbs of Chicago.

Nixon was talking yesterday about how well we are doing and the need for continuity--this in the grim Pennsylvania valleys suffering from technological revolution and unemployment and obviously longing not for continuity but change.

Kennedy was talking today about our lack of change and progress--this in bustling new communities whose houses were not built, whose breadwinners weren't married, and whose children were not born when Eisenhower came to power eight years ago.\textsuperscript{132}

Likewise he denounces Eisenhower and Stevenson for concentrating on the past instead of the future aspirations of people in the small Middle West towns such as Sycamore, Illinois:

But neither is talking as much as the leaders of these prosperous little market towns about the need for more schools, more roads and new outlets for their rapidly growing productivity of fields and factories of the old Northwest Territory.

The Middle West is dreaming about what life will be like in the wide area around the Great Lakes when the St. Lawrence Seaway is completed and ocean liners from Europe are docked along the city

streets of Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee. Though the leaders of these and many other lakefront municipalities are not famous for their foresight, they are at least conscious of the possibilities of tremendous expansion in the next generation, when they have direct-sea connection with the older continents.

Thus they are at least eager to listen to any national leader who not only shares their dreams of an expanding Middle West but also can articulate plans to take advantage of the exciting new prospects they are beginning to envisage.

Reston also is concerned with the ingenuity of candidates in adapting on a national level. He is intrigued by the reversal in strategy between the Republicans and Democrats in the 1968 election.

Roosevelt came to power here in 1932 appealing to "the forgotten man," . . . [who] now has made spectacular progress. He not only has a job a generation later but he has property . . . and has moved out of the slums of the cities into the suburbs. . . . They . . . now resent taxes, are now indifferent and many of them even hostile, to the militant poor whites and blacks who are left behind.

Nixon's whole campaign now is directed to the "new class" of workers who have moved into the middle class as a result of the welfare state and planned economy policies the Republicans have held against Roosevelt for more than a generation. Nixon knows that there is still a "forgotten man" in the urban ghettos, black and white, but he knows that there is a new and larger middle class, which resents racial turmoil, the demonstrations in the cities.

and all the permissiveness of contemporary American life. . . . He is saying that the workers of the middle class, liberated by Roosevelt, are now the "forgotten people," and this is his main hope of getting to the White House.

He is basing his campaign on the proposition that the blacks, the liberal intellectuals, and the liberal press are out of touch with the majority of the voters, and he may be right.134

On the other hand, Reston declares that even as Humphrey clings to directing his primary appeal to the "forgotten man" of Roosevelt's era, he is "clearly worried about this Nixon strategy."135 Again Reston's central focus is on audience attitude and composition:

They [Democrats] have lost their old allies in the universities and the press. They have the support of the labor union leaders but they are not sure of the support of the labor union voters. They have Mayor Daley of Chicago and George Meany of the AFL-CIO on their sides, but not necessarily the workers or the poor who made up the Democratic labor vote of the past. . . .136

Reston regards the interpretation of the audience's attitude as a mandatory, but risky, undertaking because of population changes, the loosening of former political allegiances, and the

135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
reluctance of people to be polled. Explaining the frustration of Kennedy's and Nixon's experts to "read the mood of the country aright," Reston chooses Kennedy's visit to Illinois to show population changes influence the audiences.  

Reliability of old patterns are reduced by a population change which has revolutionized the make-up of the precincts, counties, and Congressional districts and thus confronted both parties with wholly new problems, particularly in the big states which usually decide elections. . . . Chicago here is a case in point.

About a quarter of a million Negroes have moved into the city since Eisenhower entered the White House. The total population of Chicago has gone down by 109,000 in the last ten years, but the Negro population has risen nearly 400,000. . . .

For example, the Thirteenth Congressional District of Illinois, which Kennedy toured Tuesday, has increased by 93.1 per cent in the last ten years. . . .

To Reston determining the causes for the attitude change among various segments of the national audience is an essential phase of the candidate's planning. For example, he explores reasons for labor unions' declining loyalty to Lyndon Johnson in 1964 to illustrate the complexity of selecting appeals to secure labor union support.

138 Ibid.
Also there are economic, social, and psychological cracks in the "monolithic" structure of union democratic support. Affluence is the enemy of union leader influence, just as it is the enemy of the big city political boss.

Similarly, the rising standards of education and the wider dissemination of political information by television, have produced a more independent attitude of mind among the union members and broken down some of the old allegiance to the Democratic party just when the white working class is beginning to worry about the increasing competition of the Negro for jobs and housing.

Yet despite these trends in the labor union movement, the endorsement of Big Labor in this election probably is worth more than it ever was in the past.139

Although Reston reiterates that "polls and interpretations of polls . . . can have a bearing on who wins and who loses," he doubts their accuracy in reflecting true sentiment.140 Toward the end of the 1960 campaign, he notes that in spite of the mobilization of the sociologist, pollsters, and mass psychologists, "[t]he American people remain a mystery. . . .

The experts study them in the streets and in the railway yards and along the country roads, and even measure their shrieks and applause, but the new political scientists are . . . baffled. . . .


The reasons for their uncertainty are clear enough. Never since the Kinsey Report have reporters and pollsters run into so many citizens who seem to resent being questioned. Those who are going to vote for Kennedy because he is a Catholic, or against him for the same reason, are seldom willing to admit it. And together these two groups add up to an imponderable so large as to defy accurate analysis.

Frequently Reston emphasizes the importance of audience response as an instrument of positive influence on the speakers. This faith in the audience's judgment and power to encourage responsibility in the candidates is manifest in Reston's analysis of the reaction of the American people to the 1968 national political conventions.

The last few months have produced a great deal of criticism of the democratic process. You can hardly glance at a paper these days without seeing some charge that our representative system is unrepresentative, and our ideals a mockery. . . . The Presidential nominating conventions mock the one-man, one-vote principal. . . .

Thus "the system" is blamed for most of our contemporary trouble. It has broken down according to the popular pessimism of the day. . . .

And yet, while recognizing all this, it is hard to go all the way with the apocalyptic conclusion that this is "the worst of times."

The impulse for freedom is very much alive in the world today. . . .

This generation is simply taking a harder look at the facts. They look at the election process and see that it is patently unfair. They see and listen to Nixon and Humphrey and are not very enthusiastic.

They watch the convention hijinks on television and regard them as stupid and even vulgar.

The idea of equality is much more powerful than we suppose—and you can't kill ideas with cops. . . . It is a noisy world, not because the problems are not being faced, but because they are being faced more directly than ever before.

It is a noisy election, not because it is more unrepresentative than in the past, but because a lot more voters see just how unrepresentative it is and they don't like it. In fact, they're raising hell about it, and eventually this could just change it for the better. 142

He praises the native common sense evident in the American people's response to Johnson and Goldwater in 1964.

The American people have really been more sensible in this campaign than either of the candidates. "The moral fiber of the American people," says Goldwater, "is beset by rot and decay." Maybe so. But if they were so lost in depravity, as he suggests, presumably there would be no point in appealing to their better instincts.

Confused as we are on moral and political questions, it is still not easy for politicians to put over their outrageous exaggerations. 143

When interpreting the basis for an audience's positive response to a speaker, Reston sometimes reproaches people for their deficiencies. He most frequently denounces prejudice, inability to pursue complex issues, complacency, and affinity for


143 New York Times, October 25, 1964, p. 10E.
attentiveness to good news rather than bad. He is critical when
reactions indicate that prejudice has superceded rationality and
when candidates yield to the temptation to exploit such tendencies:

It is, of course, true that many people in Texas
sincerely oppose Kennedy for both economic and
religious reasons. But it also happens to be true
that it is easier, and cheaper, to defeat him here
among the working class voters with religious
rather than economic arguments.144

During the Republican Convention of 1968, Reston denounces
Republican leaders for failing to take the opportunity to make the
people believe again in the Republican candidate and the Republican
program.

They are acting on the oldest rules of American
politics—that the people vote their prejudices,
and will reject the party in power if things are
going badly, no matter who is put up by the
opposition.145

Reston warns of the portent of oversimplifying issues to
appeal to a certain segment of the population. In 1964, he wrote:

The more complicated life becomes, the more
people are attracted by simple solutions; the more
irrational the world seems, the more they long for
rational answers; and the more diverse everything
is, the more they want it all reduced to identity.

Those who feel this way are undoubtedly attracted to Senator Goldwater, and many part-political and part ethical movements have gone further on less. 146

From his interviews with people in various sections of the country, Reston observes that complacency and indifference are common among the populace in all the elections. For instance in 1956 he describes these as major challenges confronting both candidates. After Eisenhower's limited number of speeches in Illinois, Reston suggests that a change in planning is imminent:

So far as can be determined in two long journeys crisscrossing this state, complacency is the main Republican danger . . . [and Eisenhower] is being told by Republican leaders in this state and others in the Middle West that more personal appearances and more specific programs for the future are necessary if he is to be re-elected with a Republican Congress. 147

His assessment of the political scene following Stevenson's nomination stresses the prevalence of both complacency and indifference. "The country is peaceful and prosperous. It is suffering under the illusion that it is more peaceful and prosperous than it is. Indifference and defeatism have weakened the party's ranks. . . ." 148

Pointing out that people prefer to hear good news, Reston quotes Jeremiah: "The prophets prophesy falsely and my people love to have it so." Thus in the last month of the campaign in 1960, Reston credits Nixon's advantage to his emphasis on the positive: "He is doing what most politicians do in the absence of war and depression. He is bearing good tidings..." Reston underscores the significance and success of the positive approach in analyzing a speech in which Eisenhower outlined the design of his campaign to fellow Republicans.

Not "Give'em Hell" but "Give'em Heaven"—that is clearly going to be the Republican campaign strategy. . . . Peace, prosperity, and progress were all over the place, and truth was extolled as the symbol of victory.

. . . When he [Eisenhower] says he wants truth and nothing but the truth, the assembled politicians become as so many lads in Sunday School.

Although Reston views the pivotal role of the audience in persuasion as diverse and complex, often even defying explication, he nevertheless painstakingly attempts to interpret it and expects the candidates to do the same. Indeed he attempts to show the relevance

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149 New York Times, October 9, 1960, p. 10E.

150 Ibid.

between the nominees' success and their ability to determine and adapt to audience sentiment. To Reston audience adaptation does not mean that the speaker compromises his principles but seeks honestly to acquaint himself with the needs and aspirations of the people in the various sections of the country.

According to Reston this task is becoming increasingly difficult because of the growth and movement of population, a decline in party loyalty, and the unreliability of polls. Although he acknowledges persistent weaknesses in human nature, Reston maintains faith in the common sense of the American people and belief in their good judgment.

Conclusion

James Reston's criticism of the speaking of four Presidential campaigns is based on a firm understanding of speech-making and a well-conceived system of values for relating the nominees' speeches to that which is most worthwhile in man's endeavors and aspirations. His principal aim of criticism, to enlighten the electorate and encourage the candidates to practice the art of speaking with greater insight, is a safeguard to freedom. While Reston has observed that the behavior of political speakers is often commendable, he notes that their tactics invariably become abusive. As a journalist he feels
obligated to point out both the abusive and reputable conduct of the candidates so that the electorate will have a balanced account of the campaign proceedings.

Reston believes that determining character is the most difficult and important judgment facing the citizenry. Therefore, in his consideration of the candidates' speeches, he focuses particularly on a speaker's ability to instill trust, his integrity, and his courage. In addition to character, Reston recognizes the influence of personality, prestige, and the ability to secure good will. He directs his treatment of these remaining components of ethical proof toward minimizing their power to overshadow and divert attention away from the speaker's ideas.

In his analysis of logical proof, Reston scrupulously evaluates the worth and significance of the speaker's ideas, on the basis of their timeliness, scope, and relevance. Believing that speech is an instrument to be used to establish truth, Reston often evaluates the candidates' reasoning and use of evidence. He denounces the speakers for exchanging sound analysis for the immediate advantages sometimes gained by the exploitation of emotions. According to Reston, the debasement of the intrinsic merit of emotional appeal often produces national discord, pessimism, and distraction from primary issues.
Reston is mindful that a speaker's strategy is greatly influenced by his social setting. By reconstructing the scene in which the speaker operates along with the speaker's interpretation of these events, Reston provides insight into the significance of the relationship for the electorate.

Although Reston emphasizes ethical and logical proof in his analyses, he always attempts to show the relationship between speakers' successful responses and their ability to determine and adapt to audience sentiment. He underscores the difficulty of audience analysis, especially on the national level, but nevertheless regards the task as essential to a speaker's success.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

James Reston admittedly has neither sought instruction nor deliberately studied public speaking or criticism. Yet from self-concern, observation, and experience, he has developed a credible theory of speech and commendably applied it in his criticism of some of the most important political speaking of the day. Reston's standards of excellence for speaking evolve through a humanistic approach concerned with formulating the good in human endeavor. As a speech critic he fulfills a vital role by urging improvement of the art of speaking by constantly holding in view its potential for millions of readers. Furthermore his speech theory and its application is valuable because it reinforces much of what both classical and modern educators of speech advocate.

In summarizing his viewpoint and skill in speech criticism, references will occasionally be made to classical and modern speech authorities who share corresponding attitudes in order to underscore the merit of Reston's attitude and contributions.
Research reveals that Reston is intelligent, curious, industrious, knowledgeable, and possesses a strong sense of purpose and intense moral passion. Above all he appears as a man of integrity who views his job as a journalist with a profound sense of responsibility. In preparing for meeting the challenges of his profession, he developed a keen appreciation and insight into the art of oratory, particularly political speaking.

His own speaking experience combined with personal observations of the speaking of leading statesmen of the world from just prior to the outbreak of World War II through the present have instilled in Reston not only the significance of the power of the spoken word but also recognition of the interplay of factors which comprise the public speaking situation. This entails concepts centered around a pronounced faith in democracy and desire for its preservation.

Valuing persuasion above coercion, and speech as the chief instrument of the former, Reston resounds the sentiments of Aristotle in his regard and preference of the wisdom of the masses in their capability in exercising final judgment:

For it is possible that the Many, of whom each individual is not a virtuous man, are still collectively superior to the few best persons, i.e. superior not as individuals but as a body. . . .
The many are better judges... for some judge one part, some another, and all of them collectively the whole.¹

To aid the citizenry in exercising this authority as well as enhancing ability in their daily communication, Reston strongly advocates formal training in public speaking and continued study of the facts and alternative courses of action proposed by leaders of the day. Indeed, as a journalist he refers to himself as an educator whose primary purpose is to enlighten and help the readers reach a judgment on the facts. His consideration of the speeches of presidents and presidential candidates appears to grow out of his concern as a journalist to assess the quality of leadership in this country and to keep in focus the great issues and thought of the time.

In his own speaking and in the speech of others, Reston seeks above all else to reveal character. This belief that the authenticity of what is said lies within the speaker echoes classical theory, "that no man, unless he be good can ever be an orator."² The powerful influence of character along with the remaining attributes of ethical appeal are manifest in his painstaking investigation of this mode of


proof. The prevailing state of disunity and mistrust in the nation, according to Reston, is directly related to national leaders' deficiencies in this area.

While evincing respect for ethical appeal, Reston's expectations of a speaker include further obligations. His concern with the destiny of the American people compels him in his treatment of discourses to emphasize the relevance of truth. Like James A. Winans, noted speech teacher of the early twentieth century, Reston urges a speaker to "appeal to the best sentiments in your hearers." To Reston this means ideally that a speaker should present significant and worthwhile ideas which serve to actualize the highest aspirations of society instead of resorting to concentration on secondary issues and the exploitation of emotions, prejudices, and special interests for the speaker's own selfish end.

In order to do this, Reston urges that a speaker must possess a sense of duty, mental aptitude to discern central issues, initiative and imagination to educate and carry out proposed programs, and insight into human nature so that he can better adapt proposals to his audience. This presupposes that a speaker is knowledgeable of the

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national and international scene in which he operates. Reston exhorts vigorous study, observation, and involvement as did Cicero whose advice to the orator of the first century B.C. was "let him have a tincture of learning; let him have heard and read something."\(^4\)

To Reston public speaking is a practical art whose practitioners at the highest levels speak with a vested interest. Therefore, he never despairs over the repeated failures of political speakers' shortcomings in choice and presentation of subject matter as they revert to expediency to obtain their ends. He directs his efforts toward revealing and evaluating each speaker's interpretation of the issues and expresses faith in the ultimate good which can be achieved by the art through reiterating the comparison of the men of action versus the men who convey their thoughts through writing.

In both his observations on rhetoric and his critical evaluations of speakers, Reston shares the views of the noted speech critics Lester Thonssen and A. Craig Baird in maintaining three essentials: (1) "Rhetoric is to be used to give effectiveness to truth. (2) There is a need for the establishment of a more binding relationship between the instrumental and the ethical components of the speaking

art. (3) The cultivation of a sense of responsibility for the uttered statement is a crying imperative for public speakers today. . . . "5

Although Reston is a journalist rather than speech critic, he provides a service not only for the citizenry but for speech students, scholars, and educators by endorcing and encouraging the application of many of the precepts of their profession.

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Washington D.C., June 30, 1970

Bennie G. Coates: In a *Time* article it says that you first came to the United States in 1911 and that after a few months your family returned to Scotland. Is this right?

James Reston: Well the year is wrong. Actually it was 1910. My family came to Dayton, Ohio, and then my mother got quite ill. After about a year they went back to Scotland.

BGC: And there you attended Vale of Leven Academy. Is this a public school or comparable to our elementary schools?

JR: Yes it is. It is not public in the British sense of the public school. It is just a regular consul school.

BC: What about the influence of your parents? If you were naming some attributes of your parents that have influenced you the most, what would you say?

JR: Well, first obviously is religion. My mother and father were very devout believing Presbyterians. They brought up my sister and me in a very rigorous Scottish Presbyterian church going way. For example all during that period of roughly ten years in Scotland we would get up on Sunday morning. My mother would never cook on Sunday. We would get up and we would walk to a village called Renton which was about two miles away to church. Then we would walk back again in the evening. So that will give you some idea.

BC: In your columns, the prevailing idea is usually that you're optimistic and patriotic. I was wondering if either of your parents reflected this outlook toward life?

JR: I don't think so. My parents being Calvinists took a very sorta poor view of life on earth in the sense that they were both believers, strong believers in the world after this
life, and life on earth in their view was a vale of tears. Therefore, they tended to be -- first of all they were very poor -- and they tended to believe that that was the way life was on this earth. Life was a struggle. They accepted that as perhaps a punishment for original sin. Perhaps that distorts it a bit because it makes it sound as if they were lugubrious people. They were not melancholy people. But they were not optimistic.

BC: Frequently I see the quotation by your mother, "It is alright to be born poor --

JR: Yea, in that sense she was optimistic. Of course that is part of the Scotish tradition too. Strong emphasis not only on church but on education. And of course they were very strong for that.

BC: I have read that you spent long hours with your family reading the Bible and poetry.

JR: My father was a great Bible reader. Much more so, actually my father was a Bible scholar though he worked in a factory all of his life. He was a great reader. A self-educated man and he did a lot of reading.

BC: Would he read aloud to you?

JR: He would. And I did some reading but not a great deal, not a great deal.

BC: What about the poetry?

JR: No that's not quite right, some poetry. My Mother was very proud of the fact that her father, whom she regarded as a sculptor, well that was a kind of romantic girl's view of her father. I think that her father was a stone mason with a certain gift for making rough statues and he was in charge of a cemetery and a little church in Strinrar in Scotland. There he would not only carve the head stone and sometimes human figures, but he would also compose the verses for the tombstones. And in that sense he was a man of some of more than ordinary talent not only at sculpture and at poetry but also at drinking whiskey I'm sorry to say.
BC: Oh, all right. One other question concerning your parents. You obviously are not prejudiced toward the races and in your columns you speak so often about equal rights for everyone. Could I assume your parents felt this way as far as not being prejudiced toward different ethnic groups?

JR: No they didn't. Of course they grew up in a country where there was no race problem. People went out from a poor country like Scotland into the empire where they worked with black people. But I would say that prejudice toward the blacks is a comparatively new thing in the United Kingdom. It was not at that time -- certainly it was not part of my family's experience. My mother was rather vaguely prejudiced, but she knew that it was against the Lord's teachings to be prejudiced. Then therefore she never said anything about it.

BC: What about their education?

JR: They had no education really. My father went through grade school and then went to work. He never went to high school. My mother received a little more education, but she finished schooling at fourteen.

BC: When you came to Dayton, Ohio in 1920 can you recall any particular difficulty you had in making the adjustment to school here compared to over there?

JR: No, I didn't really. I had more or less a traditional education over there. I wasn't a good student particularly. I wasn't a bad student but I certainly was not a good student. But I went into the sixth grade in a typical city school, Hoffman school in the working class section of Dayton, Ohio. After a couple of years I went on to what was really a manual training high school called Stiffens high school.

BC: Your mother wanted you in another one so you went to Oakland high?

JR: Yes, I think that is an accurate thing. She was an ambitious woman. She is still alive by the way. She is ninety four years of age, a wonderful old lady. I talked to her on the telephone last night.
BC: Well I didn't know she was still alive. In high school did you take any courses in speech?

JR: No.

BC: What about extra-curricular activities? Did you participate in any?

JR: My entire interests at that time were sports. I played golf and was supposed to be a boy wonder. I won high school championships at state, Public Links championship. All when I was fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen and that absorbed my entire life.

BC: I was afraid of that.

JR: I didn't do any public speaking, except that it put me in the limelight and forced me to make little speeches of thanks to whoever was presenting the trophies and that kind of thing. More than that sports, well I very seldom ever play golf now, sports were a really critical part of my education. The fact that I played golf and played well, it carried me into a different area of life. It sorta pulled me out of the ruck of the poor part of town. I caddied for well known men, educated men, and there is something in this country as you know where wherever men of the country club see a boy that does his job well, and they think he's got talent, sorta gifts that can be developed, they're always trying to help you. That is very typical of this country. So they were always saying, "You must go on to college," and so on and so forth. That was all very helpful.

BC: When you were seventeen, you were editor of the Delco Remy publication?

JR: That was a house organ for the Delco Remy Corporation.

BC: So you did that for one year. In an article it said that this enabled you to get money for tuition to go on to college.

JR: That was right.

BC: Were you self supporting while in college?
JR: Oh yes, yes I put myself all the way through college.

BC: I guess you were on scholarship.

JR: No, I wasn't on an athletic scholarship. But you see from the golf in the winter I would go down and hang around the newspaper because I had got to know the sportswriters. I took on little jobs of picking up the phone and taking down scores and writing little --

BC: And that's how you became interested in newspaper writing.

JR: Sure, that's how I got into newspapers. From the sports to the newspaper and from the newspaper into the cities. It was a very simple transition.

BC: Would you mind if I listed the courses that you took in college? I would not put your grades.

JR: Yea, I don't know whether I can get it. Although if you wanted to do it, you may.

BC: I can write for them if your secretary can just indicate on the paper that you have given me permission to have your transcript.

JR: Yes, of course.

BC: Did you take any speech courses in college?

JR: No, I didn't.

BC: Nor participate in any extra curricular activities involving debate, drama --

JR: Or speech? No.

BC: In an article that I read, the author commented that you attended these intellectual bull sessions at the home of Bruce Wireick, an English professor. There you talked about English and philosophy and such things. Did you find activities like this more stimulating than classroom lectures?

JR: Well I think two things can be said about that. Both of
them were interesting. Again sports was the link paradoxically between the world of sports which is really all I knew anything about and journalism on the one hand at the sports level and this other intellectual world. Because it was through Wireick, who was kind a character on campus, a rather poetic, a rather eccentric man, who also happened to be a golf nut, and it was through golf again and meeting him at the Champaign Country Club that he invited me back into this more intellectual group in the university and then more important than that was the girl that I married who lived in a totally different world who was really about the best student at the university at that time.

BC: I gathered that.

JR: Very prominent on campus, very well educated, and well read. Much better educated than I.

BC: Besides this teacher were there any others that you consider have exerted significant influence on you?

JR: Well there was another professor at Illinois who was a great friend of Stewart B. Sherman, name of Zeitlin. I took Seventeenth Century prose from him and he was a remarkable man. His full name was Jacob Zeitlin, a great scholar. A marvelous teacher. That was strictly a classroom thing though. I didn't know him really as a human being as a person, but as a teacher he had quite an influence on me.

BC: You frequently quote poets and authors. Did you get impetus to read?

JR: No that comes out of something totally different. See let's kind of look at it from your point of view. The really important thing to me on speaking was going back to England during the time of Churchill and sitting in the House of Commons and watching debates and listening to debates and listening to the English who for some reason or other know how to use the English language. That was a critical experience because it was a time of great emotion, of historical significance. It was a time when men were moved by the eminence of war and by the problem of trying to prevent war in the first instance and then having failed,
dealing with the war in terms that got men out of themselves in their thinking about the security and even the life, the independent life, of their country; and therefore they spoke in a way, with an eloquence, a passion that I had never heard before. And then you see again the element of accident in life plays such an important role. The sports. I went to, I got a chance to go well into journalism and into big city journalism again through sports and through going to Ohio State University as athletic publicity director and to the Cincinnati Reds in order to go to the big cities where the major leagues were so that I could try to get a job in the big city journalism. That was the point of going there. But again it was using sports to -- you know in those days which were the days of the depression -- you didn't know I was getting out a paper in Springfield -- eight editions a week -- and how to get away was a terrible problem. So I did it through the sports way, and then the element of accident again. I just happened to go as a sports writer for the A.P. to London and just at the time of the coronation and just before Munich and during that enormously crucial period leading to the collapse of British civilization and the outbreak of the war.

BC: One more question and then I'm going to move on to your speaking experience. While with the A.P. you wrote a drama column off and on. Where would I find these?

JR: Well that's very hard to find. I actually tried to find them myself. I suppose it could be done and it is relevant to your inquiry I think, because the history of this is that there was a columnist who was extraordinarily successful in this country called O. O. McIntyre. He hit on the idea, it would be sort of out of date now, because the country is so much more mobile. But when we were essentially an agrarian county the kids wanted to go to the big town. Big town then was New York of course. O. O. McIntyre wrote this column of vignettes of what New York looked like, what was going on in the theatre, and all that kind of thing. It became very popular and the A. P. and the U. P. and the other syndicates began copying it. I was given the job shortly after I went to New York in 1934 I think and maybe 1935 of doing this column about the city. It was a column of personalities in the theatre. If authors came to New York the publishing houses would tell you about Mr. Priestley or
H. G. Wells and we would go down on the cutter and get on the boat and interview them and there again there was the beginning of a realization that there are many ways of speaking. One can be slovenly with speech or one can be precise and that it was an educated man's job to be able to convey thought through speech to another person or to other people. Meeting people of this caliber, who did speak and could make their points, illustrate their points, reach conclusions, this step began to become clear to me.

BC: Was the column syndicated?

JR: Yes, the only way you could find it -- I know the A.P. does not have copies -- these were put out on printed sheets and sent out in what is called the Associated Press feature service. Now it may be -- the only way you could find it would be through the member papers that ran it at that time and looking through the microfilm of those particular papers. I don't really think it's very relevant to your point other than this point that I'm making -- that it carried me again into the world of educated people.

BC: You and your wife purchased the Vineyard Gazette in 1968.

JR: Yes, it is a very famous old country weekly.

BC: Do you write for this?

JR: Yes.

BC: Oh, more reading that I've missed.

JR: Oh well you don't need to bother with that. I'll give you a copy of this and you can just look it over. This is one of the big issues that we get out once a year.

BC: Thank you. Now about your speaking? Do you receive assistance while you're writing your speeches? I'm referring to research. Frequently you quote various people and statistics in your speeches. I just wondered how you assimilate all of these things.

JR: Well there is a certain amount of research that goes into it, because I believe if you go and speak to an audience in
generalities it doesn't work. But if you come before an audience with some general points that you wish to make but relate those points to them, to their institution, then you get their attention as the old man said as he hit the mule over the head with the two-by-four. Therefore, I would say Rick, my intern here, I'm going to do the speech at the one hundredth anniversary of Ohio State University. I don't know whether you saw that one or not which was the last one I've just done. Go back and let's look at 1870. What was Ohio in 1870? How many people were there?

BC: Do you have someone to assist you in doing research like that?

JR: Yes, he would go and look at that. What was the population of America at that time and what were the events that happened in that year that might be interesting? And so he will go and get that, and since I'm usually trying to say to all audiences there is no answer to your problems in my view by concentrating on devils or individuals who may be to blame for whatever worries you and there is no ideological answer in my view. The only way you can understand what is going on now and see it in perspective is to broaden your scope about the whole problem recognizing that men and women have been here before and they had problems and this is the only way you can either understand or indeed endure the time of troubles if you do understand it in a broad philosophic vein.

BC: What's the major difference if there is one in how you go about writing a speech or just writing your column?

JR: I find one interesting difference and you may wish as an expert in this field which I am not to speculate a bit or analyze this a bit. My speeches are more optimistic than my columns. Not intentionally: so, they just come out that way. I think the answer is that as a journalist I am pointing to a small problem which is contemporary and saying this is wrong, we've got to do something to correct this. Whereas, when I'm making a speech I'm writing too in a much broader perspective about the tides of history rather than the waves on the surface of the water, and that the waves are ruffled. I believe that about this tide theme. Everything looks terribly confused, things are bubbling on the surface, but
underneath there are broad tides of thought and as I believe unifying forces loose in the world which are moving and which are more important than the devisive things we see on the surface. I tend to make speeches about the tides and I tend to write columns about the waves. I think that is the explanation.

BC: At Christmas and at the end of the year you write especially about the tides.

JR: Yea.

BC: You've stated frequently that you have to get away from Washington ever so often because staying here too long is like talking to yourself on the telephone. Do you feel that your speaking engagements aid you in any way. Do you learn from your audience.

JR: Oh very definitely so. I find that I learn a good deal about my craft from speaking, because first of all I learned that people are I think terribly interested in wide subjects and that simple audiences are interested in philosophy. There isn't any point in my going out -- I wouldn't go out to a university for example, even a university, and talk to an audience about the intricacies of the Cooper amendment on presidential power and give them all the ins and outs of who's for this and who is for that. First of all, I would find it a bore and I think the audience would find it a bore. But if I talk to them about the great struggle between the chief executive and the legislature which has gone on from the days of the Federalist papers right down to the Cooper-Church amendment of the present time and how first the president had been supreme or dominant in the struggle and then the congress, and what happened during the war between the states when the Congress really tried to take over the running of the war from Mr. Lincoln and what a disaster that was, they find that all very interesting. And if you then can bring it down to the contemporary problem which is that presidential power has greatly increased through the invention of the atom bomb and the intercontinental missile which means that our country could be destroyed before you could ever get the Congress together -- let alone get them to vote, then they are interested. But too many statistics I think turn people off.
BC: When you deliver your speeches, do you usually speak from a manuscript?

JR: I usually do not speak from a manuscript.

BC: An outline? Do you usually have notes?

JR: I usually have an outline, yes.

BC: Then these speeches or notes, whatever you're going to let me study later, do you write out a manuscript first?

JR: No.

BC: I was wondering if I could say this [a manuscript of a speech delivered at Ohio State University] is kind of a true approximation of what you said?

JR: Well, you can get the theme. The written speeches will give you the major themes alright. My real problem is nobody has invented the forty-eight hour day. I just don't have time to — I've just gone up to open the teacher's course at the Times. Teachers come in and go through a kind of public affairs course. Well I just sit down and put on recipe cards. You know main points that I want to make.

BC: Right. Your assistant sent me four or five speeches that you delivered in 1968. One at an anniversary at North Carolina and a couple of them were commencement speeches. Now these obviously were published. One of them appeared in a newspaper.

JR: Yes.

BC: Now for something like that —

JR: Well, I sit down and write that out.

BC: You write that out. Well when you deliver that speech —

JR: What I usually do and I must tell you this. I find that even when I have a written speech, unless it is — even when it is a commencement speech, I try to speak — to force myself to speak at the beginning extemporaneously.
BC: At least for the introduction --

JR: First of all because I assume that people have to get used
   to you. They have to stop rustling their chairs first of
   all. They have to get used to your voice and the pace of
   your voice. I try quite consciously to put them at their
   ease, primarily to put myself at ease and get over my own
   fright at the beginning.

BC: Do you still experience stage fright?

JR: Oh yes, sure, sure, sure---

BC: So even when you have a printed text, you don't adhere
    strictly to it?

JR: I would usually preface what I have to say by saying that
    I have an apology to make to the audience. I have brought
    a written manuscript. I hate written manuscripts and I'll
    tell you why. Because reporters spend most of their lives
    listening to porky middle-aged characters like me making,
    reading speeches and usually-- and I'll tell you what we do.
    We sit in the press box and--

BC: I've read that editorial and I cringed. You do take them
    a little more seriously than that don't you?

JR: Oh a little more--

BC: You have to. You wouldn't accept all these speaking
    engagements if you didn't think someone was going to
    listen would you?

JR: No, it isn't that. I'm just talking about--this is a device.
    it's nothing but a public speaking device. And usually when
    I tell them we sit in the press box and you know, anyway,
    that we run a pool on how long this goes on, and who wrote
    this, and does this fool understand it, well then they laugh
    at that and then they are relaxed and so I can then go on to
    say now you're just going to have to put up with this monster.
    But then I try--

BC: But you do try to adapt that monster at least--
JR: Oh very definitely. I never go and make a speech anywhere that I do not adapt to the audience.

BC: You know something about that particular group.

JR: Oh yes, I've never gone, and I find it frankly quite offensive to go for example to a university commencement and have a speaker usually out of Washington come here to an event which is terribly important to the graduate, and particularly to their parents and then tell them all about the foreign policy of the United States without any reference to the fact that it's their day and that the mothers and fathers have spent twenty-two years getting them this far. To ignore this seems to me to be bad manners.

BC: If that is the way you speak then you're not going to rehearse speeches as such.

JR: Oh no, I've never rehearsed a speech.

BC: I should have worked this in earlier when you commented on what you like in a speaker, but so many times you have expressed your distaste for the contrived naturalness of a political candidate's speaking. As far as your own delivery is concerned, you're not consciously trying to appear a certain way are you? Oh concerning gestures and moving around the platform and this type of thing?

JR: No, I don't. I'm not, I do try to, I think the audience picks up the mood of the man. If I come in tense and nervous, or start out exhorting them from a point of view they will turn me off. And I think one of the really useful things, maybe hopeful things about a journalist speaking is that if he can establish early on that he is searching for the truth and he is not presuming to come and tell them this is the way it is, you listen to me I'm a big shot from the big town, I know what's going on. If I tell them as I very very often do that you must not take what I say to you about people in public life too seriously and for a very simple reason. Whenever a president or a secretary of state sees a reporter, that secretary or president is always on display or on guard, and therefore we may see a more distorted picture than most people and you must take that into account. Well that in a way is
a confession but it is an honest confession and I find that the reaction of the audience is that well this guy is not trying to sell us something. He is trying to be honest with us. Then I think you can talk to them.

BC: I've gone through the New York Times Index and checked the various types of audiences that you choose to address. Considering how busy you are, I assume you have to refuse many invitations to speak. Is there any system of priority that guides you in deciding where you're going to speak and to whom?

JR: Well first of all the negative side of that is that I never speak in Washington except to something related to my own church or my own family. Because if I get into that why then I can't say no to other people and I would be in trouble. Second, I never speak to a political group--any political group. Anything that is partisan I say no. Some of my speaking involves certain obligations that I have for the Times. The teacher's course that I've mentioned, motion pictures that we make for promotion of the Times, that sort of thing.

BC: There is a film?

JR: There is a film of the Times, of me dealing with a bunch of students. There is such a film. We're just sitting around talking the way you and I are talking now. Ohio State University I think has a film of this last one hundredth anniversary.

BC: The only reference which I found to a recorded speech of yours was one at Syracuse in 1962. I would like to hear some of these. Do you have any recordings of any of your speeches?

JR: Gee I don't know. Say Rick, do you have the Ohio State speech? (Rick responded that he had a transcript of it.) I don't know. I'll have him look through the files.

BC: You may not want to answer this one, but do you have a policy concerning receiving pay?

JR: I have a policy of receiving pay and my policy is very simple, it is the higher the fee the better with some obvious --
BC: You always receive pay then?

JR: Almost always, yes.

BC: You've observed and evaluated so many speakers -- and the things you've told me about the audience. Is your opinion based primarily on observing other speakers and what worked for them with an audience?

JR: I think so.

BC: Almost an unconscious thing rather than in reading about speech and speech criticism as for example I've spent so much time reading texts --

JR: No, I have never read a text book on speech.

BC: You haven't read Aristotle, Quintilian, or Cicero?

JR: Oh you know but never with that purpose. I've read a lot of them but not for the purpose of learning how to speak. The only experience that I've ever had about this was a ghastly experience. I went once and addressed the bar association of New York. Great big fancy luncheon in New York and in the ballroom of the Waldorf Astoria, and I spoke to them extemporaneously and they recorded it. They then sent it back to me and said we would like to print this in the State Law Journal and it was appalling. My sentences didn't end. They began, they broke in the middle. They were all over the place. I was really startled by this because I thought the speech had gone fairly well. But then when I realized that I was engaged really in an impertinence to go and address a group of intelligent men, the leaders of the bar of the State of New York, and not speak as an educated man should speak. I thought I must listen to my voice and learn to give sentences a beginning, middle, and an end. In some ways that was the best experience I ever had, because my three boys at that time were just in the formative years and I tried to pass that on to them as a lesson. By using a tape recorder and just listening to them argue with one another and then letting them hear back what it was they said and thus showing them that they were not speaking in sentences either. They were appalled. Well since that time I've tried to have a sentence structure and compose myself to speak, to finish a sentence.
BC: What would you consider to be your better speeches? The lectures that you published, the Elihu Root lectures? That seemed to be a subject that you have been so preoccupied with, I was just wondering if perhaps you considered those among your best?

JR: Well those are the best, the most considered lectures I've ever given. No doubt about that.

BC: Is there any other?

JR: Well this (manuscript of speech at Ohio State University) is more typical really.

BC: Can you give me ten more minutes?

JR: Sure.

BC: I wanted to ask you questions now about speech criticism. When you refer to a speech most of the time you deal with the topic, the ideas, what they're talking about. Occasionally you do mention delivery. So I wondered do you usually refer to delivery when you observe a speech?

JR: No, I might have observed it and felt that what I observed was not really relevant to the subject matter or to justify the additional space that it took to describe it or it would depend on who the man is. For example if I were going out now to look at Muskie or young Senator Bayh of Indiana, I would look at them as potential presidential candidates and therefore how they spoke, what their manner was. Muskie for example is a big, rather laconic figure with a great deep voice and a certain majesty to his delivery. That is relevant and maybe more.

BC: Do you feel that this very definitely influences the audience?

JR: Oh, I think so, very definitely, sure.

BC: But then sometimes you do comment on a speech just from the written text?

JR: Yea, just from the text if it's not a man whose speech techniques are of any real importance. Why bother with it? But if George Wallace does his little routine about the press, how terrible
it is, and he starts over at the right and says I wanna tell you about the press. There's this crowd, and then there's this awful crowd the New York Times, and he's coming around here like this. The Times man is over here and Wallace knows that and he'll wink at him knowing that that eye is off camera. That's interesting. It tells a lot about what he is doing and in a way what a fraud he is, but what an amusing fraud he is too.

**BC:** So when you are referring to speeches are you first of all informing the audience or describing. Much of what you say is descriptive, and I will merely state this. But then are you trying to convince? Let me put it this way. To whom are you directing this criticism? To the reader? Do you hope those speakers are going to read what you say about their logic? Are you trying sometimes to influence them also?

**JR:** No, I don't care about that because if a writer begins to think about his influence you know then I think you're in trouble. I think you begin self concerned instead of passing on information. Usually there is a reason for doing that. You're saying to the reader here is a new candidate who has come upon the national scene. This is what he looks like. This is the theme he developed here, and you had better pay attention to this man because he has a presence. It isn't only what he says but the factor in his coming into the front center of the political stage is not only what he says but how he says it. And this seemed to strike the audience as being very effective. It's just like reporting on a new actor. You wouldn't merely quote from one of the great speeches of King Lear, the new central character. You would report on the technique by which the words were delivered.

**BC:** What do you consider an effective speech. I know this is a general question. Well maybe I can narrow it even more to presidential campaign speaking since you frequently comment on these. For example in 1964 you said that this campaign didn't produce a single memorable speech. Then in 1968 you said that this campaign hasn't produced a single noble speech. You said that Humphrey is probably the finest public speaker in politics today. De Gaulle is the most eloquent voice. So I just wondered what you meant by a noble speech. I can tell that it seems to be the man as well as the thought but --
JR: Well in those cases those are quick generalizations aren't they and they don't really mean anything. One really should take the lack of nobility as a theme and really develop that into a column. One should and I might make a note of it now and follow it in the present campaign. You know when Charles Dickens came to this country in the eighteen thirties he said these people can't write but they can speak. They are an eloquent people. And he was talking not only of the public figures of the day but he was talking about the natural eloquence of country men and their capacity for using simple similes of coming from nature and so on.

BC: Eloquence then when you use that term refers a little more to style, use of language.

JR: The vivid way of making a point is what I mean by it. It may be the wrong way.

BC: No, I just wanted to clarify the use, because I couldn't interpret the term safely.

JR: I've lost my thought --

BC: On effectiveness --

JR: Well I have a simple test of that. My experience is really quite varied on this. My definition of an effective speech is one which sends the audience away believing in the man and the theme they have seen and heard.

BC: If they disagree with him at the outset, you would expect him at the end to have convinced them or at least move them in that direction?

JR: Yes or to at -- the primary thing is in my view is to convey by speech to the audience a feeling that the speaker is an honest man. They may not have to or they may not agree with him at all but I know this is my experience. I have for example -- I don't know whether I do it right or wrong but I do know the effect of it. I speak quite often to audiences that don't agree with me at all. I'm going to go to California in mid-September and talk to the leaders of the Iron and Steel Institute of this country. They're not going to like what I have to say probably but I think when I leave there they will
say well you know I didn't like that guy from the Times but I think he was an honest guy, you know, that is what I consider. Now sometimes I have seen men who managed to convey that simply because they were not eloquent. A perfect case in point was Ambassador Wynant, who succeeded old Joe Kennedy as an ambassador to the Court of St. James. John Wynant was the most tongue tied man on a platform I've ever seen. But he was a magnificent looking man and when he got up there he was obviously so nervous and ill at ease but trying so desperately to get over his ideas that he had the audience sitting on the edge of their chairs trying to pull it out of him because he actually was so much in trouble and so dead earnest in trying to get his ideas over. And it was fascinating to watch the difference between Joe Kennedy, who was a glib Irishman, you know the audience was relaxed, yet Wynant in some ways I think was more effective than Kennedy.

BC: You obviously expect a person to be clear in his organization.

JR: Yes.

BC: What about some other traits? Appropriateness? The propriety of adapting language to the occasion or to the group? You've commented you wanted to appear as an educated man to the group of lawyers. There are speakers who sometimes will go all the way to try to show the group that they're one of them. Do you condone this?

JR: I don't like that. I don't like that at all. As a matter of fact I commented on the president addressing the people over at the Pentagon. Remember when he made the "bum" statement -- the students the bunch of bums. This was very interesting because he fell into a forget-whether it was James or it may have been James T. Adams who wrote an essay on what he called the "Mucker Pose." And this is the pose of the educated man talking down to the rough man. This is what Nixon did when he went to the Pentagon. He decided this was right after he had gone into Cambodia and he was role playing. The role of the morning was the president as one of the boys, the tough guy, and he dropped all his G's. He dropped all his G's and he spoke in the tough vernacular. Now I reported that at the time. I
thought it was very significant both as to fact and as to an indication of character. Now I don't know what the reader would think about that. But to me it was a significant thing relating style to character.

BC: Several times in Kennedy's administration you were saying Kennedy is appealing to the intellect not to the heart.

JR: Yea, always the air space.

BC: Would you say this is a matter of style? How could he have done that?

JR: Well Kennedy of course -- he always interested me because I always believed perhaps wrongly and subjectively that he acquired his style as to a certain extent I did in the House of Commons. His humor was not American humor at all. It was English wit. He was a backbench House of Commons speaker. Brief, very quick, not the humor of exaggeration which is American exaggeration but always self depreciatory and understated. Adlai Stevenson had something of the same quality. Jack could have done it in all kinds of different ways by referring to himself, explaining. You notice President Nixon for example is always saying to his audience, of course in this situation I could have looked at this from a wholly political point of view. The easy thing for me to do politically would be just to pull out of Cambodia, pull out of Indo China. People would, you know, they want to be rid of the killing. I know that. But then he puts himself, he builds a picture of himself as the poor harrassed man who out of the nobility of his character finally comes out with the solution that we must go on with the fighting. Well this does put the audience in the president's position, but Kennedy would never do that. Kennedy would regard that as rather ungentlemency. That you don't quite do that. That it is self-serving.

BC: But you feel he --

JR: But I think it is very effective when President Nixon does it.

BC: Do you consider Humphrey the best political speaker today?
JR: Oh --

BC: My last question will be who do you consider to be an outstanding or effective speaker?

JR: Well let me just say one thing which may be relevant to your theme. I regard the decline of debating in the high schools and Jr. high schools in this country a great tragedy for two reasons. First on the Chataqua Circuit and in the old church revivals of the past, we had acquired a great gift of public speech. For reasons which you as a student of the art know and I don't know we began dropping this. There are very few high school debating teams or even college debating teams today. That is a great loss not only because it has allowed a natural American art to decline but also I think it's been bad for the integrity of argument. Because in the old debating classes and competitions you did have to give form and substance to speech, and you had to deal with the other man's arguments. One of the great problems of debate in the Congress of the United States today is that a series of adversary positions are put up by both sides and the poor public is left in the middle merely with two arguments but the two arguments never meet. If you listen to a debate in the House of Commons, the thing is structured like a mathematical problem. The prime minister gets up and states the proposition of the government on going into the common market. He says this is the policy of her Majesty's government. We shall go in and we shall go in for the following reasons. Now when he sits down, later the opposition gets up and says we are opposed -- which happens not to be true for they aren't opposed -- we are opposed for the following reasons. And then they go across argument to argument and when they finish you've got the basis of a debate. Then members from all over the House on both sides are called upon and the leader of the party or usually the deputy leader, who winds up the debate, makes a note of every point that is raised that has not been dealt with and in the summary when he comes to the end he attempts to answer all points raised and anyone who wants to read that debate or listen to it can make up his own mind on the basis of something coherent.

BC: I know that following a State of the Union message you've
frequently said just that. Do you think that if something similar to that were going to happen that the president would change the State of the Union message? Sometimes you say that it is a map without a means for obtaining the destination when you're criticizing the speech.

JR: Yes, well I think it would improve the whole thing if it were not just a report of the State of the Union message or the message by itself but then a response from the leader of the opposition. But that gets us into the old system of whether you have a president or a prime minister or a parliamentary form of government.

BC: That touches on debate. I was just trying to recall this morning something that you said about attending lectures becoming a nationally popular spectator's sport. I felt that you were saying this as a satire but I wasn't sure. You said that it was going to take something more than this but do you feel that public speaking outside of the realm of politics is used primarily to educate? Is it worth while at all?

JR: Well I think it is worth while and I think it is a great opportunity for several reasons. First of all I think it is fairly obvious that this is a troubled country. It is troubled about all kinds of things. It's morally adrift. It still tries to live by the old standards but it doesn't really believe in the old sense of believing in the church. It's terribly worried about the morals of the young. Agonizingly worried about drugs, the escape from reality applied through drugs and therefore it wants to listen to somebody who will talk to it honestly about these problems. Now a lot of people like John Gardner are doing that, making serious speeches analyzing where the country is at this point in its history. And when a thoughtful man speaks to that audience with no other purpose but to educate it, then you've got a marriage of something that is important. A good deal of the time, however, speakers in the political realm are merely taking advantage of this troubled spirit to make speeches which are self glorifying or self concerned trying to pick up votes as a result of this and talking to or telling the audience what they think the audience wants to hear in order to get their votes. Well that is rather a debasement of the process. It's the old classic way. You can't expect politicians to do anything else. That's what
they're after -- the odds of being re-elected. But I don't know I think probably maybe the press is to blame partly for this. There are probably more thoughtful speeches being made in the country today that we never hear about than ever before in the history of the country. If you could have a hundred young undergraduates to assist you and get into a library every commencement speech that was made this year. It would be fascinating study and I would think you would probably come out of it feeling rather good about your country. Feeling you know that there are a lot of thoughtful people who trouble their minds about what to say to young people at this point. It would make a very interesting, analytical study I think.

BC: Do you think a course in public address either in high school or college would help a person better recognize these emotional appeals and self interest arguments?

JR: If I had anything to do with mandatory classes in school I think I would say that I don't care if you want to make it an hour a week. I think that I would insist that no senior go out of high school without a course in simple reporting and simple public speaking. Maybe the two things could be put together. By which I mean -- it seems to me that nobody should really give a high school diploma if he cannot take the simple thoughts of what is in his mind and tell you or me what they are in words that we understand him fairly accurately. The reporting function and that is what public speaking is to a certain extent, could consist of just taking kids in a class and have somebody open the door and come in and do something or say something and go and fix the drape or go to a table and then go out. Then have these kids say what happened, put down what happened. Then let the child get up and read what it is that he or she wrote and then say to the class, alright is that what happened? Did he have it straight or not? Let the kids deal with the problem. I think it would be perfectly possible to persuade kids that you simply cannot persuade them about the advantages of Latin or even the new math, important as they may be, but I think any group of children, I think that I could convince any group of children that there are two things that are absolutely fundamental when they leave school -- no matter what work they're going into -- whether they're going into a garage to
fix a car or going into medicine, or law, or to higher education -- and that is simply to learn the arts of accurate observation and accurate speech because whether you are a garage man telling a man that his muffler has rusted out and that he needs a new one, whatever it is, he ought to be able to explain himself so that a man can understand. The higher up the ladder he goes and the educational scale of course the more important that is.

**BC:** I've noticed that in describing a new government appointee that you usually will say whether or not he is or is not an effective public speaker. This is usually an attribute that you list. Mr. Reston I certainly do appreciate you giving me all this time.

**JR:** Not at all. I'm glad to do it.

**BC:** Talking with you has been such an enjoyable experience for me.
VITA

The writer was born in Bon Wier, Texas in 1940 and graduated from Newton High School in 1956. After receiving a B.S. degree from Lamar State University in 1959, she taught speech in the La Marque Public School System. In 1964 she received a M.A. degree from Texas Technological College and then joined the faculty at Lamar State University. She received a N.D.E.A. fellowship in 1968 and began graduate study at Louisiana State University.

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