1987

A Radical Republican in the United States Senate: the Antislavery Speaking of Benjamin Franklin Wade (Ohio).

Daniel Stewart Brown Jr

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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A radical Republican in the United States Senate: The antislavery speaking of Benjamin Franklin Wade

Brown, Daniel Stewart, Jr., Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1987

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A RADICAL REPUBLICAN IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE:
THE ANTISLAVERY SPEAKING OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WADE

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 Communication,
Theatre, and Communication Disorders

by
Daniel Stewart Brown, Jr.
B.A., Bob Jones University, 1982
M.A., Miami University, 1983
May, 1987

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A word of professional thanks is due the staffs of the Library of Congress, the Ohio Historical Society, the Western Reserve Historical Society, the Ashtabula County Historical Society, the Ashtabula (Ohio) Public Library, and the Henderson Memorial (Jefferson, Ohio) Public Library. Their courtesy and willingness to work with me was a tremendous encouragement.

Several present and former residents of Jefferson, Ohio assisted me in locating and documenting materials for this research. In particular, Mrs. Wade W. Woodbury, widow of one of Benjamin Wade's great-grandsons, a family friend and neighbor first piqued my interest in examining Wade's antislavery speeches. She shared a wealth of family mementos with me and was always gracious and helpful.
Mrs. Arthur Aho supplied me with copies of a number of Wade's letters which had been supposedly lost or considered fabrications on the part of turn of the century writers. Mr. Lowell Sowry, now a lobbyist in Washington, D.C., assisted in my travel arrangements to the Library of Congress. To these and many others I am eternally grateful.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the speech practices and rhetorical strategies of Senator Benjamin Franklin Wade. Wade was a member of the United States Senate from 1854-1869, representing the state of Ohio. He was an antislavery spokesman prior to his election to the Senate and became a leading force in the national forum. Focusing on his antislavery speeches in the Senate, the study explores (1) Wade's rhetorical background and experience, (2) the rhetorical setting in which Wade spoke, (3) the rhetorical proofs used by Wade, and (4) the effectiveness, quality and ethics of his speaking.

The study focuses on six antislavery speeches delivered by Wade. Transcripts of the speeches from the Congressional Globe were compared with texts printed for mass circulation. There were no discrepancies in the texts.

Wade, who was born in New England, moved to Andover, Ohio in his early twenties. He soon enrolled in a law curriculum in Warren, Ohio. After entering the bar, Wade returned to his native Ashtabula County and practiced law with Joshua Giddings in the county seat, Jefferson, Ohio. Here he made a name for himself by being active in civic and political affairs. He served as county prosecuting attorney, state senator and circuit judge before being elected to the United States Senate.

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At the time of his election Wade faced a number of rhetorical constraints. These include the divergent interpretations of the Constitution. Antislavery activities in the nation and Wade's own Western Reserve were a second constraint. Political loyalties as well as increasing sectionalism were the third and final constraints.

In his antislavery speeches Wade utilized effective logical proof. While his reasoning was proper, his evidence could have been stronger. The emotional proof in his antislavery speeches was varied and effective. In addition, Wade's ethical proof was proper.

While Wade's speeches did not have the immediate effect of removing slavery from the country, the long term effect is obvious. The quality of Wade's speeches is noteworthy as it was not equal to those of his congressional peers. History has, of course, vindicated the ethical nature of Wade's antislavery speeches.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Motorists in northeast Ohio who enter the village limits of Jefferson are greeted by a historical marker:

JEFFERSON
Home of
Joshua R. Giddings and
Benjamin F. Wade
Anti-Slavery Leaders
in Congress

This is the only physical reminder to visitors and residents alike that they walk where the most radical of the Radical Republicans once walked.

Giddings was memorialized when his small law office was recognized as Ashtabula County's only national landmark. Wade's home was razed in the 1960s and his law office was removed to Bath, Ohio. Nevertheless, Wade and his family are remembered by older residents. A recent brief history of the village devotes a few pages to Wade and his accomplishments on the national level as "politics was [the] town's first business." ¹

The legend of Benjamin F. Wade, along with his huge monument in Oakdale Cemetery first attracted the author as a

¹
child. Wade was a powerful antislavery spokesman in the United States Senate prior to and during the Civil War. He was a Radical Republican but entered Congress as a Whig. Though his name was a household word in Jefferson, little has been done to document his oratory. By a study of this politician, his speeches, his political times, along with the known effects of his antislavery speeches, an attempt is made here to assess critically the effectiveness of Benjamin Wade as a public speaker.

Clarifying Statement

With a sense of understatement James Mohr observed that "few terms in all of American history are more difficult to pin down than the word 'Radical'." He went on to argue that the Democratic presses, bent on the defeat of the Republican party, "blurred the distinction between 'radical' and 'Radical'" whenever convenient to their cause. Later the terms "Radical" and "Republican" were interchanged. These inconsistencies are a frustration to the historian.

The first scholar to investigate the personae of the Radical Republicans was James Ford Rhodes in 1909. He arrived at the conclusion that

Radicals were a handful of men . . . who stood well in advance of northern opinion in their demands for political reconstruction of the South. Others have accepted the assumptions of Rhodes' definition.
The term "Radical" was, however, in usage long before the period of southern reconstruction.

Observing the roots of Radicalism in Congress will make an identification of the Radical Republicans easier. Most scholars agree that the coalition between northern Whigs and Democrats during the Kansas-Nebraska debates of 1854 signaled the beginning of the Radical Movement. The ultimate effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act was the revocation of the Missouri compromise of 1820. The central issue was the extension of slavery into the United States territories. Following heated debate in both houses, Congress compromised by accepting the theory of Popular Sovereignty as a replacement for the 36 30' principle of the Compromise of 1820.

With slavery given such a hopeful future, a minority of Congressmen explored various methods of slowing or stopping its expansion. These men would become known as the Radical Republicans of the 1860s. These Radicals did not limit themselves to the slavery issue. During and after the Civil War they advocated women's rights and suffrage. They also sought improvements in fire protection, labor, education, and voting reform.

Their political backgrounds and approaches were diverse. What then did the Radicals agree upon? In short, they each were committed to an antislavery philosophy. To be sure, their proposed solutions varied greatly on this
issue as much as on the others. It was the antislavery commitment, nevertheless, which struck the core of the Radical movement. Because such diversity characterized the Radical Republicans, a general definition of their movement seems appropriate. Margaret Shortreed has identified them as:

the congressional extremists, the left wing minority of the party, who had a directly manipulative hand in most of the revolutionary developments of the decade [of the 1860s].

With this definition in hand, it is apparent that this significant movement did not evolve in a social vacuum. Many parallel movements and activities contributed to the ultimate success of the Radicals. No doubt, the abolitionist movement was foremost among these influences.

The abolitionist movement emerged as a powerful social influence during the 1830s. The words "powerful" and "social" are carefully chosen. Until William Lloyd Garrison's idea of immediate emancipation was injected into antislavery rhetoric, the movement lacked forcefulness. Early abolitionists, dating back to colonial days, had proposed gradual emancipation as the acceptable end to slavery. This effectively "kept antislavery within the orbit of innocuous humanitarianism." 10

That abolitionists of the 1830s and earlier were social rather than political activists is also clear. The original arguments of the antislavery spokespersons were
moral in nature. As Merton Dillon commented regarding the condemned slavery and slaveholders as relentlessly as revivalists condemned sin and sinners. The revivalists called for total commitment to Christ; Garrison demanded total commitment to the abolitionist cause. For Garrison, there was no middle ground. In effect he held that those who did not join him . . . were against him and thereby supporting slavery.11

Dillon's parallel between abolitionists and revivalists is not artificial. Abolitionists agreed with the States' Rights philosophy that Congress had no power over the practice of slavery in individual states.12 Since direct political intervention on the national level was not possible, Garrison and his associates directed their message to what they hoped was a morally conscious audience—the evangelical churches of the North whose "power . . . was presumably enormous."13 In short, early abolitionist leaders and their societies "had only a peripheral part in the growth of the political antislavery movement" and in fact "avoided . . . any political action."14 Their early rhetoric focused on changing northerners' apathetic attitude toward slavery.

For these reasons, it is important to make the distinction between abolition and antislavery rhetoric and their movements. Trefousse notes that though southern congressmen had a tendency to label any northern colleague who spoke against slavery as an abolitionist, "there were no real abolitionists in the national legislature."15 He
explains that "abolitionists" does not apply to politicians if the word meant friends of unconditional, immediate and uncompensated emancipation. Instead of abolitionists, both houses contained several determined antislavery leaders, men who were dedicated to the restriction and eventual abolition of the "peculiar institution" by legal means. These formed the core of the group later constituting the radical Republicans [emphasis added].

It is the term "antislavery," therefore, which best describes Benjamin Franklin Wade. A representative of Ohio, Benjamin Wade served continually in the United States Senate beginning in 1852 until his retirement in 1869. During his tenure, he became known for his strong antislavery convictions which had led to his election by the Ohio legislature and from which he never swayed. He was, furthermore, clearly identified with the Radical Republicans who came to dominate the reconstruction of the South. As a leader of the antislavery movement, he is best remembered for his ability to work within the political system and retain his antislavery conviction while abolitionists, such as Garrison, chose to work outside the political realm.

When Andrew Johnson became President upon the death of Lincoln, Wade, who was President of the Senate, became acting Vice-President of the United States. Wade had been highly touted as both a presidential and vice-presidential nominee for the Republicans. Though not selected for his party's ticket, Wade had a close brush with the Presidency late in his career. Had Johnson been convicted of the
charges facing him, the Constitution required him to be removed from office. His impeachment required two-thirds of the 52 senators to vote for conviction. The impeachment failed by a 38-14 vote, making Benjamin Franklin Wade the only individual to lose the Presidency of the United States by one vote.

Statement of the Problem

Wade, who rose to the highest levels of national leadership, was one of the first senators to lash out at the institution of slavery. The purpose of this study is to discover the rhetorical tactics used by Wade in his effort to convince Congress that slavery should be ended. Though other Congressmen were antislavery leaders in the Senate, this study resists the temptation to treat the entire Radical movement and focuses on the antislavery speaking of Senator Wade. This project seeks to answer the following questions: (1) To what extent and with what effect did Wade use logical, emotional, and ethical appeals when speaking in the Senate? (2) What were the qualities of Wade's speaking style and delivery? (3) What were the influences which led Wade first of all to become an orator, then a politician, and finally one of the most vocal spokespersons for the antislavery cause? (4) What were the social and political constraints and/or movements to which Wade was required to speak? (5) What effect did Wade's
speeches have on the attitudes of his peers in the Senate and his constituents in Ohio?

Contributory Studies

Although no studies dealing exclusively with antislavery speaking or abolitionist speaking have been located, a number of fine research projects have examined the movements in which such speaking took place. Hans L. Trefousse has authored *The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice* which traces the development of the movement from the 1820s through the late nineteenth century. T. Harry Williams prepared *Lincoln and the Radicals*, another history of the Radical Republicans.


Of important note to the student of Wade's career is Trefousse's definitive biography on Wade, *Benjamin Franklin Wade: Radical Republican from Ohio*. In addition, Trefousse
has authored a number of articles on Radicals in general and Wade in particular. Wade has been the subject of a number of theses and dissertations. These include biographies by Mary Land, T. Harry Williams, and Kenneth Shover. His economic views were explored by Norman Lederer.

Several journal articles which explore the relationships among the Radical Republicans have appeared in the literature. Edward Gambrill's "Who Were the Senate Radicals?" and Margaret Shortreed's "The Anti-Slavery Radicals, 1840-1868" both sought to place parameters on the Radicals in Congress. In addition, Roman Zorn studied the abolitionist-antislavery political link in "The New England Anti-Slavery Society."

Method and Plan of Study

To answer the research questions proposed above, a survey of Wade's antislavery speeches, the texts of which are found in the Congressional Globe, predecessor of the Congressional Quarterly, was conducted. The speech texts were compared to the texts housed at the Western Reserve Historical Society which were printed for mass distribution. The speeches were then evaluated in the light of the criteria established by Thonssen, Baird and Braden in Speech Criticism, second edition. The project focuses on the classical elements of public speaking: the speaker, the audience, the proofs, the delivery, and the effects.
Elements of Lloyd Bitzer's notion of the rhetorical situation are also incorporated.

The information collected for this study is arranged in the following fashion.

Chapter Two focuses on the speaker background. This division of the project presents a rhetorical biography of Wade. The focus is on the following issues. How did Wade's family background mold his speaking abilities? How did his education influence his speech making abilities? How did his religious and cultural heritage affect Wade's speeches? What were the major successes and failures which may have influenced Wade's speaking career? What was Wade's "philosophy" of public speaking?

The rhetorical setting is explored in Chapter Three. The emphasis is on the rhetorical situation in which Wade spoke. Some important questions to be addressed in this chapter include: What were the major social movements at the time Wade delivered his antislavery speeches in the Senate? What were the political parties and other political loyalties of the day? What was the status of the American abolitionist movement specifically? What was the immediate setting (that is, Congress) at the time Wade spoke? What was Wade's opinion of or position on each of these institutions?

Chapter Four explores Wade's use of rhetorical proofs. An attempt is made in this chapter to analyze
Wade's use of logical, emotional, and ethical appeals in his antislavery speeches. Questions to be answered include the following. What types of logical appeals did Wade utilize? Were they accurate? adequate? effective? What types of emotional appeals appeared in Wade's antislavery speeches? Were they adequate? effective? What were the ethical appeals used by Wade? Were they adequate? effective?

The purpose of Chapter Five is to summarize the study. The following questions are answered. What general conclusions may be drawn concerning Wade's effectiveness as an antislavery speaker in the Senate? What questions are raised by this research? Where might future research be profitable? What impact did Wade's speeches have on his peers in Congress?

**Significance of Study**

This study is important for at least four reasons. First, the issue involved demands study. A common theme in American public address has been the race issue. Through history the debate about race has taken different forms: slavery, racism, white supremacy, segregation, and civil rights. Prior to and during the Civil War, public debate in the United States focused largely on the slavery issue. Though rhetorical analyses of minority group leaders and movements have appeared, as noted earlier, there has been no research into the speaking of the antislavery Radical
Republicans.

This second reason—the absence of research in the area—is perhaps the most compelling. Anthologies of speeches and important writings of the Radicals such as Harold Hyman's *The Radical Republicans* have appeared but these avoid generalizations about rhetorical tactics and for the most part focus on southern reconstruction. Likewise, biographies on individual Congressmen who identified with the Radicals have appeared sporadically. These, however, have treated speech making secondarily if at all.

The third reason for this study is parallel to the second. The speaker, in spite of the importance of his position at a tragic period of American history, has been studied biographically by Trefousse only. Beyond this, little about the former President of the Senate exists. His speeches in and out of Congress have gone unstudied. What impact Wade had on Congress during his tenure cannot be properly understood without an analysis of his speeches.

Finally, the notion of a genre of antislavery speaking has gone unexplored. While abolitionists seemed to develop a rhetorical genre, the antislavery speakers in the political realm have not been studied. The identification of a genre or class of a type of speech has not been possible. While this study does not provide conclusive proof of such a genre, it may establish criteria or standards by which similar speakers may be judged or examined in the future.
Notes


3 Mohr, p. 5.


7 Trefousse, Radical, p. 24.


13 Dillon, p. 57.

14 Shortreed, p. 68.

15 Trefousse, p. 37.

16 Ibid.
CHAPTER II
RHETORICAL BIOGRAPHY

Benjamin Wade emerged as one of only a few antislavery spokesmen in the United States Senate prior to the Civil War. He eventually rose to the highest level of leadership and served as President of the Senate. He was considered for both the presidential and vice-presidential nominations by the Republican party.

This chapter is devoted to examining the factors which contributed to Wade becoming a successful political speaker. As Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird and Waldo Braden have noted, "to see a speech in its fullest context the critic must . . . seek to understand the utterance as an expression of the speaker's personality."¹ They suggest the critic focus on exploring the orator's speech training, speaking experience, general study habits, and philosophy of public address.²

Speech Training

The ancient Romans recognized the importance of a child's early education. A potential orator, they believed, should be prepared to speak from childhood on. Quintillian recognized the influence of father, mother, and
even nurse in the training of the speaker. Certainly a study of Benjamin Franklin Wade's speech training would be incomplete without an examination of his early home life and exposure to rhetorical theory.

Wade was born on October 12, 1800, in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts, located near Boston. His parents, James and May Upham Wade, were first cousins descended from the Calvinist preacher Michael Wigglesworth. James Wade was descendent from the Colonial Bradstreets and Dudleys. These names personified early American leadership and Puritanism in most cases. This was Benjamin Wade's heritage.

Wade's father, a Revolutionary War veteran and prisoner of war, was a shoemaker who earned a meager living for his eleven children. Because private schools were unaffordable, the Wade children were educated by their mother. Women of her time commonly were not well educated. However, historian Mary Land reminds us that Wade "could have received a fair classical education from his mother who had been reared in the household of one of the most prominent scholars in New England." Mary Wade's father, Edmund Upham, was a Harvard University alumnus and Baptist clergyman. He sat on the board of trustees of Brown University, having declined the offer of serving as its first president.

Testimony to Wade's sound early education is strong. Though a poor family, his parents had acquired "a library of
CHART

Benjamin Franklin Wade's Heritage
(Dates of birth and death are provided if verifiable)

Gov. Thomas Dudley (wife?)
(b. 1576; d. 1652)

Jonathan Wade (wife?)

Anne Dudley (husband, Gov. Simon Bradstreet)
(b. 1612; d. 1672)

Major Nathaniel Wade ———— Mercy Bradstreet

Bradstreet Wade (wife, Lydia Newell)
(b. 1681; d. 1738)

Michael Wigglesworth (wife)
(b. 1631)

Dorothy Wigglesworth (husband, James Upham)

Samuel Wade
(b. 1715)

Martha Upham

Edward Upham (wife?)

James Wade
(b. 1750)

Mary Upham
(b. 1752)

Benjamin F. Wade (wife, Caroline Rosekram)
(b. 1800; d. 1878) (b. 1805; d. 1889)
twelve books. Ben read them until he knew them by heart."7

Eye witnesses recalled Wade and his brothers "would lie down
before a blazing fire . . . with a book before them and
study all evening by the light of the fire."8 Furthermore,
we must assume that Wade's early education was sound as it
prepared him well enough to embark on his study of medicine
and law.

For those interested in Wade's speech making career,
his study of two specific books is important. With no
guidance, he conquered the principles of "Pike's Arithmetic,
working out all the problems." His "particular [academic]
forte was arithmetic and algebra."9 This aptitude for
mathematics no doubt assisted him in his law career years
later as he mastered the principles of logic and made
"law . . . a science, not a trade."10

The second book Wade is known to have studied carefully
was the Bible. In the Calvinist tradition, he "took long,
constant and deep lessons of biblical reading," especially
in the Old Testament.11 The author has also examined Wade's
marked Bible which the senator received while serving in
Washington, DC.12 This suggests Wade continued his Bible
reading and study late in his life. Accompanying his Bible
reading, Wade learned the New England Catechism and the
shorter Westminster Catechism, both of which are sure to
impair the Puritan fear of God.13

Given Wade's home education, it is not surprising to
learn he "knew nothing of higher schools" of elocution.\textsuperscript{14}
The little speech exercise he endured as a child was the memorization and declamation of his great-grandfather Wigglesworth's long poem, "The Day of Doom." The poem sentenced dead infants to "the easiest room in hell" because

\begin{verbatim}
You sinners are: and such a share  
As sinners may expect;  
Such you shall have: for I do save  
None but mine own elect.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{verbatim}

He recited the poem to younger lawyers in his Ohio Circuit in later years to their great amusement.\textsuperscript{16}

Wade's only other known exposure to rhetorical theory is a conjecture on his biographer's part. Riddle acknowledges Noah Webster's \textit{Grammatical Institute of the English Language} was available during Wade's childhood. Its third part outlines rules for elocution. Interestingly, Riddle questions whether Mary Upham Wade would actually have used the textbook not because of ignorance of its existence nor because of financial restraints but because Webster was from Yale and the Uphams, as noted earlier, had strong Harvard ties. Riddle, however, concluded that Wade was "undoubtedly . . . fed the Websterian pabulum."\textsuperscript{17}

Perhaps the single most important source of regular public speaking Wade encountered was at Sunday worship meetings. Little is known about the services he attended as a child except they were "presided over by a black-coated Dr. Lothrop."\textsuperscript{18} In customary New England fashion, the Sunday sermons were long, reaching "sixteenthly and
seventeenthly" and requiring the "replenishing of the foot-stoves with coals from the bar-room next door." 19

As an adult, Wade never associated with organized religion. His wife, Caroline, however, encouraged her husband to attend worship services while he served the Ohio Senate. 20 Years later he wrote to his wife about attending a Quaker meeting in Washington. 21 These facts notwithstanding, Wade became a believer in Spiritualism, a popular religious movement in the late 1800s which denied the Trinity, focused on the spirit world, and made frank use of mediums to communicate with individuals in the spirit world. 22 While a U.S. Senator, Wade corresponded privately with his close friend Milton Sutliff of Warren, Ohio, expressing fear that the "good old times [will] never return until we reach the spirit world. . . . By the Way," Wade continued, "do you still keep the faith? My own grows brighter every year, which offers me great satisfaction." 23 Shortly after his death in March, 1878, a spirit-message validating the truth of Spiritualism was supposedly communicated by Wade and was subsequently published nationally. 24

Speaking Experience

In 1821, Wade moved to Andover on the Western Reserve of Ohio. In this wilderness, Wade and his brothers concerned themselves less with self-improvement and politics than with survival and clearing their land. Nevertheless,
by 1826, Benjamin Wade was ready to join his younger brother as a law student with the Whittlesey and Newton law firm in Canfield, Ohio. In 1828, both Wades were admitted to the Ohio bar.  

Little is known about Wade's early years at the bar other than he lost his first case. Evidently his law career did not fare well as Ashtabula County records indicate he taught school in Monroe Township as late as the winter of 1839. He received fifteen dollars for his teaching that winter, a large sum of money for that time. His fortunes as a lawyer seem to have changed when he joined Joshua Giddings, who would later gain fame as the abolitionist congressman from Ohio, to form the Giddings and Wade law firm in Jefferson, Ohio. Because the Erie Canal had recently opened, the population of Ohio's northeast corner grew. Lake Erie traffic increased, and communication channels opened to the East. In addition, Jefferson was the county seat of Ashtabula County. These factors combined to make Giddings and Wade "the leading law association of their" area.

Even with this success, "few men showed less aptitude for public speaking than did he." Testimony of S.S. Osborne, a student and partner of Giddings, corroborates this opinion. Osborne claimed Wade "could hardly speak at all; but . . . was the most courageous man that ever faced a court." Not all reactions to Wade's public speaking
Benjamin F. Wade's home and law office were located across from the Ashtabula County Court House (Source: WRHS Resident File)
were so diplomatic. His biographer, for example, provided this assessment.

His [speech] efforts were for a long time dead failures—so flagrantly [sic] so that he was laughed at, ridiculed, for the sorry showing he made. . . . The moment he rose to his feet, ideas fled, memory was annihilated, language was dead.31

So inept was he at public address that in his first years with Giddings he did only the legal research while Giddings made the court appearances.32

How he overcame his shortcomings as a public speaker is not clear. Only the most general observations have been suggested. Land states he "had to work very hard to overcome his native diffidence."33 Hans Trefousse supposes the successful partnership with Giddings aided him in overcoming his poor self-concept.34 Others claim "he studied incessantly to overcome his limitations."35

As proof that Wade somehow conquered his speech anxiety, an anecdote is presented by various sources. It seems that Wade faced Millard Fillmore, then of Buffalo, New York, in a Jefferson courtroom. Fillmore was at the height of his popularity as a trial lawyer. He came to Ashtabula County to defend his clients charged with running down a sailing vessel on Lake Erie. By all accounts the case was closely contested but the decision was made in favor of Wade's clients.36

With the success of his law practice came an elevation of Wade's social prominence. In 1835, he served on the
Fourth of July committee which planned and executed the many community activities on this day of celebration. Later that same year he was nominated by the Whigs for the office of prosecuting attorney because of "his legal attainments and high character as a member of his profession." Great controversy surrounded the County Whig nominating convention which slated Wade that year. The Whig convention met in Jefferson on August 31 but not every township in the county was represented. Consequently, a second convention with full representation convened on September 18. Wade was one of the few men whose name was entered by both conventions. The debate over the legitimacy of both conventions was heated. The local Whig press, however, supported the later party slate which tended to validate the meeting which had full representation.

Perhaps because Wade had been named by both conventions and could serve as a unifying force, he was appointed to a committee of seven which was charged with the responsibility of calling future Whig meetings to avoid further confusion. In any event, Wade won his first political office against his Democratic opponent with a 1664 to 487 vote.

From 1837 to 1856, Benjamin Wade was a curious combination of politician and stump orator. Elected to the Ohio senate in 1837, Wade soon became the "acknowledged leader" of the minority Whig party. Wade himself was surprised when his resolutions against Texas annexation met...
with unanimous approval from the senate.44

The speech which made Wade's reputation as an opponent to slavery was delivered during this first term in office. Upon his election to the U.S. Senate twelve years later, it was recalled by the press as "one of the strongest anti-slavery speeches ever delivered in" the state legislature.45 Because of a case involving fugitive slaves escaping to Canada through Ohio, the state of Kentucky had appointed three commissioners to petition the Ohio legislature to enact tough fugitive slave laws.46 Racial prejudice being rampant at the time, the proposed laws passed with a large majority. "It became law to the lasting infamy of this state" but only after the stiffest opposition from Wade including a two day, one and one-half night filibuster in which he demonstrated his mastery of parliamentary procedure as well as his hatred for slavery.47

Largely because of his outspoken behavior, Wade lost his senate seat in the election of 1839. The vote which was close (3103-3175), marked the first defeat for the Whig party in the county's history.48

By this time, Giddings had temporarily retired and his partnership with Wade had been dissolved. The new firm of Wade and Ranney had the success and prestige of the former association. To this business Wade returned full time upon his defeat, but politics continued to call.

The 1840 presidential campaign of Benjamin Harrison
Benjamin F. Wade and other Whig candidates were supported by the local press with mast heads on the week of the election.
engaged the services of Wade as a stump orator. This campaign was the first into which "stumping" was introduced in the North. The term "stumping" described political speeches delivered outdoors, usually with the orator standing on a stump in a clearing. Though the practice was prevalent in the South, the term itself having originated in Kentucky, this was its first appearance among those of New England stock. As this was Wade's first experience at stump speaking, he enlisted "all his powers to the business of securing . . . [Harrison's] election." Wade "became one of the most popular men in the state" as a result of his speeches for Harrison. In addition, he met his future wife in Ashtabula City while stump speaking. In Ashtabula, we are told, he spoke on "the arraignment of Mr. Van Buren's administration and the Democratic Party" for one and one-half hours. We may assume his approach was similar in other towns and cities as well.

When the county Whigs convened on January 18, 1840, Wade served as president of the group. To this largest convention ever in the county he presented a "masterly speech." He was, despite having lost the state senate seat, the undisputed leader of the local Whigs and was appointed, along with "Z. Lake, Esq.," a delegate to the Ohio Whig convention.

In the spring of 1841, Wade married Caroline Rosekram. Her family would be active in local politics and the new
Mrs. Wade's political opinions often found their way into her letters. Although the extent of her influence upon her husband is unclear, it is interesting that the fall after his marriage Wade sought to reclaim his lost senate seat. With the support of the local Whig party and while serving on their Central Corresponding Committee, Wade campaigned for the state legislature. He was victorious in defeating the man who had replaced him two years previous. The vote this time was 2286-759. The electorate was now more inclined to embrace Wade's position on slavery and the fugitive slave laws.

In Wade's second term in the legislature, racial issues were again a focus of controversy. The debates and various parliamentary maneuvers resulted in the repeal of the state's fugitive slave laws against which Wade had fought so vigorously in 1839. Wade and others argued unsuccessfully however, for the repeal of Ohio's black codes during the same term. The apex of this term was the special session called in the summer of 1842 to reapportion the state's legislative districts. The Democratic majority, interested in securing its own political future, proposed what the Whigs believed to be an unfair plan. In protest, the Whigs immobilized the legislature by resigning en masse. Although this rhetorical tactic was risky, it earned Wade greater support and respect in his hometown.

At the time of Wade's resignation from the State
senate, his former partner, Joshua Giddings, resigned his seat in the national legislature to protest the handling of the Creole case. They each returned to Ohio's Western Reserve meeting with great popular support. (Both men were reelected to the offices they had resigned.) They stumped the Western Reserve on behalf of the Whig party and its candidates, sometimes appearing together, but more often separately.

From 1843 until 1847, Wade held no public office but devoted himself to his new family and his law practice in Jefferson. Though not in office, Wade was involved in politics. With the rapid growth of the Liberty and other antislavery parties, Wade found himself in a position of leadership in the Whig party. While his friends fled the party, Wade was appointed to serve on the five member Whig Congressional Central Committee. Soon there was discussion about Wade's candidacy for Congress and the governor's office. He continued to stump for the party's candidates at local gatherings.

During the 1844 presidential campaign, Wade stumped for Henry Clay. Interestingly, Wade "was a most enthusiastic and devoted admirer of Mr. [Henry] Clay" because he supported protective tariffs. Wade, the antislavery spokesman, was obviously not a single-issue politician, as he spoke in all but a "few townships in the northeastern part of Ohio." Wade's refusal to dissociate with the Whig
party resulted in his estrangement from Giddings and other antislavery activists on the Reserve. Furthermore, his speaking opportunities became fewer and fewer.65 This is not to say Wade did not speak for he "eloquently sustained" the resolution of the Whig party and he continued to be mentioned as a potential Whig candidate for higher office being, in fact, an unsuccessful candidate for the Whigs' gubernatorial nomination.66

Wade's "popularity . . . was unbounded" when he was elected president-judge of Ohio's Third Judicial District by the legislature in February 1847.67 His circuit encompassed the growing industrial northeast corner of the state. For those who doubted his abilities as a leader, this new position proved useful. The prejudices of his enemies were "disarmed as far as possible" while his judicial career increased "the confidence and admiration of his political friends."68

It is said Judge Wade's decisions were rarely appealed. The Supreme Court of Ohio once overturned a Wade decision and ordered a new trial. The second trial was heard by Wade who disregarded the higher court and reissued his first decision. When the losing attorney rose to protest, Wade replied, "I will give them [the Supreme Court] a chance to get right." Upon reconsideration of the case, they accepted Wade's decision.69

Not surprisingly, Wade continued to oppose
discrimination and injustice at every opportunity. Harper's Weekly reported that a man "of the blackest type" was once called as a witness in a case. The black codes in effect at the time barred the testimony of blacks and an objection was offered. After very brief arguments, Wade supposedly overruled the objection because the "statute is a disgrace to Ohio . . . [and] opposed to common law." Wade explained he would interpret the statute strictly and as "no evidence that the witness is a negro" had been introduced, the testimony was allowed to continue.70

While on the bench, Wade continued to support the Whig party, complaining to his wife that he was exhausted from "holding court all day & stumping all night."71 He was aware that Whigs from Ohio, New York, and Kentucky were crossing the Western Reserve in 1848 in an effort to rebuild their support. His concern was that Ashtabula was being neglected by these speakers. "I know if I could be there," Wade wrote, "I could persuade a great many to forsake their folly."72 Indeed, though the Reserve had forsaken the Whig party in favor of Martin Van Buren in 1848, Wade supported General Zachary Taylor's candidacy "long before" the nominating convention. His speeches in Taylor's behalf were heard "not only in Ohio, but Pennsylvania, New York and some of the New England states."73

By the fall of 1849, Wade was convinced the political fortune of the Whig party was changing for the better. He
continued to seek speaking opportunities on behalf of his party.\textsuperscript{74} Caroline Wade reported to him that "the Whigs are in a perfect fever to have you stump . . . a little before the election. . . . If you don't," she challenged, "I shall be almost tempted to don your costume & take the stump myself. The only trouble would be I should soon get angry & that would spoil all."\textsuperscript{75}

Wade's speaking in 1850 focused on the Compromise of 1850 which, in part, introduced a national fugitive slave law, a measure Wade said was "a disgrace to the nation & to the age in which we live." He made as many as two speeches a week in opposition to the Compromise.\textsuperscript{76} Wade addressed an "Anti-Bloodhound" meeting in Warren, Ohio, denouncing "the law and its supporters in most scathing terms, and proclaiming himself ready to grant a writ of \textit{habeas corpus} and test the right of any claimant who might seize upon a fugitive in this section of the State."\textsuperscript{77} Again in Ravenna, Ohio, he reportedly "said the law, bristling like a Porcupine with pains and penalties, was the most infamous enactment known to the statute book of this country."\textsuperscript{78}

These speeches led the Cleveland \textit{Herald}, Conneaut \textit{Reporter} and Ashtabula \textit{Sentinel} to endorse the judge as a candidate to the U.S. Senate.\textsuperscript{79} To Mrs. Wade he complained that newspapers in southern Ohio were also endorsing him and causing "quite a stir for me in various parts of the state. This has all been done without my knowledge or consent. I
Nevertheless, while holding court in Akron, Ohio, Wade received notification on March 15, 1851, that he had been elected by the state legislature to a six-year term in the United States Senate. The election was hard fought coming as it did on the twenty-eighth ballot and requiring a tentative coalition between Whig and Free Soil legislators.

Wade continued to support the Whig party and its candidates until 1854 when the Kansas-Nebraska Act placed him outside the Whig party machine. As late as June 27, 1853, he wrote that "the Whig cause looks rather blue, but it is to my mind, that within the next four years they will again be in the ascendant." It is no surprise then that he supported General Winfield Scott's campaign in 1852. He "took the stump in and out of Ohio and made the hustings ring with the clarion sound of his voice." By 1856, Wade was a member of the new Republican party. His "valuable labors" were then donated to their presidential candidate as he "took the stump in almost every state of the free North" in John Fremont's support. Through later years he continued to stump for Republican candidates.

Benjamin Wade, the shy, inept young lawyer had developed into a national leader of considerable fame. After years of failure, he had become a notable advocate. As Riddle concluded, "perhaps this was really his greatest success."
A public speaker's delivery consists of at least two aspects: his physical delivery and his vocal delivery. Analyzing a speaker from a pre-audio and video tape era is challenging. Little exists regarding Wade's delivery aside from passing references to his stocky frame and piercing eyes. No doubt, the few chroniclers who recorded their assessment of his speech delivery were biased. However, their references paint a rough sketch of what Wade's physical and vocal delivery were.

In his early twenties Wade was "broad, heavy shouldered, . . . straight and supple, [and] manly featured."87 Such adjectives are open to interpretation. Wade, it will be remembered, worked on the construction of the Erie Canal and cleared the Ohio land for farming during his youth.88 Hard labor contributed to his physical appearance in any case.

Wade was "dark-eyed, and . . . [bore] his head well up with unconscious dignity."89 In another source, Wade's face was considered "well featured" with "black melancholy eyes that had a way of burning with a deep smothering fire."90 Far from being objective, this witness was a law student in Wade's firm who admired his mentor's nonverbal communication at the bar.

Only one reference to Wade's physical action while speaking has been located. Evidently, Wade usually began to speak standing very erect, his right hand in his breast within his vest. When
something striking, emphatic—a point—was reached, he rose on his toes, threw out his hand, sometimes both, with force and grace, rising and sinking on his toes in a peculiar, and in him, a very effective way.91

Evidently relying on this same source, Mary Land wrote that Wade assumed "a Napoleonic stance and rising and falling on his toes to punctuate his points."92

Wade's success and notoriety at the bar led to many young lawyers copying his style and delivery. They even "combed their hair back over their heads" as Wade did. "Where he was merely frank and about [sic]," one writer states, "they became coarse and rough." Wade "indulged in the stronger English, they became profane."93 Wade was a compelling figure. Within "a few years the bar of northern Ohio was invaded by . . . rude, swearing caricatures" of the future Senator.94

If little is known of Wade's physical delivery, even less is varifiable of his vocal delivery. His biographer describes Wade's voice as "good."95 A former eye witness noted Wade had "forcefully clear diction."96 On the other hand, Land claims that Wade spoke, "never quite modulating his rough mid-west twang, which unfriendly observers referred to as raucous."97 She offers no evidence of this charge.

General Study Habits

No speaker's ideas exist in a vacuum. Wade was no exception to this rule. As a leader in his community,
state, and nation, he was expected to be well informed. What then were the thoughts Wade had been exposed to in his reading? What were his general study habits?

As noted earlier, Wade "very early evinced an unusual and ardent attachment to books . . . making himself familiar with all the books that came within his reach." His conquest of Pike's *Arithmetic* and the Bible have been mentioned. Perhaps he also engaged in reading the fifty-six books which constituted the town library in Feeding Hills and, according to Land, were stored in a two-bushel basket. Riddle supposes Wade and his siblings read Jonathan Edwards' *On the Will*, Isaac Watts' *On the Mind*, Milton's poems, and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in addition to the New *England Primer*.

Wade's early study prepared him for studying medicine in Albany, New York, while he was in his early twenties. Why he never completed his study of medicine is unclear for he undoubtedly mastered the subject matter. Half a century later his brother-in-law asserted Wade "was one of the greatest readers . . . and very proficient and learned in astronomy, geology, and many other branches" of science.

At Whittlesey's law firm Wade found "what he had all his life most earnestly desired." He was free to study the great books and legal texts of his day. The typical law library consisted of the works of William Blackstone, James Chetty, James Kent, Edward Coke, Francis Bacon, Hargreaves,
Bullen and Jacob. Riddle argues that it was Wade's "courage, will power, . . . capacity for long, continuous, persistent work, mental and physical" which explain his success in the study of law.

Such character traits seem to have transferred to Wade's early career at the bar. Early residents of Jefferson recalled that "when he was not engaged in pleading law, he seemed as much a fixture in Giddings' old law office, pondering over his books, as was the old brick fire-place in the office." Persistance characterized Wade's term in You seem to think that our Session continues on the Sabbath. . . . You are however a little mistaken. The fact is all our letters and papers are brought into the senate chamber every morning and the members mostly congregate there on Sunday morning [simply] to read their papers.

If his reading habits were persistent, Wade's memory was flawless. After entering the federal legislature, Wade was a frequent visitor to Simonds and Ranney, the successor of Wade and Ranney since Wade had become a judge. One young law student in the firm was impressed by Wade's memory and years later recalled:

he would ask the students what they were reading . . . [and] in an off hand way go over what we had read, giving a synopsis, and lecture of the subject and although it must have been years since he had read these books on the principles of law, still his wonderful memory gave him a clear distinct interpretation of the contents, seemed to present the matter so clear to our minds, that it almost seemed new matter to us.

Surprisingly, this studious man with a phenomenal memory "considered anyone who made music a 'fiddlin' cus'"
and thought Shakespeare 'gross and barbarous'.\textsuperscript{109} The fact he was familiar with music and Shakespeare led another to conclude "he was well posted in modern and ancient literature."\textsuperscript{110} It is indeed sad that Wade's library cannot be investigated first hand to discover the manner of his tastes and the breadth of his knowledge. When his law office was removed to the Hale Farm Museum from Jefferson in the 1960s, his library was dispersed to family members and remains untraceable.

**Philosophy of Public Address**

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Wade left no extended statement of his rhetorical philosophy. However, because of the extent of his speaking career, several isolated statements regarding public speaking exist in his papers. In addition, his peers recorded their impressions of Wade's speech philosophy. What was Wade's philosophy of public address?

It is not inconsequential that Wade recognized the political power of the spoken word. Although the future of the Whig cause looked bleak in the mid-1800s, Wade insisted all that was needed was "efficient stumping."\textsuperscript{111} When antislavery sentiment struggled for support in Ohio, Wade was certain the antislavery lecturers would "hold the great state on the right side" of the issue.\textsuperscript{112}

As for Wade's speaking itself, his most notable legacy is his simplicity of thought. He was a man who "dispised
[sic] sham in all the relations of life, in church, society, and politics.\textsuperscript{113} It was this philosophy, according to his biographer, which convinced Wade to go as far as avoiding the "sable pageantry" of President Lincoln's funeral. It was, to Wade's mind, "meaningless, ludicrous [and the] vainest mockery."\textsuperscript{114} At his request, Wade's own funeral was "of the plainest kind."\textsuperscript{115} We may conclude that Wade took conscious steps to portray the common man image in his death: simple and plain.

Much more so he portrayed the common man image in his life. He was, according to a close associate, "a man of action, of deeds, not words and letter."\textsuperscript{116} While his contemporaries are remembered for their flowery and florid oratory, Wade is remembered for his simplicity. He "stood out as a determined man of few words."\textsuperscript{117} Further, when he did speak, "he never fired over . . . [the] heads" of his audience.\textsuperscript{118}

Wade was, of course, not without the ability to proffer lofty words. He was once chided by his mother-in-law for not speaking in the state legislature. "I have looked over every journal for some of your pompous speeches and as yet been disappointed--will you not let us see how you can show off."\textsuperscript{119} She knew his potential for oratorical flair. In later years, Wade confessed to having "kept aloof" on certain issues facing the legislative bodies of which he was a member. On the Kansas-Nebraska Act, however, he designed
"to fight a fight [for]ever" if necessary.\textsuperscript{120}

His tendency to remain silent was evidently forgotten when faced with what he considered important issues for in the U.S. Senate he once admitted:

Mr. President, it is not without embarrassment that I rise to debate any questions in the Senate of the United States, for it is well known that I lay no claims to being a debater of general measures that come under consideration. I have generally contended myself with . . . leaving others to debate such questions as may from time to time arise.\textsuperscript{121}

How much of this simple, direct, common man image was authentic is difficult to ascertain. It is, however, interesting to note the pride with which he wrote his wife on one occasion. "My vanity is greatly flattered here to find my rank above all but the President." Further, "it is now settled here that you rank higher than the wife of a foreign minister. Does not this make you proud?"\textsuperscript{122}

Simplicity and the common man image were part of Wade's public speaking philosophy, but he is also remembered for his sharp jabs at his opposition. This seems to have been a calculated tactic on Wade's part in most cases. He was, after all, nicknamed "Bluff Ben." He once advised his son, "never harbor revenge but resist an insult with proper spirit on the spot and without fear of consequence. But above all never let your word be violated . . . let none of our blood be guilty of so mean an act."\textsuperscript{123} The elder Wade knew his speeches could be scathing. In response to an admirer of his speaking he wrote, "I handled the subject

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without gloves & I took no pains to smooth down the rough corners." 124

Wade again chose the insult when Congressman John Quincy Adams was censured by the national legislature and "a fierce . . . debate ensued [in the Ohio senate]. . . . The excitement was compelling and in that debate I took a conspicuous part . . . ." Wade wrote. "Indeed I abused them [the Democrats] to the utmost of my skill which is not small in this line." 125 Once provoked, Wade was ruthless.

Despite his skill and reputation for using sharp barbs, it is necessary to recall Wade's ineffectual speech making ability in his youth. When he realized his son was shy, he told his wife that Jim "is in danger of being rendered totally inefficient by that most para[ly]zing of all maladies [sic] diffidence." Wade's advice to the attending parent is interesting.

He has inherited this fully from me. And I do believe it is the worst legacy I have transmitted to him. You must use every means to enable him to overcome it. Thrust him forward into company on every occasion even at the peril of his morals rather than not have him surmount it. If there is a dancing school within reach make him attend it. Diffidence once subdued I have no fears for him . . . . Unless this is done depend upon it he will dwindle out and fall behind those that have not one tenth of his capacity. 126

One way Wade had resolved his own diffidence, apparently, was to memorize every speech. His commitment never to write out a speech, "to become an extemporaneous speaker or no speaker at all," may have helped overcome his
shyness. It also caused its own embarrassment when Wade was forced to back down from positions he took in the emotion of the moment.

A former Wade and Ranney student concluded from Wade's speaking career that two qualities were necessary to become a successful advocate. 1) Belief "in the justice of a cause," and 2) the ability to be fair, honest, and to remember God. Wade lived and spoke by these principles.

Summary

Wade developed, as a public speaker, from a shy inept young man into an outspoken antislavery orator. In the first years of his law practice, he deferred oral arguments to his partner and, instead, focused on legal research. Through persistent practice Wade finally overcame his diffidence.

Having become successful at the bar, he proceeded to enter politics. His eventual rise to leadership in the Republican party on the national level changed the role of the Senate and federal government. When no other senator stood against the extension of slavery, Wade courageously challenged the South's slave power. The next chapter examines the rhetorical setting in which Wade delivered his antislavery speeches.
Notes

Abbreviations used in Notes:

BFW Benjamin Franklin Wade
CRW Caroline R. Wade
LC Library of Congress
OHS Ohio Historical Society
WRHS Western Reserve Historical Society

2 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 367.
5 Land, p. 496.
6 Riddle, Life, p. 27.
7 "Strong Men: True Stories of Americans of Action,"
an uncredited newspaper clipping in the Caroline Wade Woodbury Scrapbook.


9 Land, p. 496.


11 Riddle, Life, p. 34.

12 The Bible is in the possession of Alma Woodbury, Jefferson, Ohio.

13 Riddle, Life, p. 33.

14 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 117.

15 Quoted in Riddle, Life, p. 23.

16 Land, p. 491; Riddle, Life, p. 33; Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 117.

17 Riddle, Life, p. 37.

18 Land, p. 495.

19 Riddle, Life, p. 35; Land, p. 495.

20 CRW, Letter to BFW, December 27, 1841, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.

21 Though Wade's letter is nonextant, it is referred to in CRW, Letter to BFW, September 18, 1849, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.

22 BFW, Letter to CRW, December 29, 1851, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.
23 BFW, Letter to Milton Sutliff, May 8, 1859, Sutliff Papers, WRHS, Cleveland, OH.

24 "Benjamin Franklin Wade," Banner of Light, April 6, 1878, in Parson Family Papers, LC, Washington, DC. The clipping was saved by Wade's family along with a number of accounts of his final illness and various obituaries.

25 Riddle, Life, p. 71-75. Riddle asserts the brothers entered the bar in 1827. This is probably a typographical error as he explains that Benjamin Wade began to study law in 1826 and studied for two years. Wade's certificate of admission to the Ohio bar is housed at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, OH and is undated. See also, Unfinished biography of Benjamin Franklin Wade, in the Edward C. Lampson Papers, MS 42, OHS, Columbus, OH, p. 2; Trefousse, Wade, p. 322n; Harriet Taylor Upton, History of the Western Reserve, I (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1910), p. 574.

26 Riddle, Life, pp. 78-79. Many of the earliest records in Ashtabula County were destroyed when the courthouse burned in 1849. See Udell, p. 37.

27 Riddle, Life, pp. 53-54; Unfinished biography, p. 1; Record of School Teachers and Payments, Ashtabula County, Ohio, 1828-1837, p. 7.

28 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 120. A perusal of the Ashtabula Sentinel in 1835 shows more than half the cases heard in the county were handled by Giddings and Wade.
29 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 117.
31 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 117.
33 Land, p. 501.
34 Trefousse, p.
37 Ashtabula Sentinel, June 13, 1835, p. 3, col. 3;
   Sentinel, July 11, 1835, p. 3, col. 3.
38 Sentinel, September 26, 1835, p. 2, col. 6.
39 Sentinel, September 5, 1835, p. 3, col. 2;
   Sentinel, September 19, 1835, p. 3, col. 3.
40 Sentinel, October 10, 1835, p. 3, cols. 1-4.
41 Sentinel, November 28, 1835, p. 3, col. 1.
42 Sentinel, October 13, 1835, p. 3, col. 1.
43 Unfinished biography, p. 3.
44 Unfinished biography, p. 3.
46 The progress of this legislation is reported in Unfinished biography, pp. 3-5; Trefousse, Wade, pp. 34-38;
   Sentinel, March 2, 1839, p. 2, col. 2.

48 Sentinel, October 8, 1839, p. 2, col. 1; Sentinel, October 19, 1839, p. 2, col. 4.

49 Wade spoke at Harrison meetings in Saybrook and Monroe townships in Ashtabula County. Sentinel, May 9, 1840, p. 3, col. 2; Sentinel, May 16, 1840, p. 3, col. 2.

50 Riddle, Life, p. 154.

51 Unfinished biography, p. 5.

52 "Strong Men."


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56 Sentinel, October 23, 1841, p. 2, col. 5.

57 Sentinel, December 31, 1842, p. 2. The Black Codes were repealed in 1849 while Wade served as president-judge of the Third Judicial District.

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59 Trefousse, Wade, p. 51.

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61 Sentinel, October 8, 1842; October 1, 1842; and October 15, 1842.

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86 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 117.
87 Albert Riddle, Life of Benjamin F. Wade (Cleveland: Williams, 1886), p. 52.
88 See Chapter 2.
89 Riddle, Life, p. 52.
91 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 119.
92 Mary Land, "Bluff Ben Wade's New England

93 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 121.
94 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 121.
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97 Land, p. 503.
98 Unknown biography, p. 1.
99 Land, p. 495.
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108 Curtis.

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110 Curtis.
111 BFW, Letter to CRW, September 10, 1849, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.
112 BFW, Letter to unknown recipient, February 13, 1853, Manuscript Collection, WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio.
113 Curtis; see also BFW, Letter to CRW, December 4, 1842, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.
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115 "The Final Farewell."
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117 Trefousse, Wade, p. 76.
118 Riddle, "Lawyer," p. 119.
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120 BFW, Letter to unknown recipient, January 9, 1854, Manuscript Collection, WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio.
121 Congressional Globe, February 7, 1854, p. 337.
122 BFW, Letter to CRW, January 29, 1851, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.
123 BFW, Letter to James Wade, December 8, 1858, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.
124 BFW, Letter to Milton Sutliff, April 15, 1858, Sutliff Paper, WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio.
125 BFW, Letter to CRW, February 4, 1842, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, DC.
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CHAPTER III
RHETORICAL SETTING

In his landmark article, Lloyd Bitzer focused attention
on rhetoric as situational. A speech, address, or
utterance "is rhetorical because it is a response to a
situation of a certain kind." A rhetorical situation
emerges from an interaction between an exigence, an audience
and the constraints which influence the rhetor and his
audience.

The speeches examined in this study are Benjamin Wade's
response to the exigence of slavery. The purpose of this
chapter is to explore the various constraints as well as the
specific audience Wade faced. These elements compose what
might be termed the rhetorical setting of his antislavery
speeches. The major theories of constitutional
interpretation, a history of antislavery activities,
political party loyalties, sectionalism, and Wade's
immediate audience are examined.

Theories of Constitutional Interpretation

When northern abolition societies began to become
increasingly vocal in the 1830s, national leaders were at
odds concerning the functions and purpose of the national
government. Shortly after the adoption of the Constitution, two predominant views of its nature emerged. These perspectives were personified by the Hamiltonian Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans.

In general, the Federalists were the party of law and order. Conservative financially, Alexander Hamilton's followers favored a federal bank system. In the French-Indian War, they sided with the British. A Federalist was one who believed in a strong national government.

On the other hand, anti-Federalists functioned as the party of the people. Thomas Jefferson, who believed a little revolution periodically was a good thing, set the tenor for the anti-Federalists. They favored the local or state banking system. They were the friends of the French in the French-Indian War in the wake of the French revolution.

These divergent perspectives led their adherents to opposing views of the Constitution. The federalists insisted upon a strong national government. In the event of a controversy between state and national government, the Supreme Court, a branch of the federal government, should be the final arbiter. The Constitution's authority was provided by the people and popular consent.

The anti-Federalists argued that the states had approved the Constitution. Therefore, the states ought to
be the final authority should a controversy between the state and national levels surface. This interpretation of the Constitution, of course, provided the individual states with the ultimate veto power. In the event the federal government overstepped its constitutional powers, the state government—not the Supreme Court—could prevent the execution of federal dictates.

During the 1830s, those who followed Daniel Webster's notion of the Constitution were the political ancestors of the Federalists. Webster argued that the thirteen original states had ceased to exist in practice upon the ratification of the Constitution. Further, he believed the actions of the national government overruled any state activities which might be in conflict.

An opposing view of the federal government in the 1830s was accepted by the nullifiers. Embracing the anti-federalist philosophy, they believed it was a state's right to nullify any federal action which conflicted with the state. South Carolina's John C. Calhoun personified this theory of government. Believing the Constitution established a voluntary association, or compact, of independent states, the federal government's power extended only where it was voluntarily permitted by the state governments. If the Constitution should be violated by any party involved, the contract was essentially null and void. Of course the individual state was left to determine if and
when the Constitution had been violated. Should the federal government take any action not specifically permitted by the Constitution, any state was free under this theory to call a convention and literally nullify the illegal action.

This notion of states' rights is linked to the South in the contemporary mind. Indeed, Calhoun never received whole-hearted support for his philosophy of government outside South Carolina. However, as sectionalism grew, the nullification of protective tariffs was threatened by New England states as well as those in the South.

Benjamin Wade, a Whig Federalist on most issues, tended to lean toward Calhoun and the anti-Federalist philosophy when slavery was the issue. While serving as a judge in Ohio, Wade attacked "Webster with the most withering and biting sarcastic denunciation." Because he was a Whig in principle, he denounced Webster rather than leave his party.

Though he took a Federalist approach to economic affairs, Wade was "for the death of slavery . . . whether the Union survive it or not." Later, Wade became more outspoken in his belief in states' rights.

Should the excitement of the coming contest sever the union and cut us sore from the dead corpse of slavery I should not regret it. Freedom & Slavery [i.e. North and South] must grapple and one or the other must die the death. And I know it shall not be freedom.

The antislavery press of Wade's hometown supported the nullification of the fugitive slave laws as well. The editor wrote:
Our revolutionary fathers "nullified" the "stamp act" most effectually. . . . they then went to work and "nullified" the British troops at Bunker Hill—they applied this doctrine of "nullification" to Burgoyne and his army at Saratoga . . .; and then, to complete the work of "nullification," they "nullified" the union between them and the mother country. We are disposed to follow their example; by "nullifying" the Fugitive law. 10

Although many northerners continued to support Webster's notion of federalism, Wade and his constituents did not balk at being called nullifiers. Neither did they shirk from calling for the dissolution of the Union upon principle.

A History of Antislavery Activities

Against this political backdrop the antislavery movement emerged as a powerful social influence during the 1830s. The words "powerful" and "social" are chosen carefully. Until William Lloyd Garrison's idea of immediate emancipation was injected into abolitionist rhetoric, the movement lacked any forcefulness. Early antislavery movements, dating back to colonial America, had proposed plans of gradual emancipation as the acceptable end to slavery. This in effect "kept antislavery sentiment within the orbit of innocuous humanitarianism." 11

The abolitionists of the 1830s and earlier were also social rather than political activists. The original arguments of antislavery spokesmen were moral in their nature. As Merton Dillon commented, Garrison

condemned slavery and slaveholders as relentlessly as revivalists condemned sin and
sinners. The revivalists called for total commitment to Christ; Garrison demanded total commitment to the abolitionist cause. For Garrison, there was no middle ground. In effect he held that those who did not join him . . . were against him and thereby supporting slavery.\textsuperscript{12}

Dillon's parallel between Garrisonian abolitionists in the 1830s and revivalists is not artificial. In general, abolitionists agreed with the states' rights philosophy that Congress had no power over the practice of slavery in individual states.\textsuperscript{13} Since direct political intervention on the national level was not possible, Garrison and his associates targeted their message to what they hoped was a morally conscious audience—the evangelical Protestant churches of the North whose "power was presumably enormous."\textsuperscript{14} However, early antislavery leaders and their societies "had only a peripheral part in the growth of the political antislavery movement" and in fact "avoided . . . any political antislavery action."\textsuperscript{15} Their early efforts instead focused on changing the North's apathetic attitude toward slavery.

How, then, did Garrison's concept of immediate emancipation emerge and take hold of the antislavery movement and ultimately affect the Radical Republicans? In 1829 and 1830, Garrison worked as a co-editor of the \textit{Genius of Universal Emancipation}, a journal with an editorial bent for gradual emancipation. In this position he began to urge the immediate emancipation of the slaves. His writings resulted in a libel conviction for which he served a brief
jail sentence in Baltimore. On the basis of the martyrdom he had experienced, Garrison began speaking throughout New England, in Philadelphia, and in New York City, arguing for his brand of abolition. Except in New Haven and Boston, he received little positive response.16

Even in Boston he was initially rebuffed by religious and political leaders.17 He appealed to and won the support of three relatively different factions, however. His proposal was embraced by free blacks, young people "caught up in the widespread religious revivals of the late 1820s," and "older persons, many of them Quakers," who had earlier confessed antislavery sentiments.18

Garrison sought to establish a power base in Boston. He held organizational meetings for a new antislavery society. The first meeting was attended by six men who committed themselves to Garrisonian principles of emancipation. They agreed that until a dozen individuals were willing to identify with them, no new organization would be formed. Garrison also founded and edited the Liberator in an effort to solidify respectability, if not support. Through this mouthpiece he urged the formation of a nationwide antislavery group. Finally, with twelve white men signing the organization's constitution, the New England Anti-Slavery Society was established on January 6, 1832.19

The group immediately distributed its constitution in pamphlet form and the Liberator became its official organ.20
Members of the society continued to seek the support and assistance of New England's churches but with limited success. Baptist and Unitarian churches proved to house the most friendly audiences.  

Novelist William Dean Howells, who was reared in Jefferson, Ohio, observed "that outside of the antislavery circles of Boston there was nowhere in the country a population so resolute and so intelligent in its political opinions" as was his own Ashtabula County.  

The county was after all populated by New Englanders who had mapped out townships named Saybrook, Plymouth, Sheffield, Pierpont, Lenox, Dorset, New Lyme, Andover, and Windsor. To their new home these early settlers also brought the New England attitude of accountability of the individual to the community. Meetings of the Ashtabula Lyceum, not surprisingly, were called to debate such questions as "which has the greatest cause of complaint, the African Slaves or the Aborigines . . . of the United States and territories."  

Their interest in social justice and politics led naturally to antislavery activities.  

The Ashtabula County Anti-Slavery Society was organized on May 27, 1834. This group's notion of immediate emancipation did not mean that the slaves shall be turned loose upon the nation to roam as vagabonds and aliens; nor that they shall be instantly invested with all political rights and privileges; nor that they shall be expelled from their native land to a foreign clime, as the price and condition of their freedom.
From 1835 through 1836 the society did not meet but in 1837 it affiliated with the Ohio State Anti-Slavery Society.\textsuperscript{25} Interest in slavery was heightened with the exchange of anonymous letters in the Ashtabula \textit{Sentinel}.\textsuperscript{26} The popularity of the county society grew. The group's January 16, 1838, meeting in Monroe had strong religious overtones. Their next meeting, on July 4, included the enrollment of one hundred new members.\textsuperscript{27}

Although Benjamin Wade is not known to have ever joined an antislavery organization, he was, of course, in sympathy with their cause. His opposition to the fugitive slave laws proposed by Kentucky commissioners and passed by the Ohio Legislature in 1839 has already been noted.\textsuperscript{28} To his former partner, Joshua Giddings, he wrote, "I trust it is the last Bacchanal that slavery will ever hold in this state."\textsuperscript{29} As for those who had supported passage of the laws, Wade predicted, "many a demagogue has sealed his political damnation."\textsuperscript{30} Of course, it was Wade who found himself removed from office in the election held later that year. The Western Reserve he represented was not yet solidified in its antislavery attitude.

On the national level, the formidable task facing Garrisonian abolitionists was discrediting the popular American Colonization Society. While gradual abolitionists were a foe to be reckoned with, they at least embraced a
strong hatred of slavery. On the other hand, colonization "was not in any sense anti-slavery: it had for its basis the inferiority of negroes [sic]." Furthermore, the popularity of this movement represented a clear challenge to the notion of immediacy.

Colonization was rooted in assumptions like those held by Henry Clay when he stated, "I have studied the Negro character. . . . they lack self-reliance--we can make nothing out of them." That men who later were called Radical Republicans supported colonization is demonstrated by Hans Trefousse, who relates Salmon Chase's support of the cause. John Hale and Benjamin Wade at one time urged sending freedmen to an undisclosed site in the tropics while Thaddeus Stevens suggested Haiti and Louisiana as places where blacks in the District of Columbia could be relocated. That colonization was politically acceptable is seen by President Lincoln's continued proposals to colonize blacks as late as 1863.

As the American Colonization Society continued to meet stubborn opposition from the Garrisonians, a series of verbal attacks was launched through the colonizationist's publications. When this occurred the immediatists posed as "maligned philanthropists" who were being denied a fair hearing. They reiterated that theirs was a moral crusade, non-violent and non-political, denied access to the press and pulpit. This tactic, along with a doubled circulation
of the Liberator, resulted in the North becoming more sympathetic to Garrison's ideas.35

This defense against the colonizers' attacks is questionable. Garrison explained that immediatism did not mean that the slave shall immediately exercise the right of suffrage, or be eligible to any office, or be emancipated by law, or be free from benevolent restraints of guardianship.

He claimed, further, to urge only "personal freedom" for blacks as a result of a change in public opinion.36 On the other hand, students of the abolitionists have assumed, as did Merton Dillon, that the "dual aims of emancipation and equal rights for Blacks always were inseparable in abolitionism."37 A simple solution to this inconsistency can be found in recognizing the diversity of positions which could be held and still permit an individual to be called an abolitionist.38

In May, 1833, Garrison went to England on a fund-raising tour to benefit the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Once there, he began to attack the American Colonization Society which had lobbied Parliament successfully for some time.39 The end of slavery was being debated in Parliament, heightening the timeliness of Garrison's visit. Because of Garrison's successful efforts in undermining "the reputation of the resident . . . [lobbyist] of the Colonization Society," American abolition fell into the favor of British leaders while colonization fell out of favor.40 Having lost both American and English
public support, the American Colonization Society soon was bankrupt and the "main obstacle to a broad mobilization of organized abolitionists" was eliminated.41

Following positive responses to the English tour that appeared in the northern press, sixty-two individuals gathered at Philadelphia in December 1833 to form the national abolition society of which Garrison had so long dreamed. Among those attending were representatives of the three most vocal antislavery groups of the time: the Philadelphia Quakers, the New England Garrisonians, and the New York Reformers. The meeting was dominated by the New York group. Led by the Tappan brothers, this delegation was unique in that their abolitionist-convictions were built on a fervent evangelical religious commitment.

The Philadelphia meeting resulted in the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society.42 The New England Anti-Slavery Society eventually reorganized as the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and became an affiliate of the national organization in 1835.43 Garrison continued leading the movement in his post as editor of the Liberator.

In Ohio's Ashtabula County, colonization societies were active until at least 1840. Various meetings of the county society were called in 1835 and 1836, but they seem never to have gained widespread support.44 According to one tradition it took nothing less than a speech by Theodore Weld, antislavery activist and founder of Oberlin College,
in Jefferson to motivate the abandonment of colonizationist principles. Weld's speech in October 1835 elicited an enthusiastic response from his audience, which supposedly founded the Jefferson Anti-Slavery Society immediately thereafter.45

In any event, by the 1840's, Ashtabula County was noted for more than its philosophical assent to the antislavery position. United States Supreme Court decisions in 1842 and 1847 gave the federal government complete responsibility to enforce the fugitive slave laws of 1793. Little enforcement of these laws had been provided by the state of Ohio. As noted earlier, the state's own fugitive slave laws which had been enacted in 1839 were repealed in 1843.46 These actions at the federal level encouraged sectionalism and resulted in a stronger anti-South sentiment on the Western Reserve.

Consequently, the underground railroad flourished. Through a series of elaborate plans fugitive slaves were smuggled out of the South through Ohio and into Canada. Ohio contained more underground railroad stations than any other state. The lines criss-crossed the state and ended in eight terminals on Lake Erie. Two of these known terminals were in Ashtabula County. The most popular of these was Ashtabula Harbor's Hubbard House through which "hundreds of slaves" were transported.47 Benjamin Wade's wife was related to the Hubbards and the Wades' wedding was held at the Hubbard House.48
Jefferson, Ohio, located ten miles directly south of Ashtabula Harbor and Lake Erie, had several underground railroad stations.
Ashtabula County's underground railroad was so thoroughly supported by residents that no slave was ever retaken in the county.\(^{49}\) Public officials, including the sheriff, whose hotel in Jefferson was a station on the underground railroad, winked at the illegal activity.\(^{50}\) Houses were built with false walls, trap doors, and hidden crawl spaces designed for fugitive slaves in the event a slave owner should come looking for his "property."\(^{51}\)

The people of the Western Reserve were also active in relief societies which collected clothing and money for distribution to fugitive slaves in Canada. Joseph Mason, himself a fugitive slave, spoke in Ashtabula and neighboring Lake Counties in the spring of 1851 raising support for those slaves who had escaped through Ohio. His visit to Ashtabula was controversial, but he nevertheless found the Baptist Church filled to capacity on at least two occasions.\(^{52}\)

Ashtabula County was also connected to the infamous abolitionist, John Brown. His failed but violent attempt to free slaves at Harper's Ferry, Virginia resulted in his execution. John Brown, Jr. lived in the southeastern portion of the county.\(^{53}\) The elder Brown rose to national fame when he, his four sons, and a few antislavery settlers attacked and killed five proslavery men outside Lawrence, Kansas. The guns used in this conflict were from the Austinburg Militia of Ashtabula County.\(^{54}\)

After leaving Kansas, Brown moved about the North under
assumed names advocating his brand of abolition. One stop on his speaking tour was Jefferson. On May 27, 1859, Brown addressed the assembly of the Congregational Church after the Sunday morning service. At the invitation of Joshua Giddings, Brown spoke on Bleeding Kansas and his efforts to keep the territory free from slavery.\textsuperscript{55}

In the winter of 1858-1859, a large shipment of caskets was received in Ashtabula. The coffins contained guns and weapons from Brown's followers in Kansas. These were moved to the King Brothers' cabinet shop in Cherry Valley and stored until they could be forwarded to Maryland, John Brown's headquarters for the attack on Harper's Ferry. It was also during this time that Brown organized a secret society, the Sons of Freedom, with the help of Giddings' son, Grotious. The members of these secret societies numbered upward to five hundred. They were known about Ashtabula county as the "Black Strings" because they wore black bows on their lapels.\textsuperscript{56}

The original purpose of the Black Strings was to provide support for John Brown's plan. At this time, Brown had outlined a program which entailed the establishment of rendezvous points in the Virginia mountains. It was assumed that disenchanted slaves would escape to these predetermined points and be equipped with weapons for self defense on their way northward. The people of northeast Ohio were not generally in favor of violence nor were they aware of
Brown's plan to invade Virginia. Nevertheless, Ashtabula County boasted thirteen of the twenty-one men who accompanied Brown in his invasion.57

At the beginning of his Senate term, Benjamin Wade was considered much more conservative than other Congressmen. Rather than favoring the immediate abolition of salvery, Wade argued against the extension of slavery into the territories over which the national legislature exercised control. He came to embrace the abolitionist cause, as we shall see. As a statesman, he recognized "the great struggle of slavery . . . overshadows all things else."58

In little more than thirty years after the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society, the abolition of slavery was complete. Under the terms of the Constitution, slave trade ended in 1807. Not until 1862, however, did Congress legislate the end of slavery per se when it abolished slavery in the federally controlled territories and the District of Columbia. Later that year President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which took effect on January 1, 1863.

As far as the abolitionists were concerned, Lincoln's proclamation had a number of shortcomings. Dillon discussed three specific failures of the statement.59 First, it was a war related edict. As such, the so-called border states--those slave holding states not in rebellion against the union--were unaffected. Second, the Fugitive Slave laws
were left unchanged. This was a striking weakness as far as
the North was concerned. Finally, the proclamation lacked a
commitment to civil rights. The need for further actions to
improve the freedman's lot was not addressed.

The American Anti-Slavery Society, far from being
pleased with Lincoln's order, leveled criticisms roughly
parallel to Dillon's. In addition, the organization faulted
the president because he moved, they believed, for political
and economic expediency rather than for a sense of moral
righteousness. Garrisonians were not concerned about the
motives of politicians at this time. Rather they were
pleased in selling abolition in whatever form accepted as
government policy.60

The final blow to slavery as an American institution
came on January 31, 1865, when the necessary two-thirds
majority was found to pass the thirteenth amendment. This
Garrison saw

as consummating his life's work and as
completing the mission of the antislavery
societies. At the end of 1865, he set the type
for the final issue of the Liberator with his
own hands and on 29 December 1865, announced
that after thirty-five years it had ceased
publication.61

The American Anti-slavery Society, however, was not as
definite as Garrison about its fortune. In general, these
abolitionists believed the continued fight for freedmen's
rights was best undertaken by "individuals, churches,
and . . . voluntary societies" designed for this purpose.
Nevertheless, the organization's structure remained intact until 1870.62

**Political Parties and Loyalties**

Wade was certainly influenced by the "non-political" abolition movement. He was also a politician and as such, he was influenced by the political parties and loyalties of his time. Wade, along with other antislavery politicians, shared a heightened sense of resolve and cohesiveness which resulted in the founding of the Republican party.

From 1832, the Whigs and Democrats were the major political parties in the United States until the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Until that time, Whigs had emphasized the economics involved with slavery rather than its morality. Calling for a "free-labor" system, these men viewed slavery as an unfair advantage for southern agricultural interests.63 This prompted their early attempts to enact protective tariffs benefiting their northern constituency. In general, Whigs were unified in advocating the "American System." This platform included a national tariff, a national bank, and national internal improvements.64

Perhaps, because it was in a position to benefit from internal improvements, Ashtabula County had always been a stronghold of the Whigs. Even when the Democrats carried the state of Ohio in 1835, the Whigs won big in Ashtabula County.65 The county Whig convention in 1838 voiced its
support for southern slaveholder Henry Clay. The late 1830s and early 1840s found the Whigs of Wade's hometown becoming more concerned with slavery. Antislavery sentiment began to turn the voters to "amalgamation" parties. But the Ashtabula County Whig party was changing. At their September 23, 1839 convention, with ninety-six members present, forty-six were avowed abolitionists. So strong was the abolitionist power base a decade later, that Wade predicted Taylor would win less than one-third of the Whig vote on the Western Reserve simply because he was a slave-holder. Despite the bleak future for Whigs on the Reserve, Wade avowed his loyalty to the party, its system and principles.

The second great national party was the Democratic party. Led by Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, the Democrats claimed to champion the rights of the common people. As they believed power should reside close to the people, the Democrats supported local and state banks. They further opposed monopolies and the circulation of paper money.

As noted previously, the Democrats, or the "loco-focos" as they were derisively called, never made a strong showing in Ashtabula County. Wade was typical of his constituency in his attitude toward Democrats. "The Democracy," he wrote home, "are . . . fond of sham." The problem with the Democratic party was that "their cause is rotten, and is
sustained by nothing but Demogoues [sic] & hypocrites, and is of course soon doomed to destruction." Wade rejoiced at every set back the Democrats faced.

The success of the Kansas-Nebraska Act forced the issue of slavery. Disenchanted members of Congress from both major parties felt betrayed by their southern pro-slavery colleagues. They began to form Anti-Nebraska coalitions. Understanding these coalitions which were forerunners of the Republican party demands examination of the third party movements in the early nineteenth century.

One of these third parties was the Liberty party. A political force in Congress from 1840, its supporters were pioneers in mounting constitutionally based attacks on slavery. Salmon Chase expressed the party line as an effort "to abolish slavery wherever it exists within the reach of Constitutional Action." The Ohio Liberty party organized in time for the 1840 presidential election. This was a real test of Wade's party loyalty. Wade's younger brother, a congressman from Cleveland, joined the Liberty party as did many of their mutual friends. For at least eight years, the independent antislavery third parties were important parties. That the Liberty party was the political extension of antislavery societies is undeniable. In Ashtabula County, the antislavery society and Liberty party held concurrent conventions. Nationally, the Liberty party argued against
slavery based on Federalism. The constitution was a freedom document, it was posited, and overruled the slave laws of the states.78

A second and perhaps more significant third party was the Free-Soil party. A political force to be reckoned with in 1848, this group sometimes was called the Free Democracy.79 The Liberty party had failed to convince northerners that they were responsible for slavery in the South. With the annexation of Texas and the potential for adding more slave territory to the Union came the rise of the Free-Soilers. Northerners were convinced the constitution provided the basis for outlawing slavery in these territories.80

Giddings, Hale, Julian, Wilson, and Sumner were organizers of the party who later identified themselves with the radical element of the Republican party.81 For Wade's part, he bluntly labeled the Free-Soilers "blind" to the important political issues.82 As late as June 1853, Wade insisted,

I care as little for names as anyone; but I am not to be driven from the support of whig principles, or from acting with the glorious old party, sink or swim. It will not do for us to think of joining any other party, whatever some may say to the contrary, the country cannot survive the destruction of whig principles, let us then, "never give up the ship," but for the present keep up an armed neutrality. . . . I think on the Reserve the Free Soilers may beat us again this fall, but we will try still.83

Wade's skepticism of the Free-Soilers was typical of the Whigs.
Antislavery congressmen who remained loyal to the major parties met the election of the first free-soilers with apprehension. Single issue parties have always been suspect for their unwillingness to work inside the established organizations. Their apprehension may have been with good cause. Meeting in 1849, neither major party had a majority in Congress. This precipitated seventeen days being spent trying to elect a speaker. After this extensive balloting, a pro-slavery southerner was chosen for the office.\textsuperscript{84} The presence of the third party was dangerous as well as inconvenient.

As noted above, the success of the Kansas-Nebraska Act validated the need for a united political voice against slavery. Newspapers such as Washington's \textit{National Era} had "served the political wing of the [antislavery] movement" since 1847. The editor, Dr. Gamaliel Bailey, had in fact been recruited by Lewis Tappan of New York and the American Anti-Slavery Society. While abolitionists, in general, "distrusted Bailey, believing him much too moderate," Tappan was certain a "discreet" voice was what was necessary. Thus, Bailey, with whom some congressmen boarded, encouraged the formation of the new Republican party.\textsuperscript{85}

Recognizing that merely forming an anti-Nebraska coalition was not enough and that third parties were inefficient, a new major party was built on the failing foundations of the Whig party. It was a conglomeration of
former Democrats, Free-Soilers, and Liberty party men as well as Whigs. Indeed, when the party was organized in 1854, its leaders were former political enemies who discovered in opposition to slavery an issue barely able to overcome personal hatreds and the scars of prior partisan attacks. Among them, three factions quickly emerged. The conservatives maintained the formerly Whig concern with economics. Their inclination to compromise often placed them in opposition to fellow Republicans. The second group was the moderate camp, including Lincoln which was willing to make, short-term concessions to maintain the Union. This element became particularly evident during reconstruction. The radicals formed the third faction. They were uncompromising idealists on slavery and other social issues. Interestingly, Gambill's analysis of Republican voting records demonstrated the radical and moderate factions were most often indistinguishable when it came to policy formation.

The new party was a union of many philosophies. Its leaders' abilities were no doubt sharpened by their involvement in the third parties. Before becoming Republicans, they gained experience with political abolition. Furthermore, their past experiences made them less timid of the new political organization. That its membership was capable is attested to by the fact they were able to have their presidential candidate elected within
With the confusion of party loyalties and the growth of abolitionism, a stronger sense of sectionalism, that is North vs. South, emerged. The attitudes of northerners and southerners no doubt influenced Wade's speaking in Congress. The industrialized North, as noted earlier, was obsessed with protecting itself. Slavery became an issue only when industry was threatened.

The antislavery societies of the North by their mere existence have led contemporary students to assume the northern mind in the 1800s embraced a hatred of racism. Such was not the case, however. As Harold Hyman noted, because of the "scientific" theories of the low evolutionary status of Blacks, even "after 1865 many abolitionists accepted some idea of white superiority." What, then, were the racial attitudes of the North?

During the 1830s, it will be remembered, abolitionism did not enjoy popular acceptance. Mobs often met antislavery speakers with violence when they were permitted to speak. The original tactic of the abolitionists was to appeal to a sense of Christian duty or morality. When this failed, alternative methods such as appeals to disunion, even insurrection, were used by some factions. The reaction of northerners revealed that, far from being committed abolitionists, they were apathetic or antagonistic toward
altering the status quo.

In general, the North acknowledged that the national government could not touch slavery where it already existed. The notion of the states' rights was commonly accepted. As explained in the overview of abolitionism, the antislavery movement grew slowly into respectability. When some abolitionists began to encourage secession or disunion in the 1860s, the North turned against them. Speakers in Boston and New York were faced with mob violence as they had been in the 1830s. Antislavery leaders were placed on trial in Ohio and Michigan.

Explanations of the North's fickle stand on race are difficult to find. Dillon assumed the North knew what was "right" with respect to race--abolitionists had taught them that lesson--but at the same time other of their values and interests required Blacks to be kept far from them and in an inferior, exploited position.

The average northerner could not be expected to embrace antislavery sentiment simply because logic demanded it of them. In this regard, Liberty party member Theodore Foster was convinced that abolitionists "must have some other motive to present to the people, [one] which will appeal directly to their own interests." This realization prompted northern and western radicals into a union of convenience with conservative industrial interests. This resulted in a powerful congressional voting bloc.

The change in northern racial attitudes was slow in
coming. Speakers and presses in the North used fear appeals as effectively as they did in the South to perpetuate a negative image of the freed black. While racism persisted in the North, "attitudes with respect to proper governmental policy toward slavery changed quickly and radically" when southern states seceded and the war began.\textsuperscript{96} In fact, the two factors most responsible for evoking antislavery sentiment were not racial in nature. Northerners accepted the abolitionists' goals following a series of blunders committed by President Jackson and southern leaders.\textsuperscript{97}

Indeed, the most significant, and perhaps most surprising, influence on abolitionism came from the South. As in the North, southern politicians devoted much energy to sectional economic needs. Slavery was held to be an economic and political necessity. Northerners—especially those of the antislavery societies—found no hearing in the South.\textsuperscript{98} Surprisingly, "southern action played into the hands of abolitionists" and later the Radical Republicans.\textsuperscript{99}

A single case study demonstrates the positive influence southerners had on the northern cause.\textsuperscript{100} At the second annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Lewis Tappan proposed it "finance the greatest pamphlet campaign in evangelical history." Thirty thousand dollars was budgeted for the effort. Plans called for four different monthly journals, one to be issued each week. Using nationwide mailing, the abolitionists could go in print
where their lecturers could not travel. In 1835, their campaign was underway.

When the material arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, a mob broke into the United States Post Office and burned the mail sacks containing the "propaganda." Tappan and Garrison were hanged in effigy by the mob. Through their inaction, President Jackson and his postmaster general gave "unofficial approval to South Carolina's censorship of the mails." Threats of assassination were made against antislavery spokespersons by southerners as an outgrowth of this incident. The northern press used this situation and others like it to generate abolitionist support. The South's attempt to silence the abolitionists resulted in the number of antislavery societies growing from 200 to 527 in one year.

Such over-reaction by southerners was turned against them time and again in the abolitionist press. This aided the radical cause in the long run as well. The new Republican party had a faction which constantly attempted to appease the South. Lincoln along with other "prominent Republicans" had once even endorsed a constitutional amendment which guaranteed the existence of slavery forever in the South. After the war, the liberal Republicans, led by Carl Schurz, offered to compromise to return the southern United States to order as soon as possible. These and other overtures were met with stubborn resistance
in the South. Each act of belligerence from the South was used to heighten national sympathies for the Radical Republicans and the antislavery cause.

**The Senate**

When Benjamin Wade rose to address the Senate, he spoke to the major forum for the debate of national issues. The period of 1829 to 1861 is considered the Senate's Golden Age. Sectional representation of the North and South was equal due to the current system of representation. The Senate, therefore, became "the principle battleground" of sectional matters, which included slavery.\(^{103}\)

With the exception of his final speech, each of Wade's antislavery addresses was delivered when his was the minority party. His first antislavery speech, in February 1854, was delivered while he was a Whig. The Democrats controlled the Senate 38 to 22. Two additional members represented the Free-Soil party.\(^{104}\)

The emerging Republican party struggled with a minority of fifteen members to the Democrats' forty members in the 34th Congress. The second antislavery speech in this study was delivered to this Congress in July of 1856. Wade had realigned himself with the new minority party by this time.

Wade's third antislavery speech was presented in March 1858. His Republican party was still in the minority. Republicans numbered twenty while the Democrats controlled the Senate with thirty-six members. Eight members

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represented third parties. These members hardly contributed to a swing in the Senate's votes.

The Republican minority had grown to twenty-six when Wade delivered the fourth and fifth speeches in this study. The Democrats retained their thirty-six Senate seats. Four other senators represented different parties in this Congress.

By the time he presented the final antislavery speech examined here, in January 1865, the Republican party was firmly established. Abraham Lincoln was in the White House and for the first time Republicans controlled the Senate. Largely because of the South's secession, the Republicans were dominant with thirty-six seats. Only nine Democrats represented the principal minority party. Five other seats were held by members of third parties.

The sense of importance of the issues debated at this time, no doubt, contributed to regular attendance by the Senators. Actual attendance records for each of Wade's speeches are not available. Attendance was recorded only when roll call votes were taken. However, the small size of the Senate heightened the need for Senators to be informed and to be present at important voting opportunities. Attendance was probably prompt and regular at the various debates in which Wade spoke.

The present Senate chamber was occupied in 1859. Wade's first antislavery speeches were delivered in the old
Senate. The earlier chamber was "small [and] semicircular." Its simple, unadorned walls and domed roof provided the eloquent speakers with "excellent acoustics." Mahogany desks filled the chamber on semicircular raised platforms. The small house was seventy-five feet long and forty-five feet wide and high. Marble columns were featured at the front and rear of it. Iron columns supported a gallery which circled the room.

Wade presented the final three speeches in this study in the new Senate facilities. The floor plan of this chamber is similar to its antecedent. Desks and chairs of mahogany are provided for the senators and placed in a semicircle. The presiding officer sits in the front of the chamber at a large mahogany desk. The room measures one hundred thirteen feet by eighty feet and is forty-two feet in height. The iron domed ceiling contributes to the senate chamber's excellent acoustics.

**Summary**

What, then, were the elements contributing to the rhetorical setting in which Benjamin Wade spoke? First, Wade was aware of the varying theories of constitutional interpretation. Though he was a Federalist, favoring a strong federal government, Wade supported the anti-Federalist interpretation of the Constitution when the issue was slavery. For most of his political life, Wade believed the federal government should not interfere in the
South's peculiar institution.

Second, Wade was no doubt influenced by the antislavery activities nationally and locally. The antislavery movement which began in New England and took root in the Western Reserve alerted Wade to public sentiment on the slavery issue. Indeed, Wade himself was active in the illegal underground railroad.

A third factor which contributed to the rhetorical setting was the political parties. The evident shift in political alliances was nowhere clearer than in his own Ashtabula County. The Liberty, and later Free-Soil, parties focused the nation’s attention on the possibility of political intervention into slavery.

As political loyalties shifted, sectionalism became a fourth issue facing Wade. This factor clearly delineated the opponents of slavery. It, too, contributed to the rhetorical setting of the antislavery speeches.

Finally, Wade's immediate audience was composed of equal numbers of northerners and southerners. Party lines, however, placed Wade in the minority most of the time. As a Radical Republican, furthermore, Wade was in a minority of the minority.

Each of these factors contributed to the rhetorical setting. The exigence, slavery, is clear. The constraints Wade faced are also apparent. The diverse opinions and positions of his fellow Americans and Senators heightened
the need for what Bitzer has termed a fitting response. That is, a rhetorical response which suits the situation.\textsuperscript{109} The following chapter offers an analysis of Wade's response.
Notes

2 Bitzer, p. 3.
3 Bitzer, p. 6ff.
4 There are many excellent summaries of the Federalist - Anti-Federalist conflict. Two such summaries are found in John Spencer Bassett, *A Short History of the United States, 1492-1920* (New York: Macmillan, 1921) and James A. Woodburn, *Political Parties and Party Problems in the United States* (New York: Putnam, 1924). The present discussion is indebted to these sources.
5 At the 1814-1815 Hartford Convention, for instance, northern business interests first threatened nullification in order to prompt congress into enacting protective tariffs.
6 *Ashtabula Sentinel*, November 20, 1850, p. 2, col. 5.
7 *Sentinel*, March 22, 1851, p. 2, col. 5.
8 BFW, Letter to Milton Sutliff, April 21, 1854, Sutliff Papers, WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio.
9 BFW, Letter to unknown recipient, January 9, 1854, manuscript collection, WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio.

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10 Sentinel, November 16, 1850, p. 2, col. 5.


14 Dillon, p. 57.

15 Shortreed, p. 68.

16 Zorn, p. 157.

17 Zorn, p. 159.

18 Dillon, p. 57.

19 Zorn, p. 150-160.

20 Zorn, p. 161.

21 Zorn, p. 165.


23 Sentinel, February 24, 1838, col. 2, p. 3.


25 Loomis, p. 3.
26 Loomis, p. 3-4.

27 Sentinel, January 27, 1838, col. 6, p. 2; Sentinel, July 14, 1838, col. 2, p. 3.

28 See p. 25.


30 Ibid.


33 Trefousse, Radical, p. 28-31.

34 Dillon, p. 258.

35 Zorn, p. 165-166.


37 Dillon, p. 260.

38 Trefousse, Radical, p. 4.

39 Zorn, p. 168; Dillon, p. 4.

40 Zorn, p. 169.

41 Zorn, p. 173.

42 Dillon, p. 54.

43 Zorn, p. 165-166, 176.

44 Sentinel, October 10, 1835, col. 2, p. 3; Sentinel, July 2, 1836, col. 4, p. 3.
45 Sentinel, November 30, 1850, p. 1, col. 4. The bulk of this issue was devoted to a review of antislavery activities on the Western Reserve. See James B. Stewart, Joshua R. Giddings (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970), p. 27-30 for additional details of Weld's visit to Jefferson.


47 Fuller, p. 8.

48 Fuller, p. 23.

49 Fuller, p. 8; David Bottorff, "County contributed to underground railroad," Ashtabula Star-Beacon, May 29, 1986, sec. 1, p. 6, col. 5.

50 Udell, p. 40; Fuller, p. 14.

51 "A Station on the Underground Railroad," Ashtabula County Historical Society Quarterly, 11 (December 1964), p. 1-2. The author is familiar with two octagon houses in the county. These homes were constructed so that the odd angles of the rooms would confuse anyone looking for hidden fugitive slaves.

52 Sentinel, March 22, 1851, p. 3, col. 1,2.

53 There is disagreement as to the community in which John Brown, Jr. made his home. Some histories say he lived in Cherry Valley (See Harriet Taylor Upton, History of the Western Reserve, I (Chicago: Lewis Publishing,
1910), p. 583). Another has suggested Wayne was his residence (see Edyth Dillon, comp., *The Wayne Story* (Wayne, Ohio: n.p., 1978), p. 20). Yet another historian states the younger Brown lived in Dorset (See Robert Fuller, p. 22, 27). These communities are close to each other and it is conceivable Brown, Jr., as a fugitive from the law, may have lived in each of them at one time or another.

54 Fuller, p. 24.


56 Dillon, comp., p. 20; Fuller, p. 25, 29.

57 Dillon, comp., p. 20; Fuller, p. 25, 32.

58 BFW, Letter to Samuel H. Parsons, 16 March 1856, Parson Family Papers, LC, Washington, D.C.

59 Dillon, p. 256-257.

60 Dillon, p. 252. A meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society was called for December 3 and 4, 1863 to celebrate the Emancipation Proclamation. See "The Third Decade (Special Invitation)," November 12, 1863, in Joshua Giddings Papers, LC, Washington, D.C.

61 Dillon, p. 260.


Woodburn, p. 46-47.


Sentinel, May 19, 1838, p. 2.

Sentinel, November 30, 1839, p. 2, col. 2.


BFW, Letter to Elisha Whittlesey, July 3, 1848, Elisha Whittlesey Papers, WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio.

BFW, Letter to Lewis Campbell, June 27, 1853, Lewis Campbell Papers, OHS, Columbus, Ohio; BFW, Letter to unknown recipient, February 13, 1853, WRHS, Cleveland, Ohio.

BFW, Letter to CRW, December 4, 1842, Wade Papers, LC. Washington, D.C.


BFW, Letter to Samuel Parsons, April 12, 1858, Parson Family Papers, LC, Washington, D.C.

Trefousse, Radical, p. 71-74.

Chase, quoted in Trefousse, Radical, p. 40.

Trefousse, Wade, p. 54.

Sentinel, August 20, 1842, p. 3, col. 1.

Woodburn, p. 56-72.


Woodburn, p. 73-75.

Shortreede, p. 67.
82 BFW, Letter to CRW, October 27, 1848, Wade Papers, LC, Washington, D.C.

83 BFW, Letter to Lewis Campbell, Lewis Campbell Papers, OHS, Columbus, Ohio.

84 Trefousse, Radical, p. 44.

85 Dillon, p. 165.


87 Trefousse, Radical, p. 77; see also, p. 4-5.

88 Edward Gambrill, "Who Were the Senate Radicals?"


90 Dillon, p. 250.

91 Shortreed, p. 71.

92 Dillon, p. 250.

93 Dillon, p. 259.

94 Foster, quoted in Shortreed, p. 69.


96 Dillon, p. 251.

97 Gambrill, p. 237.

98 Shortreed, p. 67.

99 Dillon, p. 251.
100 See Dillon, p. 89-91 to which this narrative is indebted.

101 Dillon, p. 248.


107 Moore, pp. 507-508.


109 Bitzer, p. 10.
CHAPTER IV
RHETORICAL PROOFS

The preceding chapters have focused on Benjamin F. Wade's rhetorical training and experience as well as the rhetorical setting in which he delivered his antislavery speeches. This chapter is an analysis of Wade's use and choice of rhetorical proofs in these speeches. Aristotle recognized three types of proof from which a speaker can choose. His system of criticism included ethos, pathos and logos:

The first kind reside in the character [ethos] of the speaker; the second consist in producing a certain attitude in the hearer [pathos]; the third appertain to the argument proper, insofar as it actually or seemingly demonstrates [logos]. . . . The character [ethos] of the speaker is a cause of persuasion when the speech is so uttered as to make him worthy of belief. . . . Secondly, persuasion is effected through the audience, when they are brought by the speech into a state of emotion. . . . Thirdly, persuasion is effected by the arguments, when we demonstrate the truth, real or apparent, by such means as inhere in particular cases.

This Aristotelian division of logical [logos] proof, emotional [pathos] proof, and ethical [ethos] proof creates the framework for the analysis of Wade's forms of support in his antislavery speeches.
Logical Proofs

Logician Irving M. Copi reminds us that "the

distinction between correct and incorrect reasoning is the
central problem with which logic deals."² This section is
devoted to an examination of Benjamin Franklin Wade's
reasoning in his antislavery speeches before the United
States Senate. We attempt to answer the question: Did Wade
reason correctly or incorrectly?

According to Thonssen, Baird and Braden, "the

constituents of logical proof are evidence and argument or
reasoning."³ An evaluation of both Wade's reasoning and
evidence will lead to a sound judgment of his use of logic.

Use of Reasoning

Donald Bryant and Karl Wallace explain that "when we
combine ideas in such a way, as to show a necessary and
valid relationship between them, we tend to accept the
combination because of the logical relationship they
reveal."⁴ The first component of logical proof, then, is
the speaker's use of reasoning. Was Wade's reasoning sound?
Were his arguments valid?

Evaluating Wade's reasoning would be impractical
without first examining his central proposition. At the
conclusion of his first antislavery speech, Senator Wade
outlined the purpose he sought to accomplish.

I wished to enter my protest against this act. I
wished to wash my hands clean of this nefarious
conspiracy to trample on the rights of freemen,
and give the ascendancy to slavery. I could not justify my course to my constituents without having done so to the utmost of my ability; and having done so, I shall leave this issue to you to say whether it is safe, right, and reasonable for any fancied advantage, to incur such enormous perils.5

This purpose was reiterated in various forms in each of Wade's antislavery speeches over the course of a dozen years. He espoused no aggressive antislavery platform or program, for his party was in the minority of the Senate for most of these years and the Radical Republicans were always in the minority of their party.

Benjamin Wade's first antislavery speech in the Senate came about because of Stephen Douglas' 1854 proposal to organize the Nebraska territory. Douglas, who was chairman of the committee on territories, consented to Missouri's Senator David Atchison's plan allowing the settlers of this new territory to decide the slavery question themselves. These men, favoring what they called "popular sovereignty" for the territories, were charged with violation of the Compromise of 1850. In turn, they held that the bill actually confirmed the Compromise of 1850 because it applied the same principles to Kansas and Nebraska which had been applied to Utah and New Mexico four years earlier. The tacit assumption was made that the Compromise of 1820 and its 36° 30', north latitude, prohibition of slavery was superceded by the Compromise of 1850.6

Wade argued deductively in each of his antislavery
speeches. With little effort his lines of reasoning can be cast as syllogisms. Once stated as syllogisms, the arguments can be tested and found valid or invalid. Syllogisms consist of three parts: a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Public speakers seldom, if ever, clearly state their arguments in syllogistic form. Instead, arguments are stated as enthymemes. That is, one or more of the components of the syllogism are unstated and the audience member is expected to supply the missing premise, premises, or conclusion. The critic, however, supplies the missing component and casts the orator's arguments as syllogisms. This allows for clear assessment and judgment of the speaker's reasoning.

The speaker's audience may be unaware of enthymematic argument as a process. The speech critic who examines an orator's arguments is not, however, engaging in fabrication. Indeed it is the critic's responsibility, as Lawrence Rosenfield contends, "to call to the attention of others those characteristics of the original communication which merit their further contemplation." Wade's use of reasoning demands critical scrutiny.

Wade, for example, began his antislavery presentation at the very heart of the bill under consideration.

**Major Premise:** If the Compromise of 1850 does not supercede the Compromise of 1820, slavery cannot be extended into the territories of Nebraska and Kansas.

**Minor Premise:** The Compromise of 1850 does not
supercede the Compromise of 1820.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, slavery cannot be extended into the territories of Nebraska and Kansas.

This type of syllogism is the hypothetical. Wade's reasoning is valid. His minor premise affirms the antecedent in the major premise. When such is the case, the speaker's conclusion must affirm the consequence conditions of the major premise. These conditions have been met.

To reinforce his argument, Wade named the politicians who were active in passing the Compromise of 1820. Among them, "stood John C. Calhoun, in the cabinet, advising upon that act. There, too, was Mr. Crawford, and there was Mr. John Quincy Adams." Wade asked of the original compromise, "Was it done by statesmen inferior to those of the present generation? . . . I think that they might . . . be adjudged to comprehend the work they were doing."

Having established the supposed sanctity of the writers of the Missouri Compromise, Wade turned to those who wrote the Compromise of 1850. Wade, of course, had not been present in Congress during 1850. He had, however, read accounts of the debates and concluded that:

there is not a word, nor a syllable, that goes to indicate that any one supposed that anything was done then to overthrow the time-honored compromise of 1820. Not one word, sir: but on the contrary, if they could recur to this compromise, they indorsed [sic] it and affirmed it in 1850 against all gainsaying. No doubt of it.

The truth of his major premise was, no doubt, accepted.
by Wade's auditors. The 36° 30' clause was clearly understood. His energies, therefore, were spent bolstering his minor premise in this case. By citing the integrity of the 1820 compromisers and the intentions of the 1850 compromisers, Wade attempted to prove his minor premise. Acceptance of his conclusion in this case would be appropriate.

F.C.S. Schiller believes the use of syllogisms is problematic. Each syllogism, should the truth of its premises be challenged, can only be proved by further a syllogism. Wade no doubt sensed this same frustration. The Ohio senator wanted to demonstrate that if any slave immigration was allowed into the new territories, the South would have exclusive use of the territories at the North's expense.

To arrive at this conclusion, Wade structured a series of enthymematic arguments which are presented here in syllogistic form.

Major Premise: Anyone who loves liberty will not work with slaves.

Minor Premise: Northerners love liberty.

Conclusion: Therefore, northerners will not work with slaves.

This argument is categorical in nature. It is valid as its middle term (those who "love liberty") is distributed and its negative conclusion results from one premise being negative.
Secondly, Wade argued:

Major Premise: If northerners will not work with slaves, they will not emigrate to the new territories which allow slavery.

Minor Premise: Northerners will not work with slaves.

Conclusion: Therefore, northerners will not emigrate to the new territories which allow slavery.

As a hypothetical syllogism, this argument is valid. The minor premise affirms the antecedent of the major premise. Interestingly, no evidence was provided to support the minor premise. It stood on the strength of the preceding syllogism.

Finally, Wade believed:

Major Premise: If northerners will not emmigrate to the new territories, the territories are for the South exclusively.

Minor Premise: Northerners will not emmigrate to the new territories.

Conclusion: Therefore, the new territories are for the South exclusively.

This syllogism takes the form of the preceding syllogism and is valid for the same reasons. Once more, no new evidence was introduced. Support for Wade's minor premise was derived from his earlier arguments.

As Wade summarized his views on slavery in this speech, his attack focused on southern culture. A formal representation of his argument follows.

Major Premise: If slavery does not work in
principle, it should not be extended.

Minor Premise: Slavery does not work in principle.

Conclusion: Therefore, slavery should not be extended.

The argument, a hypothetical syllogism, is sound. The minor premise affirms the antecedent and the conclusion affirms the consequence.

A contemporary review of American history would find support for Wade's minor premise. Wade, however, faced an audience, half of which represented the South's slavepower and which knew no alternative to slavery in the South. The senator attempted to demonstrate that slavery had hurt Virginia.

It is not more than sixty years ago, hardly has the age of one man passed away since the Old Dominion was a head and shoulders higher, in every particular, than any state in this Union, not only in the number of her population, but in her riches and wealth, and the importance of all that pertained to her. . . . Now look on old Virginia. Does she not lie in the fairest part of this Continent? Is there any other state that exceeds her in the fertility of her soil, in the salubrity of her climate, in all that pertains to the material welfare of man? No state in this Union probably could compare with her. And now, during one age of man, how does she rank according to the last census? Why, from number one she has sunk to number five. What has produced this? . . . Have your principles of statesmanship advanced you thus? Why, sir, your statesmanship is Africanized, and you want to Africanize this whole Territory. That is what you are after; and if it is right, you should do it. 12

This was all Wade offered to support his premise that slavery does not work in principle. He attempted to
establish a causal link between slavery and the diminishing population of Virginia. Of course, many other factors such as economic growth patterns, the European migration to the North, and expansion to the West were not addressed. Certainly each affected Virginia's population ranking.

The outcome of the debates on the Nebraska Question are well known. Nebraska was divided into the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Douglas's principle of popular sovereignty in the territories prevailed. National feeling was that Kansas could be made a slave state while Nebraska would remain free. This theory was based on little else than the geographic proximity of the territories and the hope that a balance between slave and free states could be retained in the Senate. No one counted on the incursions which resulted in "Bleeding Kansas."

Benjamin Wade's second antislavery speech to the Senate came during the debate on the Admission of Kansas to the Union. Large numbers of northerners were induced to settle in the Kansas territory by the Emigrant Aid Society of Massachusetts. The proslavery settlers were mostly from Missouri. When the first legislature was elected in "1855, more than 5000 men rode from that state and cast votes." The few former northerners who were elected were denied their seats by the proslavery majority. What resulted was the formation of two competing legislatures. A constitution was drafted by the antislavery legislature. Nevertheless,
Senator Douglas submitted a bill authorizing the Kansas legislature to call a constitutional convention. The Missourians would, no doubt, control such a convention.¹³

When Wade rose to address the Senate on July 2, 1856, he began with the reason for his forthcoming attack on South.

Major Premise: If the South is not moving toward eventual rejection of slavery, I will not be lenient in judging the South.

Minor Premise: The South is not moving toward eventual rejection of slavery.

Conclusion: Therefore, I will not be lenient in judging the South.

As in past examples of Wade's hypothetical syllogisms, his reasoning is valid.

The meaning of this contention was clear to his audience. Nevertheless Wade provided several telling supports to his argument. First, he demonstrated the support slavery receives from southern churches and religion:

Now, you say that it is a divine institution. Not only is it to exist where it has been imposed on the people by long prescription, but, being a godlike institution, fraught with blessings and benefit to mankind, it is to be spread all over this continent!¹⁴

Wade continued to examine the intentions of the South in regard to slavery. He found that the slavepower firmly controlled the South, northern men had no constitutional freedom to speak against slavery in the South, and northern
men had no freedom to travel in the South. Based on these details, Wade concluded the South was not moving nor would it move to dispense with slavery. He was, therefore, not lenient in his dealing with the South.

Regarding the Kansas territory issue, Wade reasoned that the national legislature had only two choices.

Major Premise: Our legislation can support either liberty or slavery.

Minor Premise: Legislation should always support liberty.

Conclusion : Therefore, our legislation cannot support slavery.

This argument is cast as a disjunctive syllogism. Thonssen, Baird and Braden established criteria by which, applied in this case, the syllogism is valid. The minor premise affirms one alternative while the conclusion denies the other. Irving Copi, on the other hand, argues that "the truth of one disjunct of a disjunction does not imply the falsehood of the other disjunct, since both disjuncts can be true." Though on its surface the syllogism appears to be sound, Copi's observation makes clear the fact that it is not valid. Indeed, common sense verifies that Congress had passed legislation favoring both liberty and slavery. The compromises of 1820 and 1850 are but two examples. Wade provided no specific support to this argument.

The bulk of his speech on the admission of Kansas was devoted to developing this disjunctive syllogism:
Major Premise: Either the South desires to give liberty a fair chance, or it desires to hinder liberty.

Minor Premise: The South does not desire to give liberty a fair chance.

Conclusion: Therefore, the South desires to hinder liberty.

By all criteria, this argument is valid. The minor premise denies an alternative phrased in the major premise and the conclusion affirms the remaining alternative.

In attempting to prove the South was not inclined toward giving liberty a fair chance in the territories, Wade charged that:

The proof stands out in bold relief and, though it does not trace a knowledge of the society to the members who voted for the bill, it shows that just about that time secret lodges, with secret oaths, and all the paraphernalia of a secret society, for the deliberate purpose of carrying slavery into that territory was formed in the state of Missouri, also in other states.  

In juxtaposition to the Emigrant Aid Society which simply financed the settlement of northerners in Kansas, Wade charged the secret societies with premeditated violence and agitation.

Southern senators, Wade charged, would never allow the territories to decide the slavery issue for themselves:

You pretended that you had no power to legislate at all for the Territories; than non-intervention was to rule; and again, Mr. Chase tested you by asking you to declare that the people should have the privilege of choosing their own governor, judges, and other officers. He offered an amendment for that purpose, so as to test your real views on the subject of non-intervention; but you as promptly voted it down, saying that they
had no such right. Such a position betrayed the South's bias toward slavery, Wade concluded.

Of the recent events in Kansas, Wade said:

It stands confessed that the Pro-Slavery men were outwitted, that the Free State men were as three to one; that Missouri and all the slave states were conscious of it; that this miserable executive was conscious of it; and hence fraud, force, and violence, were resorted to, in order to accomplish that which could not be accomplished in a legitimate way.

This, of course, was the capstone of the South's antagonism toward liberty. Wade used a variety of instances to reinforce his minor premise. Given the truth of his major premise, his conclusion in this instance was valid and true.

Benjamin Wade's widely reported "Plain Truths for the People" speech was less a reaction to specific events than a warning about impending violence. Wade began to speak on Saturday, March 13, 1858. The Senate adjourned before he was able to conclude the speech. On Monday, March 15, 1858, Wade again took the floor and finished his prophetic remarks to his fellow senators. As in his earlier antislavery presentations, Wade recognized the inability of the Radical Republicans to affect a plan of action.

His consuming argument can be cast as a categorical syllogism.

Major Premise: All principles that are antagonistic will meet with a violent conflict.

Minor Premise: The principles of slavery and
liberty are antagonistic.

Conclusion: Therefore, the principles of slavery and liberty will meet with a violent conflict.

Wade's reasoning here was sound. The middle term (antagonistic principles) is distributed. Wade did not attempt to establish the truth of his major premise. He instead focused on establishing the antagonism between the principles of slavery and liberty, his minor premise.

The proof he offered ranged from his analysis of the working classes of North and South, to the political upheaval resulting from Nebraska and Kansas territories controversy. Wade emphatically states, "Sir, there is nothing on earth that puts the human intellect to all that it can attain, like the varied labor of man." His contrast of the northern and southern working classes continued:

What does your drone, your refined aristocrat, do in his mind? What problems does he work out? He consumes the products of labor; he is idle, and ten to one he is also vicious. He never invents. Go to your patent office, and see what are the products of your degraded labor and your refined aristocrat. The latter never invents anything, unless it is a new way of stuffing a chicken or mixing liquor. . . . The doom of slavery would be fixed, if it was nothing else than the products of intelligent labor. You drudge along in the old way; you invent not steam engine because your labor is degraded. You do not want skill; you want but very little mind.21

This demonstrated the antithetical, if not the antagonistic, nature of the working classes in the North and South.

Despite the striking differences between the North and
South the southern slavepower had controlled the government for sixty years.

You have a class of not more than three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders in the United States. They have governed this Union (so says the Senator from South Carolina, and he says truly) for sixty long years; not the people of the South, mind you; he says the slaveholders have ruled the nation. That is true.22

The conflicts between the slave power and the North were well known to Wade's immediate audience.

Nevertheless, Wade commenced an exposition of the regional conflicts which resulted from the Nebraska and Kansas territories. He detailed the histories of the Topeka and Lecompton constitutions in the Kansas territory. Wade charged the Democrats with political manuvering to embarrass the Republicans in the upcoming presidential campaign.

Concerning the actions of the federal government and the Kansas territory, Wade charged:

When the great cause of human liberty and right, when the great cause of the American citizen is concerned, when the question is, shall the American citizen have a voice and vote as to the Constitution under which he and his posterity are to live, perhaps forever, ah! then he is debarred, he has no power to set it aside! He is foreclosed, just as the people were foreclosed, because they would not go and vote at your Peter Funk election for a convention.23

Wade spent two days delivering this speech. In it, he sought to establish the principles of slavery and liberty to be antagonistic. By rehearsing the facts already familiar to most of his audience, he proved his minor premise. If his major premise was accepted as true, his conclusion
followed as truth. The principles of slavery and liberty will meet with a violent conflict.

Senator Wade's next antislavery speech was in reaction to a violent conflict which no one foresaw. When John Brown invaded the army arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, the loyalties of all northern congressmen were called in to question. Wade's former law partner and colleague in the lower house, Joshua Giddings, had a bounty of $5,000 placed on his head and $10,000 for the "entire man." Wade's words would be weighed carefully by his congressional colleagues.

The Ohio Senator began his speech in an uncharacteristic manner. He reasoned that the North sympathized with Brown through an analogy. Such reasoning is inductive in its nature and differed from his usual, lawyerly deductive method of argument. The North, said Wade, sympathized with Brown's actions in the same way that the South had sympathized with the earlier proslavery incursions in Kansas. Though neither region approved of violence in theory, they each understood the feelings and constraints which motivated the violence. Though there were various distinctions in the two cases, they were similar enough to quiet, for a time, the outrage in the South.

Wade's major antislavery argument was based on the claim of southerners that blacks were not included in the Declaration of Independence. Senator Wade argued that such
I l l

a position, in its extreme, meant the Negro was not entitled to life. This being nonsense, he countered with an argument which can be cast as a hypothetical syllogism.

Major Premise: If the Negro has the right to life, he also has the right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Minor Premise: The Negro has the right to life.

Conclusion: Therefore, the Negro has the right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness.26

The reasoning in this syllogism is valid. The minor premise affirms the antecedent while the conclusion affirms the consequence of the major premise.

Wade found support for his minor premise in the original intent of the framers of the Declaration:

I am not going to read those declarations of theirs, but I say to you, you cannot find the man that was instrumental in framing the Constitution of the United States, or the Declaration of Independence, but what said over and over again, that the system of slavery, wherever it exists, is wrong, and cannot be justified upon any principle; and to attempt to justify it, would be to reduce the Government of these United States down to a level with the meanest depotism that exists on the face of God's earth.27

With these unread "declarations of theirs" and little else, Wade attempted to show that blacks were indeed included in the Declaration of Independence and, therefore, endowed with the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Given the converse of this argument, perhaps no more proof was necessary in this forum.

Wade also was found defending himself and his northern
colleagues when Senator Clay of Alabama charged them with labeling southern slaveholders as criminals. Wade's response is cast as a categorical syllogism. Note the diplomacy of the argument.

Major Premise: People who hold slaves out of necessity are not criminals.

Minor Premise: Southerners hold slaves out of necessity.

Conclusion: Therefore, southerners are not criminals.

As we have seen from Wade's previous arguments, this syllogism is valid. The middle term (people who hold slaves) is distributed.

The truth of his premises could only be established by Wade's own testimony. To that end he stated:

I know very well how habit and custom, and even necessity, modify all our abstract opinions. I understand that well, and I never mention it in the North without the proper qualifications... I give you here, on this floor, my worst version of your institutions.

No other proof was necessary for these premises. They were no doubt welcomed by both sides of the issue in light of the present, volatile situation.

Three months following Wade's speech on "The Harper's Ferry Invasion," two opposing resolutions were being debated in the Senate. The South had offered a resolution contending "that the Territories are the common property of all the States." Such being the case, individual state laws regarding property (including slaves) were to be protected in the territories. Northern senators countered with an
amendment which held "that the Territories are the common property of the people of the United States." In this case, Congress alone had the duty to legislate and control slavery. On March 7, 1860 Senators Wade of Ohio and Robert Toombs of Georgia addressed the House.

Wade's initial argument took the form of a hypothetical syllogism:

**Major Premise:** If the North has not undermined the foundations of your system of labor, complaints from the South are inconsistent and contradictory.

**Minor Premise:** The North has not undermined the foundations of your system of labor.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, complaints from the South are inconsistent and contradictory.

This argument came in direct response to Toombs' charge that by its ineffectual enforcement of the fugitive slave laws and its sophisticated underground railroad, the North was destroying the South's system of labor. The syllogism Wade cast was valid as its minor premise affirms the antecedent and the conclusion affirms the consequence of his major premise. Only the truth of his premises remained to be proven.

Wade actually turned Toombs' case against him when he recalled:

You will remember, sir, that, long before he [Toombs] got through with his speech, the slaves in Georgia were so loyal to their masters that, from the days of the revolutionary war to the present time, not one hundred of all their black
generations have fled from bondage... Only one poor Negro a year in eighty years has escaped from the great state of Georgia; and yet he [Toombs] trembles with rage, declares war, and lays hold upon the pillars of the Union. One poor Negro a year, and even that not certainly lost, through the Abolitionists or the aggressions of the North... When gentlemen come here and volunteer such arguments as these, it is perfectly evident that there is some motive stronger than any consciousness of injury received at the hands of those they accuse.29

Indeed, by Senator Toombs' own admission, the North was not undermining the South's system of labor. It followed logically, then, that complaints from the South were inconsistent and contradictory.

In direct assault on the resolution under consideration Wade argued:

Major Premise: All those who assume territories belong to the states are opposed to the Constitution.

Minor Premise: Southern senators assume the territories belong to the states.

Conclusion: Therefore, southern senators are opposed to the Constitution.

The form of this syllogism is categorical. It is valid with a distributed middle term. Wade began with the assumption that the territories "belong to the people... Congress is the trustee for them. The states, as states, have nothing to do with them."30

To support his major contentions, Wade resorted to three hypothetical illustrations. In the first he supposed Senator Douglas of Illinois owned a plantation in Mississippi and transported slaves into a territory. "Let
me ask ..., which state is it whose sovereignty is invaded; that where the senator lives or that where the Negroes live?" The lawyer Wade must have enjoyed creating such a legal dilemma for his opposition.

Further, he supposed the "Fejee Islands" [sic] attained statehood. These islands practiced cannibalism. Should residents of the state of Fejee take men into the territories to "roast and boil them as well as enslave them." Wade pictured senators saying "the people of Fejee not only have the right to bring them in, but they have the right to be protected in doing so."32

Finally, Wade painted a picture of Brigham Young, after Utah had become a state, going into a territory with his forty wives.

Brigham says, "These are my property; yea, more than my property; yea, they are forty ribs taken out of my body while I slept; I must bring them in here, or the State of Utah will not be on an equal footing with the other States of this Union."33

Confidently Wade proclaimed, "Away with such logic! There is no guarantee in the Constitution of the United States for such a position as that."34 Wade had exposed the relative absurdity of the southerner's position. It was the responsibility of Congress to govern the territories for the people. The states, as states, could not effectively legislate the territories.

The sixth speech in this study was delivered in the Senate during the Civil War. The situation was bleak for
black soldiers in the Union ranks. Slaves from the border states who enlisted or were conscripted found their families were faced with extreme prejudice. The families of these men were left to the mercy and whim of their masters. Many were mistreated and some died. When a resolution to free the families of black soldiers was laid before Congress, Senator Wade once again spoke for liberty.

His first argument was simple and pragmatic. It may be cast as a hypothetical syllogism.

Major Premise: If colored men are discouraged, they will not enlist in the Army.

Minor Premise: Colored men are discouraged when their families are not freed.

Conclusion: Therefore, colored men will not enlist.

The minor premise of this argument affirms the antecedent. Likewise, the conclusion affirms the consequence of the major premise. The syllogism is, therefore, sound.

In support of his contentions Wade offered affidavits and statements. In addition, a personal testimony based on his own review of Camp Nelson was provided:

As soon as I had arrived in the camp we had scarcely alighted from the carriage before a colored woman, whom I suppose to be thirty years of age, appeared before us, all bruised to pieces. Her face was all whipped to jelly. She had a child with her which she said was twelve years old; one of whose eyes has been gouged out, and the other attempted to be, as they stated, by her mistress, the father being in the Army... All this was done, as we were informed, because her husband had enlisted in the Army of the United States...
Wade asserted that "colored men will not enlist while these things are allowed." The reasoning was simple and the proof compelling.

No longer restrained by the presence of southern colleagues in the Senate chamber, Wade used this occasion to call for an end for slavery in the South. In a hypothetical syllogism he argued:

**Major Premise:** If the South has waged war against us, we can treat it as war and demand slavery be overthrown.

**Minor Premise:** The South has waged war against us.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, we can treat it as war and demand slavery be overthrown.

Once committed to non-intervention into the institutions of individual states Wade now saw the chance to abolish slavery forever in the United States. The syllogism in which his argument was cast is valid. His minor premise does, indeed, affirm the antecedent of his major premise. The conclusion properly affirms the consequence stated in the major premise.

In support of his premises Wade stated:

It was, in its commencement, a strictly defensive war; but war was commenced, and thank God, I think I see that it cannot end until that which gave rise to it shall have ended and I hope it will not.

The senator reasoned, the abolition of slavery could be made a term of peace. He asked rhetorically:

Have we not the right to treat [the South's aggression]... as a war, and to say that any agreement detrimental to us, or dishonorable to
us, shall be entirely abrogated, and that before they resume their position again they shall overthrow and dispense [sic] with such an institution? 38

Thus, Wade called for the unconditional abolition of slavery for which his home state was so long noted.

Throughout his antislavery speeches Wade used a variety of forms of reasoning.

Wade's main arguments in the speeches considered in this study were: (1) Slavery cannot be extended into the territories of Nebraska and Kansas, (2) Northerners will not work with slaves, (3) Northerners will not emigrate to the new territories which allow slavery, (4) The new territories are for the South exclusively, (5) Slavery should not be extended, (6) I will not be lenient in judging the South, (7) Our legislation cannot support slavery, (8) The South desires to hinder liberty, (9) The principles of slavery and liberty will meet with a violent conflict, (10) The Negro has the right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness, (11) Southerners are not criminals, (12) Complaints from the South are inconsistent and contradictory, (13) Southern senators are opposed to the Constitution, (14) Colored men will not enlist, and (15) We can treat it as war and demand slavery be overthrown.

Use of Evidence

The second part of logical proof is evidence. Evidence includes the basic proof materials used to substantiate
propositions, premises, and conclusions. It is sometimes called supporting material for, indeed, it does support the speaker's ideas.

Wade's use of evidence was limited. The authors of *Principles and Types of Speech Communication* list seven types of supporting materials from which the public speaker may choose. These include explanation, analogy, illustration, specific instances, statistics, testimony, and restatement. Most of these materials were used by Wade on occasion as has been demonstrated earlier. However, in his antislavery speeches, he relied most heavily on only expert testimony and statistics. As we have seen, he chose most often to argue from axiom in a deductive fashion.

Wade often relied upon expert testimony. For example, in "The Nebraska Question," Wade attempted to demonstrate that the Compromise of 1850 did not supersede the Compromise of 1820. To do so, he relied upon the published report of the Senate territory committee. Stephen Douglas, the chairman of that committee, had recently contradicted Wade's premise. Of his choice of evidence he explained:

I am not going to look back into the history of the opinions of the chairman of the committee, for I know that they have been exceedingly mutable. . . . I do not now pretend to show what his opinions are or have been; but here we have the authentic account of opinions, that some Senators entertained at the time the report was made.

Wade continued by quoting the recent committee report on the Compromise measures:
They say, on these subjects: "They involve the same grave issues which produced the agitation, the sectional strife, and the fearful struggle of 1850. As Congress deemed it wise and prudent to refrain from deciding the matters in controversy then, either by affirming or repealing the Mexican laws, or by an act declaratory of the true intent of the Constitution and the extent of the protection afforded by it to slave property in the territories, so your committee was not prepared now to recommend a departure from the course pursued on that memorable occasion. . . ." That, Mr. President, is what the committee thought about four weeks ago.40

Given this opinion and the lack of subsequent committee reports, Wade relied upon the month old committee report to support his position.

When Wade spoke on "The Admission of Kansas" two and one-half years later, he again cited the testimony of experts. "Bleeding Kansas," as it was known, was governed by two territorial governments: one antislavery, the other proslavery. To prove the peaceful nature of the antislavery government, Wade resorted to a letter sent by Governor Shannon of the proslavery government. After quoting Shannon at length, Wade concluded, "That is it, sir; there was no trouble with these rebels; all they did was right. . . . The Governor goes on to tell us that he visited their [the proslavery] camp, and found them sullen and revengeful."41

In this same speech, Wade also referred to a speech delivered by Andrew Butler, senator from South Carolina. Interestingly, Wade enlisted the secretary of the Senate to read the excerpt.42 Why he chose not to read the passage himself is unclear. As Butler had spoken eight months
earlier, a printed copy most certainly was available to Wade. Perhaps it was a rhetorical ploy. The address was a condemnation of the motives of the proslavery forces and Wade may have reasoned that by having a neutral party read these words he could heighten their impact.

Wade's most publicized and widely distributed speech was "Plain Truth for the People." He spoke to a wide range of issues including regionalism and slavery. To support his idea that the South was antagonizing the North, Wade referred to an address delivered by Senator Robert Hunter of Virginia and quoted a speech delivered by Senator Andrew Butler:

The Senator from South Carolina, crying out the same idea, said: "In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life. That is, a class requiring but a low order of intellect, and but little skill. Its requisities are vigor, docility, fidelity. Such a class you must have, or you would not have that other class which leads progress, civilization, and refinement."43

After quoting the Butler speech, Wade found disdain for his premise:

The Senator says of the degraded class that do the drudging: 'It constitutes the mud-sill of society and of political government. . . .' And then he goes on to say that we of the North have white slaves; that we perform our labor by white slaves. . . . How little that gentleman understood of the spirit of our Northern laborers!44

Disdainful may be too polite a word to describe the indictment against the South which followed.

An additional example of Wade's use of expert testimony

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appears later in "Plain Truths." To prove that slaves indeed ought to be free men, Wade turned to the proslavery argument of Senator Judah P. Benjamin of Louisiana:

I will read the Senator's language, to show how the most gifted man, when he is not on his guard, may admit away his own case. He said '... Does not every man see at once that the right of the inventor to his discovery, that the right of the poet to his inspiration, depends upon those principles of eternal justice which God has implanted in the heart of man; and that wherever he cannot exercise them, it is because man, faithless to the trust that he has received from God, denies them the protection to which they are entitled.' That is a very sound doctrine, in my judgment; it is an appeal to that higher law which has been so much traduced. The poet has a divine right to the inspiration of his genius and the products of his mind; the inventory of a machine has a God-given right to the use of his discovery. Does not the honorable Senator see, that if these rights are from God, above human law, no Constitution and no law can take them away?45

Wade, quite artfully, turns the proslavery argument of Senator Benjamin into a convincing call against slavery.

When Wade clashed with Senator Robert Toombs on the Senate floor regarding slavery, Wade found himself defending the integrity of his home state. Feeling that the courage of his constituents had been questioned in an earlier Toombs speech, Wade first quoted a brief portion of the address and then cited the law of the state.

The Senator said that the free States, and Ohio among the rest, have committed a kind of perjury in disregarding your fugitive law, by passing personal liberty bills. So far as the law of Ohio is concerned, we shall see how plain a tale will put down his argument. ... [The bill] is entitled 'a law to prevent slaveholding and kidnapping in Ohio;' the last section declares: 'Nothing in the preceding sections of this act
shall apply to any act done by a person under the authority of the Constitution of the United States, or of any law of the United States made in pursuance thereof." 46

Wade thus supported his contention that fugitive slaves may indeed be returned to their owners under the terms of Ohio law. Of course, Toombs contended that such an allowance by the law did not correlate with actual practice.

With the conscription of black slaves from the border states to fight in the Union army came debates on whether or not to free the families of the black soldiers. Not surprisingly, Wade argued for freedom. To support his case, he once more relied upon expert testimony. At the beginning of his remarks, he asked the Senate secretary to read a sworn affidavit. In it, a black soldier related at length the atrocities his family had faced after he joined the Union forces. In addition, Wade interjected, "I have also the statement of the commanding officer there, Captain Paul, corroborating that statement, and some other documents to the same effect. I do not know that it is necessary to read them." 47

While Wade's use of evidence was limited, he incorporated expert testimony effectively. He referred to all the expert support available to him. Wade cited northern and southern Senators. In addition, he relied upon his knowledge of the law and current events to support his claims. He used expert testimony accurately and soundly.

Another type of evidence used by Wade was statistical

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support. "Because statistics reduce great masses of information into generalized categories," write Ehninger, Monroe, and Gronbeck, "they are useful both in making clear the situation and in substantiating a potential disputable claim." Wade used statistics in both functions.

First, statistics were used to clarify the situation. In an attempt to make clear the South's intention in advocating popular sovereignty in the territories, Wade stated:

Can it be supposed, for a single moment, that it is possible, by the vote of the people, to make a slave State, left perfectly free to the emigration from the North—a population of fourteen millions, to compete with a population of six millions? Southern emigration is not half as vigorous as that from the North, to say nothing of the emigration from abroad. . . . They do not say, there is no such thing as popular sovereignty; but if you consult the first report of the chairman of the Committee on Territories, you will find that he talks of a sovereignty suspended in abeyance.49

Explaining the injustice settlers had faced in their own territorial government, Wade again cited statistics. He claimed that the antislavery constitution "was passed over the head of your Governor by a two-thirds vote."50 As in the former case, Wade cited no sources for his statistics. The recency of the events allowed these statistics to be accepted without mention of specific sources.

On occasion, Wade also used statistics to bolster his claim. Wade would never argue exclusively that the opinion of the majority should be the deciding factor in the issue of slavery. However, he did use all the available means of
persuasion and the majority of the population happened to live in free states. Thus, Wade asked:

There being an antagonism between these two principles [slavery and liberty], which is greatest in numbers? According to the present census, all the slaveholders in the United States do not amount to four hundred thousand. What number of free laborers are there who ought to have the benefit of this great Territory? Probably fully thirteen millions are to be offset against about four hundred thousand.51

Wade made limited use of evidence. The evidence he did use was most often testimony or statistics. The testimony usually came from speeches of his fellow senators. Sometimes he went to the law which testified to his position. While statistical references were limited, they functioned to clarify the situation or to bolster the argument. Their use was appropriate.

In summary, most often his arguments can be cast in syllogisms. They were deductive in nature. Rarely, however, he relied upon inductive lines of argument. Though his reasoning was sound, his premises were sometimes unsupported. One reason for this may have been the enormity of the task. Neither he, nor any other congressman, was arguing the specific merits of a case. They were instead debating principles and interpretations of our basic governmental functions and documents. The expert testimony and statistics used were well placed. In all, Wade met the challenge before him from a logical standpoint. In the next section of this chapter, his emotional proofs are evaluated.
Emotional Proof

The practitioner and critic of public speaking have both long considered emotional proof essential to their art. The authors of *Speech Criticism* charge: "to affect ... human beings requires more than error-free demonstration; there must also be judicious appeal to the feelings." The purpose of emotional proof, more clearly, is "to put the listener in a frame of mind to react favorably and comfortably to the speaker's purpose." Brembeck and Howell also view emotional devices as essential to the speaker's message which "must arouse those desires which propel the persuadee toward the goal being sought." As already shown, Wade was keenly aware of the formidable task before him. He spoke his mind yet knew his position had little chance of bipartisan (or even partisan) support in the Senate. Contemporary scholars sometimes write of emotion as a method of "eliciting trust." Anthropologist F.G. Bailey claims "they are devices for persuasion and ... they play a much larger part than does reason in governing people." The use of emotional devices "can also express a psychological commitment that transcends rationality.

The importance of emotional proofs in rhetoric being firmly established, this portion of the chapter examines the emotional devices used by Benjamin Wade in his antislavery speeches before the Senate. In the six speeches which
comprise the basis of this study, Wade used a variety of emotional appeals. The most commonly used appeals included: (1) appeals to patriotism; (2) appeals to justice; (3) appeals to prosperity; (4) appeals to fear; and (5) appeals to peace. In addition, Wade's use of stylistic devices is considered.

**Appeals to Patriotism**

In every antislavery speech he presented in the Senate, Wade appealed to patriotism. Every speech included a call to return to the basic tenents of the Constitution and the original intentions of the founding fathers as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. In his speech on "The Admission of Kansas," Wade proclaimed:

> When I invoke that Constitution for the protection of my right to speak, publish, and print, whatever I see fit, you meet me with a coat of tar and feathers, or with the halter of the hangman. Yet the South seem to suppose that they alone are loyal to the Constitution, and they talk of us as habitual violators of the Constitution. Thus will men be blinded by interest, passion, and prejudice! . . . Does any man believe that I could go into the southern states now, and, in my poor way, make a stump-speech in favor of Fremont and Dayton and argue the Republican platform in Charleston or Richmond with impunity? If I were to go there, would it be effectual for me to invoke the Constitution of the United States? . . . The Constitution has nothing to do with the rights of northern men in your southern states. You know that it has been entirely perverted, in these latter days, to the extension, upholding, cherishing, and spreading, of the institution of slavery.57

Furthermore, "Liberty was the polar star that guided our fathers in the great struggle for independence," according
to Wade. "If that word had been stricken from the calendar, not a single man would have been found to face the British bayonets for a moment."\(^58\)

Regarding the extension of slavery, Wade unquestionably held to the strictest interpretation of the Constitution. Facing the rationalizations, or "sham arguments" as he called them, of his colleagues, the senator countered, "Our safety . . . consists in keeping close to the Constitution." Therein, Wade founded his position: "Whatever we claim let us find the direct warrant for it there. . . . Let us go back to the Constitution and follow it."\(^59\)

Wade needed to overcome what he perceived to be apathy toward the founding documents on the side of his southern counterparts. In doing so, he occasionally appealed directly to the South's patriotic heritage. In "The Nebraska Question" Wade described his southern colleagues as "honorable men" who "stand by all the guarantees of the Constitution." Not only were these men honorable but "above all, the chivalry of the South would never be attempted . . . to abandon the terms of any compact."\(^60\)

Wade's appeals to patriotism extended beyond the Constitution.

Now, if there is not really any difference between liberty and slavery, then all that our fathers have done; all that the Declaration of Independence has set forth; all the legislation in England and in this country to further and guarantee the principles of human liberty, are a mere nullity, and ought not to be lived up to.\(^61\)
Here he encompassed all that was sacred to the true American patriot.

Slavery was an "organized rebel" to Wade's mind. To counter the rebel, he invoked the patriotic voices of the past. He believed, "with the fathers of the Constitution, that liberty is the gift of God to every human being." More specifically, Wade wondered, "Who within the sound of my voice would not say with the immortal Henry, 'Give me liberty, or give me death'?"

Interestingly enough, Wade also referred to his hometown's namesake:

It was there [in Ohio] that the mind of that great patriot, Thomas Jefferson, fixed his eye the moment we had repelled the force of Great Britain. His philanthropic eye was that great and beautiful wilderness lying open. . . . It was a leading object with him to carry into practice those beautiful theories of equality which had charmed his great mind so long.

Other patriots cited by Wade included the soldiers of the Revolutionary War, John Quincy Adams, John C. Calhoun, and Henry Clay.

That the slavery issue was "enough to stir the blood of every man who has any love of country," Wade knew well. In his attempt to persuade the Senate to his perspective, Wade made full use of appeals to patriotism. The effectiveness of such appeals is questionable. The inquisitive auditor, for instance, might recall that some of the patriots Wade cited were slaveholders. Further, the opposition from the South relied equally upon images of the
Founding Fathers and the Constitution in their arguments. Nevertheless, every antislavery speech delivered by Wade focused attention on patriotism in his attempt to motivate his listeners to change.

Appeals to Justice

A second emotional appeal used by Wade in his antislavery speeches was the appeal to justice or fairness. This appeal took two forms. Wade, of course, believed the slaves had been treated unjustly by the legislative transactions. He also held that the North and his party had been dealt with unfairly. He attempted to motivate his audience by appealing to their sense of justice in both cases.

Wade boldly stated "that no political principle can be based permanently on anything short of external justice and right." Slavery, he reasoned, was based on temporary injustice and wrong. Even colonization of blacks, Wade conceded, may be appropriate "if we can do it consistently with justice. . . . We will not, however, perpetrate injustice against them. We will not drive them out." Although blacks were not considered citizens, they were human beings who must be treated with a sense of dignity and justice.

The most extended example of Wade's appeals to justice for blacks was in his speech on the "Families of Black Soldiers." "These people were driven out. They were
slaves. They could not go back to their master again without subjecting themselves to worse treatment than they received at the hands of our officers there [at Camp Nelson, Kentucky]."70 Wade continued by rehearsing the atrocities blacks faced from their former masters as well as the military.

The slave system, which precipitated this treatment, was unjust. Wade had predicted earlier, "when the American people so far forget what is due to Republicanism, equality, justice, and right, as to say that Slavery is equally entitled with Freedom to encouragement, then Liberty is no more."71 To extend or support slavery in any fashion was similarly unjust. "Let it ring in the ear of the slave, that all men, he included, are created equal, and have certain inalienable rights, given by God, which cannot be transgressed without high crime and wrong."72

Wade's primary appeals to justice concerned the treatment of the North and its citizens. To this situation Wade could speak with more authority as he had been subject to unfair treatment at the hands of the South. Summarizing his attitude toward the southern slavepower Wade said during the war:

I fear nothing with regard to the United States but injustice. As long as the people of the United States will ground themselves upon the rock of eternal justice and right, I am willing to stand the contest; and if it must be so, defy all those nations of the earth. Let us clear our own skirts from injustice and wrong, and when that is done we shall have but little to fear from any other quarter.73

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That injustice had been suffered at the hands of the South was very clear to Wade.

Following John Brown's raid on the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Wade contended the North was unfairly treated. He summarized his feelings before the senate:

Why, sir, twenty-one men, all told, deluded men—yea, sir, judging from the very act they undertook to accomplish, insane me—have invaded a great and powerful sovereign state, and they have met that retribution which every sane man knew must be their lot in undertaking what they did. When a gang of conspirators are apprehended and brought to justice in every other case, as far as I know, all excitement ceases over the graves of the malefactors; and why not here? Wade perceived the continued investigations of the Harper's Ferry incident and northern attitudes as unjust.

Long before John Brown focused attention on slavery as a regional issue, Wade called upon the South to do what was right. In early 1854, he challenged his former Whig friends:

Whether we of the North did not pledge our constituents that you were honorable men. . . . My amazement was very great when I heard that any of these gentlemen were in council with the enemy. I feared that something had taken place which ought not to have taken place, I felt strong in heart to appeal to them against any fancied interst which they might conceive themselves to have, for their duty is plain and palpable. Did not our forefathers make a compact? . . . Have you, southern Senators, not had the full benefit of it? Have you not enjoyed it now for thirty years? . . . [A]nd now the period is drawing near when that part of this great bargain which is beneficial to us at the North is approaching, and I call upon you as honorable men to fulfill it. Shrink not from it.
Wade was clear in his conviction that fulfilling the terms of the Missouri Compromise was the fair, just and right thing to do.

As the affairs of Kansas came to light in Washington, the senator focused on the injustice perpetrated upon northerners by proslavery forces. He contended "that two-thirds of all those who voted for the Legislature stole in there by force, to rob American citizens of their God-given right to the ballot-box." The only option was to rectify the wrong suffered by northerners. Nevertheless, Wade continued to charge the South with injustice. To further motivate his audience, he again reminded them of the absurdity in Kansas in "Plain Truths." "You have had an army of two thousand men in Kansas," Wade said, "and all the paraphernalia of war, for what purpose? To compel that people conduct their domestic concerns in their own way!"

Aristotle wrote that "justice is the virtue whereby each and all have what belongs to them in accordance with the law; injustice is the opposite, whereby people have what belongs to others, and not as the law enjoins." By using appeals to justice, Wade called the Senate to act virtuously. His tactful reminders of justice and injustice toward both slaves and the North were designed to provide motivation to accept his antislavery position. As reminders they were effective; as motivators they failed. The course to be taken in the Senate was settled on terms other than
virtue.

**Appeals to Prosperity**

Though not a consistently recurring emotional proof, Wade did on occasion use appeals to prosperity. A former Whig, Wade was identified with the old party's economic policies. He favored protectionism, tariffs, and federal funding for internal improvements. As a northerner, Wade also believed in the superiority of the free labor system.

Southern senators charged the North with having "white slaves." This supposed denigrated working class, the South imagined, opposed the northern labor system. In "Plain Truths," Wade replied:

One man has the same interest in upholding it as another. Suppose one man is richer than another in Ohio. There is no very great diversity, as a general thing; but suppose he is; take the child of the poorest man in our State, and has he any temptation to overthrow our Government? No, sir. Full of life, full of hope, full of ambition to go beyond him who has gone furtherest, he wishes to avail himself of the same securities which have ministered to the upbuilding of others.

It is the South's system of slavery which denied progress and prosperity, Wade countered. "You invent no steam engine" as laborers in the North did "because your labor is degraded. . . . And the Senator thinks the more ignorant the laborers are the better." Such an attitude leads to "no ambition" not prosperity. Regarding the territories Wade said they were "pure as nature; . . . beautiful as the garden of God." The image of Eden, no
doubt, was used to promote this notion of potential prosperity.

Why Wade did not make fuller use of appeals to prosperity is not clear. Given the relative stability of northern industry at the time, a contrast between northern and southern systems would have seemed appropriate. The North bore witness to the superiority of its economic system by its prosperity. Wade, as we have seen, however, strayed from specifics in favor of arguing larger principles in his discourse.

Appeals to Fear

Fear appeals address the "circumstances which threaten our lives, health, job, comfort, home, [and] reputation," according to Bryant and Wallace. Senator Wade sensed the urgency of the issue of slavery and made extensive use of fear appeals. For instance, Wade early positioned the North as a region of fighters who were a potential threat to southern security:

Do you suppose, for one moment, that a proud people, jealous above all things of their rights, whose fathers perilled their lives to obtain those guarantees of Liberty which we are defending—I ask you in sober reason, divested of all acrimony, is it reasonable to suppose that it is entirely safe to drive that class of men to the wall? ... Will you be lulled to believe that it is perfectly safe to disregard their rights? I ask you to pause. I tell you these men are not safe counsellors.

To those who may have missed the point of Wade's language he explained:
for more than seventy years, . . . we have not heard of American blood shed by American hands on American soil, for the purpose of propagating any species of political principle. . . . Sir, civil war, in fact, now exists in your Territory. . . . Does any one suppose that these blows of civil war can be given by one side forever, and never be retaliated by the other?85

The threat of civil war, no one relished. Wade, however, constantly reminded his fellow senators of that possibility. In "Invasion of Harper's Ferry," he concluded:

Do not Senators know that an attempt to dissolve this Union implies civil war, with all its attendant horrors; the marching and countermarching of vast armies; battles to be fought, and oceans of blood to be spilled, with all the vindictive malice and ill will that civil war never fails to bring?86

In "Property in the Territories," he served notice that the North was ready for a struggle necessitated by the South:

We generally have physical courage. We inherit it from our heroic ancestors, who, when occasion required it, dragged guilty kings from their thrones, and deprived them of their crowns, because they undertook to trample upon the rights of the people; and we, their descendants, I trust in God, are as ready to vindicate, not only our honor, but our rights, as were our ancestors at any period.87

Far from being a threat, Wade's fear appeals were designed as a reaction to the South's attempt "to overthrow the time-honored guarantees of liberty." Slavery was a proven aggressor. "How can it be, otherwise," asked Wade, "than that we must meet each other as enemies, fighting for the victory?"88 The South was encouraging war by its political actions.

The effect of such appeals is clear. Though not
designed to be threatening toward the South, Wade easily was interpreted as being a warmonger. The years prior to the Civil War were filled with political tensions. Any challenge, or perceived challenge, to take politics into the battlefield was met with similar challenges from the opposition. Wade, then, was found in a negative spiral, in effect. Though neither side claimed they sought a war to settle their differences, each was soon caught up in a war.

**Appeals to Peace**

Very closely related to his appeals to fear were Wade's appeals to peace. Always the statesman, Wade did not embrace the notion of a civil war. His approach was more practical. Peace through politics was better than war because of politics. To that end, he sought to motivate his hearers to accept his message because of the peace which would result.

Wade knew well the differences created between slavery and liberty. This he viewed as unfortunate. It was "a diversity between us in our government that seems almost irreconcilable. I do not know but that means may be found by which this great gulf can be bridged over."89 Still, Wade sought for a factor to unify the nation.

Wade identified a unifying factor for the Senate twenty-one months later:

have you reflected that between the North and the South there are no mountain ranges that are impassable, and no desert wastes which commonly

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divide great nations from one another? Do you not know that, whether we love one another or not, we are from the same stock, speaking the same language. . . . We are bound together by great navigable rivers interlacing and linking together all the states of this Union. Innumerable railroads also connect us, and an immense amount of commerce binds all the parts, besides domestic relations in a thousand ways.90

The alternative to war was recognition of the lot cast to the people of the nation by nature, industry, commerce, and heritage. The alternative to war was peace: "We are found in the same ship," said the Senator. "There is no way by which either one section or the other can get out of the Union."91

Wade turned this covert unity into a call for overt peace: peace without slavery. Kansas could "be admitted in an hour, as a free state, and then all will be peace," he said.92 Later, the Civil War well underway, Wade said, "I say to the people of the South, 'There can be no peace while slavery exists; it is at war with free institutions.' . . . There shall be no peace as long as there is a slave in the United States."93

To Wade, peace was clear motivation to accept an antislavery stance. Many in his audience concurred. The southern senators could not accept such terms of peace, however. Their position, reasoned as it was from principle, would not be changed.

Style

Wallace points out "that form as shape, outline, or
figure is properly regarded as the physical manifestation of the activity going on when a rhetor externalizes his meaning.94 In other words, form is how a speaker says what he wants to say.

Thonssen, Baird and Braden refer to style as the way a speaker "clothed his ideas with language."95 It is closely related to emotional appeals. In fact, it is sometimes impossible to distinguish the two. Wade used a variety of rhetorical devices to communicate his ideas. Such embellishments are used to make a speech more persuasive, palatable or colorful for an audience. Wade most often used repetition, alliteration, metaphor, rhetorical questions and biblical allusions to embellish his speech.

One stylistic device used consistently by Wade was repetition of words or phrases. For example, in his

They found themselves surrounded with this institution; they saw its working and its operation; they saw that it was all wrong . . .; and they wished to get rid of it; and on all proper occasions they constantly declared it to be a wrong, and they invoked the people about them to come up to the work. . . . Therefore, sir, they were consistent. They knew that their slaveholding in the States was in direct contradiction of that great and Godlike declaration that they had put forth to all mankind, and they sought to get rid of it.96

Such language use has a tendency to polarize the audience in the sense that an "us vs. them" feeling is promoted. A clearer example of polarization occurred in Wade's speech on "The Admission of Kansas." "You repealed the Missouri Compromise. Why did you do it?" Furthermore,
he charged, "you were not content with the ordinary mode of legislation, but against all precedent you incorporated . . . these . . . words." Later in the same speech Wade said, "You pretended that you had no power." Again, Wade chided the South:

You may sing hosannas to this Union until you are hoarse; you may talk of our common memories; and you may eulogize that great flag under which our fathers fought; and you may go into hysterics on the subject.

Such repetition reinforced the "you vs. us" sentiment of the emerging sectionalism.

Other examples of repetition are frequent. Of the migrating northerner Wade said, "he must inspect his library very closely; he must remember every word in his books; he must leave out the best literature." Years later, Wade pictured Republicans "wondering at the progress of Democratic administration, wondering, most of all, at hearing those . . . threatening to pull down the . . . Union." All this happened while northerners were "full of life, full of hope, [and] full of ambition."

Of himself, Wade admitted contempt for the Supreme Court.

I wish I could entertain a good opinion of the judges of that court. I wish I could believe they were patriotic. I wish I could believe they held the scales of justice equal. . . . I wish I could believe that that court were actuated by no other than these great Godlike principles in the decision they have made.

Of a recent Senate bill Wade said, "I do not care who struck
it out; I do not care what deliberations were had about it."  

A second stylistic device used by Wade in his antislavery speeches was alliteration. Speeches in the Senate were often delivered at a moment's notice, sometimes in immediate response to another senator's question or comment. It is, therefore, not surprising that Wade used alliteration infrequently. This device takes careful planning and preparation to be effective.

Nevertheless, Wade spoke of being surprised that the Compromise of 1850 "in some mysterious manner, superceded the most stern and stubborn law of Congress." Southern actions were "disgraceful to any king or country, from Nero to Nicholas" while "ingenuity . . . was invoked to invent." He described the Senate's task as "dangerous, difficult, and delicate."

Other instances of alliteration included Wade's prediction about the South's rhetoric ("they will preach peace") and their condition ("they are in a kind of political purgatory, dangling between heaven and hell"). Descriptive phrases such as "full in the face," "political power," "despair and destruction," "well and worthily," "deliberate debates," "rational and right," and "insults and . . . ignominy" are additional cases of alliteration.

One of the most delightful stylistic devices used by Wade to embellish his speeches was metaphor. When Texas
threatened to secede from the Union, Wade said, they "are going to hold a Hartford convention" in obvious reference to the New England nullification meeting held more forty years earlier. Later, he concluded to his audience's amusement, that Democratic senators and the Democratic president were "Siamese twins."

As demonstrated earlier in Chapter 4, Wade appealed often to the founding fathers. These men were his "polar star." Of the opposition Wade decided their "doctrine has grown up into a great tree, so that some fowls lodge in the branches thereof."

By far the most consistently metaphor in the speeches examined was the Union as marriage. Boldly Wade proclaimed:

we are married forever, for better or for worse. We may make our condition very uncomfortable by bickerings if we will, but nevertheless there can be no divorcement between us.

Wade confirmed this state in other addresses. "We are wedded for better or for worse, and forever; and we had better make the best of our lot. You cannot go out."

In the debate on "Property in Territories," Wade concluded his remarks with a plea for unity based on the marriage metaphor:

As to the talk of dissolving the Union, I have nothing to say. You may talk about the South going out, but I can see well enough that she never will go out. I see with perfect clearness that we must live together whether we will or not. We cannot get a divorce. . . . You may not like us, but you cannot get rid of us. We are to live together eternally, and I think we had better try to live quietly.
A fourth stylistic device, the rhetorical question, appeared in every antislavery speech Wade delivered. Sometimes a single rhetorical question was asked, as, "What gave us the right to do so, unless it was a military necessity?" in the introduction to his "Families of Black Soldiers" speech. Most times, however, Wade used an extended series of rhetorical questions to establish his position.

In his first antislavery speech, Wade asked regarding the Compromise of 1850:

Why is it, then, that at this time it is not only called in question, but a far more sacred compromise, that lies far back, is called up and questioned, that it may be annulled? What has transpired? What new light has burst forth upon the people of the United States, that they come forward at this time and demand this great and hazardous measure? . . . What new light has burst on these United States that requires this new clause in the bill which he reported?

Such lengthy questioning was more typical of Wade. Only a few examples might demonstrate their potential persuasiveness.

Regarding the Free State legislature in Kansas Wade asked:

What good would it do to give certificates? But is a man to be estopped on a gross usurpation like this? Is an American citizen to be cheated out of his rights under forms of law? I ask any honorable gentleman on the other side, would you submit to it? No sir, you would not. would you submit to be governed by a gang of usurpers. . . ?

Would technicalities avail?

In a later speech, Wade reasoned with the South: "Why
not do it now, when, I say again, you have the Government in your own hands? why tell us that it is to be done when our candidate is elected?"

Again, he asked, "I ask Senators on the other side, why do you do it? . . . If you are going to do it, is it necessary to give us notice of it?"125

The rhetorical question can be a valuable tool for the speaker. The speaker can establish his position by leading his audience to the same conclusion. In the process the logical and correct answers are tacit. Yet the response is clear.

The final stylistic device which Wade used in the speeches examined in this study was biblical allusion. Wade's religious training in childhood provided him rich resource materials upon which to draw. His regular Bible reading throughout exposed him to the same materials.

Most of his biblical allusions were taken from the Old Testament. for example, Wade once referred to the "fire and brimstone" of "Sodom and Gomorrah."126 The story of Abraham's nephew, Lot, is told in Genesis 12-19. He settled in Sodom. Because of evil in the city, Sodom, along with its twin city, Gomorrah, were destroyed by fire and brimstone.127

A less obvious biblical allusion occurred in Wade's prediction of impending conflict. "I see a cloud," said Wade, "a little bigger than a man's hand, gathering in the
north . . . and soon the whole northern heavens will be lighted up with a fire that you cannot quench.²²⁸ The story of the prophet Elijah meeting the priests of Baal is recorded in I Kings 18. Following a long draught, Elijah and the priests of Baal contested to pray down fire to prove the superiority of their God. After Elijah was successful and the priests of Baal were killed, Elijah retired to the top of Mount Carmel. From this vantage point, his servant brought a report of approaching rain. It appeared as "a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand."²²⁹

Wade's reference, in another speech, to the southern Whigs being "now scattered as sheep having no shepherd"²³⁰ reflects a reoccurring biblical theme. Upon Moses' appointment as Israel's leader, he described Israel as "sheep which have no shepherd."²³¹ The prophet Micah used the identical words to describe Israel²³² and Jesus spoke the same of the Galileans he had compassion upon.²³³

In an extended allusion, Wade assigned his contemporaries to analogous roles in the story of Israel's flight from slavery in Egypt. This portion of Israel's history is retold in the Book of Exodus. Wade's version of the story featured Moses, who under the immediate inspiration of God Almighty, enticed a whole nation of slaves, and ran away, not to Canada, but to old Canaan, I suppose that Pharoah and all the chivalry of old Egypt denounced him as a most furious Abolitionist.²³⁴

Those Israelites "who could turn from the visible glories of
the Almighty God to worship an Egyptian calf . . . were the doughfaces of that day. They were the national men. . . . [T]hey were Israelites with Egyptian principles.\textsuperscript{135}

Wade relied less upon New Testament allusions. He once described northerners as "patience, long-suffering, and very slow to anger."\textsuperscript{136} These could be a reference either to the apostle Paul's description of loving behaviors\textsuperscript{137} or the fruits of the Holy Spirit listed in Paul's epistle to the Galatians.\textsuperscript{138} The passages are similar.

At least one metaphor discussed earlier may be a biblical allusion. Wade had described southern doctrines as a "great tree" with "some fowls" lodged in its branches.\textsuperscript{139} This is an allusion to one of the parables of Jesus. "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed," according to the parable. Its seed is small but it grows into "a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."\textsuperscript{140} Even Wade's wording reflected the language of the King James Version of the Bible.

As early as 1845, Liberty party spokesman Theodore Foster observed:

\begin{quote}
I am more and more convinced by reflection that the antislavery feeling alone will never bring . . . a majority of all the voters of the United States. We must have some other motives to present to the people, which will appeal directly to their own interests.\textsuperscript{141}
\end{quote}

Wade discovered that even extensive emotional proofs to patriotism, justice, prosperity, fear, and peace would not move the United States Senate. The next section of this chapter will consider Wade's use of ethical proof.
Ethical Proof

The third type of rhetorical proof upon which a speaker may draw is ethical proof. Ethical proofs are designed to enhance the image and credibility of the speaker and, thereby, the image and credibility of the message. Aristotle wrote, "the sources of our trust . . . are three, for apart from the arguments [in the speech] there are three things that gain our belief, namely, intelligence, character, and goodwill." Thonssen, Baird and Braden caution that the distinction between emotional proof and ethical proof "is not always clear; and in some instances it may be virtually nonexistent." As we will discover, the distinction is not easily made in Wade's antislavery speeches. Indeed, Wade's ethical proofs bolstered his emotional proofs in most instances. His use of ethical proofs is discussed according to character, intelligence, and goodwill.

Character

The successful rhetor must present himself as good, virtuous, and honest. Without these characteristics persuasion can hardly be actuated. Marie Hochmuth Nichols reminded us to be concerned with:

Not only the speaking, but the man who spoke . . . the critic needs to note and sess the persuasive effect of "echoes and values" attaching to the
person and character of the speaker.\textsuperscript{144}

To test the "echoes and values" attached to Wade, we might be wise to follow the criteria established by Thonssen, Baird and Braden. They list six ways by which a speaker may establish his good character:

In general, a speaker focuses attention upon the probity of his character if he (1) associates either himself or his message with what is virtuous and elevated; (2) bestows, with propriety, tempered praise upon himself, his client, and his cause; (3) links the opponent or the opponents' cause with what is not virtuous; (4) removes or minimizes unfavorable impressions of himself or his cause previously established by his opponent; (5) relies upon authority derived from his personal experience; and (6) creates the impression of being completely sincere in his undertaking.\textsuperscript{145}

Wade's antislavery speeches are examined according to these criteria to discover the extent to which his character functioned as ethical proof.

Wade never praised himself directly. He did, however, take strides to associate "his message with what is virtuous and elevated."\textsuperscript{146} One of the major emotional appeals in his antislavery speeches was the appeal to justice as has been demonstrated. This is but one example of the blurred distinction between emotional and ethical proofs the critic is warned about.

In "Invasion of Harper's Ferry," Wade associated his cause with the image of no less than George Washington:

General Washington himself was, according to your understanding of it, just as much an Abolitionist as you charge me with being. He believed the system wrong—morally, politically, in every
way—and he hoped some means would be found whereby it might be abolished. . . . How long do you suppose that he could remain on the soil of Virginia to-day [sic], with this declaration upon his tongue?147

The memory of the late southern Whig, Senator Henry Clay, was also used by Wade. Clay "denounced it [slavery] down to a very late period in his valuable life, in stronger, infinitely stronger terms than I could denounce it upon this floor, as wrong, continually wrong."148

In a later speech, Wade admitted, "I have been in the habit of believing, with the fathers of the Constitution, that liberty is the gift of God to every human being. With them, I have supposed it is self-evident, and incapable of illustration by argument."149 Thus did Wade link his message with what his audience considered virtuous and elevated.

On occasion Wade "tempered praise upon himself . . . and his cause."150 He began his speech on "The Nebraska Question" with praise of his previous work in the Senate:

Mr. President, it is not without embarrassment that I rise to debate any question in the Senate of the United States, for it is well known that I lay no claims to being a debater of general measures that come under consideration. I have generally contented myself with the less ostentatious, but perhaps not less useful, duty of endeavoring to inform myself upon every question that presents itself, and attending to the affairs of the committees to which I belong, leaving others to debate such questions as may from time to time arise.151

Wade also used moderate praise of colleagues who supported the antislavery cause. In "Plain Truths" he
asserted, "I would gladly forego the task that is now before me, especially as the whole subject has been debated by those much more able to enlighten the Senate and the country upon it than I can claim to be."\textsuperscript{152} In another speech he praised his friend, Senator Salmon Chase. "I need not refer further to the speech of the Senator from Illinois. My colleague . . . so entirely pulverized that speech that there is not enough of it left upon which a man can possibly hang an idea."\textsuperscript{153}

Closely related to praising one's message is the third component which contributes to a speaker's character, the linking of "the opponent or the opponents' cause with what is not virtuous."\textsuperscript{154} Regarding the supposed supporters of slaveholders in the North, Wade said, "they are the offscourings generally of the Old World--men who come here reduced to beggary by their ignorance, reduced to beggary by their vice; ignorant, vicious, dangerous." He was convinced that these individuals "are about the only stay and support you have there now."\textsuperscript{155}

Although Wade reasoned at one time that slaveholders were not criminal, with the war precipitated by the slave power in the South, his rhetoric changed. "They have committed a crime."\textsuperscript{156} Their crime was a violation of God's law as well as international law. It resulted, Wade charged, in the forfeiting of all the opposition's rights.

Another tactic for establishing a speaker's character
is the minimizing of "unfavorable impressions of himself or his cause previously established by" the opposition. This tactic was used regularly by Wade. In the wake of reports about John Brown's incursion into Virginia Wade pleaded:

I ask you in the generosity of your hearts to separate and distinguish between approval of a lawless invasion, and sympathy for a sublime hero, taking his life in his hand, and marching up to the altar to offer it there a sacrifice to his highest convictions of right. . . . Do not jump to the conclusion that the people who hold meetings in admiration of the personal qualities of John Brown, one single man of them, stand forth to justify his nefarious and unwarrentable act.

On a personal level, Wade faced charges of being an abolitionist. Of course, the tactics of the nation's avowed abolitionists differed significantly from those of Wade. Nevertheless, he minimized the unfavorable characterizations he had received from his opponents by explaining:

If an advocacy of this doctrine [of nonextension] constitutes an Abolitionist, I am one. . . . I am not choice in the use of terms; I care little for names; I care less for what men may say of me; but I wish to be understood precisely as I mean.

After outlining his antislavery convictions, Wade asked:

Is this Abolitionism? I believe it marks strongly the character of those whom you call Black Republicans. I cannot defend them against the charge, nor do I wish to do so; for I am one of the blackest of the black, if this be the criterion of the judgment.

At the same time, Wade cautioned that his position had its limits. "While I claim to be a Republican," Wade said, "I am not a negro-worshipper, as we are sneeringly called."
He did not perceive himself as the Savior of a subservient race. He was, rather, the champion of freedom in the territories.

Very rarely Wade relied "upon authority derived from his personal experience" to enhance his character. Such a case occurred in his speech regarding the "Families of Black Soldiers." The wives and children of former slaves now enlisted in the Union army were subject to great cruelty. Wade positioned himself as an expert: "I know the fact, for I have been down in that country where we are endeavoring to enlist this class of soldiers." Later in the same speech he reminded his auditors "I will state in connection with this subject that I visited this Camp Nelson last summer." Wade had little first hand experience with slavery and, therefore, he relied little upon his personal experiences.

The final tactic of establishing one's character in a speech situation is to create "the impression of being completely sincere in his undertaking." Wade certainly achieved this impression in his antislavery speeches. For instance, in his "Admission of Kansas" speech, Wade consented, "I have spoken, as I always speak, with some considerable degree of warmth and feeling."

In the same speech Wade reaffirmed the sincerity of his beliefs. With former Whigs he had "fought shoulder to shoulder with great zeal and perseverance in the great
battle against slavery. Though deserted in battle, Wade continued on the original course.

Wade used a variety of methods to establish his character in his antislavery speeches. He associated himself and his cause with what is virtuous, bestowed praise upon his cause, linked his opposition with what is unvirtuous, minimized unfavorable impressions established by the opposition, relied upon personal experience as a supporting material, and created the impression of being sincere. In the speeches examined, Wade most often associated himself with the virtuous and minimized negative impressions perpetrated by his opposers.

**Intelligence**

A second component of ethical proof is sagacity, or intelligence. The authors of *Speech Criticism* recognize five methods available to the public speaker which may enhance his perceived intelligence:

- a speaker helps to establish the impression of sagacity if he (1) uses what is popularly called common sense; (2) acts with tact and moderation; (3) displays a sense of good taste; (4) reveals a broad familiarity with the interests of the day; and (5) shows through the way in which he handles speech materials that he is possessed of intellectual integrity and wisdom.

Wade established his intelligence primarily in two ways: by acting with tact and moderation and by handling speech materials properly.

By his own admission, Wade exercised self control in
his antislavery speeches. In the course of lambasting the South, he said, "I do not wish to make use of any harsh expressions, and I am glad that I checked one which was on my tongue." He often restrained himself from citing all the supporting materials he had supposedly collected. In an early speech, he said, "I will not take up the time of the Senate by reading that provision, although I have it here." Later in another speech, rather than cite specific instances of the inaccuracies he charged a Senate colleague with, he reported, "I have not now the time or the strength to do this."

The way Wade handled his speech materials also showed he had intellectual integrity. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter Wade did not make extensive use of supporting materials. When they were used, he most often cited his sources and affirmed their accuracy.

While arguing that the law had not been upheld at the constitutional convention in Kansas, Wade charged, "I have the law that required the registry; I have the law that required the census be taken." He never quoted the documents. In the same speech he later asserted, "I have the evidence of them all here." He did not make further reference to the evidence. Rather than rehearse in detail the proof contained in these documents, Wade simply let it be known he was in possession of the proof.

At least once Wade refused to quote from Senate records
for I remember what took place on that occasion." His summary of the events which transpired went unchallenged. He did not, in this case, read the record of proceedings simply to save the valuable time of his peers.

Wade was no doubt regarded as intelligent. He was a successful lawyer and former judge. To heighten his perceived intelligence he acted with tact and moderation and handled his speech materials with integrity and wisdom.

Good Will

A final component of a speaker's ethical proof is the extent to which he exhibits good will toward the audience. Bryand and Wallace summarized their advice to public speakers along this line in a simple principle. "In any event," they wrote, "a safe rule is: Respect your hearers." A rhetor will reveal his good will toward his audience by striving:

to (1) capture the proper balance between too much and too little praise of his audience; (2) identify himself properly with the hearers and their problems; (3) proceed with candor and straightforwardness; (4) offer necessary rebukes with tact and consideration; (5) offset any personal reasons he may have for giving the speech; and (6) reveal, without guile or exhibitionism, his personable qualities as a messenger of truth.

An examination of the speeches in this study reveals Wade used each of these methods, in varying degrees, to impress the Senate with his good will.

On rare occasions he praised his peers in the Senate.
In the debates regarding the bill admitting Kansas to full statehood, for example, Wade stated "Senators much more capable to do justice to it than I can pretend" had already spoken.\textsuperscript{176} Indeed in the widely circulated "Plain Truths" speech Wade momentarily deferred to "those much more able to enlighten the Senate and the country . . . than I can claim to be."\textsuperscript{177} Such self-effacement was actually recognition of the high regard in which he held his colleagues.

Wade also identified with his audience and their problem with slavery. "Undoubtedly, under similar circumstances, we of the North would do the same [things regarding federal power]; therefore I do not complain, but simply state the fact."\textsuperscript{178} In another antislavery speech, he went as far as to admit:

\begin{quote}
I can hardly doubt that if we had changed places, and my lot had been cast among you, under like circumstance, my opinions on this subject might be different, and I might be here, perhaps, as fierce a fire-eater as I am now against fire. I can understand these things, and I accuse no man.\textsuperscript{179}
\end{quote}

Of course, Wade did complain against the South and did accuse southern senators, as revealed earlier in this analysis. Nevertheless, he did make efforts to identify with their situation.

A third way to create the impression of good will is to speak with candor. Wade rather bluntly admitted that he was "candid enough to confess that I do not know what you can do with" slavery in the South.\textsuperscript{180} He simply preached against the extension of slavery into what he believed to be
congressionally controlled territories.

While still a trial lawyer, Wade had earned the nickname "Bluff Ben." He capitalized on this reputation in establishing good will. "Well, sir," Wade said referring to the President of the United States, "I am not a man who wishes to keep anything back, and I tell my friends here . . . it is salvery that the people are opposed to."181

Being known for his harshness, it is not surprising that Wade rarely rebuked the opposition tactfully. Typically, he pulled few punches. However, speaking on the "Admission of Kansas," he confessed, "I take no pleasure in proclaiming these things, although I believe them to be true." His attempt at tact was short lived as he immediately insisted, "still, I am to be blamed, as one who interferes with other men's business."182

The fourth method for establishing good will, denying personal reasons for delivering a message, is evident in Wade's speeches. He had been charged with desiring the abolition of slavery throughout the South. To this he answered "do not understand me to be so unreasonable as to demand the immediate and unconditional emancipation of slavery in those states where it has grown up by prescription."183 This was not a proper goal to assign to his speeches. Rather, he reported:

I know that you regard me as your enemy; and yet I am really your best friend, because I stand here to advise you of the danger of being lured to destruction by men who seek their own advancement,
caring nothing what may befall you. Like those who, in times gone by, have been the honest bearers of unwelcome intelligence, I know I shall be treated as your enemy; but still I will not shrink from the path of duty.\textsuperscript{184}

Wade claimed his motivation in presenting his case was rooted in his constituency. He "should be recreant in the duty which I owe to the great state which I in part represent" if he did not speak their mind.\textsuperscript{185} Far from being self-seeking, Wade spoke because the people of Ohio "are more deeply moved with the consideration of" slavery issues "than they ever have been before."\textsuperscript{186}

The final method by which speakers can reveal their good will toward an audience is to present himself as a messenger of truth. As already demonstrated, Wade insisted he was not an enemy of southern society. In a later speech, Wade reaffirmed, "I do not stand here to deceive you, my friends. I tell you the truth just as it is."\textsuperscript{187}

Wade insisted he was on the side of truth. "You know," he said to his southern peers, "that I preach no more than the truth--nay, half the truth has not been told on this subject."\textsuperscript{188} Although he understood the South's situation, Wade could "not be biased as to the right" of their institutions. The antislavery message was truth while the proslavery message was a lie.

Clearly, Senator Wade made effective use of ethical proof. He carefully presented his character as impeccable. As a senator, his intelligence was rarely, if ever,
questioned. Still, he demonstrated his wisdom and integrity. Finally, he assured his auditors that he possessed good will toward them.

**Summary**

In conclusion, Benjamin Wade made adequate use of each of the three rhetorical proofs available to him. Though his lines of reasoning were valid, Wade's use of evidence was very limited. Furthermore, the emotional proof in his antislavery speeches was not as varied as it could have been. Finally, Wade's ethical proof was not extensive. In most instances his ethical proofs served to bolster the emotional proofs in his speeches. From a speech crafting perspective Wade could have done much more to improve his public speeches and to make his ideas more attractive and palatable. Again, the speeches seem to have been adequate rather than outstanding.
Notes


8 For more detailed treatments of testing syllogistic forms, see Thonssen, Baird and Braden, pp. 408-411; and Irving M. Copi, pp. 198-252.

9 "The Nebraska Question," p. 64.

10 "The Nebraska Question," p. 64.

11 Schiller, cited in Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 410.
Bassett, p. 489-490.
"The Admission of Kansas," pp. 4-5.
Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 409.
Copi, p. 250.
"The Admission of Kansas," p. 7.
"The Admission of Kansas," p. 9.
"The Admission of Kansas," p. 12.
For a brief but adequate account of Giddings' relationship with Brown and opinion of the invasion, see James Brewer Stewart, Joshua R. Giddings (Cleveland: the Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1970), pp. 269-271.
See Stewart, p. 270.
The term Negro, considered to carry negative
connotations today, is used here as it represents Wade's language choice. The word black is preferred and used by the author elsewhere.


42 The Admission of Kansas," p. 13.
43 "Plain Truths for the People," p. 2.
44 "Plain Truths," p. 3.
49 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 11.
51 "The Nebraska Question," p. 66.
52 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 420.
53 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 428.
56 Bailey, p. 29.
57 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 5.
58 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 5.
60 "The Nebraska Question," p. 65.
61 "The Nebraska Question," p. 68.
64 "Plain Truths," p. 2.
65 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 6, 13.
66 "Nebraska Question," p. 64.
71 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 7.
72 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 15.
75 "The Nebraska Question," p. 65.
80 "Plain Truths," p. 3.
81 "Plain Truths," p. 3.
82 "The Nebraska Question," p. 65.
83 Bryant and Wallace, p. 194.
84 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 6.
85 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 10.
88 "The Nebraska Question," p. 68.
89 "Plain Truths," p. 2.
92 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 16.
95 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 489.
96 "Invasion of Harper's Ferry," p. 5.
97 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 7.
98 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 9.
101 "Property in the Territories," p. 150.
102 "Plain Truths," p. 3.
103 "Plain Truths," p. 5.
104 "Plain Truths," p. 10.
107 "Plain Truths," p. 15.
109 "The Nebraska Question," p. 68.
110 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 6.
111 "Property in Territories," p. 150.
115 "Plain Truths," p. 3.
117 "The Admission of Kansas," pp. 1, 5.
120 "Plain Truths," p. 4.
126 "The Nebraska Question," p. 66.
128 "The Nebraska Question," p. 68.
129 I Kings 18:44.
130 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 6.
131 Numbers 27:17.

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Matthew 9:36 and Mark 6:34.


"The Admission of Kansas," p. 10.

I Corinthians 13:4-7.

Galatians 5:22,23.


Matthew 13:31,32.


Cooper, pp. 91-92.

Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 453.


Thonssen, Baird and Braden, pp. 458-459.

Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 458.

"Invasion of Harper's Ferry," p. 5.

"Invasion of Harper's Ferry," p. 5.


Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 458.


Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 458.

"Plain Truths," p. 4.
157 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 458.
159 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 4.
160 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 4.
162 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 459.
165 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 459.
166 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 15.
167 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 6.
168 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 459.
170 "The Nebraska Question," p. 64.
171 "The Admission of Kansas," p. 15.
174 Bryant and Wallace, p. 209.
175 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, pp. 459-460.
178 "Property in Territories," p. 150.
"The Admission of Kansas," p. 5. See also, "Plain Truths," p. 12.
"The Admission of Kansas," p. 4.
"The Admission of Kansas," p. 6.
"The Admission of Kansas," p. 6.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to provide a rhetorical assessment of Benjamin Franklin Wade's antislavery speeches in the United States Senate, 1854-1865. Wade, who is remembered as an early opponent of slavery at the federal level, rose to the highest level of national politics. A leader in the young Republican party, he later became President of the Senate, served on the Joint Committee for the Conduct of the War, and was suggested as a possible presidential and vice-presidential candidate. Had the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson been successful, Wade would have served as our eighteenth President. This chapter provides (1) a summary of the project, (2) an evaluation of the speeches studied, and (3) a review of potential future research.

Summary

Benjamin Wade was born on October 12, 1800 in Feeding Hills, Massachusetts. His ancestors included early American colonists and Calvinist preachers. Educated at home by his mother, Wade was apparently well prepared to undertake studies in medicine and, later, law. Though he received no
formal speech training, Wade was exposed to elements of organization and delivery by his regular attendance at Sunday preaching services as a child.

At the age of 21, Wade moved to Ohio's Western Reserve with his brothers. There he undertook the study of law. Though not meeting with any success as a public speaker initially, Wade honed his skills in law by associating in practice with Joshua R. Giddings.

By 1835, Wade was an active community leader and a successful Whig candidate for the office of prosecuting attorney in Ashtabula County. As a Whig, Wade held a seat in the Ohio Senate. He later served as a district judge. While engaged in public service, Wade delivered stump speeches on behalf of Whig candidates and causes. Though he did not seek a national office, the Ohio Senate selected Wade to represent the state in the United States Senate beginning in 1851. Because of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Wade realigned with the new Republican party.

Beginning in his childhood, the future Senator had a love and attachment to books. His persistent reading and study habits permitted his successful political career to flourish. He was familiar with the sciences, law and literature.

From Wade's letters to his family we have insight into his philosophy of public address. He recognized the potential power and effectiveness of political speaking. He
insisted on simplicity of thought and expression in his communication. Simplicity led Wade, perhaps, to portray himself as a common man. He believed in being blunt and to the point. Nevertheless, Wade attempted in his early career to memorize every speech.

When Wade entered the United States Senate, he faced a number of constraints. Foremost among these were the various theories of constitutional interpretation. Federalists and Anti-Federalists differed on the meaning of the Constitution. Federalists believed the Constitution demanded a strong, centralized government. Conversely, Anti-Federalists believed the country was a compact of states which individually retained sovereignty in political issues.

A second constraint which influenced Wade was the antislavery activity of the period. Historically, antislavery movements and societies had concerned themselves with slavery as a social evil. In the 1830s, William Lloyd Garrison began to urge immediate emancipation of slaves through legislative means. This movement began in Wade's native New England and was readily accepted on the Western Reserve. Colonization and aid societies died out and political antislavery sentiments grew nationally as well as in Ashtabula County.

The underground railroad in the county served runaway slaves. John Brown and his sons found refuge and support
there. Secret organizations for the support of antislavery activities flourished.

A third constraint was the proliferation of political parties and loyalties. In the decade preceding the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Whigs and Democrats functioned as the major political parties. Ashtabula County was a Whig stronghold as was most of northeastern Ohio. During the 1840s, the Liberty party became a political influence. The party opposed slavery on constitutional grounds. The Free-Soil party emerged in 1848 and sought the end of slavery's extension into the federally controlled territories. Single-issue parties are short lived as a rule. Finally, the Republican party developed from a coalition of former Whigs, Democrats and third party politicians. Wade reluctantly associated with the organization.

A final constraint was the rise of sectionalism. Slavery first was an economic issue which turned North and South against each other. The South encouraged the sectional splintering by meeting northern abolitionists with mob action and attempting further to censor their message.

Senator Wade's antislavery speeches contained each of Aristotle's three rhetorical forms of proof: logical, emotional and ethical. The first component of logical proof is reasoning. Wade's arguments, when cast as syllogisms and tested, are valid. Most often his arguments took the form
of hypothetical syllogisms. He also used categorical and, more rarely, disjunctive syllogisms. Surprisingly, Wade provided little evidence to support his reasoning. What evidence was used usually consisted of expert legal, legislative, or military testimonies. Sometimes statistics were introduced to bolster Wade's reasoning. These served both to clarify the situation and to support a tentative proposition.

The emotional proof which appeared in Wade's speeches was varied. Most often his appeals were to patriotism, justice, prosperity, fear and peace. As domestic tensions heightened and war seemed inevitable, Wade reacted by emphasizing appeals to fear rather than the more positive options. Wade's stylistic devices can also be considered as emotional proofs. He utilized repetition, alliteration, metaphor, rhetorical questions and Biblical allusions. Perhaps because he was not a trained speech craftsman, Wade relied upon the less artistic rhetorical questions and Biblical allusions to enhance his presentations.

The final rhetorical proof examined in Wade's addresses was ethical proof. Wade presented himself as good and honest to enhance his character. He demonstrated his intelligence by properly handling his speech materials and by acting tactfully. He basically exhibited good will toward his auditors by praising them, identifying with their problems and displaying himself as a messenger of truth.
Evaluation

Given this examination of Wade's antislavery speeches, we turn briefly to an evaluation of them. There are a number of critical bases on which a judgment might be founded.

Thonsen, Baird and Braden, for example, argue that the critic is responsible for assessing a speech's effect. A speech, or series of speeches, is to be evaluated "in light of what people do as a result of hearing it."\(^1\) Briefly, a speech is successful because of its positive "relation to social change."\(^2\) It, however, is never the only force contributing to social change. A particular speech, or series of speeches, interacts with a variety of other social influences to cause a desired effect.

Wade's speeches were certainly not successful in the short term. In his early antislavery speeches he was clearly a voice crying in the wilderness of either apathetic or proslavery sentiment. For most of his career Wade was in the minority of the Senate's minority party. A cursory review of the Senate votes demonstrates that his speeches had no immediate effect as his view was consistently defeated. Only after the Confederate States of America was established was Wade in the majority and able to see the fruits of his oratorical labor.

Largely because of the shift in public opinion brought about by the seceding southern states, Wade was positioned
to undertake greater leadership responsibilities. This is, no doubt, the sign of Wade's long term success and the effectiveness of his speeches. Once his views were vindicated, he experienced widespread popularity.

Wade had long been a popular speaker in the North, but, in 1860, he was considered by many to be the favored presidential candidate. One senator wrote home:

The most popular "rugged spirit" man here is Ben. Wade. Nearly every Senator on our side is for him. At least they would generally prefer to see him president over any other man. . . . His boldness & manliness, his pluck & undoubted courage make him the admiration in both Houses.3 Republican Simon Stevens verified that the party leadership believed Wade had "a strong probability" of being nominated for President.4 Wade, of course, was not the Republican candidate for that office in 1860.

When seriously considered as the vice-presidential nominee in 1868, a pamphlet appeared which questioned Wade's ability to serve. Although he was described as unquestionably a statesman of great vision, the pamphleteers claimed "his advanced age should disqualify him from assuming" the office.5

Though he failed to undertake these roles, Wade served as chairman of the powerful Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War from 1861 until 1865. Given the power to investigate war contracts, expenditures, activities, and later to subpoena high ranking officials, the Committee became "a splendid propaganda agency."6
The effectiveness of the speeches examined in this study, then, can be evaluated in two ways. First, Wade's speeches were not categorically effective in the short term. His speeches did not cause the end of slavery in the South nor its extension into the territories. Second, however, Wade's speeches did have a long term effect. His speeches thrust him into the national spotlight and enabled him to have a broader range of influence in future policy making.

A second basis for critical judgment of a speech is espoused by Wayland M. Parrish. He contends that "rhetoric, strictly speaking, is not concerned with the effect of a speech, but with its quality, and its quality can be determined quite apart from its effect." 7

Chapter Four assessed Wade's use of the rhetorical proofs. As was noted there, Wade sometimes fell short of the standard of perfection from a speechcraft point of view. Although he never engaged in faulty logic (probably a function of his law training), his evidence could and should have been stronger. His ineffective use of the entire range of emotional appeals and stylistic devices again demonstrated his weakness in rhetorical invention. Finally, though his ethical proof was adequate, it was limited.

Two explanations for these potential weaknesses may be suggested. First and foremost, Wade's education did not include extensive exposure to rhetorical theory. Second, he perhaps sought in the context of the Senate to live up to
his nickname, "Bluff Ben." A common man who spoke bluntly and honestly was not suited to using an elevated style to conveying his ideas. In any event, the quality of Wade's speeches was not equivalent to the speeches of his peers in Congress. Wade was different. He garnered attention through being different.

A third critical base which can be used to evaluate Wade's antislavery speeches is ethics. James McCroskey charges that "the only meaningful way in which we can evaluate the ethics of a communicator is on the basis of his intent." Obviously, it is impossible to discover the motives of Wade or any other speaker for that matter. However, Wade did contend that his motivation was to seek long range positive results. To his former law teacher he wrote, "I know of no safer way for a man to fit himself for 'eternity' than by a faithful performance of all his duty here." His duty, of course, was to represent the citizens of the state of Ohio. Certainly, history has vindicated Wade's position regarding slavery. He was in advance of many of the great minds of his age and ethically he and his ideas meet the highest standards.

**Future Research**

One sign of competent research is the potential for future research which it generates. As a plan of study is carried out, new questions inevitably are raised. This initial look into the rhetoric of a particular Radical
Republican is no exception. There are at least three areas which invite further research.

First, further investigation into Wade's public addresses seems appropriate. Elected to the Senate before the practice of popular elections for that House was in place, Wade nevertheless seems to have conducted what today we would call a campaign. His stump speeches in Ohio's Western Reserve warrant further research.

Second, as stated in Chapter One, very little research on the Radical Republicans has been conducted by speech communication professionals. As a discipline we have concerned ourselves with the more successful moderate branch of the party. The focus has been largely on Lincoln. What the common themes of Radical discourse nationally, as well as among their local constituents, were has gone unexplored. The possibility of a genre of regional northern oratory has yet to be treated.

Finally, Wade's influence on the Joint Committee on the conduct of the War has gone unnoticed. Because it became a "propaganda agency," it is surprising to find no rhetorical analysis of its activities. How Wade's early antislavery sentiment influenced the Committee is but one focus such an analysis could take.

This chapter has provided a summary of the study, evaluated the speeches in the study, and suggested lines of potential future research. As the premier antislavery
leader in the United States Senate, Benjamin Franklin Wade was a success. He focused the attention of his colleagues on a national disgrace and urged rectification of the problem. Constantly reminding the Senate of its responsibilities, he challenged the nation to do right.
Notes


2 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 539.

3 John Grisley, Letter to Friedrick hassaurek, April 23, 1860, hassaurek Papers, OHS, Columbus, OH.

4 Simon Stevens, Letter to F. Fessenden, May 14, 1860, Fessenden Papers, WRHS, Cleveland, OH.

5 "Hon. B. F. Wade, and the Vice Presidency," undated pamphlet, OHS, Columbus, OH.


9 BFW, Letter to Elisha Whittlesey, July 2, 1857, Whittlesey Papers, WRHS, Cleveland, OH.
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Date of Examination:

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