A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Republican Speeches in the 1856 Presidential Election Campaign.

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A rhetorical analysis of selected Republican speeches in the 1856 presidential election campaign

Webster, Linda Jean, Ph.D.
The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1987
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A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED REPUBLICAN SPEECHES IN THE 1856 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

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

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ABSTRACT

The Republican party organized its first presidential campaign in 1856. The party was composed of men from a wide variety of political backgrounds, primarily from free soil and anti-slavery groups. The rhetoric of this first Republican campaign represented the efforts of these individual speakers to reconcile their free soil arguments with the official party platform. Although the party was loosely organized and poorly funded, many respected orators participated in the campaign.

As background for the rhetorical analysis, the major political and historical events of the decade are identified in the first two chapters. Bleeding Kansas, abolitionism, and the reorganization of the major political parties are examined for their contribution to the rhetorical exigence of the political situation.

The analytical portion of the study first identifies the method by which the party was organized in the period between 1854 and 1856. Then, the primary arguments employed by the Republican speakers are analyzed in three separate chapters for their logical, ethical, and emotional forms of proof. Individual speeches are
analyzed for the major form of artistic proof employed by the speaker. Some speakers argued for adoption of the Republican platform on logical grounds and other men employed emotional appeals with great skill. Personal credibility, mainly the eye-witness to the violence in Kansas, was an important artistic proof in the 1856 campaign.

John C. Frémont, the Republican presidential candidate, did not speak publicly during the campaign. Instead, the party was represented by surrogate speakers. Among these speakers were former Barnburner Democrats, Liberty party members, Conscience Whigs, and political abolitionists. The rhetorical constraints posed by such a wide variety of political coalitions justifies this type of individual speech analysis.

The study concludes with a discussion of the effectiveness of the rhetoric of the presidential campaign of 1856. Suggestions for further study are also included.
Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The success of the Republican campaign of 1856 is difficult to measure against other national campaigns of the era. The immediate political challenge to the Republican organization, James Buchanan and the Democratic party campaign effort, was relatively well organized throughout the nation and had access to substantial campaign funds. The Republicans were campaigning out of their own pockets while devising strategy on a day-by-day basis. Yet, the Republicans accrued nearly one-third of the popular vote while actively campaigning in only one portion of the country. Not only is that measure of success remarkable, but it is equally significant that a national party should emerge out of the diversity of coalitions which struggled to control the fledgling party.

In general, American third parties have not fared well in the political arena. In the campaign of 1856, the Republicans faced the additional challenge of creating a party out of such diverse elements as former Whigs and abolitionists. How were the Republicans able to marshall the support necessary to create a new party that enjoyed
such rapid success? The procedure was complex, and many forces contributed to the shaping of the new party. However, one element was the campaign oratory. This study is a rhetorical criticism of the Republican campaign-speaking. Specifically, the study examines the choice of issues used by the speakers, and the manner in which they sought to adapt those issues to audiences. The investigation concludes with an evaluation of the effectiveness of those speeches.

Methodology

The present study is offered, not as a history of the speaking in the first Republican campaign, but rather as a rhetorical criticism of the speeches. As criticism, the present investigation attempts to draw some conclusions about the effectiveness of the campaign oratory. The methodology chosen for this study combines features from Lloyd Bitzer's rhetorical situation\(^1\) and a neo-Aristotelian approach.\(^2\) The approach is based on the concept that speeches create meaning as a result of a rhetorical transaction between the audience and the text. Consequently, the critic must first of all place the speeches in an historical context in order to understand the circumstances that produced the speeches (the rhetorical exigence, in Bitzer's terminology), the
characteristics of the audience that might affect their reaction to the speeches, and the constraints that the context imposed on what the speakers could or could not do in the speeches. It is not the intent of the study to write a history of the period, which has been competently provided by numerous historians, but rather to use those histories to reconstruct the features of the historical context necessary to understand the rhetorical situation that produced the speeches.

However, a weakness of the rhetorical situation methodology is that it does not lend itself well to a criticism of the speech texts. Therefore, in the analysis of the speeches themselves, the study relies on a modification of the neo-Aristotelian approach. Specifically, the analysis will examine the major premises from which the speakers developed their ideas, and the artistic proofs used to support those ideas. The artistic proofs consist of logical support for ideas, including reasoning and evidence, as well as appeals to the emotions of listeners and appeals based on the credibility of the speaker. The organization of the speeches will be examined also. However, delivery will be discussed only in general terms, since first-hand accounts of the speakers' delivery on specific occasions are usually not available. Finally, the speeches will be evaluated against the background provided by the rhetorical
situation in order to reach some judgments about the effectiveness of the speeches.

Data

The primary data for this study were individual speech texts. Those speeches were published in the New York daily newspapers during the campaign period. These texts were transcribed by trained reporters during the speech act; so the possibility of textual error exists. However, since the major speaking events were attended by many members of the press, there are usually two or more reports of any large gathering. Textual authenticity can be checked by reading the various accounts of each major speech. None of the newspapers examined carried challenges or corrections to any of the speech texts included in the study. Therefore, the texts seem to be reliable.

In addition to the speech texts, data included the biographies of the leading political figures of the era. Many of these biographies included information about the subject's speech training and physical delivery in addition to information on speaking events.

Finally, standard histories of the period provided the background data for reconstructing the rhetorical situation in which the campaign took place. Some of these
works dealt in general with the pre-Civil War period in the North and the western frontier, while others addressed topics necessary to an understanding of the rhetorical context of the speeches.

Organization of the Study

The first three chapters describe the rhetorical situation. Chapter 1 traces the history of the active political parties from 1840 through 1854. The breakdown of the Whig party, the constantly shifting abolitionist loyalties, the power struggles in the Democratic party, and the rise of the Know-Nothings are briefly examined as a part of the exigence which gave rise to the Republican party. Chapter 2 examines the issues of the 1856 campaign: the violence in Kansas and Nebraska, the emerging sectionalism, and the abolitionist tendencies of the radical Republicans. Chapter 3 analyzes the organizational structure of the party as it relates to the rhetorical strategies and constraints of the first Republican campaign. In this third chapter, the "enactment" or structural formation of the organization is analyzed for its contribution to an understanding of communication among campaign participants, a situation that created rhetorical constraints for the speakers.
Chapters 4, 5, and 6 analyze the speech texts. In order, they examine the three forms of artistic proof: ethos, logos and pathos. Chapter 4 focuses on the credibility of the speakers and its effect on the campaign rhetoric. Chapter 5 describes the logical proof in terms of the evidence and reasoning processes used by the speakers to support their claims. Chapter 6 looks at the emotional appeals generated by the speakers.

Chapter 7 summarizes the findings and draws conclusions about the rhetorical effectiveness of the speeches and the significance of the campaign oratory in terms of the future development of the Republican party.

Previous and Contributory Studies

No previous political or historical studies specifically examine the rhetorical strategies of the 1856 Republican campaign. However, several studies contributed significantly to the description of the rhetorical situation, enough as to warrant special mention.

Eric Foner, author of *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, provided the basic framework for discussion of the rhetorical situation which produced the speeches. Especially with regard to the concept of the "free soil" ideal, Foner clarified several lines of reasoning which
orators used throughout the campaign. Allan Nevins' two-volume work, *The Ordeal of the Union*, was also particularly valuable.

Literary biographies of the leading Republican figures of the nineteenth century provide some intellectual insight into the motivation behind their political affiliation. Those works were useful in this study as a means of identifying common themes developed by the speakers.

**Justification for the Study**

Very little rhetorical research appears to have been done in the historical period immediately predating the American Civil War. Although a wealth of academic inquiry has been published concerning the inflammatory rhetoric of the armed conflict, little has been documented with regard to the emergent political themes in the decade predating the outbreak of war.

Individual biographies of outspoken politicians, both North and South, dominate the literature. The southern "fire eaters" and the northern abolitionist protesters have been examined exhaustively. Yet, the political activism of the mid-1850's provided the catalytic force which arrayed the country against itself. How was it done?
A study of the rhetoric of the first Republican campaign is a logical starting place for analysis. The national party did not exist prior to 1856, yet it ran a successful contest against a larger, wealthier, better organized political entity. Party spokesmen were responsible for uniting the North and West against the powerful Democratic party, against the entire South, and against the nativist American party. With limited funding and reliance on public speaking and the newspapers to reach the masses, the Republicans successfully united nearly one-third of the nation in a brief four-month period during which an explosive internal crisis removed many of their most brilliant speakers to Washington, D.C., to deliberate in a special session.

An examination of the speeches of the 1856 campaign may provide a useful supplement to the political and historical analyses of the Pre-Civil War era. It may be that the rhetoric of the first Republicans contains a key to understanding the sectional re-alignment of politics prior to the conflict. However, the particular aim of this study is to determine the rhetorical strategies employed by an emergent political party in its efforts to unify a diversity of political ideologies in a turbulent historical setting.
Notes


1854 was a year characterized by physical violence. From the floor of the Senate to the plains of Kansas, bloodshed often resulted as politicians clashed. This escalating violence provided an "imperative stimulus," or exigence, which, according to Lloyd Bitzer's situational method of rhetorical analysis, is a necessary component of any rhetorical situation.\(^1\) Situational exigence may be defined as the actual or potential urgency of some imperfection which may be modified only through discourse.

However, the Republican speakers faced serious rhetorical constraints. Four major constraints, or situational limitations on the speaker's ability to engage in successful discourse, are examined in the first four chapters of this study. In this first chapter, the major political coalitions of 1840-1854 are examined for their influence on the rhetoric of the Republican campaign.

The major campaign issue in 1856 was the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Northerners were angry about the extension of slavery into the new territories of Kansas and Nebraska. Southerners were defensive about the northern resistance to the use of slaves in the prime, western farming regions. These sectional attitudes
further divided the political parties during the years between 1840 and the Civil War, but each party drew new strength from its sectional realignment.

The major parties were split by powerful factions and coalitions throughout the twenty years that preceded the Civil War. The Whig party was essentially powerless by 1852. Third parties regularly formed and disbanded with each presidential election from 1840 through 1852. Many of the new parties represented abolitionist or free soil interests. The Democrats faced serious internal sectional conflicts between 1852 and 1856.

The Democrats were split by the (radical) Barnburner faction in 1844, the Southern Rights Party (under John C. Calhoun) in 1846, and the Free Soilers in 1848. The Conscience Whigs emerged as a faction within the Whig party in 1845. Even the Liberty party, formed in 1840 to promote abolition and free soil territories, was split in 1844 by Salmon P. Chase and his coalitionists.

However, throughout this era of political realignment, the radical factions remained within their parties. Party loyalty superseded sectional identification until the 1850s. Radical Whig and Democratic party members did not form new parties. Instead, they attempted to purge perceived ideological inconsistencies within their respective parties. The factions reflected a desire to return to earlier, more basic political issues, to
redefine the ideological differences which characterized the formative era of each party. Coalitions did not form across party lines until after 1850. When the Compromise of 1850 made the extension of slavery a regional rather than a party issue, concerned men of all parties began to plan for a national, anti-slavery coalition.

This chapter reviews three political developments during the twenty years which preceded the presidential campaign of 1856. First, the abolitionist societies of 1839-1850 are analyzed for their contribution to the political status of the anti-slavery movement. This examination demonstrates the predisposition of the New England and Western Reserve regions to support anti-slavery activities, a major factor in the success of the Republican campaign of 1856. The movement for the abolition of slavery reached its apex as an anti-slavery political movement in 1856, when the Republican party drafted a radical, anti-expansionist platform at its inaugural convention.

Second, this chapter reviews the political events surrounding President John Tyler's bid for the annexation of Texas as a slave state and its impact on the Democratic and Whig parties. Although a member of neither major political party, Tyler initiated a political issue which resulted in the sectional realignment of American politics
and the loss of all support in his renomination bid in 1844.

Third, this chapter reviews the changes within each political party that resulted from the internal divisions over the expansion issue. These structural realignments occurred in every party, directly relating to the formation of the Republican party in 1854. The major coalitions that became the nucleus of the Republican organization are analyzed for their rhetorical strategies and fantasy themes that carried over into the 1856 campaign. The variety of political experience its charter members brought to the Republican party was broad, but the variety also provided the vitality and met the exigence of the inflammatory political situation.

American Antislavery Societies

American antislavery and manumission societies predated the Revolution and remained active throughout the eighteenth century. The Pennsylvania Abolition Society, for example, was founded by Benjamin Franklin in 1709 and Philadelphia retained its pre-eminence as a center for abolitionist activities throughout the Civil War era.

The New York City Manumission Society was formed in 1785, and New England fostered abolitionists among many of the leading political families. The most persistent
abolitionists were the Quakers, whose active involvement in behalf of enslaved Africans began in the late seventeenth century. However, the founding of the American Anti-Slavery Society in December of 1833 marked the true organizational thrust of the movement. The Society was founded in Boston, Massachusetts, by William Lloyd Garrison. It was a strange ideological mixture, being anti-political and anti-ecclesiastical. Garrison would brook no compromise.

Garrison demanded immediate emancipation. His views were widely known outside of abolition circles, since he was a prolific writer and a well-traveled speaker. He elicited extreme reactions from his audiences - he was hailed either as a messiah of emancipation or a raving zealot. By 1835, his influence was most prevalent in those churches where individual ministers enjoyed the freedom to rail against the moral evils of slavery by using Garrison's arguments. However, many of the organized religions did not support formally any type of abolition. The mob violence that often greeted Garrison and other abolitionist speakers was condemned by religious leaders. David Christy, author of Pulpit Politics, recorded the deliberations of the national Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Catholic councils, which discussed abolition during the pre-Civil War era. Religious leaders preferred to advocate a non-violent end to
bondage, leaving the means of effecting manumission to the politicians.

For a variety of reasons, political leaders shied away from supporting Garrison's program of immediate abolition. The breakdown of law and order that accompanied abolitionist gatherings was one reason, but the influence of the southern politicians in Congress was probably the most important reason. Pressure from commercial interests, especially those northern concerns carrying substantial southern industrial accounts, contributed to the political expediency of re-establishing law and order rather than pressing for an end to slavery. Garrison's radical tactics were an impediment to accomplishing a political solution to the slavery issue during the 1830s.

By the end of the decade, Garrison had embraced women's suffrage and a form of "Christian anarchy," ideas so extreme that conservative abolitionists were alienated from his organization. The schism between Garrison and the conservatives resulted in the breakdown of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1840.

In 1839, a religious abolitionist group was organized by Lewis Tappan. This American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society first met in New York City, sharing pulpits with sympathetic ministers throughout the city. Tappan's group suggested that slavery must be abolished through legal means, that is, the slave states
themselves, had to remove slavery from their own constitutions. This voluntary constitutional abolition of slavery would be morally preferable to having such legislation forced upon them by Congress. Members of the group encouraged the slave states to pursue educational programs designed to prepare the slaves for their lives of freedom. Geography doomed Tappan's group to failure. Their rhetoric was successful in recruiting sympathetic northern churchgoers to the abolitionist ideals, but the pulpits of southern churches were closed to society members. The society was preaching to the converted, not to those who needed conversion.

Tappan's strategy was to apply internal pressure on the major organized religions, especially the Presbyterians, the Methodists, and the Baptists. However, these groups were no more receptive to Tappan's abolitionists than were the political party leaders to Garrison's followers. Tappan's program was too radical to interest the large, conservative organizations—especially those with large southern memberships. Influential southern church members would hardly support a policy of abolition even if endorsed by its denominational leadership, making church-sanctioned abolition an inexpedient national policy. Without the support of the major churches, the society remained little more than a loose network of local groups. Members had control over some newspapers, providing a
propaganda outlet. However, the society was essentially a nondenominational religious group that was unattractive to both organized religion and the major political parties.

The transition from pulpit to politics began in 1840. Popular interest in the abolition of slavery became a potent political force, especially in New England where the fugitive slave laws were ignored or brashly, openly broken whenever possible. Campaigning politicians could no longer ignore the issue in the northeastern United States, since their constituents demanded that action be taken against the new, stronger fugitive slave laws. Political abolition failed as a moral issue, but abolition as a popular sovereignty issue had political significance.

Some abolitionists had been elected to local and state offices in the northeast. These men began to question publicly the constitutionality of the laws surrounding the practice of slavery, particularly the fugitive slave laws and the gag rule that bound Congress.

As an example, John Quincy Adams spent years fighting against the First Amendment violations that resulted from Congressional legislation favorable to the slavery interests. Adams was the popularly acknowledged spokesman of the anti-slavery politicians who served in the House during the 1830s and 1840s. Adams was neither an abolitionist nor the catalyst for the politicalization of abolition. In fact, he published an "indictment" against
the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1839. His indictment was inspired by the internal conflict that characterized the society and undermined its credibility with the people it sought to persuade at a time when Adams was trying to secure the congressional right of petition for abolitionists.

Adams was not interested in the abolitionists per se. He was a strict constitutionalist who was horrified at the Pinckney resolutions that were in effect in Congress. These resolutions were a series of increasingly severe restrictions on the introduction of anti-slavery petitions to Congress. The resolutions demanded, in essence, that all anti-slavery petitions introduced to the House be automatically tabled without being read, printed or referenced in any fashion.

Adams protested that the "gag rule" not only violated the First Amendment guarantee of freedom of speech, but that it set a dangerous precedent. If the "gag rule" could be enforced, then the precedent existed to introduce and enforce other rules which violated Constitutional guarantees. His popular image as the anti-slavery spokesman resulted from his courage in testing the strength of the resolutions. On January 9, 1837, Adams attempted to read a petition protesting slavery in the District of Columbia into the daily proceedings of the House. His fellow representatives shouted him down,
refusing to allow him to read the petition. On January 18, only nine days after his abortive attempt to petition an end to slavery in the District, the gag rule was renewed by a large majority.¹⁹

The Pinckney resolutions and their support by the southern members of Congress and some northern conservatives helped to focus northern attention on the "unified" southern voting block that had evolved in Congress. This first experience with sectionalism would become very important in the 1850s.

Annexation of Texas

Anti-slavery legislation was not a major political issue in the early 1840s, in spite of John Quincy Adams' dramatic attempts to break the gag rule. However, John Tyler's proposal to annex Texas as a slave state prodded politicians to weigh the ramifications of slavery as a party issue in 1844.

John Tyler succeeded to the presidency in 1841 upon the death of Benjamin Harrison. Although he was elected as a member of the Whig party, Tyler disengaged himself from the Whigs early in his administration by vetoing a number of economic bills that were critical to the Whig program
begun by Harrison. As a result of his unpopular action, Tyler was formally "read out" of the Whig party and the entire cabinet resigned.

Tyler promptly presented the names of his new cabinet officers to the Senate for confirmation. The new President was already meeting regularly with his new cabinet in September of 1841. As a result, Abel P. Upsher, who replaced Daniel Webster as Secretary of State, was instructed to begin immediate negotiations for the annexation of Texas.

Tyler's reasons for immediate annexation seemed clear to experienced politicians like Adams. Adams revealed in his correspondence that he expected most of Tyler's presidential actions to be directed at securing re-election in 1844. Tyler, a president without a party, needed an issue with which to secure a nomination from a sympathetic political organization. Adams recorded with great interest the furor created over the annexation issue and the subsequent activities of Tyler in his quest for the 1844 nomination.

The annexation proposal reached the Senate in the spring of 1844. Essentially, the measure was supported by the Democrats, a party in need of an issue to spur reorganization and re-vitalization. The more conservative Whigs, notoriously anti-expansionist, were firmly opposed to annexing Texas. Tyler forced the annexation issue onto
Congress as the national conventions readied to select candidates for the fall elections.

The Democrats split into two major factions, aligning sectionally on the annexation issue. Their compromise candidate was James K. Polk, who was subsequently elected to succeed Tyler. The Whigs were equally divided, and the moderate, Henry Clay, won the Whig nomination. The Liberty party fielded an abolitionist candidate, James G. Birney, who helped to split the popular vote. Political factions outlasted the 1844 election. Factions that grew out of the sectional annexation issue continued to agitate from within each party. The possibility of a political minority winning control of the government, an issue addressed by William H. Seward in later campaigns, was already evident in the 1844 campaign.

**Political Coalitions from 1844-1848**

The Republican party drew members from three major factions that were active throughout the 1840s and 1850s: the Liberty party, the Conscience Whigs, and the Democratic party.

The Liberty party held a national convention in June, 1845. The convention was designed to bring together any individuals, regardless of party affiliation, who were interested in the abolition of slavery. The convention,
which could be described as a large rally, was held in Columbus, Ohio, which was a fitting location. The American midwest prided itself on being a seat of anti-slavery, anti-expansion activism. Most of the emigrants to the frontier states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana were from the northeast. They brought with them their anti-slavery sentiments, which were enhanced by the abuses fostered by the corrupt legislative processes in Kansas. According to Theodore Clark Smith, author of *The Liberty and Free Soil Parties*, political anti-slavery agitation became an everyday issue on the frontier, a situation that explains the brief success of the Liberty party.

The proposed annexation of Texas spurred the formation of the Liberty party. Western Whigs were disappointed in Tyler's presidency, and the idea of an anti-slavery party became viable. Men eager to stop the spread of slavery had been meeting to support candidates whose principles reflected the anti-slavery sentiments of the Western Reserve, regardless of party affiliation. Ohio was the first state to put forth a convention call in 1840. Resolutions calling for candidates not affiliated with either of the established parties were passed. Indiana followed with a state convention in December, 1840, which also called for the nomination of candidates who were independent of the Whig and Democratic parties.
State by state, the mid-west organized to support anti-slavery candidates. A formal organization was not yet in place.

The Liberty party was dedicated to the abolition of slavery. As the political outgrowth of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, the party continued to rely upon evangelical oratory as a means of encouraging legislative action toward the eradication of slavery.39

On May 12, 1841, the first national Liberty party convention was held in New York City.30 A slate of candidates for the presidential campaign of 1844 was chosen. James G. Birney of Michigan was nominated for President and Thomas Morris of Ohio was the Vice-Presidential nominee. Both men were active abolitionists and perennial political candidates from the Western Reserve. Morris dropped out of the contest in 1843 when he determined that the cross-section of new Liberty party members included a great many men of considerable national political experience. He withdrew from the race, claiming that a candidate of greater significance than himself should be encouraged to run. The East, however, remained the center of anti-slavery activity. Members of the Liberty party met in 1843 to plan the strategy for the upcoming national campaign. The meeting was held in Buffalo, New York.31 A platform was devised to reflect the anti-slavery views of the party, and Morris was
successfully pressed to accept the vice-presidential nomination in spite of his reasons for withdrawal. The party entered into the contest of 1844 with enthusiasm.

The party strategists were enthusiastic, but neither cautious nor politically experienced. The Whigs approached the Liberty party with coalition offers which would have provided for a Texas compromise. The Whig candidate for President was Henry Clay, a man whose reputation sparked libelous editorials in the Liberty press and slanderous rhetoric from Liberty candidates. The Whigs could effect no compromise with the Liberty party because of their nomination of Clay. Henry Clay, with his pro-slavery background, was an unacceptable candidate to the anti-slavery politicians. They referred to Clay as a "man-stealer," a gambler, and a duelist.

The Liberty Party's credibility with potential voters was sorely shaken when it was revealed that the Democratic party had been behind Birney's nomination for a seat in the Michigan legislature. The Whigs immediately assumed that the Liberty party and the Democrats were working together to undermine Whig candidates. Birney had no explanation. He merely announced that his nomination and subsequent election to the state legislature was a mandate from the people of Michigan, not the result of political manipulation. The Liberty party presidential drive fell apart. Joshua Giddings and other influential anti-slavery
politicians questioned the loyalty and the motives of Birney and his supporters. The questions intrigued the press as well as the political community, causing the Liberty party to founder in its membership recruitment.35

Polk won the 1844 election. The Liberty party helped to split the votes, giving Polk a plurality. The Whigs were unable to forgive the Liberty party for the defeat of their candidate, Henry Clay.

The major problem faced by the Liberty party in 1844 was its lack of organization. The party was formed to support anti-slavery candidates. It had no specific internal structure nor did it have an organizational hierarchy. However, between the elections of 1844 and 1848, Salmon P. Chase took charge of the party and gave it political direction.

By 1848, the Liberty party harbored three distinct factions: the Chase people, who were primarily ex-Whigs and politically experienced; the Birney supporters, who embraced a full reform platform including woman suffrage and prison reform; and the pure abolitionists.36

Although the antislavery Whigs and Democrats professed alarm at their party nominees in 1848, many were afraid to join the anti-slavery fight as members of the Liberty party, since the party was popularly linked to abolitionism and its attendant violence. However, Chase was committed to bringing Whigs and Democrats into the
Liberty party through coalitions favorable to all free-soil interests. His opportunity arose when the Democratic platform of 1848 forced the antislavery Democrats to call a separate convention. These regional divisions were new to American politics of the mid-nineteenth century. Until the Texas annexation issue arose to align voters on a North-South basis, party loyalty had transcended geography. Whigs voted as Whigs, regardless of their state of residence. Democrats also voted across regional lines. Prior to the 1850s, few issues carried the sectional ramifications that characterized the political extension of slavery.

The Democrats had a history of disagreement over slavery. In 1844, the party split on the annexation issue, with the southern Democrats supporting the annexation of Texas while Van Buren's "Barnburner" faction remained adamantly opposed. Ideologically, the Barnburners felt that any form of bondage compromised the ability of both the slave and the slave owner to function as individuals. The independent individual was the basis of any republican system of government, according to the Democratic anti-slavery faction. The faction adopted their own version of collective responsibility, which was the necessity of a republican society to police the activities of its members to insure the greatest amount of freedom for each member. This necessity functioned as its
rationale for opposing the extension of slavery into the territories. Barnburners identified slavery with corruption, claiming that the wealthy, powerful members of the South held the balance of power in the party, corrupting the republican ideals upon which the party had been founded. The appellation, "Barnburners," arose from the violence of their convictions, inviting comparison with the crazed farmer who burned down his barn to rid the building of rats.

These radical Democrats were not abolitionists. According to the definitions provided by Frederick Blue, "antislavery" identified any or all aspects of the political opposition to slavery (from non-expansion to immediate abolition) whereas "abolition" was the moral opposition to slavery. The Barnburner Democrats, while loyal to the principles of their party in 1844, were also separated from the majority of party members by that loyalty. Van Buren and his faction felt that the southern Democrats were violating party loyalty and splitting the membership along sectional lines by their enthusiastic endorsement of the annexation of Texas.

Conversely, the southern Democrats were uneasy about the strong, vocal northeastern coalition, which was strongly entrenched in New York state machine politics. This coalition had control of a powerful organization in New York and was a considerable threat to the survival of
the party. The rift widened as the nominating conventions approached in the spring of 1844. Democrats were split on the spread of slavery and the party was forcing the issue with its platform of territorial expansion.

According to Mark Berger, the roots of national Democratic discord can be traced directly to New York State politics. From 1844 until the Compromise of 1850, the party split into smaller and smaller factions. Van Buren's "Barnburners," the radical faction of the party, were arrayed against the "Hunkers," or the conservative element. Although the two factions were not new to the party, the anti-slavery agitation forced the party members to choose sides. Southern Democrats and the Hunkers were the ideological enemies of the Barnburners and the free soil adherents.

In 1849, the more moderate Hunkers, referred to as "Soft Shells" or "Softs," aligned with the Barnburner (radical) faction as anti-expansionists. "Hard Shells" or "Adamantines," who were northern Hunkers committed to the national expansionist program of the Democratic party, continued to support the southern Democrats.

The Whig party experienced a similar split in 1844. Charles Sumner was the spiritual leader of the anti-expansionist Conscience Whigs. The Conscience Whigs represented another regional division, much like the Barnburners in the Democratic party. The Conscience Whigs
were a strong, northeastern faction that enjoyed the support of Joshua Giddings and the active Western Reserve movement against expansion.46

Abolitionist Joshua Reed Giddings of Ohio supplied the ideology for the Conscience Whig faction. Giddings resigned his Congressional seat in 1840 when fellow Whigs condemned him for violating the "gag rule" in order to introduce anti-slavery legislation.47 He was immediately elected to the same seat, where he represented the anti-slavery radicals of Ohio - an election which resulted in landslide returns for Giddings.48

Giddings' political vision focused on the efforts of free men who would create an effective government by working together for the good of all men.49 His version of national collective responsibility was enthusiastically embraced by the Conscience Whigs.50 Giddings was able to justify internal improvements, a perennial plank in any Whig platform, by reasoning that highway and canal construction throughout the nation would assist the movement of progressive ideas as routes of travel improved.51 Republican rhetorical strategists would argue in 1856 that industrial and agricultural progress in the South, patterned on the northern industries, was the responsibility of the administration. And they argued that only a Republican administration could be entrusted to enforce the necessary measures to promote southern
progress. The Conscience Whigs were prepared with a moral argument against slavery, too. They felt that the slave was trapped in a civil caste system which rendered him unable to assume responsibility for his actions. This violation of the Jeffersonian principles of republicanism was perceived as an affront to the northern anti-expansionists of both major parties, since any governmental system which condoned slavery could be neither republican nor self-regulatory.52

The only major difference between the Democratic and Whig anti-expansionist factions was the insistence by the Whigs that slavery must be eradicated, not merely contained within its pre-existing boundaries. This position of the Conscience Whigs was politically expedient. The Conscience Whigs depended heavily on the abolition vote in 1844 when clashing with the Liberty party for the antislavery vote.

Prior to 1844, the Liberty party balked at forming coalitions with either the Conscience Whigs or the Barnburner Democrats. From 1840 until early 1844, the Liberty leadership actively disdained a national organization, relying instead upon a loosely-formed network of state groups. By mid-1844, Salmon P. Chase was guiding the party with greater political sophistication. Chase actively encouraged coalitions with sympathetic
Whigs and Democrats in order to protest more effectively annexation and the extension of slavery.

Before Chase assumed leadership of the party, Liberty party members focused their activities on educating potential voters about the political and social problems posed by slavery. The speakers used an indirect, expository approach, voter education, as a means of persuading the audience to vote in favor of anti-slavery legislation. Their expository approach to political activism persuaded few independent voters to support the party in 1840. In 1845, Salmon Chase convinced the disorganized remnants of the Liberty party to sponsor a coalition convention in 1845 in order to unite all factions that supported antislavery legislation.

Political Coalitions 1848-1852

The Chase-sponsored convention in Columbus was intended to encourage Barnburners and Whigs to leave their respective parties and join with the antislavery coalition. However, the Liberty party was too closely associated with abolition in 1845 for a successful coalition of the major parties to occur. It was not until June of 1848 that the Barnburner Democrats and the Conscience Whigs bolted their respective parties and held separate conventions.
The Democratic platform for the 1848 presidential election incensed the New York Radicals.\textsuperscript{55} The Barnburners withdrew from the convention and met in Utica, New York, where they nominated Martin Van Buren for the Presidency.\textsuperscript{56} The gathering was attended by delegates from outside of New York who were equally unhappy with the official expansionist platform of the Democratic party and Lewis Cass, the Democratic nominee for President.\textsuperscript{57}

Worcester, Massachusetts, was the site of the Conscience Whig convention. The Whigs nominated no candidate, but they organized a central committee to plan a new party. A formal protest against the candidacy of Zachary Taylor completed the official radical Whig business of 1848.

The organizational ambivalence of the Conscience Whigs ended in August of 1848. They met in convention with other free-soil advocates in Buffalo, New York, on August 9, 1848.\textsuperscript{58} Earlier in the summer, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois held state conventions to elect delegates to the New York Free Soil convention. This convention was not sanctioned by the Liberty party. Since the free-soil factions of other established political parties were limited to securing non-extension of slavery rather than abolition, the Liberty party officially condemned the Buffalo convention. This posture was
consistent with the party's history of discouraging coalitions and compromises.

Four major free-soil groups attended. An "unofficial" contingent of Liberty men arrived, nominally headed by John P. Hale of New Hampshire. The Conscience Whigs, including Joshua Giddings, Charles Sumner, and Charles Francis Adams (son of John Quincy Adams), hosted the gathering. The Democrats were of two sorts: the "Free Soil" contingent, which wanted to support the nomination of Cass but pressured him to support free soil principles and the Barnburners, who were the most fully organized and arrived with a presidential nominee in tow.69

A Barnburner-Liberty coalition resulted. The Barnburners provided the strong candidate, Van Buren, and the Liberty strategists provided the platform.60 The fifteen-item platform had eleven anti-slavery planks, three internal improvement planks, and a single economic plank. The party motto was "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, Free Men." Van Buren was unanimously nominated for the Presidency and Charles Francis Adams was pressed to accept the vice-presidential nomination.

Eastern Conscience Whigs were unhappy with Van Buren because he was a Democrat and the Free Soil Democrats were unhappy with Van Buren because he was not Cass, but the remaining body of delegates emerged from the convention as the Free Soil party.61 The Liberty party was absorbed by
the new Free Soil party, many Conscience Whigs remained active with the Whig party, and the Free Soil Democrats disappeared as a faction under that name. The Free Soilers captured approximately ten percent of the popular vote in 1848, in spite of their precipitous formation.62

In his book, The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream, Ernest Bormann postulates that it was the free soil fantasy theme which united the various abolitionist factions.63 Northern voters, weary of anti-slavery moralizing and frustrated by the lack of a political solution to slavery, were eager to embrace the free soil issue. Free soil politics were finite; specific legislation was needed and sides were clearly drawn. "Saving" the territories would be a symbolic blow to slavery and the perceived southern political domination. The free soil concept appealed to many of the Whigs and Democrats who were not abolitionists but were in need of a vital, new issue to sustain their interest in national politics. Many voters found the salvation theme equally appealing, especially as an alternative to the hackneyed economic issues that dominated earlier campaigns.64

The 1848 canvass exposed some voting patterns that foreshadowed the organizational problems facing the major parties in 1852 and 1856. The Free-Soilers split the vote in New York and Pennsylvania, both critical Democratic strongholds that would later plague Republican
strategists. Zachary Taylor, the Whig nominee, swept the country, winning in every region except the West, but he won by a much smaller proportion of the popular vote than expected. Although Taylor's popular total included votes cast in the new states of Wisconsin and Iowa, the lower overall number of votes was an indication of the lack of enthusiasm evidenced by the voters of this particular election. The Whig vote all over New England declined significantly, with nearly 46,000 Whigs simply not voting at all.

The Democrats drew a similar apathetic voter response. The proportion of Democratic votes declined throughout New England, the mid-Atlantic, and the northeast. Even in those southern states recording Democratic victories, the overall vote declined up to sixteen percent. The decline in voter enthusiasm can be attributed to the lack of clear-cut issues represented by the major candidates. Cass was neither openly in favor of the Wilmot proviso, nor openly sympathetic to southern interests, so he lost considerable support in the North and the South. Taylor expressed sympathy with southern interests and was once a slave holder himself, yet he was perceived as the candidate of "lesser evil" by the non-slave holding voters.

Both major parties were shaken by the decline of voter participation and the strength of the Free-Soil showing in
1848. Yet, the Free-Soil party all but disbanded following the election. The various factions made attempts to re-unite with their respective parties, searching for ways to resolve harmoniously the worrisome sectional issues. The radical factions of the Democratic and Whig parties were intent on purifying their parties, not destroying them. Bormann refers to their re-union attempts as a "restoration drama," noting that "the successful reform effort [requires] first a restoration of society to its original foundations." The Conscience Whigs and the radical Democrats still identified with their respective societies, the Whig party and the Democratic party.

Political Parties to 1852

With the election of 1852, the Whig party disintegrated. There were no significant issues to differentiate the major parties. Both the Whigs and the Democrats favored acceptance of the Compromise of 1850, which would effectively eliminate slavery as a political issue. Some politicians spoke in favor of allowing each territory to decide the slavery question itself. The most significant political change affecting the parties in 1852 was the new provision for the direct popular election of local and state officials in many of those states.
undergoing constitutional reform. Patronage, or the appointment of public servants by elected officials, was in the process of being legislated out of existence at the state level. Local candidates focused popular resentment on national leaders, blaming the party leaders for the nation's ills. Local men tried to divorce themselves from the patronage, now an unpopular political association, by declaring their allegiance to home-town or state groups. This tactic further weakened support for the Whig and Democratic parties and paved the way for more independent political activity. Without patronage, political candidates would rely more heavily on emotional issues rather than the promise of direct reward in order to inflame the voting public to action at the polls. In general, the Democrats favored constitutional reform, a stance that strengthened their numbers. The Whigs resisted change, protesting many of the reforms. Their popular support declined significantly in reform states.

In spite of a search for fresh, vital issues in order to spark voter participation in the 1852 election, it was essentially a no-issue contest. The two major parties agreed on the Compromise and the territorial issue. The extension of slavery was not mentioned. The election was reduced to a popularity contest between Winfield Scott and Franklin Pierce.
Scott, the Whig nominee, was not popular with the southern Whigs. They protested his candidacy by either declining to vote or voting across party lines. Northern Whig strategists actively sought the new and numerous Catholic vote, alienating the anti-Catholic and nativist factions within the party. Since Scott had a public record as an anti-immigrationist, few votes were cast in his favor by the Catholic and immigrant voters.

Pierce was a compromise candidate from the North. His platform included acceptance of the Compromise. His campaign was conducted quietly. The free soil faction ran John P. Hale for the presidency, but support for Hale's candidacy was lacking from important anti-slavery leaders such as Giddings, Adams, Sumner, and Chase.

Summary

By 1850, national politics had changed dramatically. Sectionalism fragmented the major national parties; ideological lines had been crossed; traditional issues were resolved or tacitly tabled; and public confidence in party leadership had eroded.

Even the economic issues that had sustained the Whigs throughout their brief history were resolved. The gold rush and the flood of hard currency into the marketplace erased the urgent economic and tariff issues that had been
the mainstay of Whig platforms. With the overwhelming defeat of Zachary Scott, and no issues to sustain it, the Whig party collapsed. Scott's candidacy had alienated the southern Whigs, the northern Conscience Whigs, and the immigrant vote.

Special interest splinter parties were active in splitting the vote and confusing loyalties. Among the most vocal were the prohibitionists and the anti-Catholics.79 The low popular vote recorded in 1852 reflected the apathy and confusion within the general population. National issues and party loyalty were ebbing away.80

The Democratic party was also in flux. Franklin Pierce attempted to appease all of the factions within his party by appointing key party members to important patronage positions throughout the country. His "conglomerate" Cabinet, for example, contained a former Whig, a Barnburner, a Southern Rights Democrat, and a Catholic.81 Pierce lacked a credible political program and he alienated his power base. The Democratic party needed a strong leader and a strong issue.

Senator Stephen A. Douglas supplied the issue which galvanized the Democrats into legislative action and spurred the formation of the Republican party. Douglas was the acknowledged author of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise.
Notes

1 Bitzer, pp. 385-386.


4 Dumond, p. 47.


8 Christy, pp. 341-482.

9 Johnson, p. 184.

10 Dumond, p. 87.

11 Dumond, p. 83.
12 Christy, p. 428.

13 Dumond, p. 85.

14 Dumond, p. 83.

15 Dumond, p. 83.


17 Hecht, p. 545.

18 Hecht, p. 546.

19 Hecht, p. 546.


21 Daniel Webster waited to resign until he had successfully concluded the Webster-Ashburn Treaty with England.


23 Morgan, p. 154.

25 T.C. Smith, p. 3.

26 T.C. Smith, p. 48.

27 T.C. Smith, p. 50.

28 T.C. Smith, p. 51.


30 T.C. Smith, p. 53.

31 T.C. Smith, p. 69.

32 T.C. Smith, p. 72.

33 T.C. Smith, p. 76.

34 T.C. Smith, p. 77.

35 T.C. Smith, p. 78.


39 Mayfield, p. 12.

40 Dumond, p. 52.


42 Blue, p. 2.


44 Berger, p. 2.

45 Berger, p. 3.

46 Mayfield, p. 39.


48 Stewart, p. 86.

50 Mayfield, p. 44.

51 Mayfield, p. 62.

52 Dumond, p. 90.

53 Mayfield, p. 69.

54 Mayfield, p. 103.

55 T.C. Smith, p. 124.

56 Smith, p. 124.


58 T.C. Smith, p. 131.


60 Smith, p. 139.

61 Smith, p. 146.

62 Holt, p. 65.

63 Bormann, p. 194.

64 Bormann, pp. 210-202.

65 Raybeck, p. 303.
66 Raybeck, p. 304.


68 Raybeck, p. 305.

69 Raybeck, p. 306.

70 Raybeck, p. 306.


72 Bormann, p. 17.

73 Mayfield, p. 208; Mayfield, p. 181.

74 Holt, p. 131. The following states revised their charters or constitutions between 1848 and 1852: New Hampshire, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Louisiana.

75 Holt, p. 130.

76 Holt, p. 107; Holt, p. 140.

77 Holt, p. 102.

78 Mayfield, p. 181.


80 Holt, p. 131.
81 Holt, p. 130.
Chapter 2
Political Issues - 1854-1856

The events of the early 1850s produced further situational contraints on the Republican campaign rhetoric in 1856. According to Lloyd Bitzer, one facet of a rhetorical situation is the necessity to give meaning to a complex event, that is, the historical context of the situation determines the proper rhetorical response.

The variety of arguments employed by the Republican speakers in 1856 reflected the complexity of the situational constraints imposed by the political events which followed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Therefore, this chapter examines the major social and political events of the 1850s as they related to the campaign rhetoric.

Social and Political Movements: 1854-1856

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise inflamed northern passions. The repeal dominated politics from 1854 through 1856 as a popular issue. The possible extension of slavery into the territories finally united the free soil and abolitionist factions throughout the free states.
The popular reaction to the Kansas-Nebraska Act helped to define the issues that would characterize the 1856 presidential contest. First, the violent civil action in Kansas demonstrated the breakdown in law and order as the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions clashed in armed contest. Second, a clear sectional alignment arose as a result of the repeal, destroying the remnants of party loyalty and promoting a regional identity in its place. Third, militant abolitionism all but disappeared when the slavery question shifted from outright abolition to its extension into the territories. With the legislative battle over its expansion into previously free territory, slavery became an inescapable political issue.

The shift to sectional loyalties as a result of the new political focus on the expansion of slavery sparked an array of intellectual and social responses. This shift in focus from the morality of slavery to the constitutionality of slavery legislation is examined in this chapter in terms of its effect on the formation of the Republican party and its ideology. Further, an examination of the background and the impact of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 introduces the political ramifications of the sectional and anti-slavery (non-expansionist) arguments so that their importance as rhetorical strategies during the 1856 campaign is clearly linked to one another.
The Kansas-Nebraska Act

Senator Henry Clay's compromises were designed to reunite the Union in 1850. The proposed compromise package received the support of political moderates like Daniel Webster who were dedicated to saving the nation from sectional division. Since one of Clay's propositions strengthened the fugitive slave laws, northern radicals were angry with Webster for supporting the compromise measures. However, moderates throughout the nation seemed to be pleased with the Compromise of 1850 because it quietly tabled the slavery issue.

The compromise essentially left the Missouri Compromise intact, admitted California as a free state, allowed Utah and New Mexico to decide the fate of slavery within their own borders, abolished the slave trade in Washington, D.C., and provided a stronger, more detailed fugitive slave law. All of these events contributed to a feeling of national well-being.

In addition to the passage of the compromise in 1850, the California gold rush was enriching the national treasury, the Mexican War had been won by the United States, and Stephen Douglas had publicly vowed to speak no further on the slavery question.
Abolitionist agitation subsided in the four years after the passage of the compromise. However, the tranquillity that the moderates seemed to promise never materialized. The Nebraska territory was filling with settlers, and the railroads were agitating for a western route across the nation, so the need to form a territorial government became urgent. Stephen Douglas, who chaired the Senate Committee on Territories during the thirty-third Congress, solved the political problems of the territory with the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. By virtue of this one piece of legislation, Douglas was blamed for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the precipitation of a sectional crisis that intensified throughout the decade.

The organization of a territorial government for Nebraska was a complex political task. The resident Indian tribes had to be relocated, the "sooners" (settlers who claimed huge tracts of land by merely occupying the acreage) would have to be given resident status, the railroad interests had to be considered, and the vocal, slave-holding border Missourians had to be appeased.

During the winter session of Congress, 1852-1853, a territorial organization bill passed the House. This bill excluded slavery from the Nebraska Territory according to the provisions of the Missouri Compromise. However, the Senate adjourned before the bill could be put to a vote.
When Congress reconvened in December of 1853, there was a Democratic majority in both Houses of Congress. The same organizational bill was re-introduced in the Senate and referred to the Committee on Territories, chaired by Stephen A. Douglas. The bill evolved through three stages while in the hands of the committee: first, the initial format that allowed the territory to decide whether or not to include slavery when composing its constitution; second, a revision that included a new, twenty-first section explicitly giving the territorial residents, not the Congress, the right to determine whether or not to allow slavery on their soil; and a third, and final, form of the bill that was the most specific regarding the disposition of slavery in the territories. Senator Archibald Dixon, the successor to Henry Clay in the Whig hierarchy, composed an amendment to the bill that called for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the division of the Nebraska Territory into two parts. The territorial split was designed to appease angry, slave-holding Missourians who could assume that, with two new states being formed, one would be a slave state and the other a free state.

Free Soil protest was violent after the measure had been read in the Senate on Monday, January 23, 1854. Fearing that the bill would be "railroaded" through the Senate without a debate, free soil leaders published
virulent protests designed to encourage public outcry against the proposed repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The northern states rose to the challenge. Rallies were organized to protest the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Sermons and editorials were published denouncing the repeal. Northern free soilers were urged to action against the "slavocracy."  

The South, however, was not as passionate about the proposed disposition of the territory as her northern neighbors. It was a matter of conflict between the border Missourians and the anti-expansionists of the North, according to editorials in the southern press.  

The amended measure passed the Senate after a night-long debate on March 4, 1854. Most Senators supported their party rather than their section of the country. The House presented a more sectional argument against the amended Senate bill. Northern Whigs and most northern Democrats defied the measure. Resolutions and petitions from angry northern constituents seemed to influence the Representatives to a greater degree than their colleagues in the Senate. The House debate grew so emotional that weapons were brandished on the floor.  

On May 22, 1854, the territorial bill passed the House, 113-100, with the membership voting along clear sectional lines. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill thus voted into law was
the spark that ignited the violence that followed in the territories.

Two primary groups clashed in Kansas: the free soil emigrants and the pro-slavery border Missourians. An emigrant society, formed in the northeast specifically to populate Kansas with free soil adherents, became one focus of pro-slavery rhetoric. The society sent approximately thirty settlers from Massachusetts to establish a town at Lawrence. Although few in number, the emigrants were encouraged by the vast publicity their organization received in the northern press. Pro-slavery residents of Missouri encouraged this publicity, claiming that the entire northeast was invading the territory in order to establish an anti-slavery political base that would outvote the pro-slavery territorial residents. As the territorial population grew rapidly through the summer of 1854, so did the fiery public sentiment over the impending establishment of a representative territorial government.

Andrew H. Reeder was appointed governor of the Kansas Territory in the fall of 1854. Although he had never before held a political office, he was given broad powers to organize the territory. He was faced with the squatter claims of the "sooners," the emigrating New England abolitionists, and the "border ruffians" of Missouri who were violently opposed to a free-soil state on their western border. As the territorial election of 1854
approached, tensions rose along with the numbers of armed Missourians flooding across the border to establish flimsy property rights that would enable them to vote as Kansans.14

Hundreds of Missouri residents voted illegally for the first Congressional delegate to represent Kansas. Similar voting abuses occurred in Nebraska as Iowa's residents flooded the Nebraska polls to help elect a pro-slavery Congressional delegate and a territorial legislature.

Kansas elected a legislature the following year, waiting until the 1855 census was completed in order to determine representation.15 To avoid the illegal voting practices of the previous fall, election regulations were minutely designed, providing special election judges and constables sworn to uphold the law at the polls in addition to the more usual laws governing public behavior. However, thousands of armed Missourians again participated, electing a large majority of pro-slavery representatives to the territorial legislature.16

Although Reeder was aware of the voting fraud, he was unsure of its extent. He was also powerless to stop the abuse, since the federal troops under the command of his territorial administration were generally sympathetic to the pro-slavery administration's views. Reeder officially sought the assistance of President Pierce. Pierce expressed concern over the situation, but he was unhappy
with Reeder's tactic of publicly denouncing the Kansas voting frauds at every whistle-stop between the Missouri border and Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{17} Reeder hoped that public outcry against the massive voting frauds would force federal assistance.

The Kansas legislature met in mid-summer and began to pass legislation clearly favorable to pro-slavery interests. The representatives even went so far as to adopt measures which condemned to hard labor any individual who claimed that slavery was not legal in the territory.\textsuperscript{18} The progress of the legislature was recorded by a variety of extra-territorial newspapers, and angry northern editorials helped to arouse sectional sentiment against the activities of the pro-slavery men.

Free soil Kansans met in convention on September 5, 1855.\textsuperscript{19} They drew up a constitution calling for an end to slavery in the territory after July 4, 1857. When the constitution was circulated by ballot, it had nearly unanimous appeal.\textsuperscript{20} However, the vote also delineated battle lines between the adherents of slavery and the adherents of freedom. In December, the two forces, fully armed and prepared to battle, were stopped outside of Lawrence and dissuaded from engaging in combat by political leaders.\textsuperscript{21}

When the Thirty-Fourth Congress met at the end of 1855, representatives from a variety of anti-Nebraska, anti-
slavery coalitions filled many of the seats. The Democrats had lost heavily in both state and local elections while the Whigs were essentially powerless. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, and its attendant violence, had a direct bearing on the formation of coalition parties that sprang to life with a clear issue and a ready-made constituency. The coalitionists were able to focus their energy on a single issue - the spread of slavery into the territories - and relate that issue to the larger issues of abolition and Constitutional law. However, it was the sectional nature of the Kansas-Nebraska conflict that provoked the formation of the Republican party and its unique North-South patterns of rhetorical conflict.

Rise of Sectionalism

The political sectionalism revealed by the Kansas conflict took two forms: a covert form that grew out of the technological advances overtaking the North and the overt political alignments of the slavery against anti-slavery regions.

In general, technological advances were beneficial to the North. By mid-century, steamboats and railroads linked large areas of the nation. The Hoe rotary press provided the means to mass-produce cheap newspapers which
were illustrated with photographs and lithographs. The residents of the rapidly growing urban centers were not only able to read of distant events within hours of their occurrence, but they could travel to those distant points with ever-increasing speed and ease.

These technological advances affected the North more fully than the slave states. Internal improvements such as canals and railroads were more valuable to the industrial North, which could not rely upon the unimproved river systems that served the South. In addition, northern agriculture was diversified, aimed at regional markets, and depended upon reliable and swift transportation systems. The tariff, long an inflammatory sectional issue, was designed to protect northern products from foreign competition. According to W. J. Cash, the perpetuation of the old plantation system of self-sufficiency coupled with an unvarying daily and seasonal routine was the goal of the southern planter-aristocrat and those who aspired to his position within the regional social system. Cash concluded that the southern plantation system did not lend itself to technological advances without major modifications. Change, whether social or political, was not compatible with the plantation system.

However, the South was culturally and economically dependent upon the North at the mid-century point.
Educational opportunities in the South lagged behind those of the North. The North was rapidly industrializing and there was a constant supply of cheap, immigrant labor in northern urban centers. The plantations needed new markets in order to perpetuate the system. Southern planters needed to expand westward as their soil wore out from intensive, single-crop farming. New land was available in the territories, land that they needed in order to increase production and supply new markets.

Politically, the North was gaining power in the House as the immigrant flood continued, for few immigrants settled in the slave states. Suffrage laws were eased in many northern cities to allow immigrants to vote prior to gaining full citizenship. The traditional southern control of the House was slipping away as the northern population continued to grow and push westward, leaving the slave-holding states to assume the minority position in national politics.

Southern leaders adopted a defensive posture. The southern commercial conventions of 1852 through 1859 provide evidence of the sectional defensiveness pervading southern politics prior to the Civil War. Speakers at these regional conventions dealt with issues such as the improvement of the southern economy or the growing threat of northern political power. Demands that the federal government force the North to adhere to the fugitive slave
laws and that the South unite to combat dependence on the North were recorded at various meetings. From 1853 until the eve of the Civil War, delegates to these commercial conventions even promoted enthusiastic support for strictly southern educational and literary institutions that would limit the intellectual contact between the North and the South.

C. Vann Woodward defined southern sectionalism through its defense of slavery. He claimed that "Loyalty to the South came to be defined in terms of conformity of thought regarding one of its institutions." He charged that southerners embraced their defense of slavery with the eagerness and single-mindedness of a cleric involved in the "repression of heresy." Woodward blamed the sectional realignment of Congress and the evolving struggle for political control on the slavery issue. The South was put on the political defensive and was unable to strategically recover before the issue became fatally divisive. Therefore, the rhetorical dilemma facing the South helped to define the Republican rhetorical strategies of 1856. According to Woodward, the South permitted the opposition to define the issue, and naturally the issue was not defined to the South's advantage. "Because the attack centered on slavery, the defense rallied around that point."
As early as 1849, John C. Calhoun encouraged a southern caucus to prepare a formal defense of southern rights in Congress.\textsuperscript{31} Immediately prior to the Compromise of 1850, Calhoun began agitating for a southern rights party to organize in protest against Joshua Giddings' constant petitions, which urged the abolition of the slave trade in Washington, D.C.\textsuperscript{32} The address which Calhoun prepared for delivery in Congress was far too radical to suit even his southern rights supporters. Although never actually delivered in Congress, the address was widely circulated throughout the South as a bill of grievances against the northern abolitionists. Calhoun's defense of slavery, both morally and constitutionally, provided the nucleus of defensive thought that united the South as a political unit.\textsuperscript{33}

Political sectionalism intensified during 1849. Southern Democrats and Whigs united against the plan to admit California and New Mexico as free states.\textsuperscript{34} Northern free soil Democrats and Free Soil party members formed coalitions in various states, while the Massachusetts Democratic Convention proposed a platform specifically opposed to slavery and its spread into the territories.

Even the opening of Congress was delayed by the sectional squabbling. The major parties had split sectionally and had spawned so many factions that it took
nearly four weeks to elect a speaker. The moderates were appeased during the following year with Clay's compromises, which allowed the government to function in spite of sectional differences. Southern politicians were pleased with a stronger fugitive slave law. While northern radicals were driven to a greater fury because of the fugitive clause, they were not in a sufficiently strong position to change government policy in 1850.

The publication of Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1852 gave new impetus to the radical northern abolitionists. Once again, rallies and editorials inflamed the passions against the evil "slavocracy" in the South. The activities of the Underground Railroad increased and this open defiance of the Fugitive Slave Laws infuriated southerners.

The Compromise of 1850, which had quieted the moderate members of the major parties, was destroyed with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Rampant sectionalism guided political activity from 1854 through the Civil War. Sectionalism was fostered by those northern politicians who genuinely feared the power of southern slave owners to undermine the republican principles of government, especially the concept of majority rule. The three-fifths representation accorded each slave had given southern representatives a powerful edge in Congress for many years. The spread of slavery into the territories
virtually guaranteed the continuation of a southern political stranglehold in Congress, according to the radical abolitionist press. The Kansas-Nebraska Bill was perceived as the beginning of northern political enslavement by the southern "slavocracy" according to the radical abolitionists.

Abolitionism

By 1855, the radical abolitionists had a legitimate political issue. Sectional differences polarized around the slavery issue. In particular, the disposition of fugitive slaves widened the ideological gulf between the North and the South. Developing from this sectional view of the fugitive slave legislation, two northern responses directly influenced the Republican party platform and the rhetoric of 1856. First, the response to the slave's condition of enforced servitude produced the need for arguments in the political sphere to deal with the moral issue. Second, the constitutional, or legal, aspects of the legislation providing for the institution of slavery and its perpetuation in the territories provided Republican party spokesmen with logical grounds to argue.

The moral arguments against slavery could be traced to the four truths of John Woolman. Woolman, a Quaker, held that all men were equal in the eyes of God, that
Negroes were intellectually and morally responsible members of society, that the slave owners, not the slaves, should bear the expense of emancipation, and that slaves were entitled to "retributive justice." Benjamin Rush defined slavery as a sin, claiming that the moral faculties of the slave owner became debased and any vices in which the Negro indulged could be blamed on his involuntary servitude.

Abolitionists condemned the institution for its immorality, unchristian character, and cruelty. Politically active abolitionists attacked the planter aristocracy as being undemocratic, robbing the slave of his freedom, which the antislavery forces claimed was grounded in the Constitution. To the abolitionists, the slave was a person, not a piece of property, and he had the same rights under the Constitution as any other man. However, protests against the institution were politically ineffective because no one knew how to abolish the system without causing economic devastation in the South. There was no program for emancipation.

Instead, the militant abolitionists, including William Lloyd Garrison and Bostonian David Walker, called for immediate emancipation. Slavery, they contended in their editorial columns, was contrary to Christianity and the American way of life. Economic devastation or not, they demanded that the institution be abolished by any
possible means. These demands were perceived by the moderates as threats against law and order. The Compromise of 1850 realigned the relationship between the political moderates and the radical abolitionists. The moderates felt that the slavery issue had been legislated to rest, while the abolitionists were in the forefront of the protest against the stronger fugitive slave laws. In fact, the fugitive slave clause was one of the principle issues that polarized the adherents and opponents of slavery on constitutional, rather than moral, grounds.

Historically, the slavery issue centered around a definition: was the slave a person or was the slave property?\textsuperscript{42} Successful fugitive slave legislation depended upon the slave's being perceived as stolen property by the courts of the state in which he was apprehended. Interstate cooperation was critical for the enforcement of the fugitive statutes, since no extradition laws covered the slave.\textsuperscript{43}

The first fugitive slave law was passed in 1793. The slave owner, or his agent, needed only to appear before a magistrate and prove ownership by whatever means might be satisfactory to that particular magistrate. Free blacks could be kidnapped and placed into bondage on the word of a slave owner or his attorney.\textsuperscript{44} The Compromise of 1850 strengthened and further defined this law. Fines for obstructing the apprehension of a fugitive were raised and
the commissioners appointed by the state circuit courts were to be paid $10 for each ruling favorable to the slave owner and only $5 for each ruling favorable to the fugitive. The fugitive was not allowed to testify in his own behalf nor was he allowed a jury trial. It was these abridgements of his constitutional rights that aroused the wrath of the North against the continuation and spread of slavery.

For example, the argument in favor of a slave's constitutional right to a jury trial was reasonably strong. Slaves, who were worth over $20, required a jury trial as stolen property. If deemed a person instead of property, the fugitive was being denied protection of life and liberty. Some northern states passed personal liberty laws which were designed to provide fugitives with a jury trial, witnesses to his identity, free counsel, and the mechanism to fine and imprison anyone who reduced a freeman to slavery.

Summary

The repeal of the Missouri Compromise was a major situational restraint that shaped the Republican rhetoric of 1856. Sectionalism was no longer a subtle distinction in 1855, but a viable political issue. "Bleeding Kansas" united the free-soil adherents ideologically, regardless
of previous party affiliation. The underground railroad and personal liberty laws operated in open defiance of the fugitive slave laws, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* brought a dramatization of slavery into northern homes, and the northern press continued to sensationalize rallies and mobs that gathered to protect unjustly accused fugitives in major urban centers.

Successful Republican candidates began to emerge from the state and local elections of 1854. The party gathered national political recognition from the support of men like William Seward, Charles Sumner, Thurlow Weed, Joshua Giddings, and Horace Greeley. These men formed the organizing committee of the new, national Republican party.
Notes


2 Nevins, I, p. 349.


4 Nevins, II, p. 88.

5 Nevins, II, p. 93.

6 Nevins, II, p. 95.


9 Nevins, II, p. 132.

10 Rhodes, I, p. 475.

12 Johnston, p. 160.

13 Johnston, p. 161.


19 Rhodes, II, p. 103.

20 Nevins, II, p. 411.

21 Holt, p. 151.

22 Holt, p. 151.

23 Curti, p. 301.


25 Curti, p. 304.

26 Owen Peterson, "Speaking in the Southern Commercial Conventions," in Oratory in the Old South, ed. Waldo W. Braden (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University

27 Peterson, p. 209.


31 Nevins, I, p. 222.

32 Nevins, I, p. 221.


34 Nevins, I, p. 240.

35 Nevins, I, p. 251.

36 Nevins, I, p. 251.

37 Holt, p. 152.

39 Clark, II, p. 23.

40 Clark, II, p. 50.


42 Johnston, p. 128.

43 Johnston, p. 129.

44 Johnston, p. 132; Rhodes, II, p. 73.

45 Johnston, p. 133.
Chapter 3
The Organization of the Republican Party

The Republican national party was organized quickly. The presidential election was scheduled for the late fall of 1856, and the party formally organized less than six months before the election. The rapid formation of the national organization can be examined according to Lloyd Bitzer's concept of exigence as a motivating factor. The major controlling exigence was the need to form an organization that would effectively guide the Republican campaign efforts. The organization had to run efficiently, yet the major factions had to be given some measure of control and power.

The audience addressed by the Republican organizers was composed of anti-slavery coalition members and Republican sympathizers from the individual states. The change to be effected was the organization of a strong national party which would offer a direct challenge to the Democratic party. Finally, a presidential candidate whose political record could satisfy the major factions and represent Republican free soil interests would need to be recruited to the party.
This third chapter examines the organizational structure of the Republican party as a means of identifying further situational constraints on the 1856 campaign rhetoric.

The Republican party was organized with astonishing speed. From a loosely affiliated network of local free-soil "Nebraska" coalitions in 1854, a fully organized national party emerged to compete successfully in the presidential election of 1856.

The organization of the party cannot be examined internally from an effective interpersonal or small group perspective. These perspectives would be of great value in determining the particular campaign strategies employed by the party leaders. However, the secrecy which cloaked the early meetings of the party founders formed a precedent that guides the activities of the national Republican party today. A brief examination of the contemporary duties of the party organizers will help explain the significance of the organizational task accomplished by the men who planned the 1856 presidential campaign.

The contemporary Republican party is organized around an executive committee that coordinates a national convention every fourth year. This executive committee, referred to as the National Committee, began to function as a permanent entity in the twentieth century. Prior to
its contemporary form, the committee met only to write a convention call in the months immediately prior to a national presidential election.

The contemporary National Committee runs the party. It is responsible for raising funds, providing information to state organizations, and defining policy.¹ The means by which policy is determined are secret. No records are made of official meetings; no by-laws have been recorded; no organizational chart has been developed; and public records are heavily edited. The party stands, unified, behind the platform and the policy as determined by the most powerful party activists.

The same procedure was followed in 1856. Although not formally organized into a national committee, several men of particular political or organizational stature - well known to one another - determined the policies of the new Republican party. The organization reflected the political needs of Whigs and Democrats, Free Soilers and compromisers, businessmen, laborers, and professionals of all classes in the free states.

The organizational methods employed by the early party leaders molded these disparate elements into a political entity. These organizational methods can be studied thematically. However, in order to identify the elements of the Republican ideology as it emerged from this initial campaign, it will be necessary to analyze the situation
that spurred the organization of the Republican party in the spring of 1856.

The organization itself can be defined in terms of contemporary organizational theory to explain its internal structure and its success in surviving intact through the post-Civil War era. The emergent thematic unity of the platform and its attendant ideology will be analyzed according to the fantasy theme motif proposed by Ernest Bormann.

Organizational Environment - External Factors

According to Lewis Clephane, author of the pamphlet "Birth of the Republican Party," and the national secretary of the self-styled Republican Club of Washington, D.C., a local movement was organized in the Capitol to urge the adoption of an abolitionist platform by one of the major parties planning to campaign in the 1856 contest.2 The Republicans had not organized at the time Clephane called for an abolitionist party, but many anti-slavery activists had formed local clubs that corresponded with one another. The clubs also sponsored speakers and other public events. The intention of Clephane, Daniel R. Goodloe, and H. S. Brown, the self-appointed organizing committee of the "Republican Association," was to force the rapid coalition of all
anti-slavery groups under the aegis of a single, "republican" ideology.³

The Republican Association, as conceived by Clephane et al., was organized on June 15, 1855. It became the Republican party in January, 1856, when a national assembly met under that name and voted itself into existence.⁴ The various state party leaders, many of whom had run for local offices in the 1854 elections as "Republicans," assembled in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on February 21, 1856.⁵ Their ranks were swollen by the presence of wavering Know-Nothings and abolitionist leaders. According to Horace Greeley's enthusiastic reporting from the pages of the *New York Weekly Tribune*, an executive committee was appointed as the first order of business in Pittsburgh, along with the following committees: Address and Resolutions, to prepare the official convention platform; Safety, to investigate the armed conflict in Kansas; Convention Credentials; and a committee for the Rules for the Government of the Convention.⁶ The executive committee was charged by Francis P. Blair, Sr., president of the Pittsburgh convention, to "execute" a national nominating convention for mid-June of 1856.⁷

The organizational process was well under way by the spring of 1856. A clearly defined hierarchical structure of power and authority was created with the formation of
the national committee and its specialized sub-committees. This structure closely resembled the national Whig organization, the model on which the Republican party appeared to be cast. The need for a strong, national organization was a recent political innovation, a factor resulting from legislation which defined a particular date for the polling of national election returns. Both of these organizational concepts, the clearly defined hierarchical structure and the environmentally-produced organization, are critical factors in the ability of an organization to function efficiently.

The political environment shaped the national character of the party structure. Prior to the 1848 presidential campaign, the individual states held presidential elections on different dates. A small cadre of party spokesmen could travel through many states, delivering the same message to a wide variety of voters. Eight months of the year, there were elections in one state or another.

By Congressional action, however, a uniform, national election day was established in 1845, giving the Whigs and the Democrats, the two most powerful political parties of that decade, three years to re-organize and create national organizations which could coordinate a national presidential campaign.
The local and state organizations remained important. Communication and fund-raising activities remained local responsibilities. The necessity that forced the parties to organize at the national level did not significantly reduce the power of the state organizations. For example, the incumbent Democratic leaders who wielded the greatest power in Congress were in control of tightly organized state machines. The more experienced Whigs, while not in control of the sophisticated "machines" that characterized northeastern Democrats, were the dominant coalition within the new, Republican organization by virtue of their experience in state and national politics. Men like William Seward and Thurlow Weed delivered huge local blocks of votes into the new party by virtue of their influence at the state and local level.¹⁰

The dominant coalition of ex-Whigs was responsible for the structural similarities between the new Republican party and the old Whig organization. The power and authority for structuring the new party were firmly in the hands of the experienced ex-Whigs rather than distributed throughout the factions of Free Soilers, Softs, abolitionists, or other groups whose experience in practical politics would not have been as near the source of national power. Seward, Weed, Clephane, Blair, and the rest of the dominant coalition were already ensconced in Washington, D.C. They brought a rich background of
political experience to the Republican party. They were determined to nurture the organization, even if it meant sacrificing some individual goals in order to sustain the organization.

In his correspondence, Thurlow Weed alluded to the strategic planning element of the dominant (Whig) coalition. He felt that the Republicans had a very slim hope of success in the 1856 presidential contest. He found the Republicans poorly organized when compared to the Democratic party machine, especially in the southern states. He recognized that the Know-Nothings, thinly disguised as the American party to avoid comparison with their secret society Masonic party counterparts of twenty years past, would split the vote in several critical polling areas. Therefore, he proposed the following strategy: with Buchanan's election (the Democratic candidate for President in the 1856 election), the Republican candidate would be sacrificed. However, Buchanan's term of office could be expected to generate enough public errors that the Republicans would be guaranteed the presidency in 1860.

The element of strategic planning was evident from Weed's memoirs, which chronicled the activities of his close associates, many of whom had been members of the dominant Whig coalition. Strategic planning, as an organizational resource, provides a measure of flexibility
within the organization, allowing for a shortened reaction
time when organizational readjustment becomes necessary in
a volatile political environment.13

In addition to the strategic planning element as a
sophisticated organizational resource used by party
planners, the Republicans had access to communication
resources already functioning within the political
environment. The existence of these resources in the
political environment was a critical factor in the speedy
creation of the new party.

Republican candidates had access to a wide variety of
sympathetic newspapers. They were able to draw support
from the abolitionist press, the anti-Democratic press,
independent newspapers willing to run Republican
teditorials for financial remuneration, and newspapers
owned by the party itself. The major metropolitan
newspapers had telegraph terminals in city news rooms for
the rapid dissemination of campaign speeches, news of the
latest, inflammatory border disputes, and demands for
broadside and pamphlets to counter opposition attacks
throughout the nation, throughout the campaign.

Members of Congress and church leaders communicated the
Republican platform at those regular secular and religious
gatherings designed as public speaking forums. In return,
these same Republicans provided feedback to the national
party. Information about the Democratic and American
party platforms were gathered from opposition speakers who shared the same speaking occasion, partisans hosting speakers on campaign tours, and copies of the local press forwarded from "stump" locations.

Thurlow Weed was the major figure in the organization and use of these information systems that were already in use as a part of the daily news gathering sources. He created at the national level a form of the party machine he had manufactured in New York state for the gathering and dissemination of information. With a central location for information processing and the field resources to gather and disburse that information, the power and authority of the national party could be effectively wielded.

In spite of the wide variety of political factions represented at the first Republican convention, the organizational process was swift and effective. Once a national coordinating committee had been established, the assorted free-soil interest groups were able to interact formally. Yet, the national coordinating committee would have been unable to form without the assorted free soil interest groups that it represented.

Conflict and uncertainty were reduced as the Free Soilers, Whigs, abolitionists, and Democrats united under an ideology broad enough to encompass a variety of separate ideologies that were dedicated to an equal
variety of solutions for the slavery issue. The organization was able to focus its activities by organizing specific committees which included members from the various factions. The reduction of separate political units increased the immediate positive outcome of all activities, since the coordination of support for each activity was enhanced with the concentration of authority in a central committee. Therefore, once the organization was formally defined, strategic planning was possible. Organizational objectives were formulated simultaneously with the party itself and all members could use the available communication resources.

The specific organizational structure, the internal hierarchy, was not made a matter of record nor did any of the members of the dominant coalition refer to the structure in extant letters or manuscripts. This reluctance to specify an internal hierarchy provided some measure of organizational flexibility. Present-day organizational theorists suggest that the absence of a hierarchy may indicate that the dominant coalition was so well acquainted and so politically experienced that specific roles and duties were not assigned. A rigid hierarchy might have blocked communication channels and slowed the reaction time of the organization. Yet, contemporary studies of the national committee are confounded by this historical lack of documentation. As
Hugh Bone observed, "[I]n both parties the operation of
the national committee is not generally prescribed but is
left to custom and the discretion of the chairman and his
staff." According to this contemporary description of
the committee structure, the internal communication flow
appears to be blocked both vertically and horizontally.
The structure suggests that flexibility was more important
than specific hierarchical distinctions, a structure that
would have served the party well when it first organized
in an era of limited communication technology and trusted
associates.

Organizational Environment - Internal Factors

The politicians attending the first Republican
convention represented a wide variety of political
affiliations. The very diversity which characterized the
representatives should have been a barrier to internal
communication and compromise. Since the organization was
swiftly and effectively created in spite of the potential
for disagreement, a summary analysis of the theoretical
basis for the success of the organization is necessary.

The diversity of experience and personality brought to
the convention by the participants was itself the key to
the swift formation of the party structure. The
organization was the means of effecting coalitions of the
varying interests of the participants. The organization became a "marketplace" of influence without which the convention participants would not have been able to establish bonds, compromises, or common experiences in nearly so short a time. The common free-soil interests of the Republicans would have hardly been enough to provide the basis for effective, concerted action in the highly structured political environment. Instead, an internal structure of influence and control established the necessary hierarchy as well as the means to plan for effective, measurable political activities.

The men who gathered in Pittsburgh planned just such a coalition of influence as they developed a united stand against the spread of slavery. The marketplace concept allows the participating individuals to retain some measure of control in a compromise situation. The possession of resources determined the amount of control that any one participant might expect. For example, many of the participants were in control of viable state organizations, a necessary resource of the national party. Others held positions of power and influence in the national government or in the private sector. The common desire of these men to stop the spread of slavery, whether for political or economic gain, formed their official union. The amount of influence possessed by each
participant determined the organizational hierarchy even before their initial meeting.18

The success with which an organization mobilizes is a measure of the success with which the need for stability and unity of purpose is met.19 Since the convention participants had a single, over-riding purpose in the desire to prevent the spread of slavery into the territories, a hierarchical organization met their needs as a means of facilitating the union of various factions into a cohesive political unit. The organizational structure, itself, provided the stability through which the activities of the groups could be measured and aligned.

Specifically, a political organization is merely the institutionalizing of control, both symbolically and realistically.20 The elected leadership within the party functions both as a symbol of control to members within the organization and as the mechanism for dealing with external demands. Therefore, the formation of the Republican party fulfilled the institutional needs of the various "Nebraska" groups whose unity of purpose had been confounded by the lack of centralization or organizational stability. With the formation of a stable central organization which directed the activities of its members, the course of action chosen by the party leaders could be launched.
The particular political environment of 1856 dictated rapid action on the part of party organizers. Not only were events moving quickly in those geographic regions under dispute over the spread of slavery, but Congressional guidelines regarding presidential elections affected the nomination and campaign procedures of all organized parties, forcing the formation of national organizations.

Prior to 1848, each state held elections for national offices within a given calendar period, not on the same day. There was no need for a national organization. When the election procedure was changed by Congress to allow a single day, nationwide, for the election of national officers, it became necessary to organize quickly in order that the necessary channels of communication would be in place by the date of the election. Many of the men who were active in the structuring of the Whig national organization turned to the Republican party while their organizing experience was still fresh, providing for the enactment of an organizational structure similar to that of the defunct Whig party.

Therefore, the Republican party succeeded as an organization because it fit well into the pre-connected political environment. The organization was acceptable to the majority of individuals within the group. It has retained its bias in favor of northern business interests,
giving rise to continued criticism of its clearly sectional interests. Those interests arose from the strategic need to campaign sensibly in 1856, pouring all resources into the non-slave-holding areas for the most effective voter return, rather than making a weakened, geographically comprehensive effort to campaign throughout the entire nation.

Free Labor Ideology

The formal ideology of the early Republican party was reflected in the introduction to its convention call of 1856. The convention planners invited

[Those] People of the United States, without regard to past political differences or divisions, who are opposed to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, to the policy of the present Administration, to the extension of slavery into the territories, in favor of the admission of Kansas as a free State, and of restoring the action of the Federal Government to the principles of Washington and Jefferson . . . 22

This invitation to convene encapsulated the popular beliefs of a rhetorical movement that had been in place for several decades. From the pulpits of New England to the floor of the Congress, orators had thundered against the spread of slavery in the United States. Concerned politicians like John Quincy Adams and other constitutionalists, men who were bitterly opposed to the gag rule and the fugitive slave laws, gave the Republican
party a legal basis for its platform of anti-expansion. But, it can be argued that the Republican party was ideologically structured by the prevailing popular opinion against slavery and the extant rhetorical movement against the institution and its spread into the western territories. According to Leland Griffin, a rhetorical movement such as the popular movement against slavery may be classified either as an attempt to arouse public opinion in favor of an idea or an institution or an attempt to further the destruction of an institution. Although the abolitionists favored the destruction of an institution (slavery), they demanded that the public accept the notion of universal freedom from bondage. Abolitionist speakers removed their demands from the destruction of an economic and social institution to the more philosophic plane of greater human good.

Griffin classifies rhetoricians as aggressors or defenders, according to their stand within the rhetorical movement. Many of the boundary-spanning journalists and abolitionist orators inherited by the Republican party were aggressively in favor of freedom from bondage. Some were so aggressive that they suffered physical harm for their zeal in speaking against the spread of slavery.

The political rhetors sought to focus public attention on the origins of sentiment against the spread of slavery. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the extension of
slavery into previously "free" regions was the result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, according to the Republican speakers.\textsuperscript{25} Congressional candidates added their voice to those of the clergy in the effort to stop the spread of slavery, making political issues out of the moral sentiment against human bondage.

Once the roots of the movement have been uncovered by public speakers, methods for propagation of information must be found.\textsuperscript{26} For the Republicans, avenues of propaganda were already in place, with Greeley's \textit{Tribune} heading the list of partisan newspapers eager to press for the containment of slavery and an end to bloodshed in Kansas. In addition, many prominent abolitionist orators were serving as publically-elected officials and they used their public positions to speak against slavery with greater authority.

The Republicans, therefore, simply absorbed the movement against slavery. Orators such as the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, who was widely known for his dedication to the abolition of slavery, joined the Republican cause immediately upon its organization. Beecher, in fact, took a leave of absence from his New York pulpit in order to campaign for the Republicans in 1856.\textsuperscript{27}

The rhetorical movement against the spread of slavery encompassed all regions of the United States during the
1850s, except for the South. By 1855, two phases of rhetorical development had been completed, according to Griffin's model. The period of inception, which stretched from the end of the slave trade to the Missouri Compromise, had been marked with occasional organizational success, mainly because of the Quakers and an increasing number of active abolitionists. The period of rhetorical crises, the second phase of development, occurred with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.

The final developmental period of the rhetorical movement, the period of consummation, occurred when the Republicans formally organized with a specific plan to bring the ideals of the movement to fruition. Although the Republican presidential candidate did not win the election in 1856, the party continued to grow in strength as a result of its absorption of the abolitionist and free soil movements. The movement prospered within the organization; the organization prospered under the leadership of the men who formed it; and the party was sustained through the rhetorical crises of a political campaign by the consistency of the movement that spawned the organization. This symbiotic political/ideological relationship succeeded, according to Griffin, "... in irrevocably disturbing that balance ... between the groups which had existed in the mind of the collective audience."28 The movement for the non-expansion of
slavery could never return to being either an abolitionist movement or a constitutional restoration movement. The balance between the individual moral and the political elements was destroyed in the public mind. The public had a new choice: it could align with the Democrats (the pro-slavery identification group) or the Republicans (the new anti-slavery identification group).

The rhetorical analysis of the 1856 Republican campaign must rest on the particular strategies that created and nourished the party, uniting a variety of coalitions under a new ideology. As will be seen later in this study, the diversity of elements created important constraints on the rhetoric in support of the party's presidential candidate.

General Rhetorical Strategies

The rhetorical battles of 1856 were waged by surrogate speakers representing the Republican party, not the Republican candidate. Political communication theorists suggest that successful surrogate speakers normally should have a proven record of competence as public speakers, and they should have a clearly identifiable link to the candidate.29 This link was established in the 1856 campaign by the implicit common political affiliation and the shared rhetorical vision of the party members. In
addition to speaking experience and a link to the candidate, campaign speakers had to establish a link with the audience. Many of the surrogates stumped in their home states, from their familiar pulpits and in their own towns where sympathetic communication could easily occur. For lack of speaker-audience links, no Republicans campaigned in the South.

The particular rhetorical problems faced by the surrogate speakers included disavowing any direct association with the Whig party, avoiding the use of abolitionist rhetoric in place of anti-slavery arguments, raising grave suspicions against the Know-Nothings, and maintaining the fervor of the partisans already supporting the new party.

Campaign efforts were limited to New England and the mid-west. The far West was deemed pro-Fremont, freeing the strategists to concentrate on the disputed border areas.30

Two formal means of currying voters were employed: the political clubs and the stump speakers. The clubs were formed locally and were the primary source of grass-roots funding, undertaking sanctioned local organizational and fund-raising events.31 Stump speakers, sanctioned or not, provided the substance of the campaign. From the local scene, in which small-town magistrates and Fremont Club members would orchestrate torch-light processions and
outdoor rallies for front-page press coverage, to the pulpits of metropolitan churches, men engaged in discourse about the political solution to slavery. The names of the particular presidential candidates were often absent from such discourse, even when it involved specific campaign issues.

The sectional arguments that formed the basis of the Republican campaign included the statistical comparison of slave versus free labor, protective tariffs that favored northern manufactured goods and were violently opposed by southerners, and the alleged southern political stranglehold on Congress. Free labor was the Republican ideological explanation for the rate of northern urban growth and its attendant enlightened culture. Northern industrial growth outstripped that of the South, claimed the Republicans, as a result of the immigrants who were filling the northern cities to compete in the free labor market, swelling the general population and nearly outstripping the demand for both skilled and unskilled labor. The Republicans argued that the comparative growth of northern and southern cities demonstrated the vitality of northern dedication to the free labor principle, since the sheer numbers of factories, goods produced, and people employed were significantly larger in the North. However, statistics were not enough to persuade voters that the new Republican party was
dedicated to serving the interests of the free states. An ideological commitment to larger principles than factory ownership was necessary to allow for the successful emotional appeal of the party's platform.

Eric Foner located the roots of pre-Civil-War Republican ideology in the concept that labor is a noble and dignified pastime. Actually, the concept of labor was characterized by a complex moral, social, and economic system. According to Foner's analysis, to labor was a noble pastime. The nobility of labor stemmed from its role as a Christian endeavor, for the capital produced by labor created wealth that was perceived as one means of serving God. The Republicans argued that labor might only be construed as a Christian value, however, if the laborer were able to enjoy the fruits of his labor. Since slaves labored only to enrich their masters, both slave and master were debased and brutalized by the system. The slave could not enjoy any capital gain or material advancement as a result of laboring; therefore virtue could not arise from the act of laboring to increase one's capital. Further, the slave owner who prevented the slave from advancing materially or intellectually by the results of his labor was brutalized by the corrupt moral system that usurped both free will and free labor.

The Republicans neatly defined a laborer as anyone engaged in any useful activity. The woodcutter and the
novelist alike were members of the laboring class, as were the fisherman and the professor. The measure that determined whether or not one was laboring freely was one's degree of financial independence. It was not necessary to amass great wealth to have achieved success in a free labor market. Merely to have economic choices or financial independence was enough to satisfy the Republican definition of "freedom." For this reason, Republican speakers with working-class roots usually had the greatest prior ethos. For example, Henry Wilson had once been an indentured servant and Nathaniel Banks had been a bobbin boy in a mill. Both men enjoyed enhanced prestige for having worked their way upward to an economic status of financial independence. They exemplified the Republican free labor ideal.

In theory, the financially independent woodcutter should have been able to enjoy the same social success as the novelist or professor. But the reality of northern social mobility was not as egalitarian as Republican idealists would portray it. However, there were two methods of defending the northern social attitude to the voters. Either the southern social caste system could be painted in the darkest possible terms to contrast unfavorably with northern society, or Republican orators could remind their audiences of the vast potential for economic and social opportunity that awaited the
enterprising entrepreneur, either in the industrial northeast or the western frontier.

The South suffered from a totally closed social system, according to the northern anti-slavery orators. That rigid class system was the major reason that the economic theories of the North could not take hold in the cotton regions. Since social mobility accompanied the accumulation of capital in any free-labor market, the South was doomed to practices that tied the entire population to a form of economic slavery and eventual extinction. Since slaves were unable to benefit directly from their own labor, all participants in the system, free and bound, were condemned to both social and economic stagnation.

The West figured prominently in the Republican ideology. The West was regarded as an economic extension of the industrial northeast. Those northern farmers and businessmen who wished greater opportunities than those available in the heavily populated New England region turned to the frontier areas as a means of establishing their financial independence. As immigration swelled the ranks of the unskilled and semi-skilled laborers to bursting, the excess population could move westward. Republican speakers portrayed westward migration as the only available means of protecting the eastern urban areas from the unemployed who would otherwise live on the
streets of the northern cities. The threat of slavery in the territories directly affected the free labor market because slave labor would choke off the need for free laborers in the West. Unemployment and urban poverty would then rise to dangerous, unprecedented levels, according to Republican speakers, since immigration continued to swell the northeastern population faster than jobs and housing could be made available. This threat of blocked emigration became a stock secondary argument in the Republican repertoire, second only to the arguments regarding the constitutionality of the pro-slavery representation in Kansas and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

Eric Foner referred to the election of 1856 as a constitutional referendum. The primary debate centered around the issue of the constitutionality of slavery. Was it protected under the Constitution, as the South believed, or was it a matter for the individual states to decide?

The more radical Republicans, William F. Seward and Charles Sumner among them, were dedicated to the eradication of slavery by any means. The 1856 Republican platform reflected the radical position on slavery, but the arguments favored by the Republican spokesmen on the stump did not effectively echo the degree of radicalism preferred by Chase, Giddings, and other politicians with
abolitionist backgrounds. Therefore, the major themes espoused by Republican speakers dealt with the violence in Kansas as a symbolic expression of the pro-slavery mentality, the economic problems created by a slave society in a free-market world, and the political threat posed to the North by the united "Slave Power" in the South.

The Candidate as a Constraint

John C. Fremont was a popular, romanticized hero of the nineteenth century. He was the "Pathfinder," the daring explorer who bravely opened the West to overland travel and lived to write of his exploits. He was the son-in-law of Thomas Hart Benton, distinguished Senator from Missouri. With the companionship of his wife, Jesse, he outfoxed presidents and became the darling of the young literary set in both the United States and Europe. Continental salons idolized the young explorer.

Yet, Fremont was court-martialed during Polk's administration, held responsible for the extreme suffering and negligent deaths of his fourth expedition, involved in disreputable land speculation in California, and scorned by his powerful father-in-law.

Fremont's career in politics was brief. He served only a few months in the U.S Senate before accepting the
Republican presidential candidacy in 1856. How did a man of so little political experience come to represent a new party in an era of political crisis?

John C. Fremont entered politics as a Senator from California in 1849. The first session of the California Constitutional convention met on September 1, 1849. On Saturday, October 13, its work was finished. The borders of the new state were determined, state elections were scheduled so that a legislature could be seated on December 21, 1849, and copies of the proceedings were sent to Washington.

John C. Fremont and William M. Gwin were elected by the California legislature to represent the state in the U.S. Senate.37 They were a compromise slate, for Fremont was a Free Soil Democrat and Gwin represented a growing pro-slavery faction. The pro-slavery faction in California was very powerful. Members were primarily wealthy mine owners who were in favor of working the mines with cheap slave labor rather than with wage-earning laborers.

Fremont and his family boarded a ship bound for Washington, D.C., less than one year after arriving in California. Fremont had taken no active part in the organization of the new state, was battling for title to his Mariposa lands, faced a Congressional investigation into the deaths of eleven men from his fourth expedition, and was preparing to work in Congress with the same men
who had participated in his celebrated court-martial of one year past.

Fremont and Gwin waited in Washington for nine months before California was finally admitted to statehood. The admission of the territory was angrily contested in Congress, since the southern Senators wanted that portion of the territory lying south of 36° 30' to be open to slavery but the residents of the territory had approved a free soil constitution. The California Bill was passed on August 13, 1850, by a vote of 34-18 in the Senate. The following day, a long, formal protest against Fremont and the anti-slavery status of the new state was read into the Senate record, signed by Senators from Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Florida. They were outraged at the new political imbalance between the slave-holding and free states, protesting that

an odious discrimination is made against the property of the fifteen slaveholding States of the Union, who are thus deprived of that position of equality which the Constitution so manifestly designs, and which constituted the only sure and stable foundation on which this Union can repose.

Fremont was never called to answer any charges or explain his position as a free soil advocate. However, some pro-slavery Senators claimed that Fremont's uncompromising
stance on slavery prolonged the debate that delayed the seating of the California Senators.40

William M. Gwin and John C. Fremont entered the Senate chambers on September 9, 1850. Fremont's credentials were presented by Senator Barnwell of South Carolina, who noted that he was not in favor of seating the new Senator under the present circumstances.41 Jefferson Davis of Mississippi even raised a formal protest before Fremont was finally seated, that the election of the California Senator was unconstitutional.42

Within a period of only four working days, Fremont and Gwin caused seven bills to be read and referred to various committees. Speed was essential, since only three weeks of the legislative session remained after the two men were sworn into office.

The first session of the Thirty-First Congress closed on September 26, 1850. Fremont's most effective speech had been delivered the previous day when he pleaded for gold mine legislation. A great deal of business remained unfinished with regard to California, but Fremont's role was over. Because of a recurrence of Chagres (Panama) fever, he was unable to return to Washington to attend his second, and final, session of Congress in January, 1851. At the time of his appointment to the U.S. Senate, Fremont drew the shortest of three straws that represented the
three new Senatorial terms available to the two men. Of the three terms due to expire in 1851, 1853, and 1855, Fremont drew the term which ended in 1851, represented by the shortest of three straws. William Gwin drew the session which lasted through 1855 and was an active member of the pro-slavery faction throughout his term.

Fremont campaigned briefly for re-election as a Free Soil candidate. However, during his long absence in Washington, the pro-slavery wing of the California Democratic party had grown stronger. Since his health was weak and the election was held only two months after his return to California, he had little opportunity to campaign effectively. He was soundly defeated in February, 1851, but no candidate was elected in his stead.43

Europeans were interested in large-scale mining propositions in the American West, so Fremont took his family to Europe in 1852, traveling to amass financial backing for mining operations on his Mariposa grant. Fremont remained aloof from domestic events until he returned to the United States to find himself the presidential nominee of the Republican party.

Although experienced abolitionists, Free Soil Democrats, Whigs, and other politically active men flocked to the Republican cause, few among them were suitable for a national nomination. Sumner, recovering from the
caning, was too volatile an abolitionist even if his health had permitted him to campaign. Salmon P. Chase and William H. Seward, although experienced politicians, were equally radical in their demands that the fugitive slave laws be repealed along with the right to sell slaves in the District of Columbia.\textsuperscript{44}

The Republicans needed a candidate with a firm, moderate stand on slavery, high name recognition, and no interest in politics.\textsuperscript{45} John Charles Fremont was deemed the ideal candidate by an ad hoc group of party officials and newspaper editors meeting in New York City four months prior to the nominating convention.

As spring opened, the St. Louis Democrat, Worcester Spy, New York Evening Post, and other journals were all quietly pressing the explorer.\textsuperscript{46}

However, the attributes that brought Fremont to the attention of these powerful men were rhetorical weaknesses. Fremont successfully engaged the public fancy as a dashing young explorer. He had powerful friends and relatives scattered in all regions of the nation. Yet, he was never a candidate of any substance. His political experience included less than three weeks of national service in an appointed office, a powerful father-in-law who refused to support his candidacy, and a record of leadership which did not bear close scrutiny. Allan Nevins, Fremont's biographer, noted that
It was true that his career was sprinkled with incidents indicating that he lacked practical judgement, was deplorably erratic in his estimates of men, acted impulsively and egotistically, and wanted both tact and the stauncher traits of character.47

Yet, the initial period of Fremont's candidacy was intense and successful. Without so much as a single recorded word on his part, Fremont was guaranteed the presidential nomination. John C. Fremont was a manufactured candidate who fitted the rhetorical needs of the Republican party in 1856: he was glamorous, he was popular, and he was silent.

Since Fremont was a figurehead rather than a political leader, Charles Sumner emerged as the symbolic leader of the Republican campaign. Sumner was beaten into insensibility at his desk on the floor of the Senate chamber by Preston Brooks, a southerner. The symbolism of the action was rich. The august Senate chamber, where the founders of the nation had deliberated, was sullied by the blood of an anti-slavery martyr whose life was threatened by a weapon-wielding southerner. Sumner had seriously offended Brooks and the entire body of southern Senators by delivering a polemic entitled "The Crime Against Kansas."48 Because of his rhetorical attack on the South, Sumner became the symbol of northern righteousness. Brooks came to symbolize the incarnate inhumanity of the southern slavocracy through his instinctive defensive action.

Sumner's speech formed the basis of many emotional proofs
against the extension of slavery, while the Republicans had a new focus for their emotional appeals which was neither economic nor moral. It was a sectional focus.

Summary

The excitement of a presidential canvass arises from the highly-charged emotional issues and a sense of supporting a righteous cause against an enormous wrong. The constitutionality of slavery certainly provided a double-edged issue, but the economic and moral arguments employed by the Republicans needed an emotional focus which would enhance identification between the party and its cause without employing stock Whig or abolitionist arguments.

The Republicans were challenging Democratic party control and Whig influence in all sections of the North. Particular attention was given to the campaign strategies in Pennsylvania and New York, for these were the two pivotal urban regions that would determine the election. According to Trent and Friedenberg, there are seven strategies available to the political challenger in a contest. The Republicans employed five of the seven strategies, each designed to force a change in the status quo. The strategies used by the Republicans included attacking the record of their opponents (the Democrats);
taking the offensive position on issues (slavery and its expansion); calling for a change (a Republican administration); emphasizing optimism for the future (a free labor society for the South and greater economic protection for the North); and speaking to traditional values rather than calling for value changes (the constitutionality of a free society rather than the unconstitutional "slavocracy").

By June, the Republican party was ready to launch a national campaign. The organizational phase was completed. A national committee was operational, a convention was called to nominate a presidential candidate, a platform was drawn around a clearly articulated ideology, and a broad base of popular support was secured by the state organizations. The Republican party was designed to formulate and direct those national activities that affected its candidates and its policies. The individual members were free to explain, elaborate and define those activities and policies according to the exigence of the situation.

However, it was the individual speaker who represented the party. It was the individual speaker who defined the needs of a particular audience with regard to the policies of the party. Therefore, the strategies of the 1856 Republican campaign can be most effectively studied
through analyses of those speeches that were delivered
during the course of the summer campaign.

The specific rhetorical strategies employed by the
Republicans are examined in the next three chapters
according to a neo-Aristotelian model of speech criticism
suggested by Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird, and Waldo W.
Braden in the second edition of *Speech Criticism*. 
Notes


3 Johnson, p. 6.

4 A small group of Congressional leaders met to discuss the possibility of a national campaign based on the inflammatory situation in Kansas. This was not the official organizing assembly of the party.


9 Scott, Mitchell, and Birnbaum, p. 280.


12 Barnes, p. 245.

13 Scott, Mitchell, and Birnbaum, pp. 287-290.


15 Bone, pp. 6-7.


17 Johnson, p. 7.
Horace Greeley correctly predicted the names of those men who would be elected to office within the convention, based upon their influence and activities prior to the gathering. He was so sure that he published his predictions before the convention began.

Pfeffer and Solancik, p. 261.

Pfeffer and Solancik, p. 264.

The parties had three years to organize for the 1848 election, since the legislation was enacted in 1845.


Charles Sumner was beaten with a cane while lying helpless on the floor of the Senate. Sumner's injuries were so serious that he was unable to participate in the 1856 campaign.

Trefousse, p. 96.

Griffin, p. 154.

28 Griffin, p. 155.


30 John Bigelow, *The Life and Services of John C. Fremont* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1856), Appendix I.

31 Smith, p. 358.

32 Curti, p. 303.


34 Foner, p. 15.

35 Foner, p. 27.

36 Foner, p. 87.


38 *Congressional Globe, 31st Congress, 1st session,* 1, p. 367.

39 Until August 1, 1850, the southern Senators were arguing to limit California's boundaries to 35° 30' in order to provide for slavery.
The circumstances were the admission of California as a free state within the geographic boundaries set by the California legislature.

Globe, p. 1791.

Nevins, Fremont, p. 396.

Allan Nevins, Ordeal, p. 461.

Allan Nevins, Fremont, p. 479.

Nevins, Ordeal, p. 463.

Nevins, Ordeal, p. 462.

Chapter 4
Ethos: Identification and Credibility

According to rhetorical theory, the credibility of a speaker develops from one of three major factors. First, the speaker may present himself as an "expert" during the course of the speech. If he conveys an impression of being well trained in the art of public speaking and persuasion, as well as thoroughly schooled in the subject of the speech, he will likely be perceived as trustworthy by the audience. If he is able to incorporate practical and theoretical experience into a speech act that encourages the audience to trust him as an "official" messenger, he will probably create a lasting impression that will serve to enhance his reputation either as an effective speaker or an expert in the particular issue under discussion. The resulting positive "terminal ethos" provides the "initial ethos" at his next public speaking appearance.

Second, he may be associated with a particular group or movement that endows the speaker with the enhanced credibility of the association or "prior ethos." The names of those speakers who represented the free soil coalitions, for example, were quite often substituted for
the political party. "Garrisonians" for abolitionists was one synecdoche in which the man was named in place of the entire movement.

Third, the speaker may be well-known as an "opinion leader" within a small but influential group. Local elected officials or respected citizens within a community often perform this leadership function. They may not be directly affiliated with the issue under discussion or they may not be qualified experts as speakers or analysts, but they enjoy the respect of the community. Reputations as men of public "good will" qualify them to speak on political topics.

Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird, and Waldo Braden confirm the classical notion that the speech can be only as credible as the speaker. Whether the speaker merely creates an impression of trustworthiness in the minds of his audience or whether he is trustworthy by virtue of his prior activities or reputation is an issue which has been debated for centuries. In Speech Criticism, the authors present a variety of classical studies that illustrate the importance of the speaker's personality and reputation in any persuasive endeavor. In the present analysis, the elements which constitute the "ethos" of a speaker will be drawn from classical literature. The character of the speaker, his intelligence and his good will toward the
audience will be used as the primary elements of credibility.

The character of the speaker is measured by the audience. According to *Speech Criticism*, the speaker may associate himself with anything deemed "virtuous" by the audience. He may link his cause with praiseworthy accomplishments or link his opponents' cause with events that are scandalous or horrifying. The speaker must appear to be sincere. Otherwise, his character may not be perceived as trustworthy.

The second element of the ethical appeal is the measure of sagacity demonstrated by the speaker. This term refers to the "integrity and wisdom" demonstrated by the speaker during the course of the speech. It is a measure of his intellectual stock and rhetorical skill. The speaker who is tactful yet compelling, wise, informed, and tasteful demonstrates sagacity in public speaking. Clear logic and good, recent evidence contribute to the perceived intelligence of a speaker by enhancing the impression of wisdom.

Good will and emotional appeals are very closely linked. The speaker wants the audience to trust his motives in any persuasive endeavor but he must stir the audience to action. The audience must want to believe that the speaker is seeking to protect the common good and will protect them from whatever evil lurks within the
opposition. The speaker must reveal himself as a "messenger of truth" in order to establish his good will toward the audience.3

The major Republican speakers of 1856 were a critical factor in the party's success. Their training and experience in practical politics served to enhance their image of character, intelligence and perceived good will throughout the campaign. The specific elements of the ethical appeals employed by the Republicans will be examined in this chapter.

Political parties that were organized during the 1850s in the critical frontier regions shared several characteristics, according to Theodore Clarke Smith. Organization was incomplete, the personalities of the politicians counted far more than principles or voting records, and "eloquence and combativeness for more than social culture and wealth."4

The Republican party had no political history with which to define itself in 1856. The most effective means available to persuade voters to support the new party lay in the artistic proofs of ethos, pathos and logos as employed by the surrogate (non-candidate party representative) campaign speakers. The men who spoke in support of the Republican platform needed to embody the principles of the party by demonstrating the virtue of their cause through ethical and logical means.
Specifically, the platform called for a return to the ideals rooted in the Constitution, the abolition of slavery and polygamy in the territories, and the immediate admission of Kansas under a free soil constitution.⁵

Although one plank in the platform called for a full range of internal improvements, including railroad lines and harbor improvements, few of the campaign speeches address the need to provide such improvements. Instead of urging the voters to approve funds for better transportation, it was the task of the Republican speakers to establish the urgency of the Constitutional issues embodied in the platform and to persuade the voting public to support the party's presidential candidate. The personal recommendations of these campaign speakers constituted the sole basis of their credibility, since no recorded party activities could stand as inartistic proof in support of their ethos.⁶

The men who represented the new party enjoyed a great measure of prior ethos as trustworthy political representatives or leading abolitionists. In this chapter, the ethical appeal of five major speakers is examined according to the neo-Aristotelian standards set forth by Thonssen, Baird, and Braden in Speech Criticism.⁷ The issues of the campaign were clear and the arguments in favor of adopting the Republican platform were limited by the short history of the party. Therefore, the
examination of the speakers in this chapter falls into one of three issue-related categories. The speakers were eyewitnesses to the chaos in Kansas, leading anti-slavery politicians, or religious leaders whose ethical standards transcended political boundaries.

These speakers represented another situational constraint. The rhetors spoke directly to potential voters, attempting to produce action by giving meaning to the political situation. Party membership imposed situational constraints on the identity of each speaker. However, the orator had the freedom to manipulate the artistic proofs of each speech, allowing his personality to overcome the situational restraints of party membership.

Leading Republicans

A list of the major political and literary figures associated with the Republican cause during the 1856 campaign includes many famous names. Thaddeus Stevens, William L. Dayton, Horace Greeley, Abraham Lincoln, John Greenleaf Whittier, Charles Sumner, Henry Ward Beecher, Salmon P. Chase, Francis Preston Blair, Schuyler Colfax, Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and William Cullen Bryant of the New York Evening Post were among the more prominent opinion leaders
who flocked to the Republican party. However, not all of these men were seasoned politicians with the oratorical skills necessary to participate in a national campaign. For example, William Dayton, the Republican vice-presidential nominee and a former Senator from New Jersey, proved an able campaigner but cost the party critical votes in Pennsylvania.8

Horace Greeley devoted the New York Tribune, both the daily and the weekly editions, to the Republican campaign, often travelling to report on significant speeches and rallies in person.9 Members of sanctioned Republican clubs were treated to a special, reduced subscription rate to the weekly Tribune during the course of the campaign. But Greeley's effectiveness was limited by his temper which he vented both in person and through his editorials. His editorials were often libelous, giving rise to the quip that the weekly edition of the Tribune was purchased only by those readers who wished to disagree with its sentiments.10

Schuyler Colfax was an example of an abolitionist politician who allied himself with the Republicans in spite of personal hardship. Colfax was a respected, self-avowed abolitionist from Indiana. After running for re-election to the U.S. Senate in the fall of 1856, Colfax immediately went on the stump for the Republicans. He drew enthusiastic crowds throughout southwest Indiana in
spite of a voice weakened from hours of outdoor oratory in his successful senatorial campaign. Senator Colfax noted that

... in the woods, miles from the nearest village, there would be four thousand present, procession and banners, bands and glee clubs, ladies innumerable; spoke three hours and a half in open air, throat giving out; but the crowds can't get into the houses ...11

Colfax described other crowds and other occasions in his letters, all as enthusiastic and well-turned-out as the crowd he described above, but he felt sure that Fremont would not carry the state because of to the presence of a strong Know Nothing contingent.

Salmon P. Chase was not a powerful speaker. In addition to a minor speech impediment, Chase was uncomfortable when speaking to the "common people." J.W. Schukers, a biographer of Chase, compared the Senator unfavorably with Stephen Douglas, claiming to have heard them both speak a number of times.

... he did not employ the language of the people ... he could not please the crowds either "on the stump" or at the bar or in the legislative hall.12

Audiences were prone to thin out quickly when Chase rose to speak, an effect not favorable to his message. However, his distinguished physical appearance and borrowed credibility from a seat in the U.S. Senate lent dignity to most formal speech occasions.
Francis Preston Blair of Maryland was one of the more flamboyant and outspoken anti-slavery speakers of the campaign. He travelled throughout Missouri, railing against the spread of slavery into the territories. His life was threatened more than once. He seemed to be enormously gifted in generating hostility wherever he spoke. Professing a burning moral commitment to eradicate slavery, he was nevertheless a slave owner who undermined his credibility by refusing to emancipate his family's slaves.13

A variety of rhetorical tactics was employed in an effort to unify the divergent political beliefs which distinguished the early party spokesmen. For example, Republican speakers alluded to themselves and their supporters as the defenders of liberty, rather than as Republicans or abolitionists. The slavery argument was limited to the proposed expansion of the institution into the territories and the events in Kansas. The Know Nothing threat was soft-pedaled in those areas where American party and Republican co-operation would best serve to defeat Democratic candidates for office. Partisans were reminded that the South was an economic and intellectual wasteland, existing only to sap the North of its industrial and economic advantages.

John Charles Fremont was the popular symbol that united the diverse Republican speakers in the 1856 presidential
campaign. Fremont did not actively promote his own candidacy. He did not even attend the nomination convention in Philadelphia, so he was not present to accept formally his nomination on June 19, 1856. The major purpose served by this convention was to provide a forum for the moderate free-soil men. Fremont had already been "tapped" for the nomination by the dominant coalition of powerful ex-Whigs months before the convention, but a formal convention fulfilled a symbolic function that unified the free-soil coalitionists into a single political identity. The convention hardly met the criteria for a deliberative body, since the platform and the presidential candidate had been approved before the opening speech in Philadelphia.

Fremont was nominated on the first ballot to the great enthusiasm of the participants. Six days later, a ratification meeting in New York City ended with a torchlight procession to the home of the "Pathfinder," a meeting that the nominee had declined to attend when invited by enthusiastic supporters. However the Republicans were not ill-served by their candidate's silence. With his lack of political experience, he would have been a liability if pitted against Democratic orators such as the embittered Stephen Douglas. Instead of campaigning, the Fremonts "received." The candidate greeted small delegations of admirers at his home, where
his wife, Jesse Benton Fremont, served coffee. The partisans seemed gratified by their gracious reception, as confirmed by effusive descriptions appearing in the press.

In the midst of the group sat a small, intense, earnest, determined-looking man, who bore the trace of hardships and toil, yet his countenance beamed with such an expression of good-nature that it seemed to preserve a magnetic attraction for his guests. . . . My preconception of greatness was confounded - yet I could not help admiring the man more than ever . . . modesty; ability; integrity; were written as plainly as the alphabet upon the whole MAN.16

Fremont's silence allowed the professional campaigners of the party to organize a battery of highly skilled orators, fueled by sympathetic and powerful newspapers. Their skill was such that Fremont's name became the symbol for every democratic ideal they might conjure, with the Free Soil party slogan expanded to include "Free Speech, Free Press, Free Men, Free Labor and Fremont" to become the Republican rallying cry.17

Speeches by William H. Seward and Henry Ward Beecher are representative of the tactical speaking employed by Republicans in 1856. Their discourses dealt with a dual rhetorical vision posited by other leading Republicans. This vision provided for a nation which could either favor slavery and divide against itself and its founding principles or a nation which could abolish slavery and regain its integrity.
William H. Seward nursed a personal ambition to become the foremost speaker among the anti-slavery leaders, according to his biographer Frederick Bancroft. He enjoyed an undisputed reputation for "ringing oratory," and his participation in the 1856 campaign was critical to the success of the new party.

Henry Ward Beecher took a leave of absence from the pulpit to stump the northeast for the campaign. He compared slavery to a burning building and the political controversy raging around the issue to a quantity of explosives stored therein. He called for a daring but prudent man to rush between the fire and the explosives in order to separate them and preserve the surrounding institutions. Fremont, as the Republican candidate, was that unnamed, metaphorical man of daring and prudence. But even Beecher was hard pressed to answer the anti-Fremont accusations that streamed from the Democratic press. The primary attacks against Fremont included allegations that he was Catholic, that he was illegitimate, that he was an alcoholic, that he was negligent with regard to the fourth western expedition, that he was a slave-owner, and that he was engaged in land speculation in California. These Democratic attacks against Fremont's religion and parentage served indirectly to weaken his candidacy in those states that supported the nativist, Protestant sentiments shared by the Know
Nothings and their candidate, Millard Fillmore. The rest of the allegations were less serious problems than the loss of the anti-Catholic vote in Democratic strongholds like Pennsylvania.

This chapter analyzes the ethical appeals in selected speeches of representative Republican surrogate speakers. Campaign speeches by Charles Robinson, Andrew H. Reeder, Salmon P. Chase, William H. Seward, and Cassius M. Clay are examined for their ethical appeals. Robinson and Reeder were eye-witnesses to the violence in Kansas, Chase and Seward were experienced free soil politicians, and Clay was an anti-slavery southerner.

Eye-Witnesses

Charles Robinson and Andrew Horatio Reeder served as governors of Kansas during the first turbulent months of territorial organization. Reeder was appointed governor of the Kansas territory by President Pierce and was outraged by the corrupt election practices that resulted in a pro-slavery legislature being seated in 1854. Having taken his outrage to the people by engaging in a public-speaking tour on his way to Washington, D.C., in the winter of 1855, he proved too great an embarrassment to the Pierce administration and was removed as governor in July of 1855.
Returning to Kansas, he was elected as the free soil (free state) candidate for Congress in October, 1855, by a narrow margin over the pro-slavery candidate. Reeder then spent nine months campaigning for recognition of his status as a legal territorial representative to Congress. His status as a Congressional delegate was eventually disallowed by the special committee formed to examine his credentials. He returned to Kansas once again, arriving in the spring of 1856, when he was indicted for treason by a pro-slavery grand jury. He fled the state in May, and openly traveled east from Illinois, speaking frequently to large, sympathetic audiences during his journey to Washington, D.C.

Charles Robinson was indicted for treason along with Andrew Reeder in May of 1856. Robinson was an active abolitionist and a practicing physician who served as the resident agent for the Emigrant Aid Society, the Boston, Massachusetts, settlement group. Robinson's reputation as a proponent of "fair play" and as a defender of the underdog grew from his defense of California squatters whose land was pre-empted by Sutter during the height of the California gold rush. He was seriously wounded in an armed confrontation between the squatters and Sutter's men in 1849, then tried for conspiracy and murder. Robinson was eventually acquitted of both charges. While on trial, he was elected as a free soil proponent to the California
legislature, where he supported John C. Fremont's candidacy to the U.S. Senate.22

In Kansas, Robinson was active with free soil (free state) interests from 1854, when he arrived, until the successful admission of the state under a free soil constitution in 1861. During 1855-56, his home was sacked and burned by pro-slavery men and he was imprisoned. He was elected governor of Kansas under the free state Topeka constitution in 1855, but he did not take office until Kansas was admitted to the Union.23

During the campaign of 1856, Robinson traveled widely in the East, speaking in behalf of a free Kansas. He relied upon his personal experience and integrity as a free soil politician to generate good will toward the Republican platform.

Charles Robinson: Speech of October 22, 1856

Charles Robinson was the first free soil governor of Kansas. Before statehood was conferred on the Kansas territory, however, Robinson's election to the governorship by the extra-legal free state convention was an act of defiance which thrilled the anti-slavery sympathizers across the nation. Robinson traveled throughout the free states during the campaign of 1856, speaking in behalf of those free soil Kansans who had
elected him to office. His address of October 22, 1856, provides an example of the ethos which he brought to the Republican campaign.

According to the account printed in the *New York Daily Times*, Robinson was the first of several speakers to address a noisy, partisan audience that had jammed the New York Academy of Music to capacity. He opened his address by immediately establishing his status as a representative of the people of Kansas, enhancing his prior ethos.

... in the present canvass there is a great issue before the people. And I wish briefly to speak in regard to that issue, for I feel personally interested in it. I feel that the people that I in part represent here tonight, are personally interested in that issue. The question with me is a personal one...

The question was slavery. The issue was its extension into the territories. Robinson knew the partisan nature of his audience well. He did not provide any particulars about the extension of slavery until the conclusion of his speech. Instead, he spent the bulk of his address firmly establishing his credibility as a witness to the political problems in Kansas.

Robinson was an eyewitness to the Kansas atrocities. However, rather than discuss the sweeping events occurring on the frontier, events that were being chronicled with relish by the newspapers as quickly as telegraphed accounts were received from Kansas, Robinson chose to illustrate the conflict with a series of homespun,
specific examples. He reminded the audience of the unfair laws passed against the anti-slavery residents of Kansas by explaining that

The Missourians carried the election and they passed such laws as they chose - laws under which you can scarcely breathe. Why, a man cannot speak even to his wife in the night without being liable to break those laws.26

To some extent, the audience would have been familiar with the pro-slavery legislation of Kansas to some extent from reading editorials and news announcements headlined "Current Kansas Atrocities." By providing a folksy, humorous illustration of the unconstitutional constraints of the new laws, Robinson underlined the severity of the new legal code while invoking the sympathy of his audience. Robinson enhanced his credibility as an eyewitness by providing a sense of perspective for the particular problem - the abridgement of free speech in Kansas.

His understated description of the sack of Lawrence illustrated the hopeless frustration of the anti-slavery men in the face of the pro-administration border ruffians. In Robinson's account of "battle," the pro-slavery, territorial militia marched to the outskirts of Lawrence, Kansas, an anti-slavery settlement. The ruffians were armed and angry, just spoiling for a confrontation with the free state men. A rabble of 2,000 to 3,000 Missourians approached the city, claimed Robinson, only to
be stopped from engaging in open battle after marching, fully armed, right up to the city limits. The new governor of the territory, an administration appointee and pro-slavery man, talked the rabble into leaving the city of Lawrence alone. However, as Robinson recounted the confrontation, it was obvious that anti-slavery law and order prevailed over the unprincipled actions of the pro-slavery forces as they retreated from the field of "battle."

The governor goes down and gets them in consultation. They agreed very reluctantly that they would let Lawrence stand, and not attack at that time, and concluded they would go home. But, before they go home, they begin to steal horses again, right before the governor's eyes. 

Robinson illustrated the extent of the political corruption he had observed by describing how the insurgents proceeded to burn a sawmill and several homes while still in the governor's company. He drew no conclusions for his audience. Instead, he enhanced his ethos as a rational, intelligent observer by allowing his audience to draw its own conclusions about the actions of the pro-slavery administration in Kansas. Robinson was an expert free soil witness to the activities perpetrated by the pro-administration territorial government. He was unquestionably loyal to the anti-slavery, anti-administration coalition which sought to contain slavery. He illustrated the political
situation and identified the major figures, but Robinson drew no conclusions for his audience. He left the audience to draw the necessary inductive generalizations from Robinson's specific examples of injustice to the conclusion that the Pierce administration was to blame for the chaos that plagued the entire territory. Robinson provided his audience with a vivid contrast. He balanced his anecdotes with skill. The irrational activities of the pro-slavery faction were effectively contrasted with the understated observations of the more peaceful anti-slavery faction that Robinson represented.

For example, he captured the irony of the confrontation quoted above in the very next passage of his address. The citizens whose cattle had been stolen along with the horses appealed to the governor to help them recover their goods. Robinson related the following confrontation:

Well, the Governor says, I don't know, those men are gentlemen down there, I find that they are old political friends. I have known them before. I find them very honorable men and I don't know about stopping them; you ought to have driven your cattle away. Well, says a man, ought I to have driven away my sawmill that they burned? Robinson's drawling narrative style was perfectly suited to his reputation as a homespun, frontier man of action. His rather plain style reinforced his credibility as an intelligent, objective eyewitness. According to Thonsson, Baird and Braden, the relationship between the speaker's style and his credibility reveals the inner character of
the speaker to his audience since "personal character is clearly revealed by the speaker's style of expression."29

Although his speech was relatively free of stylistic figures, Robinson incorporated a great deal of irony into his narrative. Both irony and sarcasm served to underscore his sympathy for the Kansans while he ridiculed the administration. The ironic twists within each descriptive passage focused the attention of the audience on the point Robinson wished to emphasize, illustrating his facility for persuasive exposition.

Robinson related dialogue as a witness to its occurrence.30 In addition to his presence at the confrontation between the governor's troops and the anti-slavery settlers of Lawrence, Kansas, he was perceived as a reputable anti-slavery eyewitness because of his status as the victim of pro-administration persecution. He illustrated the lack of due process that faced the free soil settlers in a manner calculated to engage the good will of his audience.

Robinson relied upon this form of expository narrative throughout his address. His authority as a responsible eyewitness was enhanced, for he included no judgments against the territorial administration or the powers in Washington. In Speech Criticism, Thonssen, Baird and Braden contend that any distinctive speaking style is
"... an indivisible element of the process of persuasion and focuses attention on what language does, rather than exclusively upon what it is." Robinson probably hoped to enhance the identification process by presenting familiar political relationships, that is, patronage, re-set in a violent context. He painted a familiar picture - an administrative appointee (the governor) with corrupt associations (the pro-slavery men) exposed by an "honest man" (the farmer with the burned barn) who exposed the dishonest practices to the audience via the narrative sequence.

Robinson further implied Republican support of the free soil Kansans by burlesquing the illegal activities of the pro-slavery Pierce administration. He related an incident involving a roving "posse" of pro-slavery militia that had appropriated several hundred head of horses.

The Marshal of the United States is guilty then of horse stealing Kansas by the whole sale. The President of the United States retains him in office to this hour, indorses [sic] his conduct and he is himself a horse thief. The audience roared with applause and shouts at Robinson's observation. His narrative moved the audience to demonstrate a measure of their good will. He then shifted into an intense, first-person narrative of the particular atrocities in Kansas for which he blamed the President whom he had just characterized as a horse thief.
Now I tell you that I might depict to you every outrage that has been committed there, if I had the power and you could not believe them. . . . We can tell you of them but we cannot show you the dead body of Barboue, shot by an officer of the United States. We cannot show you the shrieking wife as she sees the dead body.\textsuperscript{33}

Robinson's plain style was perfectly suited to this climactic, intense exposition. His method of relating grand tragedy in simple terms enhanced his image as a credible eyewitness. He implied a sense of stark helplessness consistent with a horror-benumbed eyewitness account.

The image of Robinson presented by the speech text mirrored his prior ethos closely. The consistency between the type of action-loving man Robinson was perceived to be and the manner of active exposition that characterized his speech suggested that the speaker could be trusted by his listeners.

Robinson drew no explicit conclusions for his audience. He made no grand promises nor any dire threats about the national problems that could arise from the territorial unrest. Robinson used his narrative about the plight of Kansas to provide an inductive basis from which his audience could draw their own conclusions about the larger problems implied in Kansas. If Robinson assumed correctly, then the trustworthiness and credibility he established during the course of the speech should persuade the audience to support the free soil activists.
If Robinson's integrity, good taste, trustworthiness, and expertness were successfully demonstrated throughout the speech by the consistent objectivity with which he reported the violent and illegal activities in the Kansas territory then, based upon his experience in Kansas, Charles Robinson can be considered an expert witness against the Democratic administration. Therefore, the audience should reason that all men who accepted Robinson's narrative as the truth should vote against the Democratic administration.

The conclusion of the speech was not reproduced by the New York Daily Times, but the columnist summarized Robinson's closing remarks. He apparently suggested to his audience that a vote for Fremont was a vote against the Democratic administration, which Robinson blamed for the problems in Kansas. Since the rally at which he spoke was sponsored by the Young Men's Republican General Committee of the City of New York, Robinson's closing remarks were predictably partisan and a necessary part of the speech. His address expressed support for the Republican program with regard to its ability to redress the constitutional infringements wrought on the citizens of Kansas by the pro-slavery, Democratic administration in Washington, D.C. However, Robinson's partisan remarks were scant. Robinson's speech was designed to support the anti-slavery stance of the Republican party, that is, the
concept that the Kansas situation was a blatant Democratic attempt to force slavery on the territories.

Charles Robinson was not the first eyewitness to address a New York audience during the 1856 campaign. Andrew Reeder, the first governor of the Kansas territory, had spoken in New York City earlier in the campaign. Reeder was an experienced anti-slavery politician as well as an eyewitness to the chaos in Kansas. He was not an active member of the Republican party, however. He was a free soil advocate with the ability to testify to the pro-slavery abuses fostered on the Kansas settlers by the Democratic administration.

Andrew Reeder: Speech of 27 August 1856

Andrew Reeder spoke before an audience of approximately three thousand in the New York Tabernacle on Tuesday, August 27, 1856. He arrived late. He had cancelled a scheduled speech earlier in the summer at the same location long after the Tabernacle was filled with an eager audience. The packed house was noisy, hot, and unruly, according to the newspaper account. Reeder was anxiously awaited by the organizing committee, since they hoped that his arrival would calm the crowd.

Although delayed, Reeder arrived to speak that Tuesday
evening. His appearance was met with cheers and sustained applause, according to the New York Daily Tribune.  

Reeder had served a short, turbulent term as the first governor of Kansas, appointed by President Pierce. His reputation for first-hand knowledge of the political chaos in the territory produced for him a strong initial ethos when speaking to partisan groups during the 1856 canvass. In addition, Reeder's election to the U.S. Senate by the anti-slavery settlers in Kansas probably enhanced his ethos as a spokesman before anti-slavery audiences.

Reeder was sincerely outraged by the violence in the territory. His sincerity and integrity were evident as he attempted to engage the good will of his audience with the introduction to his speech. "I come before you upon a mission from the Free State men of Kansas to tell their tale of wrongs and to appeal to you for that aid." However, his appeal was indirect, compared to the emotional appeals of Robinson's vivid narrative. Reeder attempted to engage the sympathy of his audience without describing particular activities or remedies. The good will he hoped to induce in his audience was heavily process-oriented. He appealed for their sympathy and their support. He thanked the audience for its show of sympathetic applause upon his entrance to the hall. He claimed that their eager applause demonstrated their acceptance of his presence as the official representative
of all "who are struggling for their dearest rights upon the plains of far-off Kansas."

I come to you not as a politician to urge the claims of any candidate for office. I represent a party who has but one article in their creed - the making of a Free State in Kansas.  

Reeder made use of his ethos as the ex-governor of the territory. He declined to solicit votes from his audience, claiming only to be a non-political representative of beleaguered, free soil Kansans. He attempted to enhance his integrity by promising "to give fellowship and sympathy and thanks to every man who is laboring on sincerely to make Kansas free according to the test of his judgement."  

In contrast to the indirect, narrative nature of Robinson's appeals, Reeder hammered at his audience with his first person demands. He declined to associate himself formally with the Republican party, choosing to identify himself only as a free state representative. "I speak for free Kansas and that alone," he asserted in his introduction. Postulating that the "truths" he revealed during his speech might help one party or another, he insisted that he did not wish to be held accountable for supporting one political organization over another, even by implication. 

As the introduction drew to a close, Reeder suggested
the depth of his single-minded commitment to a free Kansas by saying

I shall go as straight to my object as my intellect will allow, and shall not deviate to the right or left for the sake of candidates or parties. If, however, the truths I shall tell, and the remedies I shall suggest, shall incidentally help any party, it is their due and I shall have nothing to take back. If on the other hand, they shall work injury to any, the responsibility is on them and not on me, and I shall not have a shadow of regret for my action, whatever I may have for theirs.  

Reeder left nothing to chance in his efforts to establish his authority as a free state spokesman. If anything, his emphasis upon his qualifications to represent the free soil cause made his personal credibility the sole issue. Reeder's insistence that the audience accept his credentials as a man of integrity may have been purposefully defensive. According to Winston Brembeck and William Howell in their work, *Persuasion: A Means of Social Influence*, the validity of a speaker's assertions as perceived by an audience is a function of the trustworthiness he is able to project during the speech act.  

Reeder had been appointed governor of the Kansas territory by President Pierce. The Pierce administration was perceived as strongly pro-slavery by the Republican party. In his speech, "The Crime Against Kansas," Sumner had accused Reeder of complicity with the Pierce administration, charging that Reeder was a "tool of
Pierce" for not challenging all of the territorial election returns in 1854. Sumner was a radical abolitionist with high political credibility in New York, so Reeder had to defend beyond doubt his trustworthiness as an anti-slavery spokesman.

Reeder developed a three-part ethical appeal in his own defense. First, he established himself as a loyal free state man by reminding his audience of his free soil activities and associations. Second, he illustrated his concern for the plight of Kansas and the constitutional rights of those citizens he had been appointed to protect. Third, he appealed to the audience to concern themselves with the welfare of Kansas as a means of protecting the welfare of the entire nation by presenting an inductive analysis of the slavery threat based upon his experience and observations.

Rather than demonstrating his trustworthiness, Reeder initially demanded that his audience accept his credentials as a man of integrity by asserting that his purpose was moral and that his intent was selfless. His introduction was designed to reinforce his strong partisan credibility, establish his credentials as a trustworthy source, and imply his support of the Republican party. He recited an emotional chronology of the wrongs inflicted on the population of Kansas by the pro-slavery faction that had pre-empted the legislative power in his territory.
Reeder absolved himself of responsibility for carrying out the "oppressive" measures dictated by the Pierce administration by claiming that he suffered from equal oppression. He charged that a "scheme" existed to bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state, just as Sumner had claimed in his "Crime" speech. Reeder argued that he was obviously blameless for any part in the pro-slavery scheme, since he had left the territory in order to bring notice of the scheme to the nation via a series of public lectures. He attempted to regain his trustworthiness and integrity by "exposing" the scheme at the public forums provided by the election campaign.

Like Sumner, Reeder offered no evidence for asserting the existence of any scheme. He relied upon the audience to associate his virtuous intention to expose the pro-slavery schemers with the commendable character he intended them to perceive. If the audience perceived him to be the honest, wise, and just man he claimed to be, then his assertions would probably be perceived as truthful as well.

Reeder's strongest source of credibility was his expertise as an eyewitness and as an administrative insider. His inductive analysis of the Kansas situation was the only indication that he wanted the audience to perform a specific service, to vote into office those national representatives who would stop slavery from
entering the territories. By skillfully scattering emotional and ethical appeals throughout the body of his speech, Reeder implied that the nation was in danger if the situation in Kansas, as he portrayed it, were not resolved in favor of the free state party. His revelation of the administration's scheme to bring Kansas into the Union as a slave state was accompanied by a promise to "endeavor to show you what the awful consequences of that consummation will be to the North."

Reeder described the coming territorial election as a travesty which would indirectly affect every member of his audience should they fail to support the free soil advocates in the fall election. Reeder postulated that the results of the October territorial elections would be manipulated by the same armed ruffians and corrupt election officials who had engineered the outcome of the pro-slavery victory of 1855. Unless his audience provided support for national free soil candidates, history would repeat itself. Should the successful pro-slavery legislature draft a slavery constitution for Kansas, argued Reeder, then the "contest is transferred from the plains of Kansas to the halls of Congress and it will there be battled by you."  

Reeder reasoned that a policy of unrestricted slavery throughout the nation would result in a gross political imbalance in Congress. He reasoned that the election of a
pro-slavery legislature in Kansas would result in the extension of slavery into all other territories, upsetting the power balance in Congress, for "Each state will send two Senators, the South will have the preponderance of power, and when do you suppose we will get it back?"

He indicted the Pierce administration for condoning the constitutional abuses occurring in Kansas. Reeder provided an historical example to illustrate the depth of corruption in Washington, strengthening his credibility as an intellectual analyst. He compared the treasonous activities of the Pierce administration to those committed during the reign of Charles I of England. He compared Jeffries, of the Bloody Assizes, to Lecompte of Kansas, earning a round of sympathetic "hisses" from the audience.

Reeder, himself, had been charged with treason for his anti-slavery activities in Kansas. He fled the territory during the early weeks of the Republican campaign, fearing for his life and the safety of his family. After his flight, he enjoyed great popularity as an anti-slavery speaker. Therefore, his counter-charge against the Democratic administration served both to reinforce his credibility as an anti-slavery eye-witness to the atrocities in Kansas as well as to substantiate the Republican argument against the constitutionality of the pro-slavery, Democratic policies in Kansas. Reeder
shifted the focus of the argument from a defense of his innocence to a charge of collective guilt for an entire administration. His audience responded with enthusiasm to his counter-charge of treason against the administration that condoned the violence in Kansas.

His final appeal served to complete the sense of identity between the northern audience he addressed and the free state men in Kansas.

The free laboring men [sic] of the North should know that the people of Kansas are fighting his battles and fighting to settle the question whether he shall have a right to go there and build a home for himself and his children.\(^{43}\)

Reeder concluded that the only means of protecting Kansas and the rest of the nation from the pro-slavery factions (and, by implication, the Democrats) was to vote against the policies of the current administration by voting against those candidates fielded by the party currently in power.

On September 19, in New Haven, Connecticut, Reeder delivered his second New England address of the campaign. He made no reference to his tenure as a representative of Kansas. He constructed this New Haven address with subtle, implicit political appeals in contrast to his New York address in which his purpose was explicitly stated.

His major concern in the second speech appears to have been the re-establishment of civil rights in Kansas. He urged that legal, constitutional measures be invoked so
that due process might return to the courts of the territory. His references to the violent struggles in Kansas were refined. He referred indirectly to the violence, describing the bloodshed as "a struggle of a few years." 44

As in his New York speech, Reeder projected the impact of a pro-slavery Kansas constitution upon the rest of the nation, and specifically upon New England, detailing the effects of new slave states on western emigration and congressional balance-of-power.

Reeder continued with this theme of pro-Republican morality throughout his address. He relied upon sweeping generalizations to illustrate the morality of the anti-slavery forces in Kansas. He likened the free soil population of Kansas to the serfs of Russia, for example, in their forced servitude to the pro-slavery legislature. To enhance identification with his implied constituency in Kansas, Reeder relied upon the use of collective pronouns throughout the address. As he indicted the pro-slavery politicians currently governing Kansas during the campaign, he asserted,

Having thus robbed us of all our political rights, shut us out from the ballot box, deprived us of access to all judicial remedies, stripped us of our leaders, destroyed our presses, the next step was to destroy all facilities for Northern emigration and isolate us from our friends in the States. 45
Reeder thus sought to establish himself as the authoritative link between the two scenes: the Kansas atrocities, which he had witnessed, and the prospective northern emigrants, some of whom were perhaps occupying seats in that very auditorium.

The New Haven address included many of the same arguments that comprised the earlier New York speech. Reeder barely alluded to the upcoming presidential election, the Republican party, or any of the candidates. He professed no partisanship except to a free Kansas. Yet, the New York Daily Tribune subtitled his speech, "Reasons for Electing Fremont and Dayton." Reeder's speech was inherently pro-Republican. Its anti-slavery sentiments echoed an emergent Republican fantasy theme, an argument in favor of free labor throughout the nation. Therefore, Reeder's appearance in behalf of those free state Kansans who had been denied due process associated him with a worthwhile cause and was therefore probably persuasive. He demonstrated, through his eye-witness testimony, that the pro-slavery forces encouraged lawlessness. He attempted to increase a sense of identification between his northeastern, pro-Republican audience and his fellow free state Kansans. Therefore, by linking both his cause and himself to positions which his partisan audiences approved, he tapped a strong source of artistic proof in support of the Republican party.
Salmon P. Chase, William H. Seward, and Cassius M. Clay were well-known anti-slavery politicians. Chase was the recently-elected governor of Ohio and an acknowledged leading radical Republican during the 1856 campaign. He was able to generate sympathy for the Republican cause by using his own campaign and political record as evidence.

Chase was an outspoken foe of slavery. He had served in the U.S. Senate as a Free Soil party member from 1849-1855. He ran as the first Republican gubernatorial candidate in Ohio in 1855, defeating his Know-Nothing and Democratic opponents by enlarging upon the issues of sectionalism and the problem of slavery in the territories. He used his own victory, and the defeat of his opponents, as a focus for his pro-Republican oratory during the 1856 presidential canvass. Chase professed to be an example of the ideal Republican candidate, representing the economic and political stability of the Republican platform.

William H. Seward had long been an active anti-slavery representative in Congress. His reputation as a Conscience Whig was well known throughout the free states. However, he was reluctant to apply his influence with the New York voters in favor of Fremont's candidature. Seward,
himself, had hoped to represent the new party as its first presidential candidate. He was humiliated by the party's decision to endorse Fremont for the position that Seward felt he had earned during his tenure as a party founder. William Seward considered withdrawing from public life at the end of the summer in 1856, since he felt that his party had scrapped its principles by nominating an inexperienced, but publicly and politically useful, presidential candidate.

Seward labored in Congress throughout the summer of 1856, during which a special session of Congress had been convened to deal with army appropriations. Congress did not adjourn until the end of August, and Seward was deeply involved in arguing for the admission of Kansas as a free state even during the special session. When the Congress finally adjourned, Seward announced plans to travel abroad during the fall, but he was persuaded to remain in the United States and lend his voice to the campaign. Thurlow Weed, among other leading Republicans, urged Seward to display better sportsmanship and to take an active part in the campaign. Seward agreed, but he limited his engagements to New York and Detroit. His address at Auburn, New York, which clearly demonstrated his lack of enthusiasm for the canvass, is examined in this chapter.
Cassius Marcellus Clay was a southerner who had embraced the abolitionist cause. His support of the Republican platform was potentially valuable because he provided eyewitness testimony about the abuses of the slave system in the South. He was fiercely dedicated to the eradication of slavery and gifted with the eloquence to move his audience to action. Clay was Yale-educated but reckless and willful. His personal life was punctuated with duels, brawls, and at least one murder. Therefore, Clay's primary value to the Republican campaign of 1856 lay in his ethical appeal as a southern abolitionist.

Salmon P. Chase: Address of July 1, 1856

Salmon P. Chase was serving as the governor of Ohio during the 1856 presidential contest. Chase had served in the U.S. Senate for six years, then won election in the 1855 gubernatorial contest when his term in the Senate expired. He was a popular speaker at anti-slavery meetings, so his prior ethos was that of an active, politically seasoned, anti-expansionist Republican. When speaking in behalf of the Republican party, Chase used his own political background as his strongest argument in favor of other Republican candidates. He limited his speaking engagements to Ohio, normally
addressing partisan groups in or near Cincinnati. On July 1, 1856, Chase spoke briefly before an outdoor rally in downtown Cincinnati, where his political record and achievements were well known to his audience.54

Chase announced that his topic would be freedom and slavery as they affected the governing of the republic as a whole. Since the responsibility of his office dictated that Chase protect the welfare of his constituents, he meant to continue speaking against slavery for the good of his fellow Ohioans as well as for the good of the Republicans. He reminded them of his long experience as an abolitionist speaker and of his popular election as a free soil adherent. Then, he reminded his audience that he was addressing them unofficially - not as the governor of Ohio, but as a concerned citizen of the nation. He endeavored to establish his competence on two fronts, as a duly elected public servant and as an acknowledged spokesman for a national party. He included a touch of humility, as further evidence of his selfless intent.

There are times and occasions when, before addressing a public and political meeting, a public servant might need to apologize for his appearance in assemblies where the strict line of official duties did not call him. . . . I am here tonight to discuss the question that most nearly affects us as citizens.55

Having defined his identity as a servant of the public, Chase claimed that it was his official duty as a "friend
to our form of government" to address the "imminent danger" facing the national government.

The body of his short address had three major parts. In the first portion, Chase illustrated the alleged shortcomings of the Democratic administration by presenting a selective chronology of those events that led from the repeal of the Missouri Compromise to the Democratic campaign of 1856. He spoke from personal experience as he developed the chronology. He had served in the Senate and participated in many of the decisions pivotal to the current campaign.

Pursuing a rhetorical strategy of enhancing his own character by attacking the behavior of an opponent, Chase charged the Democrats with political irresponsibility for nominating Pierce and promoting an oligarchy which had proven unpopular even within their own party. "I cannot think of any good thing done or proposed by this President, and therefore I will be silent." By implication, Chase condemned the party which had nominated Pierce. However, his condemnation reflected his good taste by being discrete, indirect, and humorous. He suggested that the Democrats had failed their public trust to defend the principles of the Constitution and that Democratic leaders had acknowledged that failure by nominating someone other than the incumbent to run for the presidency.
Chase briefly developed the notion that Pierce and the Democrats were dedicated to promoting a slave-based political power. Rather than allude to the "plot" theory proposed by Reeder and Robinson, Chase derived his authority from his political experience in Washington, D.C. Chase charged that Pierce had served the slave-power interests more fully than any previous President, doing exactly as he was directed by "the sole and trusted representatives of the slaveholding oligarchy." Chase avoided naming the opposition as the Democratic party. He alluded to the organization that fielded Pierce as its representative, but he avoided making direct accusations by naming the party. The partisan audience was left to draw its own connections between Pierce, slavery, and the party currently in power.

Chase illustrated the second half of his speech with what he claimed were successful Republican policies as implemented by himself as governor of Ohio. Chase claimed that "Manufacturers are stimulated, the price of property has advanced - everybody is employed - and the Union stands! Have I not a right to claim all this as a result of my election?" Chase used his political record and the ethos of his elected office to imply that effective Republican leadership in Ohio could provide a model for effective Republican leadership elsewhere in the nation.

... the opponents of our cause predicted
... that if Salmon P. Chase was elected Governor, Cincinnati would sink; the Union would be dissolved; there would be no trade; commerce would make her farewell appearance on the northern shore of the Ohio . . .58

He then testified to the various economic and political successes that had been achieved in Ohio since his election, arguing that if the opposing party had been in error about the results of Ohio's election, then they could make a similar error in predicting the outcome of the national election. Having listed the positive results of his short tenure in office, Chase linked his political identity to the national Republican campaign effort by preparing to "speak of the beneficent influence already felt from this uprising of the people in behalf of the Republican cause."

In this third portion of his speech, Chase attempted to establish his political integrity. He recited a lengthy chronology of the evils inflicted upon the American society by the party currently controlling the government. He continued to allude to the guilty Democrats without naming the party, demonstrating his verbal moderation in the face of violent issues.

I care nothing about names of party; it is the principles to be asserted and maintained; all that we want to know is, whether men who are presented to us for our suffrages will use their positions in the right way. I don't know that it is worth while to talk about Buchanan or any of the candidates.59
Chase lodged a direct attack on the Democratic party as he concluded his speech. Having reminded his audience of the outrages in Kansas, he remarked that "The candidates of the so-called Democratic party represent the wrongs we have referred to, and in this light only have we to regard that party." Just as he would have his audience judge the Republican party on the record he represented, Chase demanded that his audience then judge the Democrats on the evidence he presented in his address. Chase offered his own political record to support the Republican standards of constitutionality and fairness. He detailed the legal abuses in Kansas as the Democratic record.

Chase had hoped to represent the Republicans as their presidential candidate in 1856. He felt that his record as an active anti-expansionist would be adequate endorsement for his candidacy. When Fremont was given the nomination, Chase continued to support his party, but he kept his endorsement of its candidates rather general. As he concluded his address, Chase recommended Fremont to the crowd, claiming that Fremont was a man "... who never says a thing he don't [sic] mean, and never promises a thing he don't [sic] perform." That was the sum of his political endorsement.

The final passage of the address was an appeal for anti-slavery votes in November. The close argumentation and personal testimony which characterized the body of the
speech gave way to generalizations and partisan assertions. Chase predicted that the eradication of slavery would produce the "blessed spectacle of a happy people, fearing God and loving the right." Prosperity would follow automatically once freedom was secured in all the territories, and the welfare of the nation would be insured, according to Chase. All of these good things would come to pass if his audience voted correctly. He could make such a promise believable for, on his own authority, he had established happiness, prosperity and freedom in Ohio as a Republican governor.

Cassius M. Clay: "Slavery or Freedom?" Speech of 24 October 1856

Cassius M. Clay spoke before the Young Men's Fremont and Dayton Central Union on Friday, October 24, in New York City. His purpose was to generate new enthusiasm for the flagging Republican campaign. Clay's prior ethos as a masterful orator and a popular southern abolitionist was reinforced by his enthusiastic reception, as reported by the *New York Daily Times*. His address was interrupted repeatedly by laughter, cheers and applause during the course of the evening, indicating his popularity and acceptance as a party spokesman.
Clay employed a variety of stylistic devices to enhance the emotional appeal of his address. Clay relied primarily upon satire to engage the sympathy of his audience. He enlarged upon the stereotypical impressions of the South and southerners held by his northern audience. For example, he referred to slave owners as "those who are in the habit of fainting away whenever the word liberty is mentioned . . . ."

Clay divided his address into three major portions, each section relying for proof on his credibility as a southerner, a scholar, and an experienced politician.

First, he charged that southern slave-holding practices created an oligarchical form of government which prevented the universal exercise of personal liberty. He demonstrated that he was knowledgeable about the subject by referring to his experiences in Kentucky politics. He charged that the entire southern region was an oligarchy. The South was guilty of sectionalism, a real threat to freedom and liberty in the rest of the nation. " . . . the intention of the fathers of the Constitution was that Liberty should be national and Slavery sectional, . . . ." for " . . . the man who follows blindly the dictation of the South and would make a slave of a black man today would make a slave of a white man tomorrow." Therefore, Clay demanded that every citizen should have the right to pursue liberty for his own protection.
Further enhancing his ethos by demonstrating his knowledge of the matter, Clay illustrated the difference between the intent of the founding fathers who held slaves but created the documents providing national liberty, and the intentions of the men who desired to curtail all personal liberties by opening the entire nation to slavery. He proposed that, in spite of their ownership of slaves, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and George Washington recognized the necessary personal liberties that distinguished a democracy. Again arguing from his authority as a native southerner, Clay insisted that there were indeed men living in the South in 1856 who appreciated the principles of liberty as outlined by the authors of the Constitution.

... although the leading patriots and minds of the South recognize in common with those of the North, man's equality in law ... yet, the great masses of the southern people did not recognize and appreciate this great idea.63

He claimed that the founding fathers could not be faulted for the oligarchy that arose in the slave states. Clay's detailed explanation regarding the intentions of the founding fathers was designed to answer Democratic arguments demonstrating the constitutionality of unrestrained slavery. Leading Democrats argued that the nation was founded by slave owners who never intended the slave to be free to enjoy the privileges of liberty.
Measured by the neo-Aristotelian methodology developed in *Speech Criticism*, Clay's arguments appear to establish his integrity as a southerner who recognized and respected the concepts of liberty and equality. His ethos would be all the stronger by virtue of his role as "reluctant witness," that is, a southerner who supported the anti-slavery cause. His image as a leading mind of the South was reinforced by his demonstrated knowledge of those concepts, and his good will toward his audience was emphasized by his allusions to their good fortune in being from the "enlightened" North.

Throughout his short address, Clay referred to the audience as "you men of the North" and "you, the Christian people of the nineteenth century." He emphasized his role as a southerner, referring to southern men collectively as "we" and "us." He reminded the audience of his prediction regarding the annexation of Texas as a slave state, further demonstrating his political foresight.

I warned you against the annexation of Texas as a slave state. Now after twelve years more, I stand before you again, and I tell you that this struggle must sometime be met, that one or the other of these principles must triumph in this country.64

The accuracy of his predictions reinforced his image as a man of intelligence, further establishing his ethos.

The speaker reminded the audience that the spread of slavery posed a national problem, which Clay had correctly identified twelve years before the 1856 campaign,
according to his own recorded testimony. He demanded that his northern audience support the cause of freedom since he claimed that slavery was an affront to both Christian and democratic ideals. Clay's reasoning flattered his regional audience. The North was consistent in its Christian principles and its pursuit of universal liberty, according to Clay's definitions. The South denied its Christian heritage by enslaving both blacks and whites in a society that concentrated its power in the hands of a few greedy individuals, again according to Clay's observations. Therefore, if Clay could "convert" to a Christian, northern, anti-slavery ideology, then other intelligent, thoughtful, Christian southerners could also "convert." Clay's ethos was his main contribution to the Republican cause.

William H. Seward: Address of 23 October 1856

William H. Seward entered the ranks of pro-Republican campaign speakers with reluctance. Stung by the party's refusal to select him as its first presidential candidate, Seward professed little interest in promoting the candidacy of Fremont. He agreed to speak in behalf of his party only as the campaign drew to a close in the fall of 1856.
On October 23, he addressed a Republican meeting in Auburn, New York. There were several thousand townspeople in attendance, according to an estimate appearing in the New York Daily Times. The crowd enthusiastically greeted Seward upon his introduction, cheering and whistling as he rose to speak.

Although Seward was speaking to a friendly, partisan, home-town audience, his address was devoid of specific campaign ideology or endorsement. The tenor of this particular address was neither enthusiastic nor sincere. Seward refused to discuss the candidates, claiming that "It is not my habit to speak largely of candidates." Rather than engaging the emotions of his audience in support of Fremont and the Republican party, Seward presented a solid, logical analysis of the political dangers inherent in any three party contest.

Seward signalled his wish to renew his identification with his audience in either a modest attempt to gain their good will or as a means of asking their indulgence while he engaged in a political ritual demanded by his party.

We are neighbors and friends. We know each other well. I know that you are sincere and you know, as I trust, that I am not a man of ungrateful disposition.

The introduction to his message may have been aimed at his supporters who were not willing to trust the leaders or the policies of the new party that had ungratefully cast Seward aside in 1856.
Having tried to establish a link with his audience in the introduction, Seward proceeded to analyze the general role of organized parties in national elections. He warned his audience that his address would be rhetorically unembellished by claiming that "you will not expect from me either humorous, exaggerated, passionate, or prejudicial speech." Seward insisted that his lengthy political career, and his professional interaction with many of the candidates, precluded him from supporting one man over another.

First, because, being necessarily brought into public combination or conflict with public men, my judgement concerning them is liable to the bias of partiality or jealousy. Secondly, because it is not the habit of parties in our country to select unfit, unworthy, or unreliable men to be their representatives.67

His support of the Republican party was tepid. His prior ethos suggested that he would address the gathering with the fervor he had displayed in his free soil arguments on the floor of the Senate. Yet, the even, unemotional tenor of his address suggests that he was unenthusiastic in his support of the Republican candidate and the impression may have affected his credibility with the audience.

The only aspect of the speech that might have increased Seward's ethos was the character that he demonstrated as a speaker. He exhibited good taste and moderation throughout the address. His condemnation of the Know-Nothing party was restrained, as he accused it of
"distracting the public mind" and interposing "an unreal
or false issue" on the minds of the voters. These traits
presented him as a man of good character.

Restraint is evident throughout the address. He
accused the Democratic administration in Washington of
opening all states to slavery as it overruled individual
state constitutions during the period of 1850-1856, and he
concluded that "... the whole of the Territories has
been already lost to freedom by the legislation of the
last seven years."

Seward provided a single, tepid endorsement of the
Republican party to fulfill the ostensible purpose of his
speech.

During the first six years of that period
1849-1856, there were only two parties - the
Democratic and the Whig parties - in Congress
and in the country. During the last year,
there were three, the Democrats, Know-
Nothing, and Republican Parties. Everyone
will at once acquit the Republican Party, and
those who now constitute it, of all agency in
the betrayal and surrender of Freedom which
have been made.68

Seward relied upon his personal experience as a Senator to
substantiate his allegations against the Whig, Democratic,
and Know-Nothing parties. However, his endorsement of the
Republicans was limited to his assertion that the party
could not be held responsible for any political activity
prior to its inception.

The conclusion of the address was equally ambivalent.
Seward claimed to have examined, without partiality, the
political parties contending for the presidency in 1856. He praised the audience as honest, well-meaning and patriotic, a technique by which speakers are often able to gain the good will of listeners. He attempted to assuage his injured dignity and reputation by observing that "While I have tried to pursue always one steady course which my conscience has approved, friends have often been alienated and adversaries have become friends." He sought to reinforce a favorable image by claiming that his judgment of those he alienated was charitable and he appealed for a charitable judgement from those who opposed him.

Seward spoke in his own defense on this occasion, not in defense of his party. He referred to his political record and his presidential qualifications. He did not present his political loyalty with any degree of sincerity. The tone of the entire address was one of wounded pride and reluctance to join in an enthusiastic effort to elect a national candidate in spite of personal differences. Seward appeared to be seeking personal support from a local, sympathetic audience rather than using his enormous influence to sway the audience in favor of Fremont's election and a Republican victory. Perhaps if he had exhibited a greater show of enthusiasm, Seward might have alienated the New York free soil contingent. Seward's purpose seems to have been immediate validation
of his continued favor with the home-town crowd rather than to be recognized among the premier Republican speakers of the 1856 campaign.

Summary

The five speakers discussed in this chapter made effective use of their prior ethos in promoting the Republican platform in 1856. The vital, pugnacious personality of Cassius Clay infused his address with an urgency and importance unavailable to a more timid speaker. As a southerner, Clay could have possessed a particularly strong ethos, since he advocated positions a southerner would not be expected to support. His credibility would have been high, analogous to a "reluctant witness" in a courtroom. Clay's ethos probably grew as his reputation followed him from one speaking engagement to the next. He consistently demonstrated an understanding of Republican values in his pro-Union, anti-slavery addresses. Although Clay demonstrated an occasional lack of moderation, tact, or good taste within his speeches, his bold and direct accusations of corruption within the ranks of the southern Democrats may well have formed the basis of effective ethical appeals.

Robinson, Reeder and Chase demonstrated character and intelligence in their addresses, according to the
standards provided by the neo-Aristotelian model of analysis. Each man brought authority to the speech occasion based on personal experience. According to the inserted observations of the newspaper reporters, identification between speaker and audience was successful as measured by applause and vocal feed-back from the audience. On the whole, their ethos probably contributed to strengthening pre-existing positive attitudes toward the Republican party and its presidential candidate.
Notes

1 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, pp. 446 - 451.

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

3 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, pp. 459-460.

4 Smith, pp. 1-2.

5 Johnson, p. 43.


13 Smith, p. 291.


16 "A Visit to Col. Fremont", New York Times, 3 October 1856, p. 3.


21 Blackmar, p. 555.

22 Blackmar, p. 589.

23 Blackmar, p. 590.


28 Times, p.1, col.4.

29 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 489.


31 Thonssen, Baird and Braden, p. 489.
32 Times, p.1, col.3.

33 Times, p.1, col.5.


38 Tribune, p.1, col.1.


40 Sumner, Works, V, p. 186.

41 Tribune, p.1, col.4.

42 Blackmar, Cyclopedia, II, p. 556.

43 Tribune, p.1, col.4.


48 Bancroft, I, p. 420.

49 Bancroft, I, p. 420.


54 "Great Meeting at Cincinnati," Tribune, 4 July 1856, p.1, cols. 4-5.

55 Tribune, 4 July 1856, p.1, col.4.

56 Tribune, 4 July 1856, p.1, col.5.

57 Tribune, 4 July 1856, p.1, col.4.
58 Tribune, 4 July 1856, p.1, col.4.

59 Tribune, 4 July 1856, p.1, col.5.


Chapter 5
Logical Appeals

According to the methodology presented in *Speech Criticism*, the logical appeals of a speech act can be examined for three elements: the validity of an idea as presented by the speaker; the application of argumentation theory to the development of proof in support of the speaker's idea; and the "measure of truth" demonstrated in the reasoning processes utilized by the speaker. ¹ Although cautioning that these criteria alone are not a precise formula for speech criticism, the authors suggest the following three-part method for judging the logical development of a persuasive appeal: one, the "intellectual resources" of the speaker; two, the "severity and strictness" of the logical forms; and three, the basic "truth" of the speaker's ideas as they relate to existing conditions.

The "truths" from which the Republican speakers argued were developed in the party ideology. "Freedom" was the basic theme of the party platform and free labor was the prevailing emphasis of each Republican campaign address. As defined by Eric Foner, free labor encompassed not only the doctrine of freedom from bondage as a Constitutional
guarantee, but also the dignity of individual labor as the basis of a functioning capitalistic society. Individual labor was perceived as the foundation of a vital, expanding economy endowed with the morality of the eighteenth century Protestant work ethic. Free labor was a concept that included the opportunity for the laborer to rise from one economic level to the next as the just reward of his industriousness. Economic independence was the epitome of the working man's career.

Although the free labor concept was appealing to the growing middle class in 1856, it was unpopular among northern industrialists. According to Foner's analysis, free labor threatened the capitalistic concept that employees should be grateful for their jobs regardless of working conditions or salary. However, most Republican speakers did not focus their rhetoric on the concerns of the big industrialists, since big business was well served by the political status quo. Instead, the orators were concerned with the votes of the middle class - a middle class, swelling with skilled immigrants and western businessmen, that was beginning to threaten the entrenched economic dominance of the eastern industrial establishment.

As a result of their free labor ideology, the Republicans perceived the stratified slave labor society of the South as an economic threat to the North.
Nathaniel Banks, whose Wall Street speech is examined in this chapter, addressed the negative economic ramifications of any future southern political dominion with a series of sectional arguments. To enhance the perception of the economic problems foreseen under another Democratic administration, the Republicans developed their own version of the southern conspiracy theory, linking national economic ruin with continued southern political domination in Congress. The speakers predicted that the southern states would act together as a unified "slave power" to use the national government to promote the interests of the slave states over those of the progress-minded North. The erosion of free labor would accompany any consolidation of southern leadership in the federal government, resulting in a national slave society. Republicans claimed that any portion of a society that did not allow its workers to savor the rewards of their own labors could hardly be expected to promote the work ethic and economic growth of any other region in the country.

The logical arguments employed by Republican speakers were confined to the premise of free labor as a Constitutional right. In addition, many of the speakers built arguments against the extension of slavery by "proving" the existence of a pro-southern Democratic conspiracy to open the entire territorial United States to slavery. The arguments in favor of these concepts were
constructed by men highly skilled in public speaking who addressed particularly receptive audiences.

This chapter examines the particular logical appeals employed by the following speakers: Nathaniel Banks, speaker of the House, who provided the most dramatic example of logical proof in favor of free labor while addressing an outdoor assembly of New York merchants from the steps of the New York Merchant's Exchange; George Curtis, a newcomer to politics, who addressed a gathering of literary men in Middletown, Connecticut, on their duty as scholars to fight actively the "slave power" with their pens and their votes in order to protect the First Amendment guarantees of the Constitution; and William H. Seward, who provided the ideological premises of the Republican platform as a rational alternative to the breakdown of the political and economic systems that a Democratic administration would trigger.

Specific attention is paid to the use of economic and sectional appeals in place of the more inflammatory abolitionist and pro-Kansas rhetoric of the ethical and emotional appeals. Each speech is examined for two major premises as described in Speech Criticism: first, an analysis of the Republican economic policy embodied in the free labor concept in terms of credible evidence and valid reasoning processes; second, an analysis of the political
threat envisioned by a "united" South for further credible evidence and valid reasoning.

According to the methodology presented in Thonsseen, Baird and Braden, the invention of sound logical arguments lies in the speaker's ability to recognize pressing socio-political problems; to think reflectively about those problems in order to define solutions; and to identify probable implications of those solutions. The three speakers analyzed in this chapter effectively identified the containment of slavery and the growing threat of southern political control in the Congress as the pressing socio-political issues facing the campaign audience. Their solutions lay with the election of a Republican administration. The logical appeals in these speeches dealt with the implications of electing a Republican administration and the implied problems in retaining a Democratic administration.

Nathaniel Banks: Address of September 26, 1856

Nathaniel Banks constructed his entire appeal on the premise that the South was to blame for all economic and political problems that plagued the nation in 1856. He relied upon two lines of reasoning to support his allegation. First, he argued that the superiority of northern industrialization demonstrated the inefficiency
of southern slave labor policies, which contributed to a weakened economic situation in the nation as a whole. Second, he argued that the southern political stranglehold on national politics had occurred by northern default, not by any particular strength of southern political acumen.

Banks' strategy in constructing logical appeals was clearly stated at the beginning of his address.

In that which I have to say to you I mean to rely upon great facts above all questions as to their truth, and facts which, if admitted, remove all question as to the policy by which we should be directed in this impending controversy.7

The crowd gathered to listen to Banks' "great facts" was estimated at well over 20,000 members by the New York Daily Times8 and as great as 25,000 by the New York Daily Tribune.9 He spoke for over two hours to a crowd which packed the street for an entire city block in front of the Merchant's Exchange. To this mass of merchants, bankers, and speculators, Banks argued that all current national problems were the fault of the South, rooted in economic practices spawned by the reliance on bound labor and protected by "slave power" representatives ensconced in the United States Congress.
Free Labor - Evidence

As his only evidence, Banks analyzed the economic productivity of the nation and the portions of that national product contributed by each region. He claimed that the North contributed three-quarters of the overall industrial/agricultural wealth of the nation. In contrast, he claimed that the South contributed 45% of the agricultural product, 20% of the industrial output, and less than 20% of the trade. According to him, these figures proved that "... the reason of this is apparent and palpable ... In the South, there is one man down and another holding him there. There is one portion of the people doing nothing and another portion of the same people helping them do nothing."¹⁰ The solution could be found, he contended, by forcing the South to emulate northern industrial and economic practices.

Free Labor - Reasoning Processes

Banks argued that the northern industrial community would assist the South in a total revision of its economic structure. This revision would allow the South to contribute fairly to the national product. Indeed, he suggested that slavery would automatically wither in the
face of the more efficient, northern agricultural methods
certain to be adopted by southern planters after the
northern enlightenment arrived in the slave states. The
speaker asserted that the southerners

will come North into the manufacturing
and mechanical establishment, the
agricultural fields and the country
houses, and learning from us, they
will accomplish great results in their
own section. ¹¹

Banks' argument was logically sound and strategically
wise. He did not raise the possibility that the South
might resist change, but emphasized instead what his
audience presumed to be true: that businessmen and farmers
in the South aspired to the industrial and agricultural
achievements of the North.

Cast as a hypothetical syllogism, his argument can be
examined for logical integrity. The major premise is: if
southerners can be relieved of the responsibility for
running the national government, then they will emulate
northern concern with economic growth and improvement.
The minor premise is: a Republican administration can
relieve the South of the responsibility for running the
national government. The conclusion is that the South
would turn to the North as a role model for economic
improvement. Therefore, the minor premise affirms the
antecedent and the syllogism is formally valid. The
weakness of the argument is that Banks provided no
motivation for southern agriculturalists to come North for
instruction. However, since other Republican speakers argued from similar sectional premises, then Banks must have presumed the premises as truthful.

Southern Threat — Evidence

Banks claimed that a northern political victory would force the South to reevaluate its economic impact on the nation. He argued that once the South was no longer distracted by affairs of state, its citizens would automatically engage in commerce and industrialization. However, he also acknowledged that it was this southern preoccupation with national politics which had allowed northern industrialists the leisure to develop flourishing businesses. The inference seems to be that the time had come for the North to guide both the economy and the political direction of the nation, allowing the South to end slavery and pattern its economy on that of the North.

Banks argued that a northern political victory would force the South to compare its achievements with those of the North, causing its leaders to recognize the truth of the statement that I have made to you — that they have no literature, no science, little or no commerce, little or no manufacturing and mechanical industry; and that even their agricultural industry is falling off.12
As evidence, he cited statistics from the Bureau of Inventions, Washington, D.C., which supported his contention that few southerners were mechanically inventive. "[O]f two thousand patents issued . . . for the last year," he noted, "less than one hundred and twenty-five were issued to men living in the fifteen southern states."13

The evidence used by Banks was loaded in favor of the small businessman and the middle-class manufacturing community. It was the northern industrialists and financial merchants he was addressing in both the immediate audience as well as the reading audience. He relied upon statistical evidence for all of his production arguments, inferring that greater production was the equivalent of greater success in both the economic and political spheres.

Southern Threat - Reasoning Processes

Banks' reasoning can be cast into the following syllogistic format: men who succeed in business can succeed in politics; northern men are successful businessmen; therefore, northern men will make successful politicians.

The next assertion in his chain of reasoning was: men who succeed in politics should want to succeed in
business; southern men were successful politicians; therefore, southern men should want to succeed at business. These categorical forms support a contention that arose repeatedly throughout his address. Banks formulated the hypothesis that northern control of politics would force the South to abandon slavery and engage in commerce patterned after northern practices.

Arguing that southern political maneuvering was the cause of the dangerous sectionalism that was a hallmark of the 1856 campaign, Banks used the Pierce administration to demonstrate how Democratic policy caused sectional division and civil unrest. He implied that the southern Democrats, responsible for the election of Pierce and his administration, were fully and solely responsible for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. If it had not been repealed, the sectional and ideological strife in Kansas would have never occurred. Therefore, he contended, the Democrats, specifically the southern Democrats, were responsible for every drop of northern blood spilled in Kansas.

As a further indictment of the pro-southern, Democratic administration, Banks claimed that the entire nation was at peace in 1853. By comparison, Banks claimed that after three years of Democratic leadership

We see today one entire section of the confederacy arrayed in policy and purpose, as represented by candidates, against another portion, and the
fairest portion of the territorial possessions of the Government reddened with the blood of American citizens, stricken down by the hands of each other in a bloody civil strife.¹⁵

The blood-soaked imagery employed by Banks focused the blame for the Kansas riots on the Democratic administration in Washington, D.C. It would have been commonly accepted among the members of his audience that Stephen Douglas, a Democrat, and his fellow members of the Senate Committee on Territories were responsible for the legislation that repealed the Missouri Compromise.

Banks and, by implication, the North were outraged further by an executive order sending federal troops to restore peace to the territory. This act was perceived as overt support of the pro-slavery territorial government -- the government elected by armed insurgents from Missouri. Therefore, Banks placed the blame for the breakdown of law and order in the territories with the pro-southern Pierce administration. Casting the argument as a hypothetical syllogism, Banks contended that if the southern Democrats claimed to be representatives of a peaceful administration, then there should be no violence in the nation. There was violence in Kansas. Therefore, the representatives of the Democratic party did not represent peace. This syllogism tests successfully as a valid logical construction, since the minor premise denies the consequent.
Banks furthered his sectional argument by claiming that the Pierce administration actually condoned and promoted the lawlessness that characterized the Democratically-controlled policies.

The men of the North who have gone into that Territory are disfranchised, and the United States Government looks coldly upon all these transactions without an effort to restore peace, unwilling even to make any declaration of principles that shall tend to restore peace in that distracted Territory. 16

Banks contended that the Democrats were without an ideological basis as a party and could not claim logically to represent peace - or anything else - without a declaration of ideological commitment. His contention reinforced the popular notion that the North was more highly principled than the South. Based on the pro-Republican evidence provided by the political situation in Kansas, Pierce's southern-influenced administration represented only continued slavery and armed conflict.

Banks challenged the Democratic argument that the violence in Kansas stemmed from an excessive number of aggressive anti-slavery settlers. Claiming to have studied the emigration records of five western states, Banks concluded that emigration to Kansas was not a "... new thing in the history of the American states as if it were of scandalous character, purpose and intent." 17 By example, he demonstrated that no civil conflagration had
accompanied any past northern migration westward. Therefore, the blame for the volatile situation in Kansas must be placed outside of the arrival of the northern anti-slavery settlers.

Perceived Truth of the Ideas:

According to Thonssen, Baird and Braden, the "... preparation and background that the speaker brings to the process of logical invention figures strongly in the determination of argumentative soundness and integrity." Banks included statistics and examples to heighten his credibility as an analytical speaker. His conclusions were logically sound when tested against both the evidence he presented and the prevailing beliefs of his partisan audience. But, Banks did not merely list facts, figures, and analyses. His use of emotional proof, with evocative language being of primary importance, strengthened his logical appeals.

This use of emotional proof was a further measure of the intellectual stock of Banks as a speaker, since a successful orator must be able to adapt the evidence to meet the needs of his audience. The speakers "... must prepare the minds of the audience for the ready acceptance of the evidence used to support the arguments." For example, in order to engage the sympathy of his audience
for his purely sectional argument, Banks demanded that they remember the violence in the Senate. He was indirectly referring to Sumner's caning by the enraged Democrat, Preston Brooks, who became an effective symbol of southern emotionalism and violent potential, an idea popular among the northern speakers.

Banks reminded his audience of the incident in order to expand inductively his argument about the dangers of increased southern political control.

[I]f the act . . . [by] which the sovereignty of a State is despoiled of its Representative is looked upon with acclamation in some parts of the country and tolerated with indifference in other sections, every man must feel in his heart of hearts that there is no longer a hope for the institutions or liberties of the American people.20

Banks skillfully wove his emotional proofs into the claim of logical analyses that comprised the main portion of his address. He used emotional proofs to illustrate the "truth" of his logical conclusions - the test of probable "certainty" demanded by the methodology.21 He demonstrated the certainty of the economic threat posed by future southern political strength in a manner acceptable to his immediate audience. His conclusion that a Republican administration would bring "four years of peace . . . and we will open all these avenues of wealth"22 was one of the few unsubstantiated assertions of his entire speech.
Banks did not address the possibility that northern pre-occupation with politics, should the Republicans be victorious in 1856, might weaken the northern contribution to the national product. Neither did he entertain the possibility that the South might cling even more strongly to the institution of slavery if stripped of both economic and political options as a result of a Republican administration. Since Banks and his audience were convinced that the South desired to match northern industrial and agricultural output, he argued that the South would willingly relinquish its institutions in order to industrialize. Once the South was occupied by commercial interests, he insisted, southern political domination would melt away.

He asserted that the South had actually amassed its political power by default, a notion popular with his audience. Since the North had been absorbed by commerce during the developing years of the nation's history, the South "has turned its attention chiefly, so far as its leading men are concerned, to the government of the country," securing for themselves and their fellow southerners the necessary "methods of obtaining places of honor and trust in the Government."23 Political power needed to be divided between the sections of the country, according to Banks, with the Republicans providing the means to bring about a political balance.
George William Curtis: Address of August 7, 1856

On August 7, 1856, George William Curtis delivered an address entitled "The Duties of the American Scholar" to the members of the assembled literary societies of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. The address was one of the most widely distributed, read, and quoted of the Republican campaign in spite of its suitability for a particular occasion and the narrow audience of intellectual and economic elite of the northeast.

In his speech, Curtis eloquently called for literary activists in the mold of the wounded Charles Sumner, who, "In a Republic of free men, ... speaks for freedom and his blood stains the Senate floor." Curtis artfully built a substantial case to encourage scholars to employ their pens actively and their voices in support of the Republican campaign - a case so sound in its rational development that its proofs were borrowed wholesale by other Republicans during the remainder of the campaign.

George William Curtis spoke from experience, both as a scholar and as a politician. His introductory remarks were designed to establish his intellectual resources, since his audience was composed of academics. The relationship between the duties he assigned his audience
and the political problems of the era was tenuous. Yet, by carefully constructing proofs that defined the scholar's responsibility to take an active part in the campaign and by offering himself as an inferential example of an activist-scholar, Curtis proved that he was a skillful strategist.

His own scholarly background was the most important facet in establishing his intellectual stock and his capacity for the formulation of ideas. Curtis chose to demonstrate his intellectual abilities in a lengthy introduction that contained a wealth of literary and historical allusions. His audience may have been aware of his background as a protegee of Ralph Waldo Emerson and the Transcendentalists of Brooks Farm, where Curtis stayed for two years during his youth. He was well-traveled, documenting his travels in works of satire and descriptive analysis that were published and widely circulated in the North. "The Duties of the American Scholar" was the first in a series of literary orations that distinguished his career.

Once Curtis established his intellectual stock, he proceeded to establish a link between his audience and the political problems of the nation. Since few members of his audience were directly affected by the Kansas situation, Curtis had to establish a connection between the experiences shared by his immediate audience and the
urgency of the issues facing the rest of the North. These students and academics, cloistered in a private, northeastern college, needed to be reassured of their importance in the Republican campaign. Curtis needed to establish a political scholarly ideal with which his immediate audience could successfully identify. Only then could he effectively argue for specific action.

Curtis began his address with a series of definitions in order to enhance the process of identification. Scholarship was defined as an active process of involvement in world affairs. Curtis claimed that the scholar of 1856 must not "abstract" himself from the practical world any more than the Greeks would have abstracted themselves from events at Thermopylae. Claiming that the life of a scholar in ancient Greece did not preclude the scholar's responsibilities as a citizen, Curtis inferred that the precedent for action applied to the audience he addressed in Middletown. He demanded that the scholars seated before him, as citizens of a republic, fulfill their duty to protect their Constitutional freedoms, for without freedom, scholarship can neither flourish nor even exist. His premise was boldly stated, given the occasion, because he was addressing participants in a literary festival, not a political rally. Curtis acknowledged the seeming impropriety of his political oratory on an epideictic occasion, but he defended his
argument by asserting his intent to stray beyond the oratorical pale of the occasion.

I know well that a conventional prejudice consecrates this occasion to dull abstractions and timid if not treacherous generalities. It would allow me to speak of the scholar and the American scholar, in his relation to Greek roots and particles, but would forbid me to mention his duties to American topics and times.\(^{28}\)

In this manner, he gave greater weight to the perceived urgency of the issue under examination which is a logical approach to a topic both unexpected and (perhaps) unwelcome on this ceremonial occasion.

**Free Labor - Evidence**

Curtis included very little specific evidence in this speech. Instead, he relied on his ability to construct arguments from logical premises that were accepted as truthful by his audience. He argued, mainly, from examples.

Curtis employed a brief stock argument to establish the economic value of free labor. His evidence against the use of slave labor included a comparison of land values between the potentially fertile southern areas of the nation and the less fertile New England states. He asserted that the inexpensive southern farmland had been worked to exhaustion by the unenlightened system of
intensive slave labor. The South's potential for a successful agricultural society had been destroyed by the greedy demands of the few and the labor of the oppressed majority. Curtis claimed that the relatively low land values in the potentially rich southern climates constituted the necessary evidence that slave labor was economically unsound.29

Free Labor - Reasoning Processes

Curtis built a case that favored scholarly involvement in behalf of particular political activities. First, he defined the general role of scholars in any national enterprise, insisting that scholars held the collective responsibility for the soul of their nation. Scholars embodied the conscience of the state, carrying the responsibility to re-awaken the populace to its responsibilities in times of national prosperity and prosperity's attendant immorality. He provided examples from ancient history, again establishing precedents for his audience to build upon.

Greece was not greatest when rumors of war had ceased. Rome was not most imperial in the voluptuous calm of Constantinopolitan decay. The magnificent monotony of Bourbon tyranny in France, and the reign of its shopkeeping King, were not the grand eras of French history.30
Curtis chose to emphasize the national prosperity and complacency as the greatest impediments to a Republican victory. Ironically, his audience was composed of the sons of satisfied, prosperous merchants and farmers.

Curtis condemned Greece, Rome, and France for failing to provide for the long-term collective welfare of their citizens. He characterized their activities as selfish—aimed at immediate gain. If they had only met the aesthetic needs of their citizenry, he claimed, then they would have prospered. Therefore, since the goal of the state is a prosperity which can be achieved by providing for the common aesthetic needs of the entire nation, then the "... elevation and correction of public sentiment is the scholar's office in the state."[31]

Curtis provided a confusing set of propositions in proof of his hypothesis. First, he defined his terms. He claimed that national peace was the key to prosperity. But peace depends upon the absence of moral idealism. He implied that moral idealism disappears with political compromise according to historical precedent. If peace can be negotiated easily when moral standards are in abeyance, then the success of private enterprise (which depends upon peace to succeed) becomes the measure of the moral standard of the nation. Therefore, if keeping peace within a nation is the most important task of the government, then the task of the scholar is to insure that the moral
standards and aesthetic needs of the citizens are not forgotten. As a specific indictment of the Democratic party, Curtis cited the political power of the wealthy, slave-owning southerners to illustrate his hypothesis. The Compromise of 1850, which contained the immoral Fugitive Slave clause, was negotiated to maintain the peace between the two sections of the nation. Therefore, peace was secured by compromising the moral standards of the nation in order to preserve private enterprise. Deductively, then, Curtis indicted the wealthy, slaveowning southerners and their northern financial counterparts for following a line of political expediency that protected their financial interests.

The argument was applied to his particular audience when Curtis asserted that the duty of the scholar is to identify the immoral bases of such national policies and to use all literary means to uncover and broadcast those activities to the public. The nobility of citizenship, he claimed, is preserved through moral activity in this manner.

To the right discharge of this duty all his learning is merely subsidiary, and if he fails to devote it to this end he is recreant to his duty. The end of all scholarly attainment is to live nobly.32

As an example of an activist scholar whose life was dedicated to the nobility of literary pursuits and their political application, Curtis presented a lengthy
biography of John Milton. Milton would have been a familiar character to the Middletown audience as both the author of *Paradise Lost* and as a foe of "Cromwellian dictatorship." Curtis argued that scholars should apply their literary skills to the same political ends which occupied Milton - freedom of the press, enlightened education and the revelation of truth in a public atmosphere of dialectical freedom.

Having established the scholarly political ideal to which he wished his audience to aspire, Curtis proceeded to analyze the particular political role of the American scholar. Curtis claimed that the American scholar who neither voiced his opinion nor voted was a traitor. Before casting the argument as a syllogism, it is necessary to analyze his terms. First, Curtis argued that a democratic republic determines policy by majority rule and that the majority is determined by the number of votes cast and available for tabulation. Each non-voter weakens his own cause numerically, allowing the minority to achieve a political ascendancy that undermines the democratic ideal of majority rule. Therefore, treason is the result of withholding one's vote. All non-voters are traitors in a participatory democracy. America is a participatory democracy. Therefore, non-voters in America are traitors. As a categorical syllogism, the argument is valid.
In a second, specific argument against the use of slave labor, Curtis cited the "natural" decline of slavery in the North as a sign of inefficiency as an economic, and political, system. Economic, political, and artistic progress accompanied the rise of the North as an industrial and agricultural leader at the time slavery was abandoned. Since the North was providing the art, literature, educational institutions, and manufacturing processes that were the measures of progress, as interpreted by Curtis and the Republican sectionalists, and the North had cast off slavery prior to the rise of its progressive institutions, Curtis chose to acknowledge the decline of northern slavery as a sign of rising progressivism.

A third sign employed as an argument against governmental support of slavery was his use of "testimony" from the correspondence of the founding fathers, men who were perceived as enlightened protectors of both "Liberty" and liberty. Curtis dealt with the ideological aspects of "Liberty" in his definition of the governmental responsibility to protect society from "rapacious" individuals. Individual liberty, a concept that occupied the Republicans in 1856, had its roots in the Constitutional Convention, according to evidence supplied by Curtis. He claimed that George Washington desired the legal abolition of slavery in his correspondence dated
1786; that Thomas Jefferson considered slavery a form of despotism; and that James Madison abhorred the concept of man as a piece of property.

Curtis inferred that this testimony, taken from a variety of personal correspondence between the men named above and their various political counterparts, was evidence that the republic was conceived in a spirit of universal individual liberty. The democratic nature of American political institutions was constrained by an acknowledgment of bondage. Therefore, democracy would not exist - and was not designed to exist - in the presence of slavery.

The premises of this argument would have been perceived as valid by the partisan voters in his audience. His reasoning was consistent with party assertions, slanted toward portraying the slave-owning founders as men whose intellects rebelled at the necessity for keeping slaves. Curtis did not choose to illustrate further the relationship between slavery and its practice by the men who were portrayed as the ideological founders of the anti-slavery Republican party. His audience had often heard the arguments designed to exonerate Jefferson, Madison and Washington. Curtis simply added more evidence with his list of correspondence.

In order to vote, however, one needed to make a decision as to which party "respected" the majority of
national concerns and the welfare of the state. Ideally, one supported the party that recognized the needs of the majority of the citizens. At this point in his address, Curtis began his partisan appeal.

Southern Threat - Evidence

Curtis argued that the existence of slavery denied the basic premise of a democratic government. Progress could not occur, he contended, under a system which denied liberty to any member of that system. The evidence was clear. Obviously, no progress had occurred in the South, since a lack of literature or other civilized activities could be documented.

Manners are fantastic and fierce; brute force supplants moral principle; freedom of speech is suppressed because the national speech of Man condemns slavery . . . a slave society has the characteristics of wandering tribes who rob, and live, therefore, insecure in the shadow of impending vengeance.35

Curtis acknowledged the existence of individuals among the slave owners who were moral and undeserving of condemnation. He recognized that not all men could be responsible for a system which governed them. However, he did argue that "the mass of men are never better than their institution",36 which supported his initial proposition that the system of slavery was at fault.
Curtis demanded a government that would serve the progressive needs of all members of the society. Otherwise, the institution itself was not functional.

The events that encouraged the growth of the "slave power" were presented as specific evidence of a southern threat. Curtis reminded his audience that Mississippi was brought into the Union as a slave state over the protests of the abolitionists who demanded a free constitution; that the Missouri Compromise was enacted with the South as a document of trust; that Florida had entered the Union under Spanish rule, which had abolished slavery, then became a slave state when becoming part of a democratic nation; that the Pickney Resolutions violated the First Amendment; that the Compromise of 1850 was another document of trust that strengthened the fugitive slave laws; and that the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 was the final bit of evidence that the united South was controlling the nation's government for the benefit of a minority of its citizens.37

The purpose of the lengthy chronology was to illustrate the concessions wrung from the United States government by the "Slave Power," a term Curtis employed repeatedly. By implying that slave holders were powerfully united in order to transform democratic institutions to their selfish needs, he was attempting to engage the sympathy of
the audience while presenting documentary evidence to support his contentions. Curtis reminded his audience that the threat of disunion had accompanied every demand made by members of the "Slave Power," in spite of the numerical and economic inferiority to the North.

Southern Threat - Reasoning Processes

Curtis argued that it was not really the threat of disunion that so powerfully insured the policies of the "Slave Power," but rather the moral degeneration of the North during its search for a prosperous peace. It was compromise that gave the "Slave Power" its strength and weakened the North. Curtis described the repeal of the Missouri Compromise to illustrate his argument.

This [repeal] was an immense victory for the Slave Power, for it revealed to them a state of demoralization in the party of Freedom. It showed the Slave Power that it could accomplish its ends by depending upon the moral weakness of the enemy rather than upon its own numerical strength. The historian commemorates a national crime when he records that during all these debates the party of Freedom had a majority of votes in Congress.38

At the conclusion of his speech, Curtis had argued a full circle. He returned to the theme of collective responsibility, which had characterized his opening remarks to the assembled scholars.
In order to prove that the Republicans represented the ideals of the democratic state whose liberties were being exploited by the opposing, minority party, Curtis argued that the function of a governmental institution was limited to its ability to protect human liberty. He defended his assertion with the following hypothetical reasoning: if human governments enact laws, then those laws must be designed to protect society from those members who would restrict individual freedoms by usurping power. Human governments enact laws. Therefore, the function of government is to protect society from individuals who would assume powers detrimental to society as a whole. The reasoning is valid because the minor premise affirms the antecedent clause of the major premise.

He clarified this circular definition by claiming that society exists both to improve the individual's quality of life as well as to promote the improvement of the "race". Therefore, the government must protect society from irresponsible people without limiting the ability of society to improve itself and its individual members.

\[\text{Consequently, that is the best government which gives to men the largest liberty and constantly modifies itself in the interest of Freedom.}\]

By inference, Curtis indicted Douglas and his political cohorts for preparing the legislation that repealed the
Missouri Compromise. According to the Republicans, the repeal was perceived as detrimental to the health of the nation. The abrogation of civil law in the territories was evidence of the improper use of power that resulted in the restriction of personal liberty in the border regions. Curtis clearly intended to influence the audience in favor of the Republican platform, which he discussed in some detail as a means of establishing a more responsible form of government. He repeated the words "liberty" and "freedom" frequently throughout the second portion of his speech. This repetition served to remind his audience of the Republican slogan which included the phrases "free labor, free soil and free men." He obviously intended to enhance a sense of identity which, in turn, would increase the appeal of his logical arguments.

Perceived Truth of the Ideas

Curtis was able to supply evidence for his contentions even at the most emotional moments of his address. This technique heightened his authority as a speaker and reenforced his reputation as a scholar. For example, his reference to a "national crime" reminded the audience of his earlier examination of the treasonous activities of the Pierce administration. The themes of liberty, duty and morality appeared throughout the address, illustrated
and supported in a manner consistent with Curtis' reputation. These themes were also consistent with the moral temper of the region. Curtis gathered the three themes into a decisive call to action in the conclusion of his address.

He asserted that freedom of thought could only exist in an atmosphere of liberty, for without the freedom to express thought, the intellectual life of the individual and society would cease to exist. He compared the scholars seated before him in Middletown to the patriots of Lexington and Bunker Hill. He demanded that the scholars temporarily forsake their homes and their purely intellectual pursuits in order to protect their political liberty, just as the residents of revolutionary New England temporarily forsook their homes to secure a government free from outside influence. By inference, the "Slave Power" took on overtones of British despotism - taxation without representation - which was a powerful emotional appeal in New England.

Curtis the transcendentalist was evident throughout the address. He reasoned by analogy, employing historical and literary examples familiar to his audience, searching for arguments relevant to the occasion and the local political temper. His ideas were internally consistent, as none of his evidence refuted any portion of his theses. Curtis addressed the particular needs of his party, his region
and his audience throughout the speech, placing the particular issue — an appeal for votes — into a sociological construct with intellectual appeal for his audience.

Curtis engaged in a valid reflective process. He identified the political problem, the abrogation of majority rule; he analyzed the problem in the proper social setting, the lack of scholarship demonstrated by those men wielding the greatest political power; he suggested a solution, that those who favored majority rule for the protection of their liberty to pursue scholarly activities should vote against the currently prevailing minority; and he reasoned, by example and analogy, that the implications of both the present situation and the implications of his solution should provide the necessary evidence and motivation to involve his audience actively in supporting the Republican campaign.

William H. Seward: Address of 24 October, 1856

William H. Seward enjoyed a reputation as an impassioned defender of freedom. During the summer months of the 1856 campaign, he continued to argue from the Senate floor against the extension of slavery into the territories of the United States. He was in the midst of a long, distinguished career in the United States Senate
as a representative from New York. He had served that state as its governor as well as its Congressional representative, being returned to the Senate as recently as 1855 by the vote of the state legislature. His re-election campaign in 1855 was the successful result of a state-wide oratorical contest between the pro-slavery and the free soil politicians. Seward was returned to the Senate for a second six year term as the representative of the anti-slavery politicians of New York. He did not campaign for his Senate seat, since Senators were still appointed in 1855, but he actively participated in the state elections that year by stumping for Republican candidates.

In 1855, Seward gave several speeches that were full of enthusiasm and ringing endorsements of the newly formed Republican Party as a result of his involvement in the New York campaign. Seward's "free Kansas" and anti-slavery speeches were widely reprinted and referenced, with one reference even appearing (with attribution) in President Pierce's annual Message to Congress in December, 1855.

In Albany, New York, Seward condemned the Democratic Party and the entire national administration for bowing to the dictates of the privileged classes - the slaveholders. This speech, which was delivered on October 12, 1855 - one year prior to his campaign speech
favoring the candidacy of John Fremont, identified clearly the particular problems facing the emerging Republican party and the political future of the nation. Eloquently, Seward described "the spirit of the revolutionary age" that must infuse the anti-slavery voters. He argued that slavery was "antagonistic to the fundamental principle of the government"; and that the privileged classes promoted legislation that "darkly shaded, [allows] personal humiliations which daily come home to yourselves."46

I do not dwell, as others so often and so justly do, upon the atrocious usurpation of the government of Kansas by the slaveholders of Missouri, nor even on the barbarous and tyrannical code which they have established to stifle freedom in that territory, nor even yet on the fraudulent and nefarious connivance of the president with the usurpers.47

These were not the words of a man lacking imagination or courage, nor were they the words of a man of unpolished rhetorical skill or unawareness of his oratorical power. William Seward should have been a great asset to the Republican Party in 1856, given his reputation and the evidence of his moral convictions in 1855. However, Seward gave a limited effort to the national campaign designed by the party he had helped to create, mold, and launch into the political arena.

Only two major addresses are included in his memoirs for the campaign period. Seward was, of course, detained
in Washington for the extra session of Congress that was called in late August to deal with the budget issues of the Indian wars. The extra session of Congress demanded a great deal of his time and energy. His passion was expended by the end of the session. He had not secured the Republican presidential nomination at the June convention; his oratory on the floor of the Senate had not produced any immediate results in Kansas; and he faced a national campaign for which he had no enthusiasm, either personally or professionally. Seward preferred to spend the fall in Europe, but he was dissuaded by political friends. They needed his voice, especially in New York, to legitimize the activities of the new party. Familiar names, like that of William H. Seward, provided the sole means of identification that the Republican Party could depend upon for bringing new voters to its organization.

In 1856, William Seward's campaign speeches were coldly analytical, almost devoid of passion. Stylistically, they contrast sharply with his speeches of 1855. The topics of both years were similar - campaign speeches in favor of Republican candidates and ideals - but the lack of metaphor, evocative language, and idealistic goals in the 1856 addresses were uncharacteristic for both the speaker and the occasion. The ringing idealism and the sweeping oratory were noticeably lacking in these campaign efforts.
Even his specific references to the Republican party were
tepid and vague.

On October 2, 1856, Senator Seward made the first of the
two campaign speeches that have been included in his
memoirs. The Senator spoke in Detroit, Michigan, to a
partisan crowd of Republican supporters. However if the
audience had come to hear grand oratory and impassioned
elocution, they were bitterly disappointed. He proposed to
prove that the slave-holding minority of the United States
population had infiltrated every portion of the
government. As proof, Seward provided lists. He listed
the names of every appointed and elected member of
Congress. He condemned the President, the vice-president,
his secretaries, "printers, sergeants at arms, door-
keepers and pages," each of whom "is either an active or
passive advocate of the policy of the slaveholding
class."49 He listed committee members, by name, and their
disposition to vote for slavery measures; Constitution
committees, foreign relations committees, the committee on
agriculture, and the committee on the Army and the Navy,
services long thought to be particular southern
strongholds.

In the speech, Seward surveyed the national government,
department by department, taking his audience on a
travelogue of the Washington Mall. The courts, the Post
Office, and the Department of the Interior shared in the
scorn heaped upon the internal operation of the Democratic administration by Senator Seward. But, he defended his speech to his Michigan audience, claiming that "... there is no way of escaping imminent danger, without first calmly and steadily looking it fully in the face and ascertaining its real nature and magnitude."50

On Thursday, October 23, in Auburn, New York, less than three weeks after his Michigan address, Seward spoke before a large, partisan crowd of Republican supporters. Rather than delivering an impassioned speech on the Kansas situation or the spread of slavery and its attendant political and moral evils, Seward provided a lecture on the American political two-party system. The Auburn speech was an oblique endorsement of the Republican party. It was designed to persuade by exposition, since Seward only faintly praised his alliance with the new Republican party while damning the Know-Nothing and Democratic organizations.

According to the five-step formula outlined by Thonssen, Baird, and Braden for the measurement of successful reflective experience, the logical development of Seward's major argument against the Know-Nothing (American) party was sound.51 First, he recognized the problem posed by the third party - a distraction of the public mind from the "real" issue facing the canvass. Second, he analyzed the bearing of the problem on the
social setting of the day by arguing that Constitutional freedoms would be denied all men if slavery were permitted to expand into the territories. The capacity of his audience to engage in free trade would be limited as would their opportunity to enjoy a free labor market and the practice of free speech. Seward met the third measure of a successful reflective experience by arguing against support of the third party by the voter. Fourth, Seward's acuity of analysis was enhanced by his credibility as an experienced politician and the partisan nature of his home-town audience.

Upstate New York voters were historically disposed to distrust third parties. It was in their state that the Anti-Masonic party was founded after the murder of a Mason who published secret ritual information for public dissemination. Seward's audience was composed of active abolitionists and angry anti-expansionists who were eager to hear about the urgency of settling the violence in Kansas and the role of the Know-Nothings and Democrats in fueling the frontier violence.

Seward did not discuss the free labor concepts that were of such importance in other Republican speeches. His address served two purposes, one overt and the other covert. His covert purpose was to remind the audience of his long service in their behalf - governor and Senator - and of his loyalty to the free-soil concepts that were the
basis of the new party. However, his introduction clearly illustrated his outrage at being passed-over for the presidential nomination. He spoke of the "common memory" shared by his audience and himself of the "long and inclement political storms" which they had weathered over the years. He was gratified to see signs of "the triumph of the political principles which I have cherished through so many trials" but he was clearly disappointed by his role as a party spokesman, rather than that of premier candidate.53

William Seward delivered a dry, rational defense of the Republican platform by analyzing the shortcomings of the Democratic and Know-Nothings parties. He examined the political threat posed by the third party - the threat of a pro-slavery victory by default at the polls. He referred to the record of the Pierce administration as evidence of Democratic blundering - giving the voter little choice but to support the Republican party as the least of three evils.

Southern Threat - Evidence

Senator Seward provided evidence of the perfidy of the Democratic administration by listing examples of pro-slavery legislation in his speech. He began with the Democratic obstruction of the admission of California
under a "free" constitution in 1850; the Pierce administration's policy of popular sovereignty in the territories - the direct result of which was the frontier violence in progress during the campaign; and the refusal of the Democratic majority in Congress to admit Kansas as a free state in spite of impassioned petitions and the demands of her citizens.

Senator Seward produced a litany of events that he offered as proof that Democratic party rule had promoted the expansion of slavery and the negation of effective compromise. He resorted to lists in each speech - and the New York Senator was not afraid to name names. However, for the purposes of defining thematic emergence and political unity of thought, the Auburn speech will be examined in this chapter.

Seward produced evidence designed to prove that Democratic party rule was the moving force behind the territorial expansion of slavery. First, he reminded his audience that slavery was legally outlawed from every part of the nation at the time he first took national office in 1849. In 1856, he claimed, Congress had allowed the expansion of slavery into all regions, even into those states and territories that had voted to exclude the institution as constitutional measures. Therefore, Seward concluded that the campaign of 1856 was being waged on the issue of reclaiming territory for free labor, rather than
preventing the enactment of legislation that would allow slavery to expand. He shifted ground from a defensive to an offensive argument.

Free Labor - Reasoning Processes

The solution to the expansion problem lay with the Republican party, he assured his audience, but his proof was curious. He suggested that the Republicans were blameless as the agency of either the pro-expansion forces or the prior means of checking the growing power of the slavery forces, since the Republican party did not exist until after the Missouri Compromise was repealed.

Everyone will at once acquit the Republican party and those who now constitute it, of all agency in the betrayal and surrender of Freedom [sic], which have thus been made.55

His argument was rational, but tepid. It also covered a lot of ground. Seward not only attempted to exonerate the Republicans with his reasoning that the party could not act if it did not exist, but inferred that those Whigs who were serving in Congress while the repeal was being enacted were exonerated, as well.

Having built a case against the Democratic party based upon its support of pro-slavery legislation, Seward presumed that nothing better

[It]s to be hoped from the Democratic party in the future. It is a party
essentially built on the interest of slaveholding classes. Deprived of that support, it would instantly cease to exist.\textsuperscript{56}

Seward asserted that politics regulated the daily lives of the American people and that the security of the individual rested upon this regulation. However, without wisdom and the "right conduct" in Congress, the national good would cease to exist.

How much of individual, domestic and social happiness depends on the regulation and conduct of only one single human life? How vastly more of human happiness depends, then, on the regulation and conduct of the whole nation's thousand-fold longer life!\textsuperscript{57}

A functional, two-party system was the only hope for carrying on the proper regulation of those collective lives. And, even though the Democrats had supported pro-slavery legislation, Seward conceded that they provided the proper two-party balance.

Southern Threat - Reasoning

To Seward, the Know-Nothings posed a double threat to the national safety. In addition to their un-American, unrepresentative "secret" stature, which was a strong secondary threat, the Know-Nothings as a third party would split the national vote and throw support to the Democrats. With Know-Nothing help, a Democratic administration might take power that would reflect a
minority rule. Indirectly, then, the Know-Nothings became part of the southern threat by virtue of their ability to split tickets and provide for a pro-Democratic, pro-slavery administration.

Seward argued that the real political power was being contested by those two parties representing the opposing slave-power and abolitionist interests. Relying upon his experience as a politician and the reputation he had earned as an anti-expansionist, the Senator claimed that the Know-Nothing party was representative only of a minority of voters who were clearly dangerous to the Republican cause. For proof, he demonstrated how the third party would numerically weaken the support of the Republicans.

If the American people divide, and one portion, being a minority, declare for Freedom [sic] while another portion, being also a minority declare against foreigners and Catholics, and a third, larger than either, declare for slavery, nothing is obtained against foreigners and Catholics, nothing against slavery, and Kansas becomes a Slave State [sic].

Seward argued that the Know-Nothing party represented an issue which was neither urgent nor relevant to the welfare of the nation. He claimed that the effect of the "false issue" raised by the American party, coupled with their neutrality on the slavery issue, distracted the public mind from the real issue.
To demonstrate the American party's viability as part of the southern threat, Seward claimed that the third party would eventually align itself with the weaker of the two parties in every region of the country in order to gain political power. Republicans could watch with dismay as the Americans aligned themselves with Democrats in those northern and western states that were primarily Republican, serving their own limited, political ends. Republican strength was so limited in the South that Republican-American alliances throughout that region would serve to dilute Republican principles but would not provide a political threat to the entrenched Democratic majority. American-Whig alliances were a possibility in the South, but the Whig national organization had collapsed and neither party had a solid, national power base.

Seward warned that the American party was facing a short, tempestuous political life.

By virtue of a law that is irresistible, it will sooner or later betray each party when its own peculiar ends require that course. The effort will cost its life. Crowded and jostled between the two combatants, it will and must dissolve. . .59

But, the Senator warned further that any such dissolution of the third party would occur too late to assist the cause of the free-soil party in the current controversy. Therefore, since that existence of a third party disrupted
the political system that was designed to protect the security of the individual, Seward concluded that the Know-Nothing party could not hope to succeed except as a temporary impediment to freedom.

Having lectured on the third party as a disruptive influence and the possible means of promoting minority rule, Seward dismissed the Americans as a viable political entity, altogether.

All masses which affect neutrality, as well as all masses which affect to stand independently on questions which have already passed . . . are crowded and crushed in the conflicts between the two which occupy, for the time being, the whole field of contest.60

The Know-Nothings chose to ignore slavery and the territorial expansion of the practice in 1856. They concentrated on nativism, an issue that occupied (unsuccesfully) the Masonic party of the 1820s. Seward contended that the slavery issue could not be ignored, since it so fully occupied the public mind and the administration of the government, leaving the "nativists" to support a hollow issue. Further, by establishing an ideological link between the Know-Nothings and the Masons, Seward reenforced the similarities between the failed, discredited political activities of the latter and the political aims of the former.
Perceived Truth of the Ideas

Seward demonstrated the inadequacy and dangerous ineptitude of Democratic leadership. He blamed the Democratic party for the breakdown of civil law and order in Kansas and accused the Democratic administration of ineptly protecting the Constitutional rights of the nation's inhabitants.

Having suggested that the Know-Nothings did not address the important issues, slavery and its impending expansion into the territories, Seward concluded that the third party was a clear danger to the American two-party system of majority rule and an indirect tool of the southern Democrats.

Seward concluded his short address by inferring that support for any party but the Republican party would result in the breakdown of majority rule and the constitutional guarantees of freedom. "If these arguments be sound, we are shut up to the necessity of giving our support to the Republican party as the only means of maintaining the cause of Freedom and Humanity."\textsuperscript{61}
Summary

The final standard of measurement for determining the integrity of the ideas found in the speeches of the campaign of 1856 is the determination of the results of those ideas on society. "Was the speaker right, as determined by an appeal to historical reality?" is the measure described in *Speech Criticism*.62

The abolition of slavery was accomplished during Lincoln's administration, ending the threat of the extension of slavery into the territories. However, the free labor concepts developed by northern speakers did not replace the slave labor system. The transformation of the South into a comprehensive industrial/agricultural economy, modeled on that of the North, was forestalled by Reconstruction. In addition to the harsh economic reprisals forced on the South, the social residue of class and economic distinctions unique to the South made the transition from a slave labor society to one of independent industry very difficult.

Southern businessmen were expected to flock north to learn the ways of Wall Street. Southern agriculturalists were supposed to journey north in large numbers to observe scientific farming techniques, according to Republican speakers during the 1856 campaign. Whereas some
industrialization and agricultural diversification occurred after 1865, the economy of the South lagged behind that of the rest of the nation. Therefore, the economic predictions of the northern speakers were inaccurate.

Ultimately, the "southern threat" concept proved to be sound. The South did unite and the result was the Civil War. Northern Republicans did take control of the government in 1860 and remained in control through 1884. Since the neo-Aristotelian methodology suggests that "... logical proof should ideally achieve Truth as the final desideratum," then the validity of the logical appeals used in the Republican campaign is open to a variety of interpretations. For example, the sectional arguments that painted the South as a threatening abode of ignorance and evil may have contributed to the rigors of northern reconstruction in the South after the Civil War. Whether or not the depth of ignorance in the South was truthfully reported in the northern campaign is of less importance to an analysis of the speeches than is the measure of perceived truth of the concept in the minds of the northern audience.

If it can be argued that the political enslavement of the South occurred in part through the persuasive appeals of the northern campaigners, then the ends of the Republican speakers were fulfilled by the eradication of
the trade and ownership of men. The ends of the campaign were expedient, not truth-seeking. Since the proposed solution involved the election of a Republican administration as the means of ending slavery, then the ultimate goal of the campaign was achieved.

The arguments presented by the Republican speakers were perceived as the truth by their northern audiences. The speakers were coherent in their definition of the urgent nature of the political crisis and consistent in their call for a political solution. "Logical coherence" can function as a means of determining the truth of a situation, according to Thonssen, Baird and Braden, and the speakers examined in this chapter were profoundly articulate with regard to the political and moral crises facing the North.64
Notes

1 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 393.


3 Foner, p. 16.


5 Foner, p. 73.

6 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 394.

7 *Tribune*, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.2.


9 *Tribune*, p.5.

10 *Tribune*, p.5, col.3.

11 *Tribune*, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.3.

12 *Tribune*, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.3.

14 Tribune, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.4.

15 Tribune, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.4.

16 Tribune, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.4.

17 Tribune, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col. 4.

18 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 393.

19 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 402.

20 Tribune, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.4.

21 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 416.

22 Tribune, 26 Sept. 1856, p.5, col.5.

23 Tribune, 26 Sept 1856, p.5, col.3.


26 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 394.


28 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.1.

29 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.3.

30 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.2.
31 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.2.

32 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.2.

33 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.2.

34 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.4.

35 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.3.

36 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.3.

37 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.5.

38 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.4.

39 Tribune, 7 Aug. 1856, p.6, col.5.

40 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 395.

41 Seward, IV, p. 35.

42 Seward, IV, p. 35.

43 Seward, IV, p. 35.

44 Seward, IV, p. 226.

45 Seward, IV, p. 228.

46 Seward, IV p. 235.

47 Seward, IV, p. 235.

48 Seward, IV, p. 41.
49 Seward, IV, p. 259.

50 Seward, IV, p. 272.

51 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 395.


53 Seward, IV, p. 276.

54 *Tribune*, 24 Oct. 1856, p. 6, col. 3.

55 *Tribune*, 24 Oct. 1856, p. 6, col. 3.

56 *Tribune*, 24 Oct. 1856, p. 6, col. 2.


60 *Tribune*, 24 Oct. 1856, p. 6, col. 1.


62 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 412.

63 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 415.

64 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 415.
Chapter 6
Emotional Appeals

According to neo-Aristotelian speech theory, an effective speaker must engage the emotions of his audience members in order to move them to action. Thonssen, Baird, and Bradden define this rhetorical concept of emotional proof as that material which is "designed to put the listener in a frame of mind to react favorably and conformably to the speaker's purpose." Emotional proof requires the speaker to adapt his remarks to the needs of the particular audience and the issues of the moment. He strives to identify as an individual with his audience so that his concerns become their concerns and the audience is ready to act favorably on his suggestions.

The speaker, himself, is a major factor in any emotional appeal. He functions as the "interpreter" of the emotions he wishes the audience to reproduce. However, he should not be an "emotional" person. Irrational patterns of exposition are ineffective rhetorical tools. The experienced speaker should present an organized, intellectual and controlled address that eschews "extravagant imagery" and "exaggerated
conclusions." The speaker's sincerity and rationality must be evident.

The most effective emotional tool at the speaker's disposal is evocative language. *Speech Criticism* postulates a dual role for language in any public address. First, language must appeal to the rationality of the listener so that the words have referential value. Second, language must fulfill the emotional needs of the audience in order to complete the process of identification. There is no clear demarcation between the emotional and rational appeals of any persuasive address. The two areas overlap. The logical development of a particular idea is necessary for the establishment of cause/effect relationships, but the emotive language cues the audience on the proper reaction.

The Republican speeches were rich in imagery and evocative language. The speakers were essentially well trained, rational men who had a great deal of experience in public speaking. There were particular speakers who relied more heavily on emotional language and fear appeals than their colleagues. Primarily, these men were members of the more radical faction of the Republican party.

The emotional appeals of the 1856 Republican presidential canvass were encapsulated in the party slogan. "Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men, and Fremont" was the chant at the vast torch-light rallies where whole
towns gathered to listen to partisan speakers. Each of
the speakers defined his political terms within the
framework of the party slogan, since "free soil" to a
constitutionalist like Adams was a concept far different
from the free soil concept of a moralist like Henry Ward
Beecher.

Emotional appeals characterized the radical faction
within the Republican party. The radical Republicans of
1856 were characterized by their unwillingness to
compromise on the expansion of slavery. According to Eric
Foner, author of Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The
Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War, the
party radicals united only on the expansion issue. They
had no cohesive economic policy and their foreign policy
was limited to the exclusion of American slavery from
Cuban soil.

Foner identified rural New England as the most radical
section of the North. He cited the urban dependence on
trade agreements with southern agriculturalists as the
moderating influence on Republicans living in larger
cities. The idealism of the radical faction within the
Republican party was shaped by the high literary and
religious standards on which the New Englanders prided
themselves.

The Republicans of the Western Reserve were heavily
influenced by the religious abolitionism that swept the
north-east in the 1830s. Since the "northern tier" of the midwest had been settled almost exclusively by New Englanders moving due West for 20 years, radical, anti-slavery Republicanism was embraced with ease by its inhabitants.⁹ Many of the Republicans of the Western Reserve were already sympathetic to the religious abolitionism of New England. However, the Reserve politicians were adamant that slavery be immediately abolished without any further compromise or delay. In this demand, they surpassed even their New England counterparts in radical tone and temper.¹⁰

Essentially, radical Republicans were idealistic free-soil activists. They provided the moral standard for the party and the campaign. Although the radicals were a strong political contingent within the free soil movement, many of them came to the Republican party from distinct abolitionist backgrounds.¹¹ The abolitionists represented a tradition of moral activism rather than political activism. Therefore, the strategies they employed in their attempts to persuade voters to support the Republican platform were markedly different from those strategies employed by the political activists, since the convictions of each particular speaker assumed priority over purely party activities.

Ideals and morals are difficult to explain logically. They are most effectively presented in an emotional
appeal, designed to persuade an audience to action by arousing indignation, anger, outrage or some other emotion. The object of the speaker is to produce first conviction, then action. For this reason, the speeches of the more radical members of the Republican party leaned more heavily on emotional proof than did the speeches of the conservative speakers. The radicals strove to raise the anti-slavery issue to primary importance, while the conservatives attempted to placate the northern business community with a logical, protectionist approach.

According to Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, precise analyses of emotional appeals pose a problem for the critic because of the individual motivation behind each appeal. Since antiquity, theorists have argued the moral aspects of emotional appeals as a mode of persuasion. Therefore, any definition of emotional appeals must assume some moral responsibility on the part of the speaker and the willingness of the audience to allow the speaker to make moral judgments.

This chapter examines two broad types of emotional appeals used in the 1856 Republican campaign: the religious speaking which most fully characterized the emotional arguments against slavery and the radical approach toward the political aspects of the moral issue imbedded in the anti-slavery movement. Each speech is
examined for its primary thesis; then the particular elements of identification and language use is isolated.

Abolitionists

The most effective abolitionist speakers in 1856 were the pulpit orators. *Speech Criticism* lists the traits that a speaker must bring to an effective persuasive address. The first trait listed is the speaker's motives. Listeners probably attributed to Beecher, Cheever, and the other pulpit orators the altruistic motive of emancipating the slaves. These ministers were not associated with mob violence as were the secular abolitionists. Most of these ministers were respected opinion leaders with popular followings. Many of them spoke outside of their own churches and were widely quoted in the press. In particular, the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher and the Rev. George B. Cheever were outspoken ministers whose sermons hammered at their congregations to take an active part in emancipating the southern slaves. Both men had their sermons published in the daily newspapers and Beecher often wrote editorials. They endorsed the Republican platform and embellished the party appeals with forceful moral arguments.

Their moral arguments appear to be aimed at generating righteous indignation among the members of the audience.
They apparently wanted to rouse their listeners to anger over the enforced bondage of the southern slave; to provoke the audience's guilt at shirking their collective responsibility toward their bound brothers in Christ; and to create a sense of shame that would move their audience to vote against the Democratic candidate in the coming election. Both men were masterful orators. Both Beecher and Cheever were well-practiced in the techniques of persuasion. Those particular techniques and arguments which they brought to bear in behalf of the Republican party are the focus of this chapter.

Henry Ward Beecher

The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher was a popular abolitionist speaker. He took a leave of absence from his New York pulpit in order to travel throughout New England and speak on behalf of the Republican campaign. While none of his campaign oratory has been included in those works dealing with his life and public service, the essence of Beecher's emotional appeal can be extrapolated from an account of his preaching style.

His denunciations of oppression and oppressors do not proceed from a soured mind, but from a profound sympathy with the oppressed. ... He seems to be talking directly to each individual hearer. There is no escape; he bends over the pulpit and looks you in the face; he intends that
you shall not go home without appropriating a portion of the discourse to yourself. 14

Unfortunately for the student of rhetoric, Beecher most often spoke without notes. 15 However, his arguments against slavery were recorded in The Independent, a national weekly newspaper that carried Beecher's editorials. 16 His contributions to the newspaper were indicated with a large star, but his name seldom appeared in print.

Identification:

Identification is a technique usually studied when analyzing ethos. However, Thonssen, Baird, and Braden include identification as an important element in emotional proof because the concept of "acting together" or consubstantiality can be achieved only if the emotional needs of the audience are fully met by the speaker. 17 Since the audience should perceive genuine emotion behind the appeals of the speech, the speaker needs to embody those emotions he wishes to arouse in his audience. Identification between speaker and audience, then, occurs when the speaker arouses the audience to the same emotional level that he, himself, enjoys.

Identification was accomplished by triggering two complex, emotional belief systems. First, Beecher spoke to audiences that presumed themselves to be practicing
Christians. Beecher was an ordained minister. Therefore, the identification process had already begun before Beecher even rose to speak. As long as Beecher's message was perceived as a message of Christian righteousness, his audience would respond favorably.

Second, Beecher was addressing a secular audience, his fellow American citizens. Since the end of persuasion is to cause the audience to engage in action, Beecher was urging his listeners to use the polls to cause an end to a moral evil. His aim was to engage first their righteous anger on the broadest level - a gathering of Christians to listen to an indictment against unchristian behavior - which did not demand any particular action. Then, having established a common bond on that level, Beecher was able to use that anger as the basis for a call to action in the political arena for the purpose of bringing an end to slavery.

Beecher based his appeals on the premises that it was the duty and necessity of every Christian to oppose slavery. Not only was it unchristian to support slavery, but it was equally important to instruct others in their duty to oppose slavery. Beecher constructed emotional appeals that appear to be aimed at making the pacifists feel guilty.

He draws a picture of the poor hunted fugitive; he leads you among the cotton fields of the fair, sunny south, where the breezes are scented
with orange blossoms; and there he asks you to listen to the heart-broken sighs of some miserable slave mother, parted from her children. . . . But before he is done, he smites you; he charges those before him with indifference to this giant wrong; he tells them that the blood of the oppressed will be found on their skirts, for conniving at the servitude of three millions of their fellow-men.19

Although slavery could not be abolished without the active support of the strict abolitionists, Beecher constructed his rhetorical strategies as if he believed that moral commitment was not enough. A plan of action must accompany his campaign of persuasion.

According to Beecher, the specific problem faced by the Republicans in 1856 was to identify a universal threat posed by the institution of slavery. In one address after another, throughout the state of New York, Beecher identified that threat. The inherent danger posed by slavery lay in the system's ability to function as an economic institution only if it could unendingly expand into new territories.20 Once the land wore out in the old sections farmed by intensive slave labor, the plantations were forced to move in search of new, fertile land. As long as land was available for the large-scale, single-crop agriculture that characterized the South, slavery would continue to exist. Therefore, the Republicans were demonstrating political expediency by demanding that slavery not be allowed into the territories through
legislative channels as well as moral expediency by opposing an institution that was immoral.

Slavery violated both the principles embodied in the Constitution of the United States and the concept of free labor as described by the Republicans. According to Beecher, then, there was a consistency between the political and the moral arguments against allowing slavery to expand. The task facing the new party was to move men to respond to the anti-expansionist arguments by voting for the Republican program.

**Language:**

Like many of the radical speakers, Beecher employed a great deal of imagery. In an article printed in the June 29, 1856, issue of The Independent, he metaphorically illustrated the issues of the campaign as explosives stored in a burning building. The prudent man, Beecher's metaphor for the Republicans, would rush to separate the explosives from the fire, while only a madman would stand aside to await the outcome. The madmen were those potential voters who preferred to wait out the inflammatory slavery situation, since any vote withheld for lack of conviction was a vote for the pro-slavery South.

Beecher also argued in his editorial that slavery demoralized both blacks and whites. Political ideals,
manners and personal habits were all endangered by the institution.

Preaching must be guarded, political speeches must be guarded, newspapers must be circumspect. ... Ignorance is right if slavery is right. Free speech is wrong if slavery is right. A system of force cannot deal with moral suasion. 23

Using the imagery of slavery, Beecher suggested that the minds as well as the bodies of all who lived in the South were fettered under the system of human bondage portrayed by Beecher.

He employed a variety of metaphorical constructions in his observations. For example, the South was described as a ship being wildly driven ahead of an "omnipotent storm." 24 Beecher continued with the sailing metaphor, claiming that the "current" which guided southern policy was not of its own immediate making but that it reflected a "tendency" that had caused its policies to "drift far" from the intent of the ship's master.

Every Northern man should thoroughly understand that the policy of the South is not one of vexatious haughtiness. It is a policy the necessity of which springs from the very organization of their society, from the irresistible nature of their industrial system. They cannot help themselves. If they would they cannot. They are on a current which sweeps them whether they will or not. 25

Henry Ward Beecher was a popular speaker. Although many of his anti-slavery arguments were familiar to audiences
throughout the North by virtue of The Independent and its wide circulation, it was his defense of his right to preach against the institution of slavery that formed the moral foundation of the radical Republicans.

The Journal of Commerce editorially attacked Beecher for his sermons advocating abolition, according to biographer David W. Bartlett. From his pulpit in New York City, Beecher declaimed in his own defense:

Three million men, against natural law, against every fundamental principle of our state and national government are, by law, thrown over the pale of the race and denied to be men. This is not fit for the pulpit to mention; it is allowed, nevertheless, to preach about China and India! Every year thousands of children are snatched from their parents' bosoms, and remorselessly sold every whither... Every year husbands and wives are torn asunder, christian or no christian; and the Journal of Commerce browbeats that pulpit that utters a word about such politics...

These were the sentiments by which Beecher encouraged other men of principle to join the Republican campaign, even if they were not previously political activists. He took the moral issue of slavery and turned it to political advantage for those men who would join him in 1856. The new moral definitions proposed by Beecher were the emotional proofs adopted by other ministers whose speeches survived the campaign.
Reverend G. B. Cheever of New York City portrayed the presidential canvass of 1856 as a moral crisis. He delivered a series of partisan sermons during the summer and fall of 1856 to illustrate the crisis to the people of New York.

**Identification:**

Since Beecher had pioneered the use of the pulpit for political purposes, Cheever did not have to establish his credentials as a political speaker. He was immediately accorded the status of a leading Republican spokesman by virtue of his pulpit and his politically-motivated abolitionist sentiments.

During October, the New York Daily Tribune and the New York Daily Times printed a series of abolitionist homilies delivered by Cheever. His theme was consistent from one sermon to the next. He claimed that slavery, itself, was a sinful activity – a well-worn abolitionist assertion. However, even greater moral damage resulted from the immoral practices that accompanied the institution of slavery, according to Cheever, and these were the damages that the Republicans could repair.

On October 20, Cheever discoursed on the moral problems that would accompany the expansion of slavery. The emotional impact of the setting probably predisposed his
audience to listen to his discourse sympathetically. Cheever spoke from the pulpit of the Church of the Puritans on a chilly fall Sunday evening. Since his sermons had been widely publicized prior to the start of the series, the assembled audience can be presumed to have pro-Republican or abolitionist sentiments regardless of their active church membership.

Language:

He established his intention immediately in the introduction by quoting from Jeremiah. Cheever relied heavily upon the use of metaphor and evocative language throughout the sermon. Slavery was the "colossal guilt," a "shipwreck of conscience," a "national injustice," the "impious project," a "marked and mighty sin," and a "daring, culminating inequity". The men who engaged in the holding of slaves were members of the "oligarchy of masters" who promoted the "irresponsible despotism" produced by a slave-holding society.

God's retribution against the slave owners would be like a "sun shot into chaos" and his earthly agents [Cheever's listeners and readers] were charged to get

[T]his orb of light in the firmament of God's word in the right line . . . and calculate our course of duty and safety . . . We ourselves are at sea and surrounded by breakers and God only can rescue us . . .
Cheever employed the same type of navigational metaphor favored by Beecher. Both men reassured their partisan audiences that they were right to seek light and safe harbor in the face of the moral darkness that slavery represented. The stormy political seas were the fault of the slave owners who chose not to heed the biblical injunctions against human bondage.

Cheever shifted ground at the end of his emotion-charged exordium, moving from a demonstration of biblical precedents against slavery in general to a particular argument against the practice of slavery in the United States. He relied upon a parallel illustration to prove his allegations against the immorality of the institution in a nation's history. He compared the plight of the ancient Jews - and God's retribution against their captors - to the situation in the South. He warned that God would punish the pro-slavery southerners with the same dramatic intensity which He had visited upon the slave owners of Biblical times.

The punishments promised by Cheever were outlined in the Bible, his major source of authority. He tried to persuade his audience to action through the use of fear appeals, based upon situations chronicled in biblical times. He attempted to engage the emotions of his audience against the institution of slavery by promising dramatic fiery retribution against the unjust among them.
There burns the light, the fire, the wickedness, the warning, the thunderbolt; you can almost hear it hissing and detonating anew as you open these sacred pages. There stands the scorched, transfixed and blasted form of a nation once chosen and beloved of God, but now a monument to the universe of his inexorable justice.  

Cheever encouraged his congregation to deplore slavery before God's wrath was visited upon the United States just as it was described by Jeremiah in Cheever's opening remarks.

Since God's just and horrible punishment would extend to those men in the North who refused to actively work for abolition, Cheever proposed a course of action.

We are to choose for an empire between wrong and right courses, between injustice and justice, between oppression and benevolence, between slavery and freedom.

This course of moral and practical action was clothed in impressive stylistic devices. Cheever used parallelism and antithesis with impressive dramatic effect in this passage as well as in others throughout the address. The repetition of the moral dichotomy represented in this particular passage was powerfully designed. Cheever provided a clear definition of his concept of slavery as wrong, unjust and oppressive.

According to Bembreck and Howell's text, Persuasion: A Means of Social Influence, the audience, or receiver of the message, must have the freedom to make choices if the
process of persuasion is a valid process. Cheever presented his audience with a choice of action, a necessary element of the persuasive process, while demonstrating that a single course of action was desirable among Christian men. He had predisposed his audience to identify the correct "choices" through their common identity as practicing Christians. Therefore, this "loaded" dichotomy suggested that Cheever's aim was to intensify attitudes already favorable to his cause by appearing to offer alternatives to the "correct" actions which would be totally unacceptable to both the speaker and his audience. This same dichotomy illustrates the uncompromising attitude of the radical Republicans toward slavery - there was no middle ground between slavery and its abolition. The voter supported either one or the other if he remained a radical.

Cheever outlined a course of action for his congregation, based upon their collective duties as Christians and citizens. He encouraged them to invest the presidential canvass with the moral principles of Christianity for

We do not preach to the people on a question of mere expediency, or diplomacy, or profit, or political economy, or statesmanship, or even of what is best, but of what is right; of what God allows.

True Christians, he asserted, cannot avoid speaking against slavery and denouncing the "iniquity" of the
institution. He demanded that his congregation act against the extension of slavery with the enthusiasm of blacksmiths employing "burning thoughts and hard blows" rather than with kid gloves and "fastidious elegancies."34

Cheever's primary purpose was to activate his congregation by arousing them to anger and outrage. He played upon their feelings of guilt within the concept of collective responsibility, just as Beecher did with his audiences. Cheever praised his audience in advance of their actions at the polls, encouraging them to bear testimony against the evils of slavery in a manner analogous to the bravery exhibited by Christ when testifying in front of Pilate. Cheever's imagery was exquisite. He was able to endow the Republican campaign with the weight of the entire Christian ethic by employing images such as Christ's bravery in front of Pilate. His congregation, both immediate and secondary, was "blessed" with a Christ-like mission to eradicate slavery. They would not have to engage in any activity more dangerous than casting their votes in favor of the Republican candidate, but Cheever ennobled the deed to heroic proportions.

The extent of slavery's unchristian character was illustrated with the image of Pilate. Pilate, who sought to place the blame for his actions elsewhere, was the prototype of the southern slave owner. Whereas Pilate
placed the blame for Christ's execution on the heads of the assembled multitude, the southern slave owner placed the blame for the violence in Kansas on the heads of the northern radicals who refused to compromise.

Cheever described the southern moral and political standards transported to the plains of Kansas as wicked, treasonous, perverted, villainous, fraudulent, diabolical and a "monstrous prostitution of law." The resulting bloodshed, he claimed, could have been avoided by devising national policy according to the dictates of the Bible.

This [border violence] could never be, if we, as a people, had kept the word of God in view . . . we must take our stand on God's Word, and square our policy, our platform, according to it . . .

Having demanded that his audience take action to stop the spread of slavery as their moral duty, Cheever proposed a series of six proofs designed to defend his contention that slavery was a sinful state, deserving of eradication on moral grounds, alone. With "proof," the audience would have good reasons to take action. These proofs occupied the second half of the body of his sermon and they were arranged in descending order of importance.

The arrangement of arguments within an address is a critical element in emotional proof. Classical theorists argued that the most effective use of pathetic proof was at the beginning and at the end of the speech. Cheever adhered to this pattern of development.
to the Ciceronian model examined by Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, Cheever opened his sermon with an exordium designed to prepare his audience to sympathize with his later premises. He first presented the grounds for speaker-audience identification by quoting from the scriptures to establish his source of inspiration. The narration was devoted to shifting audience indignation from slavery in broad, historical terms to the proposition facing the voters in 1856. He built parallels between the ancient Jews and the contemporary Africans that would allow his audience to make inferential judgments against the southern slaveholders who wished to extend slavery into the territories.

His logical proofs, all based upon moral indictments and philosophical "truths," were developed in the center of the address. The invention of these "truths" was consistent with the reasoning employed by other Republican speakers who were casting about for logical reasons to oppose slavery. An amorphous theme was beginning to emerge by this late point in the campaign. This theme would begin to replace the "fire and brimstone" thunder of the radicals as a more rational approach to the moral issues imbedded in the slavery controversy. Briefly, Cheever demonstrated the illegality of slavery within the Christian concept of democratic government. He claimed that laws against oppression, man-stealing, denial of
brotherly love and the violation of the parent-child relation were designed to protect all residents of the United States. His proofs were couched in metaphor and an assumption of the common Christian experience of his audience rather than as demonstrable lines of evidential reasoning like the economic and political arguments of the Congressional speakers.

Cheever's address was consistent with the classical model of emotional proof as outlined in Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, for he closed his sermon with a call to specific action in a highly-charged peroration.

Every man who sanctions the iniquity of slavery, by a vote in favor of it is himself part and parcel of the sin. But it is not a question of mere individual sin. It is what you will do with the power put into your hands to make others sin...

Cheever closed his appeal by charging his congregation to become keepers of their southern brothers; to encourage those northern voters not in attendance to vote against slavery for the salvation of all souls, whether directly or indirectly involved in the perpetuation of slavery.

One week after delivering the sermon based upon the words of Jeremiah, Cheever delivered a second sermon in favor of the Republicans entitled "God Against Slavery," based upon Ezekiel 22:29, 30,31. In addition to expanding upon the six proofs against slavery that he had outlined the previous Sunday, Cheever developed the
concept of "man-stealing" into a full-scale moral horror as a means of inciting his congregation to vote against the pro-slavery Democrats. His premise was based on the reasoning that if another Democratic administration were elected, then the horror would increase geometrically.

For every two immortal beings forced into this chattelism, there would be five others forced, in like manner, by the next.40

Cheever accused these later generations of "thieves" of a double crime. Their first crime was that of stealing men to make into slaves. Their second crime was that of stealing the slave-born children from their natural parents, disrupting the sacred and natural bond between parent and child.

These emotional proofs were effective from the pulpit, but used sparingly on the stump. The proofs were too reminiscent of the abolitionist rhetoric to be of much use to the moderate Republicans and the Democratic-Republicans in 1856. In fact, there were some Republicans who found the abolitionist sentiments of the pulpit orators to be contradictory to the party's success at the polls. It was too easy for the Democrats to condemn Republicans as rabble-rousing abolitionists. In fact, one of these Whig-turned-Democrat speakers was Rufus Choate. Throughout the northeast he began to question publically the right of activist preachers to represent a purely political endeavor that could only result in disunion.
The "Radical" Speakers

Invention was a very important element in the construction of the free soil emotional proofs. Since even the radicals were shy about employing stock abolitionist arguments, the invention of new arguments was necessary. Normally, invention would not be analyzed as a portion of pathetic argument. However, Republican rhetorical tactics were founded on new varieties of political arguments in order to avoid comparison with abolitionist, Whig, and Democratic ideological arguments of past campaigns. Therefore, invention becomes an important tool in analyzing the structure of these Republican addresses. In order to provide a foundation for the recurring arguments in the later Republican campaign speeches, a brief thematic analysis of Senator Sumner's address from the spring of 1856, "The Crime Against Kansas," is necessary. Many of Sumner's definitions and rationalizations were quoted throughout the campaign without attribution to the Senator. Sumner's address, in essence, was the keynote of the 1856 Republican campaign.

Charles Sumner compared slavery to a crime against the government, (treason), and a crime against social morality. His arguments in support of the immorality of
slavery were passionate and highly metaphorical, much bolder than those accusations employed during the formal campaign. Slavery was a "harlot" and a "wicked" practice, a "perversion" against the Constitution. To extend slavery into the territories would result in the "rape of a virgin land," an interesting contrast to the metaphorical harlotry he called forth elsewhere in the same speech.

His logical proofs dealing with the constitutionality of slavery were often borrowed by Republican speakers. Sumner charged that since slavery was clearly unconstitutional, the extension of slavery into the territories was an act of treason. Freedom, he claimed, was the natural state of men under the Constitution and the Constitution protected men in all parts of the nation. Slavery was practiced sectionally and was a political concept limited to that section, claimed Sumner. However, freedom was a national concept. Therefore, the pro-slavery men were the treasonous sectionalists who were in open defiance of the constitutional guarantees of personal freedom. Sumner reasoned that their mere participation in the slave society, whether they owned slaves or not, made them traitors.

Sumner listed the particular crimes of which he accused the South. Congress had been "swindled" with the repeal of the Compromise of 1850; popular sovereignty in the
South was abridged, since slavery was the only "choice" of those men unable to cast a vote for any elected official; property rights substituted for human rights, according to the fugitive slave legislation "forced" upon the North; and the entire democratic process was prostituted by the voting frauds perpetuated in the South and her "invaders" in Kansas.

The pro-slavery factions in Kansas and Washington "reeked" with conspiracy, claimed Sumner. Government appointees to Kansas were demonstrably pro-slavery, sent by the pro-slavery President Pierce and his administration to obtain control of the territories of the "Slave Power." Sumner charged Pierce and his administration with "murder," "illegal" militia raids, and the abrogation of law and order by their Missouri "invaders." A "tyranny" was in effect in Kansas and Pierce, the Democrats, and all of the pro-slavery South was to blame.

In addition to the emotive material supplied by Sumner, some of the emotional proofs employed by the less temperate radicals of 1856 were lifted directly from the abolitionist campaigns of previous years. These were the immoderate, accusatory proofs studiously avoided by the more moderate elements of the Republican party. Yet, it was the radical faction that provided the platform, the slogan and the ideology that united the party and gave it the strength to survive a single-issue campaign.
Republican Appeals

The Whigs in the Republican party emphasized Union and compromise; the Democrats plotted to undermine the power of Calhoun and his Slave Power followers; and the abolitionists were determined to abolish slavery regardless of the political situation. However, one line of defense consistently appeared in most Republican addresses - the northern radicals defended the rights of free soil men to engage in free labor as guaranteed by the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the intentions of the founding triumvirate of George Washington, James Madison, and Thomas Jefferson.

Salmon Chase, Andrew Reeder, Charles Robinson and Henry Wilson were among the speakers who remained loyal to their anti-slavery roots while campaigning for the Republican party. While they employed emotional proofs more limited in scope than those all-encompassing arguments adopted by the pulpit orators, they were adept at illustrating the concepts of freedom and justice as promised by a Republican administration.

For example, Senator Henry Wilson addressed a huge crowd of laborers and workingmen at the New York City Tabernacle on Saturday, October 4, 1856.41 His appearance
on the speakers' platform was accompanied by the sounds of a brass band and a glee club, who were entertaining the crowd with "rousing" campaign songs. The platform of the Mechanics and Workingman's Central Republican Union was read aloud to the crowd, then Wilson was introduced. His audience was wildly partisan. According to the newspaper report, he was greeted with cheers, applause, shouts and the "waving of hats and handkerchiefs."

Since the audience and the speaker already shared identification as Republicans, and since their goals were similar as illustrated by the Union platform, mirrored the Republican national platform, Wilson's job was to intensify the commitment of the crowd to the national party. He defended the northern principle of free labor by characterizing southerners as "degraded and dishonored" as a result of the slavery system. This form of sectional slander became pro forma in the Republican campaign. It needed no further amplification when addressed to a northern, anti-slavery audience.

Wilson charged the Democrats with criminal activity against the very men standing before him in New York City, having taken nearly 500,000 square miles of the soil of this nation forever consecrated to freedom and opening it to the inroads of Human Slavery. It was a crime against the mechanics, against the laboring men and against the small farmers of the United States...
He continued with this quasi-religious metaphor by accusing the Democrats of obeying the demands of the Slave Power to claim Kansas for slavery, having stolen "the heritage of the freemen of the Republic North and South, and desecrated it, laid it as a votive offering at the foot of the Slave Power."  

Wilson was enlisting the support of his audience of laboring men in favor of a political party that revered free labor. While the purely political issue of the extension of slavery into the territories might not move his audience to vote for Republican candidates, Wilson was certain that an appeal against the restriction of free trade and an end to free labor would command their attention. The Republicans reasoned that territories built with slave labor wouldn't welcome free labor. Wilson developed that notion of restrictive emigration while painting the South as comparable to a rapist plundering the territories "to dishonor and disgrace and degrade."

Wilson referred to the Democrats as "Lords of the Lash," "traitors" and "Calhoun sectionalists." He demanded the emancipation of the white men of the South from the restrictions slavery put upon free enterprise rather than demanding that slavery be eradicated for moral reasons. The enslavement by the white man by the system of slavery became a stock Republican argument.
In contrast to Wilson's diatribe against the enslavement of the working classes of the South, Salmon P. Chase remained an abolitionist to the end of the campaign. Chase demanded the emancipation of the Negro slaves whether under the aegis of a particular party or by any other possible means. He, too, referred to slavery as a crime and the slave states as "oppressors." Democrats were members of an "invading gang," ready to "scheme" against the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Chase employed analogy in order to compare the 1856 canvass to a battle between the forces of freedom and bondage.

It is here in our midst the battle of freedom is to be fought; we are to determine whether . . . murder and rapine are to stalk abroad in the broad light of day, startling even the stoutest hearts by their atrocity.

Chase gave voice to the radical concept that individual liberty was more important as a goal than the preservation of the Union. Even the prospect of compromise with those men who represented the slave states was perceived by the radicals as a traitorous act. The Union, claimed Chase, could continue only if it were founded upon the exercise of full freedom for all participants. In effect, the Union, as represented by the Pierce administration, was perceived as a tool of the "Slave Power." Therefore, it was of no use to the radicals in its present form, for the ideals of the Constitution had been prostituted by Douglas
and the expansionists within the administration. Cassius Clay expressed the radical contempt for compromise in his New York address of October 25.

I say look back upon our past history to see if you have not done enough in the way of conciliation and compromise. . . . the man who blindly follows the dictation of the South, and would make a slave of a black man today, would make a slave of a white man tomorrow. 48

Clay offered no proof for his assertion, but this radical line of sectional reasoning was acceptable to partisan audiences by this late date in the campaign. The concept of white enslavement gradually replaced the more conservative free labor concept in the later campaign rhetoric. It was certainly more dramatic and it fostered more immediate identification between speaker and audience. Whereas none of the audience members might have occasion to visit the South and actually observe the slavery system in operation, most of the audience members could identify with the possibility of reduced emigration to the West and a tight labor market.

The frontier radicals, exemplified by Andrew Reeder and Charles Robinson, were more concerned with the Constitutional violations on territorial soil than with the larger issues of slavery. However, they brought forth the same arguments that Clay and Chase favored for the purposes of identification with the audience. Radical speakers warned their audiences that if Constitutional
abuses could happen in the territories, then they had initiated a precedent that would allow abuses in any other portion of the Union. Further, the abuses currently under discussion were the fault of the Democratic administration, both current and immediately past.

The territorial spokesmen relied upon graphic description and evocative, first-person language to generate sympathy. Reeder skillfully used analogy as a stylistic device to demonstrate the specific dangers of the spread of slavery across the nation. Postulating that the territories could not support both free and slave labor, Reeder claimed that slave territories would dam the westward expansion of the free labor advocates of the northeast, clogging the cities and saturating the marketplace.

These northern states may be likened to a tub under a fountain, all the time boiling over with a surplus population, and streaming over the vast West . . . [if] you shut off this entire stream of northern emigration you . . . turn back this human tide to throw itself upon the states of the North . . . 49

Reeder assumed that his audience accepted the proposition that slave and free labor could not co-exist based on inductive evidence provided by the violent situation in Kansas. By example, if the pro-slavery forces and the free state forces could not compromise in a single,
uncommitted territory, then the possibility for national compromise was even more dismal.

Reeder employed praeteritio, a sophisticated stylistic device which allows for the inclusion of derogatory remarks while protecting the speaker from slander, to illustrate the horrors visited upon his fellow Kansans in the name of justice. For example, Reeder claimed that he would not undertake to describe the "robberies, the house burnings, the plunderings, the horse-stealings, the murders" in the time allotted to his speech while, of course, he proceeded to do so. He felt inadequate to the task of describing "the acts of our oppressors [which] were stained with blood and with every attribute which could disgrace humanity" although those acts were planned with "devilish ingenuity" toward "awful consequences."50

In contrast to the skillful use of devices in the address of Reeder, Charles Robinson limited his emotional appeals to specific eyewitness accounts designed to align his audience against the Democrats. He employed few analogies or other sophisticated devices to arouse the sympathy of his audience. His success as an emotional speaker lay with his ability to speak plainly of - and to - the average citizen in straightforward terms. Robinson was able to identify with his audience and create common ground immediately. He claimed that "It makes me sick every time I think of a Northern man going for Southern
aggression."51 He described the plight of Kansas in the same plain, straight-forward terms that served to underscore the nobility of the beleaguered free state men.

Captain Shores, who has spent most of his time in defending the homes of the people of Kansas . . . is sick, his wife is sick, and he has no means of support. This is the condition of some of our captains and you may imagine what the rest must suffer.52

The success of his examples rested on the presumption that every person in attendance at the speech had been sick at one time; that each could identify with the care of a sick spouse, so that identification with the sick, discouraged Captain Shores should have been universal in the audience. Without the use of sophisticated rhetorical devices, Robinson created a spare, bold picture of suffering with which his audience could easily sympathize.

Robinson illustrated his major premises with homey anecdotes, plainly expressed without ambiguity, for the maximum identification. He spoke of no threat larger than the situation in Kansas itself, leaving it to his audience to realize the national threat through inductive application.53 The result was an address of great trustworthiness from a man who humbly begged for political support from his listeners so that a simple problem might be solved with their help - vote Republican and keep Kansas free.
Rufus Choate delivered a pro-Democratic address at Lowell, Massachusetts, on October 30. His speech employs many of the same references and emotional appeals used by the Republicans, providing an interesting rhetorical counterpoint to the free soil rhetoric. For the sake of comparison, a brief analysis of Choate’s address is included. He was addressing the same geographic audience that gathered to hear Seward, Chase, Banks and the other leading northeastern speakers.

Throughout his introduction, Choate relied heavily upon the same iconographic representations of national ideals that were standard fare in the Republican speeches; representations of national values that were familiar to his northeastern audience and would enhance his chances to achieve consubstantiality. He was attempting to engage the sympathy of his audience for his message by arousing their sense of patriotism and linking their patriotic emotions to the imagery within his speech. For example, he commended his Massachusetts audience for attending his speech like “true patriots.” He acknowledged their desire to elect a “successor to Washington” who would represent a “closer Union, and a truer and intenser [sic] American feeling and life” than that promised by the current administration.
However, Choate presented a non-sectional argument in favor of the Democratic party that was strikingly different from the arguments of his Republican colleagues. Since his premises were certain to be unpopular with the anti-slavery audience in attendance, he employed a stylistic device that was meant to form an immediate bond of identification between himself and his listeners. He introduced the body of his speech with a series of rhetorical questions that were designed to be answered in the affirmative.

Rufus Choate wanted compromise. He felt that sectional and emotional arguments were falsely divisive since they ignored the political aspects of a presidential canvass. No longer were the Democrats arrayed against the Whigs on the use of tariffs and the running of the government - realms in which men might exercise the use of political power wisely. Instead, Choate envisioned continued conflict.

Don't tell us how provoked you are, or how provoked Rev. Mr. This or Hon. Mr. That has come to be against the South; [or] how passionately one southern member spoke or another southern member acted; [or] how wicked it was in Washington to hold slaves ... Choate complained that other speakers tried to "mystify or trick us" with statistics designed to prove the superiority of the North or the inferiority of the South. The result of this trickery, he claimed, was not
beneficial to the nation as a whole, since it provided no solutions. Choate's observations were designed to focus the ideals of his party on a workable solution to the disunion that was threatened by the accusations being tossed from pulpit to pulpit in the northeast.

Does this attempt to weave and plait the two north wings of the old national parties into a single Northern one, and cut the Southern wing off altogether, strike you to be quite as far-sighted and safe as it is new and bold? . . . To combine States against States in such a system as ours - has it been generally held a very happy device towards forming a more perfect union and insuring domestic tranquillity? . . . to put in requisition every species of rhetoric and sophistry to impress on the general mind that the end justifies the means; . . . does this strike you as altogether in the spirit of Washington and Franklin, and the preamble to the Constitution and the Farewell Address? Does it strike you that if carried out it will prove to be a mere Summer excursion to Moscow? Will there be no bivouack [sic] in the snow: no avenging Winter hanging on retreat? No Leipaic; no Waterloo? 57

Choate was adept in the use of metaphor. He was able to employ the same stylistic devices that Cheever and Beecher relied upon for emotional proof in their sermons. However, Choate demonstrated the truth of his arguments through the imagery of the Constitution and the presidential succession, rather than through biblical example and individual moral exhortation. Rufus Choate
preferred collective action in favor of the political
good, rather than individual action for moral good.

Choate was violently opposed to a sectional party.
But, he was also a foe of slavery. He developed a thesis
which would allow for the containment of slavery and the
success of the new party. Choate simply proposed that the
Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850 be honored.

'That which gave peace to the country
in 1820 and that which consummated the
peace of the country in 1850 ought to
be made good by the government of the
United States and with the consent of
the American people.'

Choate argued that freedom and Union were obtainable with
compromise. He continued to embellish his address with
rhetorical questions throughout, giving to the whole
speech a defensive posture. He did not make a conscious
attempt to engage in any further identification with his
audience after initially acknowledging those attending the
speech as his neighbors in Lowell. The speech appears to
be an ideological alignment of party and national policy.
Choate attempted to expose the sectionalism as the first
step in the destruction of the Union. He called
sectionalism an "artificial" issue and he indicted the
abolitionists as traitors to the Union. He called for

'The recognition of an equal title to
love, regard, honor, equality, in each
and every state and region; that
studious and that admirable conclusion
of all things sectional.'
Choate demanded that sectionalism give way before the heritage shared by the entire nation. He employed further, local iconography in his peroration by reminding his audience of Bunker Hill and Faneuil Hall as sites of national—not sectional—importance. He reminded his audience that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution inspired the Democratic platform. Those documents were not the province of the North but of the whole nation. His final appeal was to the memory of George Washington, who warned against sectionalism in his Farewell Address, an address often quoted by Republican speakers seeking to exonerate the Founding Fathers as slave owners. Choate neatly deflected the Republican arguments with complimentary emotional proofs of his own.
Summary

The emotional appeals employed by Republican speakers were as varied as the backgrounds of the individuals who wrote the speeches. Whigs emphasized Union and compromise; Democrats plotted to undermine the power of Calhoun and his "Slave Power" followers; and the abolitionists were determined to abolish slavery regardless of the political situation.

Many of the emotional appeals employed by the Republicans appear to be at odds with one another because of the diversity of political experience brought to the campaign by the various speakers. In 1856, the Republican party had not yet crystallized its ideology and was still dependent upon the prior reputation and particular speaking ability of each spokesman. Also, each speaker represented a particular personal facet of the political scene, so that the individual quite often spoke more loudly than did the party he represented.

Since the main thrust of the 1856 campaign was to stop the expansion of slavery into the territories, the rampant emotionalism of the abolitionists was de-emphasized by those speakers who represented the powerful inner circle of the organization. For Nathaniel Banks, William Seward and George Curtis, rational exposition was a more fitting
form of persuasion than emotional arguments better suited to the pulpit. They strove to form the basis for a lasting political organization that would represent more than the abolitionist sentiment that originally brought them together in 1854. The solid reasoning that characterized the speeches of the party organizers was the vital thrust that carried the party into the campaign of 1860, not the stale, emotional diatribes against the evils of slavery, grown tiresome with twenty years of constant use.
Notes

1 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 428.
2 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 434.
3 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 435.
4 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 436.
5 Foner, p. 107.
6 Trefousse, p. 4.
7 Foner, p. 107.
8 Foner, p. 106.
9 Foner, p. 108.
10 Foner, p. 109.
11 Trefousse, p. 20.
12 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 419.
13 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 434.
14 David W. Bartlett, Modern Agitators: or Pen Portraits of Living American Reformers (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), pp. 204-205.

15 Bartlett, p. 204.


17 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 433.

18 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 427.

19 Bartlett, pp. 205-206.

20 Patriotic Addresses, p. 84.

21 Bartlett, p. 204. Patriotic Addresses, p. 196. Beecher's biographer admits a great deal of difficulty in finding extant speech texts from 1856. The major newspapers carried synopses of his addresses, but full text speeches are rare.

22 Patriotic Addresses, p. 197.

23 Patriotic Addresses, p. 197.


Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.1.

Tribune 21 October 1856, p.6, col.1.

Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.1.

Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.2.


Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.2.

Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.2.

Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.3.

Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.2.

Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 434.

Tribune, 21 October 1856, p.6, col.3.

Tribune, 28 October 1856, p. 5.

Tribune, 28 October 1856, p.6, col.1.

Tribune, 6 October 1856, p.6.

Tribune, 6 October 1856, p.6, col.1.

Tribune, 6 October 1856, p.6, col.1.
44 **Tribune**, 6 October 1856, p.6, cols.1-5.

45 **Tribune**, 4 July 1856, p.5, cols.4-5.

46 **Tribune**, 4 July 1856, p.5, col.5.


49 **Tribune**, 27 August 1856, p.5, col.4.

50 **Tribune**, 26 August 1856, p.5, col.2.


52 **Times**, 23 October 1856, p.1, col.5.

53 **Times**, 23 October 1856, p.1, col.3.

54 **Times**, 30 October 1856, p.1, col.5.

55 **Times**, 30 October 1856, p.1, col.5.

56 **Times**, 30 October 1856, p.1.

57 **Times**, 30 October 1856, p.1, col.5.


59 **Times**, 30 October 1856, p.2, col.3.
Chapter 7
Summary and Conclusions

Summary

The Republican campaign rhetoric of 1856 was shaped in part by the free soil concerns of northern politicians. The repeal of the Compromise of 1850 and the extension of slavery into the Kansas territory inflamed those Republicans who spoke during the presidential campaign of 1856.

However, the persuasive arguments employed by Republican speakers were constrained by the same circumstances that spawned the organization. The Republican party was composed of many free soil factions rather than a single, cohesive group. The party had no history and could provide no sense of identity for its members. In addition to the lack of a group identity, Republican free soil sentiments ranged from those of the abolitionists to those who favored full compromise with the Democrats.

Therefore, the free soil conflict which confronted the new party was double-edged. Free soil provided the
campaign platform, but divided the rhetors according to individual sentiments.

The arguments employed by Republican party spokesmen generally advocated free soil policies for political, moral, and economic reasons. The arguments were open to individual interpretation, allowing each speaker to meet the needs of his particular audience while pursuing his own variety of free soil advocacy.

First, the political arguments in favor of free soil were designed to attack the results of pro-slavery, Democratic policies in the territories and in the South. Anti-slavery arguments and anti-Democratic arguments were interchangeable, according to the surviving speech texts. Republican speakers linked the Democratic party and pro-slavery activities, establishing an anti-Democratic identity for members of the new party.

In addition to the anti-Democratic unity advocated by Republican speakers, the free soil concept united the North against the Slave Power Conspiracy of the South. These sectional arguments, coupled with the anti-Democratic rhetoric of the Republican campaign, gave the members of the new party a sense of political identity.

Second, Republican speakers established an economic identity for their audiences. Republicans, they explained, were free-state residents who were convinced that slave labor, if unstopped, would increase white
unemployment and close the western frontier to eastern emigrants. It was the duty of Republicans to vote the Democrats out of office so that slavery might be contained in the South for the economic good of the free white men of the North.

Third, slavery was morally reprehensible to the free men of the North, according to party spokesmen. Republican speakers backed their moral arguments against slavery with evidence from the long history of abolitionism in New England. Slavery imprisoned both the black man and the white man, they argued.

The Republican platform of 1856 was a compromise measure, designed to satisfy the more militant free soil members of the party. Yet, Republicans argued in favor of non-expansion and free soil rather than for abolition and universal emancipation. Abolition implied militancy and lawlessness, whereas the new party demanded law and order on the territorial frontier.

Conclusions

Although the Republicans lost the presidential election of 1856, the party was successful in 1860. The rhetorical strategies used by party spokesmen in 1856 provided rhetorical strategies for successful Republican campaigns in 1858 and 1860.
A primary element in the Republican success was the politically experienced men who joined the party as its spokesmen. They effectively created a political identity for the new party, avoiding any similarity to the old Whig and abolitionist organizations. Many campaign speakers did not identify themselves as "Republicans." They spoke of issues and national concerns that were part of the Republican platform rather than making promises in the name of the Republican party. Many of the speakers who chose to remain formally unaffiliated with the Republican party were known to be opposed to the Democratic administration. However, once the new party placed members into the Congress and produced great popular support at the polls in 1856, many previously unaffiliated opinion leaders openly joined the party and touted their "charter" membership to generate added ethos for themselves in the campaigns of 1858 and 1860.

In order to establish some form of identification with their audiences, Republican speakers addressed gatherings as fellow-citizens, fellow-merchants or fellow-scholars in 1856. By 1858, they could address their audiences as fellow-Republicans, based on the demographic evidence of election returns. The radical Republicans usually resorted to slavery issues to cement identification with their audiences, while the moderates chose economic themes to dispose the audience in their favor. By 1858, both
contingents of the Republican party could point to Congressional and state voting records of party members as well as the destructive line of policy being followed by the Democrats in the face of an alternative Republican platform.

However, Republican speakers faced constraints imposed by the situation they strove to resolve. The political factions which composed the new party included many former Democrats. To verbally abuse a party to which they had so recently owed political loyalty was a difficult task. According to Lloyd Bitzer's rhetorical analysis of Abraham Lincoln's campaign speaking in 1860, Senator Stephen Douglas and his fellow Democrats continued to be blamed for perpetrating a pro-slavery conspiracy. Therefore, much of the anti-Democratic rhetoric was aimed at President Pierce, the Pierce Administration, and the Slave Power Democrats. The "evil" Democrats had allowed the repeal of the Missouri and Clay Compromises into which the non-slave states had entered in good faith. The negation of the compromises, in addition to destroying good faith, allowed the perpetuation of an institution which was morally reprehensible to the Republicans of the northeast. The Slave Power conspiracy theory proved popular in 1856 as a unification theme in the northeast, so it was retained as one of the fantasy themes of the later Republican campaigns.
Speakers painted the expansion of slavery as an immediate threat to the security of the free state residents by portraying the violence in Kansas as the result of slavery expansion policies favored by the Democrats. The causal links used by the Republicans to blame the Democratic administration for the constitutional violations in Kansas were expanded (or chained) to illustrate a threat to the entire nation.

By placing the blame for the frontier atrocities on the Democrats, the Republicans continued to strengthen their party identity as the united opposition to the "evil" Democrats. This form of party identification was vital to the new party in 1856 and their united opposition to Democratic territorial legislation continued into the campaigns of 1858 and 1860. According to Bitzer's analysis, the Dred Scott decision increased the urgency of the debates concerning the legality of slavery as a local or a national institution.

Republican speakers continued to support the sectional nature of their party. Sectionalism was a frequent and violent theme in the Republican speeches during the 1858 campaigns. However, the sectionalism fostered by the anti-slavery platform of the party created another rhetorical problem. Since the majority of large business owners in the North had economic ties to the South, a means of providing a sense of economic security had to be
discovered. This problem was not solved until after the campaign of 1856. Instead, the rampant sectional arguments of 1856 were designed to insult and isolate all southerners, as well as anyone with economic or emotional ties to the South, whether they were slaveholders or not. The vicious verbal attacks aimed at the educational, social and moral structures of the slave states alarmed those conservative northern businessmen whose economic success depended in some measure upon a stable southern trade. The radical anti-southern sentiments which proved so popular with mass audiences in the North widened the gap between the Republicans and the business community.

As a result, the Republicans never accumulated a comfortable treasury during the 1856 campaign. Large donors were not attracted to the party, mainly because of its uncompromising sectionalism. Instead, the Know-Nothing party attracted many of the wealthy, north-eastern businessmen in 1856, a party that promised to shield their business ventures from immigrants and papists, as well as from radical Republicans.

However, the sectional argument remained one of the strongest stock arguments in the Republican repertoire. The argument condemned Democrats, slavery, the South and Stephen Douglas in a variety of ingenious forms. These various forms of the sectional argument became the bases for the fantasy themes which chained through the
Republican culture in the four years prior to the election of 1860. Lincoln's enhanced conspiracy theory was simply a more sophisticated form of the sectional argument of 1856.²

Judging the effectiveness of public speaking is a difficult task. Thonssen, Baird, and Braden suggest in Speech Criticism that audience response is one method of judging effectiveness. However, since a variety of speeches that were given over several months time were examined in this study, the only available form of response would be the popular vote recorded at the end of the campaign. Since voting abuses, errors in tabulation, and the lack of a uniform registration code existed in 1856, the popular tally of recorded votes cannot be an accurate measure of audience response.

In fact, there were recorded votes for Republican candidates. John C. Fremont received one-third of the official popular presidential vote in 1856. Other Congressional and state offices were filled by Republican candidates in 1856 and the years which followed. Voters were being affected by the Republican appeals and electing party members to public office. According to Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, effective oratory can be measured by the actions taken by the audience as a result of hearing a speech.³ But, judging the effects of many speeches over a six month period may not be defensible.
However, Speech Criticisms also suggests that an effective speech should function as a means of positive social change. Rather than limiting judgement of public speaking to the immediate audience response, the critic may study the effect of rhetoric on groups of people which associate with one another in public life. Specifically, the methodology demands that effective rhetoric anticipates the needs of a future audience as well as the needs of an immediate audience. If the orator demonstrates foresight, wisdom, vision, and perspicacity, then his arguments may be judged sound.

Therefore, the speeches of the Republican presidential campaign may be judged according to their political and social value in light of later Republican campaigns. The political arguments of 1856 grew from the political exigence provided by the territorial violence and the perceived Slave Power threat from the South. The social arguments reflected the larger value-laden issues identified by Republican speakers such as Nathaniel Banks and George Curtis.

The Republican speakers in 1856 demanded an end to the bloodshed in the territories, adequate representation for the anti-slavery residents of Kansas, and legislation to stop the spread of slavery into the territories. These demands met immediate political needs; these demands would cease to define the party when solutions were presented.
However, the compelling political issues of the 1860 presidential campaign were similar to those issues of 1856. The slavery issue was still unresolved and territorial violence continued. The speakers who predicted that the violence would escalate were correct in their predictions. Speeches supporting territorial law and order were delivered by Republican rhetors during the four years between presidential elections.

Eyewitnesses like Robinson and Reeder continued to demand an end to the pro-slavery, Democratic support of the Lecompte faction in Kansas. Since James Buchanan, a Democrat, was serving as President, Republicans continued to argue that the Democrats were to blame for the bloody territorial violence.

The short-term demands of speakers like Clay, Robinson, Reeder, Beecher, and Cheever were validated during the period between presidential elections. Violence did escalate, as they predicted; the threat of slavery expansion strengthened with the reinstitution of the slave trade under a Democratic administration; and the spectre of a united Slave Power grew stronger as southern "fire-eaters" urged separation from the Union. These Republican speakers were accurate in their predictions of political events in their immediate future, but would their campaign rhetoric provide the basis for a lasting ideology?
Speakers such as Chase, Banks, Curtis, and Seward provided the Republicans with transcendent ideas which survived the political crises of the pre-Civil War era. Their arguments in favor of liberty, freedom, and the constitutionality of the legislation passing through Congress were not dependent upon the particular political situation. The values reflected in their appeals were open to compromise and wide interpretation.

The Republican argument protesting the constitutional legality for the adoption of the Kansas-Nebraska Act provided an ideological basis for other legislative battles, rather than being limited to a single situation. The economic issues inherent in the Republican free labor concept provided the ideological framework for endorsements of future economic policies.

The Republican idealists proposed social concepts that sustained the party through the slavery crisis. The effectiveness of their appeals can be measured by the survival of the party. Slavery has been legislated out of existence and the Kansas territorial dispute has been settled. Yet, the ideals of the early Republicans continue to exist in the economic and legislative policies of the contemporary party.

According to Ernest Bormann, the fantasy themes which were most important during the late 1850s linked the free soil movement to the rhetorical visions of a free
frontier. Abraham Lincoln, especially, was concerned about the dangers of slavery and the southern policy of expansionism. Bormann claims that "Lincoln's vision portrayed the issue as one of great historical importance, of the survival of the Union . . ." In essence, Lincoln was caught up in a restoration drama that concerned his entire party - the restoration of the Union to the principles of full equality and "the great experiment in human self-government" that occupied the founding fathers.

On June 16 1858, Abraham Lincoln delivered his "House Divided" speech in Springfield, Illinois. The occasion was his acceptance of the Republican nomination for a seat in the United States Senate. This speech was an example of the restoration theme in Republican rhetoric which was popularized in the speaking of the 1858 Illinois senatorial campaign.

Slavery was still the pivotal issue in national politics and the Republicans seemed no closer to legislating an end to slavery than they were in 1856. Lincoln was concerned about the divisiveness of the slavery issue and could not comprehend how the nation might survive as a single unit until its resolution. He did not predict the destruction of the Union in his address, but he did warn the South to prepare to abolish slavery according to the dictates of the free soil advocates.
Lincoln concluded that the Union would endure regardless of the stress placed upon it by the divisive slavery issue because all internal conflict could be settled constitutionally.

Even the repeal of the Missouri Compromise was placed in historical perspective by Lincoln, proof that even such a grievous wrong could be rectified through the normal course of justice. Without public endorsement of the repeal, the law could not be made to work. If the "rightful basis" of the government were allowed to work in favor of the people it was designed to represent and protect, then the expansion of slavery would be a moot issue. However, the particular problem facing the Republicans remained the same in 1858 as it had in 1856 - how were they to ensure that the legal system of the United States government would be allowed to operate in all states and all territories?

With regard to the "gag rule" and the fugitive slave laws, Lincoln remarked that the "opposition" chose to constrain the entire concept of self-government within the following definition: "... that if any one man choose to enslave another, no third man shall be allowed to object."10

In summary, Bormann's analysis of Lincoln's speaking in 1858 finds that Abraham Lincoln was more concerned with the governmental imbalance that affected the ability to
compromise among the regions than with the issue of slavery. Lincoln assumed that the institution of slavery would expire without government intervention. He was much more concerned with the heated sectionalism and the lack of national unity that inspired men to reinterpret the Constitution to meet their immediate political needs. Lincoln was not confident that the Union could survive the sectional divisiveness that closed off avenues of discussion and debate, reducing the grounds for common identification and self-government among the states.\textsuperscript{11}

However, the sectional argument remained one of the strongest stock emotional arguments in the Republican repertoire. The argument was useful for the condemnation of Democrats, slavery, the South and Stephen Douglas in any variety of ingenious forms. Sectionalism and frontier violence provided the means of political identification in a decade when it was necessary to skirt the issue of outright abolition. Without these specific emotional appeals, the strength of the identification between the new party and the northern idealists would have faltered early in 1856. The Republicans were closely linked to their own arguments against the brutality of a social system that enslaved both black and white citizens. They couldn't simply drop sectionalism and anti-expansionism for a new vision in 1858 and 1860.
"Free labor" was a Republican concept that was the perfect counterpoint to their "free men" philosophy. One could not exist without the other. However, the concepts were so broad that any number of intellectual and political interpretations could be applied in the course of future campaigns.

Suggestions for Further Study

Eric Foner suggested that the campaign of 1856 has been too long ignored by historians and political scientists. The lack of secondary source material currently available about this presidential contest confirms Foner's observation. In order to make the best use of extant historical and political studies of the immediate pre-Civil War era, the rhetorical scholar will need to examine particular arguments for their historical development, that is, to search for the historical exigence from which the campaign arguments arose.

In particular, rhetoricians contemplating a study of the campaign rhetoric of the mid-nineteenth century will need to explore private collections for biographical and communication data of those speakers who have not been treated to exhaustive, published biographies. For example, many influential Republican speakers such as
Robinson and Reeder are not profiled in volumes easily accessible to scholars outside of Kansas.

The formation of the Republican party is only briefly treated in this study. Most standard Republican histories state that a new party was formed on one of several disputed dates. Although theories of organizational structure apply to the formation of any political party, no study has been devoted to the formation of the Republican party in particular. A rhetorician with expertise in organizational communication should examine the dynamics of party formation in greater depth than this study provides.

The Democratic and Know-Nothing answers to the particular Republican free soil charges need to be studied. In some regions of the country, Republican speakers advocated compromise with one or the other of the opposing parties in an effort to split the vote. The rhetorical significance of the arguments in favor of campaign compromise needs further study.
Notes

1 Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, pp. 327-329.

2 Bitzer, p. 216.

3 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 536.

4 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 539.

5 Thonssen, Baird, and Braden, p. 542.

6 Bormann, p. 201.

7 Bormann, p. 208.


9 Peterson, p. 491.

10 Peterson, p. 492.

11 Bormann, p. 215.
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Entrepreneur - Owner/ Operator 7/84 - present
Comic Book Emporium

Writer - Free-Lance Biographer 5/80 - present
Textbook Editor
Magazine Articles

Reporter - Shore Line Times Group 5/80 - 6/83
Columnist/ Features

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DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Linda J. Webster

Major Field: Speech

Title of Dissertation: A Rhetorical Analysis of Selected Republican Speeches in the 1856 Presidential Election Campaign

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination: 