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THE RHETORIC OF THE BENIGN
SCAPEGOAT: PRESIDENT
REAGAN AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

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by

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B.S., Southwest Missouri State University, 1991
M.A., Southwest Missouri State University, 1993
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In 1987, at the age of 35, I entered my first college classroom. To be frank, I was terrified. But the journey to a terminal degree has been an enjoyable one. Many people have helped me along my way. I will mention some of them in this acknowledgment.

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ABSTRACT

Ronald Reagan deservedly attained the moniker “The Great Communicator” due to his rhetorical prowess. This dissertation addresses an aspect, governmental scapegoating, of Reagan’s rhetorical strategy. Traditional scapegoating theory claims that the scapegoat is either killed or driven from the community. However, I claim that Reagan profited by making a unique use of the scapegoat, one that was benign, the government remained essentially unscathed.

The means to analyze Reagan’s discourse is Kenneth Burke’s cycle of guilt, victimage, redemption and rebirth. Ten speeches of President Reagan are analyzed: both of his Inaugural Addresses, his Economic Recovery Speech, and his seven State of the Union Addresses. Analysis revealed a consistent pattern of federal bureaucratic attack throughout Reagan’s eight years in office.

Although Reagan successfully utilized his benign scapegoating, concern arises when the United States’ form of government, representative democracy, is considered. Scapegoating can stifle discourse, a potentially dangerous outcome for a free and open society.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH INTENT

INTRODUCTION

The period between 1930 and 1980 has been characterized by a vast expansion of the power and responsibility of the federal government in the United States. The expansion has varied in its pace and extent. At times it has been dramatic and systemic, at other times it has been slow and incremental. The New Deal response to the Great Depression, the vast mobilization for World War II, the Cold War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Great Society, and other large-scale projects allowed human and other material resources to flow to Washington D.C. Traditionalists like Robert Taft and Barry Goldwater routinely protested that the steady intervention of the central government was weakening state and local governments through a steady drain of brains and dollars and that a growing federal bureaucracy was hurting individual enterprise and causing the populace to become dependent on the Federal Government. However, their voices were generally discounted, for this was an era of unprecedented prosperity. The United States government had achieved great successes on the battlefield in battling tyranny. Its resources were
allocated to alleviate hunger, disease, and ignorance. At home, the GI Bill, FHA Housing, loans, and Social Security were highly prized. Thus, the credibility and policies of the government remained high and filled the void left by the demise of European Empires in world affairs.

In the early 1970's vast changes took place. The Middle-East oil cartel and the full post-World War II recovery of United States' market competitors in Europe and Japan threatened American hegemony. Loss of foreign markets, double-digit inflation, the lost war in Vietnam and the national angst it caused, the decline in real wages, accelerated loss of farms, the Watergate scandal, a growing reaction on the part of the white majority to social programs they saw as failing, and a long list of perceived foreign and domestic failures eroded the national faith in the federal government, a loss of confidence that will be documented in an appropriate place in this dissertation. This loss of faith gave credibility to the Goldwater wing of the Republican Party, and in particular to the popular California governor, Ronald Wilson Reagan. With growing success, Reagan argued the expansion of the federal government was a primary cause of the loss of America's global competitiveness and a threat to unity at home. He
promised to "get the government off our backs" and to liberate
the genius of the American people from a "stifling and arrogant
federal bureaucracy." During the 1950s Reagan had been a
spokesperson for General Electric who traveled the country
supporting free enterprise at home and denouncing
collectivism in the Communist world. In the late 1960s his
target broadened to include a sense of growing collectivism in
the United States.

Reagan ran for President in 1980 upon a platform
predominantly based upon attacks leveled at the federal
bureaucracy, attacking liberals and lending a stronger voice to
conservative ideology than even Barry Goldwater had
achieved.

Even after his election to office in 1980, Reagan continued
to attack the government. He promised again to downsize it,
to discipline it, and to remove it from citizens’ private lives.
Although he was not conspicuously active in pursuing those
goals, he continued to articulate them in the course of his day
to day governance. The government remained a scapegoat
upon which the President loaded the failures of American life,
the King George III of the late 20th century. While even his
most enthusiastic supporters admit that his actual success in
disciplining the government was modest, episodic, and piecemeal, the strategy of "scapegoating" was a formula that was employed in so many arenas of governance as to constitute the dominant style-note of his administration. And as a concept, scapegoating of one branch of government or another continues to have a rhetorical presence in the discourse of both major political parties over a decade after Reagan left office.

The task of this dissertation is to examine President Reagan's discourse of scapegoating during his administration. The significance of this examination is evident when one considers how Reagan's development of the governmental scapegoat seems to violate or extend our beliefs about the use of the scapegoat by leaders. I will argue that Reagan used a benign scapegoat, one that could be artistically rehabilitated, and finally transformed. Redemption could be affected if the people would consent to a change in its mandate and powers. A chastened government could enter into a new contract with its citizens.

In general, rhetorical scholars have followed the work of Kenneth Burke, who noted that scapegoats are chosen by the leaders of a group that seems unable to solve its problems.
The blame and the guilt for their failures are heaped upon the backs of the scapegoat group. After a campaign of vilification and public humiliation the scapegoat victim is purged from society and the fragmented social order (which yesterday seemed unable to unite for anything positive) is healed. Society is united through the act of casting from their midst a common enemy. When the next crisis occurs, another scapegoat will be sought to carry the burden.

One of the weaknesses of scapegoat theories has been that the paradigm cases have been drawn from fascist regimes or from nativist movements. Absolutist regimes seem to offer the most dramatic and extreme examples, and they have furnished the model for scholars. And as Burke noted, when absolutist leaders begin to identify a scapegoat, it is not long before someone has to die (1961).

Reagan achieved a high degree of popularity and consensus despite the fact that his party did not control either branch of Congress (with the exception of the Senate from 1983-86). Unlike the dictators so beloved of scholars, he did not kill; he slew the government dragon on a symbolic level only. His language was apocalyptic, but oddly humorous at the same time. He attacked the spirit of big government, while
doing little immediate damage to its physical body. Reagan's rhetoric hints at the possibility of using a benign scapegoat, and the possibility that a group or institution may be scapegoated without being purged. In other words, an attempt may be made (as in Reagan's case) to humiliate an institution into reform. It is possible that this sort of gradual transformation is generally unattractive to charismatic leaders or dictators who must have quick and dramatic results to continue in power. However, for a mature parliamentary democracy, like the United States or those of Western Europe, it may prove a valuable means of long-term social change. Reagan seems a particularly good case study for examining the "rhetoric of benign scapegoatism" because he practiced it so constantly, and developed it so fully that it infused his discourse in an almost systemic way. His rhetorical style has influenced politicians as disparate as Patrick J. Buchanan, John McCain, and William Jefferson Clinton, who practice scapegoating with varying degrees of completeness and success. One thing all have in common is that someone or something must be found to blame for mistakes and failures.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To what extent does Reagan's "benign scapegoat" cause us to revise rhetorical concepts of scapegoating? Our dominant paradigm places scapegoating in the Burkeian cycle of guilt, purification through victimage, and redemption/rebirth. This paradigm has largely confined our studies of scapegoating rhetoric to totalitarian governments, dictatorships, and revolutionaries. An examination of a "reformist" scapegoating discourse may broaden our understanding of this concept, enrich and expand its theory, and improve our critical product and understanding of the concept.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TRADITIONAL THEORY

Scapegoating has been practiced since ancient times. Douglas (1995) says scapegoating is necessary for a culture to rid itself of impurities. Burke (1961) and Douglas (1995) claim that we use scapegoats to promote communal cohesion, and Burke (1961) notes that societal unity is bought at a heavy cost. Social purgation is largely negative. Groups come together against an enemy. The positive good of salvation usually remains an elusive promise.

The spiritual use of scapegoating is an ancient practice. The term scapegoat can be found in the Old Testament Book of
Leviticus. The Israelites sacrificed one goat to the Lord, and loaded their sins onto a second goat and allowed it to escape into the wilderness (Douglas, 1995). The essence of this act is to put blame into another vessel to avoid punishment. According to Douglas (1995), the phenomenon exists in every culture, with appropriate variants for a secular society. Today, people use scapegoats to avoid blame, accusation and punishment. The selection of a particular scapegoat over other possible candidates is a matter of great interest to scholars. Why one candidate, and not another? Is the choice dictated by cultural, societal, or political matters. Is it a combination of many situational and cultural factors?

BURKEIAN THEORY: GUILT THROUGH REBIRTH

According to Kenneth Burke all humans experience guilt. Guilt is a strong and volatile emotion, and we desire to rid ourselves of this uncomfortable feeling (Douglas, 1995, Burke, 1961). Burke (1961) notes that guilt (he synonymously uses the term pollution) is a counter-term for the concept of original sin. It is a transgression which is natural to humans and cannot be avoided. Guilt can be held singly, or by a community. Other comparative terms for guilt are "anxiety,"

Guilt, Burke asserts, is an inevitable consequence of social hierarchy. All societies are hierarchal. All members of a community are situated upon the rungs of their hierarchy. Burke argues that people feel guilt for not having climbed higher on the societal ladder. People also feel guilt about the plight of those below them on the ladder. No matter the position there is guilt, and the experience of feeling personal and communal failure.

Societies (Douglas, 1995) look for the causes of what they see as something having gone wrong, and humans have the propensity not to place blame upon themselves, it is easier and more comfortable to shift blame elsewhere. Societies or groups that experience guilt lose cohesion and the ability to act in a purposeful way. When a society is unable to readily find cause, it seeks an available agent to blame, or, a scapegoat. Fear of existing or imminent peril is a factor. For example, some economic disaster may make an entire nation look for external culprits if possible, rather than an internal cause. If an external cause is not readily available, a (weak or someone who is seen as different) member of the internal society may
be chosen. The transference is designed to lessen psychological discomfort and thus enhance self-preservation.

The agent to which the offense has been transferred is sacrificed so the group can return to grace. The offender can be partly to blame, or completely innocent, but must be made to seem credible by the message of the leaders.

The idea behind scapegoating is to make someone or something else to pay for the sins we cannot accept as our own (Douglas, 1995, Burke, 1961) and this punishment must be performed. During this public drama, a victim may be killed, or driven out. Christ's death fulfilled the role to absorb the evil, whereas, Hitler actually caused the death of millions of Jews. Scapegoating allows an external fight, rather than an internal conflict, and the former is a more comfortable psychological condition. Burke (1969a, 1961) labels the ridding of guilt (pollution) as purging, or purifying. The guilt is initially expressed through language, and symbolic action allows us to dispose of the guilt caused by language, which is later incarnated by physical death. Cupitt (1985) reinforces this concept with the notion of atonement. This act is done so people can preserve what they have and attempt to survive for the future. The irony of this act is that the sacrificial life lies at
the heart of Western Christianity. Ultimately, it is often the sacrificed one whose death smashes the old order to bring a new world.

Although scapegoating was an ancient ritual, Douglas (1995) argues that in the last thirty years people have increasingly gone toward a society that wishes to lay blame somewhere other than themselves. And he notes that in today's world, governments are a prime target for blame. Burke (1961) bolsters the view of this tendency by stating: "Where governance is, there is the goad to scapegoat" (p. 199). We seek a "purgative" function and do this through a "vessel" (1969a, pp. 31-2). Governments are a prime target because the persecutors are not attacking a particular person, but a system of ideals and protocols.

Guilt, punishment, and blame are deeply associated with redemption. Suffering is followed by death and salvation (Burke, 1961). Total payment purifies, and redemption leads to rebirth. Virtue, societal order, and vision are restored (1969). After redemption and rebirth, the cycle is complete, but begins again with the next transgression.

Throughout history humans have believed in a system of punishment and reward (Douglas, 1995, Cupitt, 1985, Leach,
Ancient communities did their scapegoating in intimate communities, but modern technology allows an entire nation to make scapegoating a national-communal effort. Mass media allows leaders the opportunity to mobilize huge populations behind their agendas. Reagan’s relatively tidy agenda allowed him to focus upon a single obstacle to its success. Reagan routinely used government scapegoating as a centerpiece rhetorical strategy designed to build consensus for his policies. The extent and ingenuity of his scapegoating and the ways in which it challenges traditional theory will be the text of subsequent chapters. His choice of the federal government was not a daring one.

Apathy toward the government has steadily risen in the United States since the 1950s (National Election Studies, 1992). During the 1970s and 1980s the government became an easy target due to political dissension, a failed war, and ever-increasing antipathy to the scale of government intervention.

SIGNIFICANCE

I have chosen Reagan as a practitioner of scapegoating because his success has been documented. More specifically, Carmines and Stimson(1989), Weiler (1992), White (1988), and
Ritter and Henry (1992) conclude that Reagan was largely successful at enacting controversial policies. They also assert that he was a shrewd and self-conscious rhetor. Reagan was a man of "poise, charm and forcefulness" (Crable and Vibbert, 1983, p. 291). Despite Reagan's wide popularity and political success, some suspected his rhetorical methods. Ullman (1982) claims "If ever we have had a president who makes black look white, who blames his predecessors and gets away with it, Reagan is that man" (p. A8). Crable and Vibbert (1983) claim that Reagan was successful in blaming his predecessors and their policies for the problems the country faced at that time. Note that these criticisms fault him for his success at scapegoating.

BACKGROUND ON REAGAN AND CONSERVATIVE IDEOLOGY

Ronald Reagan had a long history of advocating conservative policies, but he was not always a Republican. During his collegiate career and into the late 1950s he claimed allegiance to the Democratic Party. Although he did not embrace all tenets of that party, He did consider himself a party-supporter (PBS, 1996).

As he grew older, Reagan began to question liberal economic policies, and his career cast him in a position to
personally observe the nation’s marketplace of both ideas and market goods.

During the 1950s, he was president of the Screen Actors Guild. In the midst of the Congressional investigations of Communism inside the guild, Reagan used his executive position as a means to help fight communism. He also traveled as a spokesperson for General Electric, making hundreds of speeches about the merits of capitalism and the evils of communism (Weiler, 1992).

In 1964, Reagan gave his first national political speech supporting Barry Goldwater for president. He spoke strongly against LBJ’s liberal policies, echoing Goldwater’s sentiments that the federal government was too powerful and ineffective. He denounced big government's ever stricter regulation of business, and its growing burden on taxpayers.

The Johnson administration's ambitious plans created the climate of debate in which Reagan flourished. LBJ felt that the federal government not only had the right to direct social policy, but that the government had the responsibility to assist people in making their lives better and more comfortable. LBJ asserted that Roosevelt's New Deal must now be expanded to
fulfill its real promise. As a result, Johnson initiated costly Great Society programs (Carmines & Stimson, 1989).

Opposing Johnson in 1964 was arch-conservative Barry Goldwater. Goldwater's dismal performance at the polls is well known, but his ideology had a profound effect on the rise of American conservatism. Goldwater took the GOP further right than it had been in the past. The election of 1964 also had another long-term political effect; it introduced Ronald Reagan to national politics (Carmines & Stimson 1989, Weiler, 1992).

In 1980, Reagan, adhering to the anti-federal government ideology of Barry Goldwater, caused the etchings in the sand between conservatives and liberals to be even deeper and wider (Carmines & Stimson 1989). Reagan felt the federal government was too large and cumbersome and advocated a reduction of its size and power.

Reagan's political philosophy gave a dramatic edge to his attacks on liberalism. He strongly pushed the issue of big government culpability during the 1980 campaign, and during the eight years of his presidency he never stopped pushing.

Reagan had a difficult rhetorical challenge White, 1988). He wanted to cut government, including many social programs, while appearing to be sensitive to the needs of all
Americans. The result is a rhetoric that separates the nation from its government, true compassion from patronage by the bureaucracy.

Reagan's policies were controversial. He had to assure the nation it could "make do with less," or make more through private means (White, 1988, p. 3). He proposed expenditure reductions in such popular programs as loans to college students, school-lunch programs, and other programs with broad middle-class support. Despite his attacks on middle-class benefits, he remained popular with middle-class voters.

By way of explanation, White (1988) maintains that Reagan's communication style transformed him into "one of us" (p. 4). Former Speaker of the House, Tip. O'Neill, (D-Mass), charged that Reagan was a "rich man's president... He has shown no care or compassion for the poor, or for the working person" (1987, p. 348). Despite regular attacks of this sort, Reagan seemed relatively invulnerable to class appeal arguments. Except for a brief period when the Iran-Contra scandal was at its zenith, Reagan remained popular with the public.

This invulnerability constitutes another justification for analyzing his discourse. Reagan appeared able to appeal to a part of the electorate who ordinarily would have disagreed
with him. My initial supposition is that scapegoating the government deflect these attacks and helped Reagan to some of his successes.

Before he was President, Woodrow Wilson (1908) said that it was increasingly more important for the President to be the "unifying force in our complex system, and if he rightly interprets the national thought and boldly insists upon it, he is irresistible, and the country never feels the zest of action as when its President is of such insight and caliber" (1908, p. 60). I declare a second supposition: Reagan's use of scapegoating rhetoric enabled him to fulfill a unifying role.

METHODOLOGY

Kenneth Burke's theory of scapegoating will be my guiding construct. Burke's theory explains several steps: (1). A group suffers anomie, failure, and guilt. (2). The leader selects a scapegoat and blames it for failure. (3). The scapegoat is purged by the leader. (4). The group recovers cohesion and unity. (5). The leader celebrates the rebirth of the group. I will note its lack of explanatory power in the present case, and attempt to amend and extend it to explain the construction of a benign scapegoat and of a reformed rather than "sacred" group.
DATA TO BE ANALYZED

The data examined will be Reagan's seven State of the Union addresses, his two Inaugural Address and the Economic Recovery Speech he gave shortly after taking office that outlined his agenda. Weiler (1992) and White (1988) note the importance of State of the Union Addresses to a president advocating policy or policy change. (Note: All the speeches were taken from The Public Papers of the President).

CHAPTER DIVISIONS:

Chapter One is an introduction to the problem, a justification, and a blueprint for the study. Chapter Two discusses theories of the secular scapegoat. Burke and Douglas will be the primary focus in this chapter, but other pertinent authors will be analyzed. This chapter will discuss conceptions of the theory and enactment of scapegoating. Chapter Three examines the scapegoat in political discourse. Recent history offers many instances of scapegoating in political discourse. Groups to be analyzed are the Freemasons, the Catholic Church, and the national banking system during the Great Depression. Chapter Four concerns Reagan's history and predominant rhetorical style. Chapter Five discusses Reagan's anti-government Rhetoric and the redemption cycle.
This chapter will describe the different components of the guilt, scapegoating, and redemption cycle. Chapter Six contains summary, consequences and conclusions. This chapter critiques the strengths and weaknesses of scapegoating rhetorically, and insights about political discourse using a scapegoating perspective.
CHAPTER 2: SCAPEGOATING AND THE REDEMPTIVE CYCLE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines scapegoating in the context of the redemptive cycle. Scapegoating practices of the pre-secular and post-Christian eras will be discussed, and differences between the two periods noted. The main focus of the chapter will be upon Kenneth Burke's concept of scapegoating as symbolic action.

In Burkeian analysis, scapegoating is a central term. Burke viewed the scapegoating not as a survival strategy for rural societies, but as a device natural to language here and now. Burke's emphasis on "the perennial value" of the "scapegoat principle" is based on the great frequency of the use of sacrificial motifs in modern political discourse (Golden, J., Berquist, G., & Colman W, 1992, p. 201). Furthermore, scapegoating is an intrinsic feature of any form of political discourse, a genre dealing with order and disorder. For political symbol makers, scapegoating is a primary resource. Rationalized and nuanced with practical thoroughness, this device is flexible enough to sanction acts from ethnic cleansing to the wanton destruction of the environment (i.e., recalcitrant
nature may be smashed by bulldozers in the name of progress, profit, or national destiny). In this sense, scapegoating is a kind of vocabulary of motive in which terms of salvation are used to cover up acts of destruction and killing.

After a brief historical exposition of the term, the bulk of the chapter will detail Burke's conception. Finally, the chapter will discuss one glaring weakness of the theory and embrace a substantial modification, benignity.

SCAPEGOATING IN THE BIBLICAL AND MEDIEVAL ERA

Although this study is concerned with scapegoating in the political rhetoric of the 1980s, this behavior has been practiced by humans for thousands of years (Douglas, 1995), and is present in all cultures. The logic and rhetoric of scapegoating have varied widely over the centuries, but upon a foundational basis, its function of social purification and communal solidarity are much the same as they were 2500 years ago, although the scope and method may have varied over time.

All cultures maintain coherence and integrity through rule-governed behavior. The Hebrews believed (Graves, 1961) that God had given them a set of guidelines for righteous living. If this order was broken, someone had sinned, and sin merited
punishment. They believed that God was aware of all acts, thus, all sins would be known. Further, since the ancient Hebrews (Douglas, 1995) believed that their fallen nature inclined them toward sin, punishment was inevitable. However, it was not always inescapable. In some instances, someone else must be ready to pay for the transgression, and this could be accomplished by simple transference through language (Burke, 1961).

The Hebrews (Douglas, 1995) felt that sin and evil were in a substantive form, and could be dealt with as a substantive form. This led them to believe that sins could be placed upon another object, often a goat, which could be driven off. To the Hebrews it was important that the goat just disappear. It did not matter where the beast wandered with their sins, as long as it disappeared from the community. The surrogate's exile meant purification, and thus escape from further punishment. This kind of word magic (confusion of symbol and thing) allowed people to speculate that the rise of science would destroy the practice of scapegoating. Burke noted (1984) that scientific communities were particularly adept at rationalizing the practice of scapegoating.
Scapegoating fulfills a basic human need. The paradigm of reward vs. punishment is found in the example of man's fall in the Garden of Eden in the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament (Burke, 1961). From this lesson, people learn that disruption in the order of a society is a call for punishment. In the example above, a moral issue was at stake. Disorder and order are translated as disobedience and obedience, or as transgression and holiness.

The term scapegoat is also derived from the Old Testament. According to Douglas (1995), the actual term scapegoat comes from the Bible's Old Testament Book of Leviticus. Moses' brother, Aaron, had two goats selected from the tribe's herd. One goat was killed as a sacrifice to the Lord; Upon the other goat all the sins of the Israelites were loaded. As the goat escaped into the wilderness the peoples' sins went with it, and they were purified through the symbolic act of removal of their sins.

Scapegoating, however, was also practiced by pagan communities. Leach (1950) gives a definition of scapegoating based upon its functions in myth and folklore:

Any material object, animal, bird or person on whom the bad luck, diseases, misfortunes, and sins of an individual or group are symbolically placed, and which is then turned
loose, driven off with stones, cast into a river or sea, etc., evils placed upon it (p. 976).

Renault (1978) notes that the ancient Greeks' pagan society used scapegoats for a variety of purposes. A scapegoat might be needed because crops were not faring well, or because advancing hordes were threatening the city-state. The selection process varied with time and place. For example and circumstance, the Greeks might select a victim who was physically or mentally different for torture and immolation by public burning. Since the transfer of evil was a continuous social need, a prospective scapegoat, usually someone in prison, could be stored for future use.

Because people (Douglas, 1995) believed that an all-powerful being saw and appraised human actions, the sense of being under constant surveillance produced a degree of watched anxiety (fear), and a sense of communal guilt. There was no belief in random occurrence. Group members believed that events occurred or did not occur simply due to the will of the Gods. This belief of constant surveillance set the two factors needed for scapegoating to occur.

These two factors were imperative for the process to begin (Douglas, 1995, Graves, 1961). First, fear must be
present within the group. This fear was the compelling incentive to try and avoid or to deal with impending punishment. Communal fear is often a catalyst for action, not always measured or wise action. Fear may cause people to abandon those they love, do cowardly acts, and sometimes make great sacrifices. The second factor was that the process was a community event. The entire community was in some sort of danger, and the entire community would be involved in some form of compliance. These early communities needed one another for survival more than do today's communities due to external threats and because of struggles against nature. It was essential for them to be close knit, and this closeness led them to be communal in picking and using the scapegoat. Although a leader or leaders of the group might have been urging the act of scapegoating, the communal-group as a whole was involved. It is surely a testament to the power of this act that many of our religions are focused on the redemptive quality of sacrificial death.

According to Douglas (1995), scapegoating was a process of purification. By placing their offenses upon another, a community would look clean in its own eyes, and in the eyes of their God(s). This helped to bring group
harmony achieved through collective action and like-mindedness...

Scapegoating was widespread during the Medieval Era. Girard (1986) states that Jews were put to death if there was fear a plague might come, no matter how unfounded the rumor. Whenever a large part of the community is involved in the process, such an event is called "collective persecution" (p. 13).

Scapegoating represents social failure. It is most attractive for communities wracked by intractable problems. (Renault, 1978). And Jonker (1951) notes that it is easy to distrust or blame an outsider, or a marginal group of insiders. The greater the threat to the society and culture, and the less well understood its cause, the greater ethnocentrism becomes. If the crisis continues (Girard, 1986) unabated, normal institutions may break down, and a mob mentality becomes strong.

Leach (1950) reports that the removal of disease by a scapegoat was amply practiced by the Incas during their empire. When a village was afflicted by a disease, a black llama was loaded with the clothing of all those who were ill and the llama was driven from the village. The Incas, not
unlike the Old Testament Hebrews, believed that the disease departed with the animal. Because it transcends culture and epoch, theorists assume scapegoating is unlearned and primordial, a “natural” human behavior.

This primitive use of scapegoating did not end with modernity. Today, tribes that are based on primitive culture still implement a form of this ritual (Leach, 1950). The Quechua and Aymara Indians medicine men transfer ills of their patients to an animal, usually a guinea pig, which is then killed. These tribes also may leave the possessions of a sick person along the bank of a river, believing that whoever carries the possessions away, carries away the disease from the person and from the tribe.

In the United States recent scapegoating practices were aimed at Masons, foreign-born persons, and at Communists during he 1950’s witch hunts. Again and again, minorities have faced irrational acts of persecution. Despite pluralism and egalitarianism, America has not been free from this practice.

In summation, the belief that an omnipotent and omnipresent being or beings was present paved the way for scapegoating, and commonalities can be found in ancient
cultures. The common themes of the pre-secular era are that the guilt/sins were transferred to a living vessel. Whether it be a bird, animal, or person, the persecutors could see, touch, and hear the victim. The scapegoat was either killed or driven out. This study deals with a disembodied scapegoat, a federal government. In this restylized form, the scapegoat is not embodied and it is not removed from the community. A rhetorical pariah, who is both faceless and always present may have rhetorical advantage for the political high priests of increasingly secular and abstract society.

SCAPEGOATING IN THE MODERN ERA

Although scapegoating was widely used in ancient times, modern humans have certainly made use of the ritual as well. Douglas (1995) argues that blaming others for problems and seeking a scapegoat has actually increased in society within the last 30 years.

He further asserts that there are marked differences between the practice of scapegoating for reasons of religion and superstition, and how scapegoating is done in the present era. Douglas believes that scapegoating has become more complex and complicated with age. The ancients (Douglas, 1995) considered the process of sacrifice very important, and had little
consideration for the victim(s). At those times, scapegoating was done for the benefit of an entire community. Communal religious beliefs also were a factor. Entire communities believed that they were being overseen by a divine power who might become angry, and who would punish them for their transgression. From this fear, scapegoating became a set ritual.

By contrast, the contemporary practice of scapegoating is more concerned with individual victims, more secular, and more opportunistically applied. Because of a lack of coherent communal belief and a clear focus on divine power, September 22, 2000 scapegoating may be performed to serve or preserve the needs of a single individual, rather than a community. The replacement of the homogeneous tribe by the heterogeneous nation-state has also complicated matters. Douglas (1995) also notes that countries today tend to blame other countries for their woes, and that this practice is increasing. Since it is much easier for a government official to blame another country, than to take the responsibility for his/her own actions, national scapegoating is almost a reflexive act.

Though Douglas illustrates the differences between ancients and contemporary society, he points to an unchanging unity of function. Douglas claims (1995):
What has remained essentially the same, and the main reason why it is possible to regard all forms of scapegoating as belonging to the same category of behavior, is the ubiquitous and everlasting need of human beings to avoid censure and blame (p. 51).

The drive for communal self-preservation and group justification has remained essentially the same for thousands of years.

While scapegoating has become more "rational" and "strategic" in the last few decades (Douglas, 1995, p. 32) it is surprisingly less self conscious and more the act of a spokesperson speaking on behalf of a fictive community. Leaders may not even be aware they are seeking a symbolic goat upon which to lay their sin. Thus, the scapegoating practice has become a defensive reflex, part of an arsenal of political weapons.

Technology has increased the effectiveness, speed and power of the practice. Today, modern communication makes information as readily available to a nation, as to a small community. Blame and censure can be orchestrated, victims represented, evidence displayed to millions of people at the same instant.
BURKE'S GUILT-REDEMPTION CYCLE

This section concerns the theories and stages leading to the scapegoating process. The theories begin with the negatives of language, hierarchy, and perfection. These three elements make possible the rhetorical guilt, victimage, and redemption cycle. All the stages and elements are interconnected and dependent upon one another, and are fulfilled symbolically through the use of language.

Burke (1969a) notes that humans are different from animals because language allows them to seek meaning through transcendence and that they strive to do this though the use of symbolic language, and this language makes the drama of human relations unfold. According to Rueckert (1963) this unfolding of the drama is not only possible, but it is inevitable because of human nature.

According to Burke:

If there is hierarchy and social order, there is also the rejection of order and the consequent guilt. Here is the foundation of Burke's society: if drama, then conflict, if conflict, then hierarchy. If hierarchy, then guilt. If guilt, then redemption. If redemption, then victimage. (1989, p. 33).

The Negative

The negative of language is based upon the concept that for every term of language there is a counter-term. The
ability to say “No” gives humans choice (Burke, 1969, Carter, 1996). Free will, moral choice, and human dignity are implicit in the concept of the negative.

Humans live in a rule-governed society (Burke, 1969). From the beginnings of humankind, people have been given commandments, either by other humans, by God, or by themselves. These commandments are either obeyed or disobeyed. How do people make decisions about whether to obey or disobey? People thrive on comparison and contrast, and either place themselves with something or place themselves against something. It makes the decision-making process easier to understand and easier to fulfill.

From birth, people’s lives are full of “thou shalt,” and “thou shalt nots” (Burke, 1969, Rueckert, 1963). According to the tribal formula, actions are judged good or evil or are challenged by dissenters and outsiders. In this process it is easy for humans to satanize those they see as different and inferior (Carter, 1996). The fall from imperfection leads to tension and anxiety. Moral codes are numerous, often conflicting. People fail in some, if not many, aspects, causing disruption in the hierarchy.
Hierarchal Order

Burkeian scholar William Rueckert (1963), defines hierarchy as "a graded value-charged structure in terms of which things, words, people, acts, and ideas are ranked" (p. 131). Carter (1996) claims that the negative and hierarchy are linked and necessary for people to make sense of the world. According to Burke (1969) hierarchy is inevitable in all societies, and creates a covenant among people. Rueckert (1963) notes that people crave all types of order in their lives, including social, familial, personal, etc., and achieve this stability through hierarchy.

Hierarchy simultaneously (Burke, 1989) unites and divides parts of the whole by putting things in a rank order. It unites people in that it has an ideal that causes humans to strive for perfection, and all make that push. But, there is also divisiveness inherent in hierarchy, resulting in tension because all members of a society do not have the same social status and power in the bureaucracy. This makes alienation from others fundamental to human nature. Humans' competitive temperament leads people to endeavor to be king of the hill, which results in discord.

Burke (1984) claims in Permanence and Change that motives for mounting the hierarchy also operate synonymously
with the fear of declining in the order. From this desire to transcend, and the fear of descending, people are afflicted with "hierarchic psychosis" (p. 281). Burke says the psychosis can be treated but not cured.

As people attempt to climb the hierarchy they are striving for perfection, but that is not possible and they fail. This failure ultimately leads to guilt, and the need for purification.

Perfection

The concepts of hierarchy and perfection clarify the manner in which members of a hierarchy join together. No matter where a person's place is in the hierarchy, he/she is involved in the principle of the structure. Everyone is aware of the ascension and descending of the order of things.

In a hierarchal ordering that is value-graded, everyone in the structure seeks the perfection that the apex of the hierarchy represents. Burke (1969) gives the example of a seed germinating and fulfilling its potential. Humans strive to be perfect, but that is not possible. From this failure arises the condition of guilt.

Guilt

Burke (1961) sees guilt (pollution) as the secular counterpart to the concept of original sin. It is an inherent
misdeed which cannot be avoided and a condition that all must endure. It is as much a part of social order as progression and regression, and interplays with those movements within the hierarchy. Burke (1969a) claims "Those 'Up' are guilty of not being 'Down,' those 'Down' are certainly guilty of not being 'Up.'" (p. 15). In essence, this means that there is no way of escaping some of the feelings associated with guilt.

Humans realize (Carter, 1996) that rules are necessary for a civilized society. Carter claims that the collective society realizes the lack of perfection and violation of rules, and this society will share "ubiquitous guilt" (p. 5). Both Burke (1969) and Carter (1996) state that guilt is a natural and a constant condition.

Guilt is a very strong and uncomfortable emotion, and humans try to rid themselves of this emotion, even having a "moral obsession" to be cleansed. (Carter, 1996, p. 6). Burke (1969) and Carter (1996) note that there are two principle means of relieving guilt, mortification and victimage.

Mortification

Mortification is the process whereby guilt is eradicated or reduced by punishing oneself (Burke, 1969). In this process, a person, or a group, actually victimizes the self/selves. (In pure mortification, blame is not transferred).
Rueckert (1963) notes that means of purification can be used for either constructive or destructive purposes, and that language can bring people out of symbolic hell. The concept of the sacrificial Christ and the promises within his covenant are an example of constructive uses of mortification. However, Rueckert (1963) also notes that mortification can be harmful, such as when one dies for a foolish cause. But the purpose of victimage is always the same: purification and redemption are achieved by blaming someone else for problems. Victimage is a considerable potion of this dissertation.

Victimage

Victimage is the more dangerous and manipulative of the two purification means. Rueckert (1963) says that "masked under the most exalted of motives, some of the most barbaric acts known to man (sic) have taken place" (p. 150). As examples, he notes the Spanish Inquisition, the Communist purges, the German extermination of Jews, and minority segregation in the United States. The social environment can make catastrophic acts not only possible, but many times probable. The most ominous aspects of victimage are that the guilt of a person, or several people, leads to the suffering and sometimes death of one, several, or possibly millions, as was the
case with Nazi Germany. Hitler blamed the Jewish community
for Germany's problems, and a people who were desperate for
rejuvenation and rebirth allowed genocide to occur.

In times of rivalry humans seek sacrificial candidates. If
blame can be assigned to one's opponents, one's stature is
raised. Combine this with rivalry and the need for the sacrificial
candidate increases (Carter, 1996).

If an opponent is socially different, the candidate may be
readily available, because humans' socialization causes them to
ally themselves with groups similar to them, and against
dissimilar groups. Outsiders make for easy targets because they
are different. In the 1980s Reagan used the threat of
Communism to create the needed scapegoat to radically increase
the United States' armed forces.

People need to make their opponents seem as morally
inferior as possible. In this process they tend to demonize
sacrificial candidates. Reagan demonized the USSR as the Evil
Empire. In a more recent context, Saddam Hussein was made to
appear as a larger than life evil figure in the 1990 Persian Gulf
War (Carter, 1996). This portrayal of evil is an excellent means
for a rhetor to persuade his/her audience, based on moral
grounds inherent to that society. Burke states (1961)
"purification by dissociation" is a "curative" means to "hand over one's ills to a scapegoat" (p. 202). If the goat is from an alien culture and society, the transference is made even easier.

Through language people purify themselves with moral indignation (Carter, 1996). Blame is given others for the disruption of order (guilt), and there is the temptation to urge the elimination of something bad for something good. The sacrifice, the scapegoat, must be justified. Scapegoating (Girard, 1986) is so important that if people don't have it, they miss it, because it fills a human need, the need for self-esteem and survival. When a large group of people come together, the group looks for someone to carry their sin and burdens. Burke (1969) notes that in many cases the scapegoat may be a part of the group at one moment, and not a part the next moment. Burke says (1969):

The scapegoat represents the principle of division in that its persecutors would alienate from themselves to it their own uncleanness. For one must remember that a scapegoat cannot be curative except insofar as it represents the iniquities of those who would be cured by attacking it. In representing their iniquities, it performs the role of vicarious atonement (that is unification, or merger, granted to those who have alienated their iniquities upon it, and so may be purified through its suffering) (p. 406).

Burke's explanation reveals what a tragedy the scapegoating process can become. But as stated earlier, the need to relieve guilt and transcend the hierarchy can cause
humans to commit acts that are seen as reprehensible. This striving to redeem the self brings near the end of the cycle.

 Redemption and rebirth

 After the sacrifice, redemption is signified by what is seen as a change that takes people forward, and toward a goal. Through language, the masses are rejuvenated and have a positive view toward life (Burke, 1969), Rueckert claims (1963):

 Redemption as an achieved state is a moment of stasis, the still moment following the fusion and release of a symbol-induced catharsis, or the still moment of vision, when, after the furious moment of dialectic, a fusion at a higher level of discourse takes place to produce a perceived unity among many previously discordant ideas and things (pp. 137-138).

 Note that things seem to stop in this moment of stasis. The cycle has reached the top, but will not remain there for very long before the entire cycle begins anew. Reagan oftentimes symbolically the advances that both his administration and the American people had achieved, in spite of a government that unfairly burdened itself upon the American scene.

 Summary of Burke's Cycle

 Burke's theories note that society is a complex and interconnected phenomenon. Burke notes that humans have free will in making choices and choose between options. There is the desire to be as perfect as possible, but all people fall short
of the ideal. People are able to see their failures in part because of their position in the social order, the hierarchy of human drama. From failure, there is guilt. Guilt is not necessarily caused by one’s own misdeeds, it may just be that there is disorder in the hierarchy. Burke, and others, feel that guilt is an unavoidable condition of human existence. Because guilt is such an uncomfortable condition, people strive to be rid of the feelings associated with that state of being. Humans may punish themselves (mortification), or may try to make another pay for their sins (victimage). If the decision is to make another pay, a scapegoat is sought. The group will finally arrive at a new state of being through redemption and rebirth. But the cycle will ultimately begin again.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed scapegoating in the Christian and modern era, and Burke’s theories of guilt, purification, and redemption. It has established that since humans first inhabited the Earth they have been confronted with guilt, and have sought to rid themselves of this emotion. Many times this purification has caused much suffering.

This chapter has also discussed that one method of purification is done symbolically through language. Traditional
scapegoat theory claims that the scapegoat is either killed or
driven from the community. However, traditional theory does
not address the circumstances of the scapegoat being neither
killed, or driven out, nor even substantively harmed. In Chapters
Five and Six this dissertation addresses those circumstances
and argues for the possibility and actuality of a benign
scapegoat and argues that is what Ronald Reagan used for
political gain in his eight years as President of the United States.
CHAPTER 3: THREE CASE STUDIES OF POLITICAL SCAPEGOATING IN AMERICAN POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will briefly review three scapegoating cases in American political history. The purpose is not to provide exhaustive analyses of the cases, but rather to form an ideal type of composite scapegoat that can be used as an analytical model. In addition, a review of these cases may suggest the existence of criteria for scapegoat selection and recurrent scapegoating images, metaphors, and other characteristic linguistic features of this "sacrificial" discourse.

The cases to be studied are: the Anti-Mason Party, the Know-Nothing Party, and the Populist Party. Each of these movements stigmatized a particular group, respectively, Masons, Catholics, bankers, and derived short-term political advantage from doing so.

Each of the three scapegoating groups began with a negative force against another group seen as a growing threat. Hoffer (1950) states that a political or social movement does not operate in a vacuum. For a movement to go forward it must be against something. The movement is most effective when the opposing force is not abstract, but is concrete, giving
the mass of the group tangible elements upon which to focus its fear, perhaps hatred. It is important for the group leaders to focus the group’s energy against a single enemy, and to make it appear as if the enemy is widespread, dangerous, and needing immediate attention. If the enemy is not dealt with quickly and strongly, chaos may result, and the way of life will change for the mass society. All three of the scapegoating groups felt danger from the group they had chosen to scapegoat.

THE ANTIMASON PARTY

Masonry has a long history (Hofstadter, 1965, Johnson 1983) dating back to ancient times. The order was prevalent in Great Britain during the 18th century and became popular in the early years of the United States. Masonry began as a sort of labor union and evolved into a fraternal order.

According to Vaughn (1983) “Antimasonry is as old as Masonry itself” (p. 12). It was fueled by distrust of the order’s secret rituals and selective membership practices. Although distrust already existed, a single event occurred in 1826 causing the Masonic order to come under suspicion, and subsequent public scrutiny. That year (McKerrow, 1989, Hofstadter, 1965) a former Mason, William Morgan, violated
Masonic rules by announcing his intent to publish detailed accounts of Masonic rituals. The violation of his act called for death by a heinous fashion. Soon after the announcement, Morgan disappeared, and Masons were blamed. Although a positive body identification was never obtained, four Masons were convicted of kidnaping, but given light sentences because at that time kidnaping was a misdemeanor in New York state.

The light sentences fueled the public myth that Masons were prevalent in police, all levels of the courts, political bodies, and business interests (Vaughn, 1983). Additionally, the secret order’s wearing of elaborate costumes and its use of terms such as “Master,” “High Priest,” and “King,” caused fear among common citizens. Vaughn (1983) says that, “Many Americans believe that Masonic secrecy concealed the members’ unconditional loyalty to an autonomous state, and this allegiance far exceeded any loyalty to the nation (p. 15).

The trial of Morgan’s abductors occurred during a crucial time in New York politics (Vaughn, 1983). The Clay-Adams Party was in rapid descent, and the time was ripe for a new party. Supporters of the fledgling party used pre-existing dislike of Masons, based on religious grounds, to garner public support. In 1829 a state Antimason Convention was held in
New York, and in 1830 the first national Antimason Convention was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

At that convention, Senator Seward proclaims: “We are impelled in the undertaking to abolish Freemasonry not by fiery excitement, or fanatical zeal, but by a deep sense of our responsibilities to perpetuate this government” (Seward in Vaughn, 1983, p. 36). Their method to do so was: “If Freemasonry ought to be abolished, it should certainly be so abolished as to prevent its restoration. No means of doing this can be conceived so competent as those furnished by the ballot boxes” (in McKerrow, 1989, p. 281).

McKerrow (1989) states that other resolutions were adopted claiming Masonry was alien to liberty and freedom. The conventioneers encouraged Masons to leave the order, claiming they would be viewed positively if they did. An argument was made that there was a “civic duty” to destroy the organization (p. 281). McKerow goes on to note that the Antimason Party attempted to identify with the ideological principle of the nation as a whole to use as a base to attack Masonry. The party leaders spoke of ending the “cabal” of the order (in McKerrow, p. 281).
McKerrow (1989) notes that the Antimasons attempted to vilify the order by attacking their character and citizenship. A New York Antimason legislator claimed:

On the one side is an aristocratic nobility, composed of men bound together by the most terrific oaths, which conflict with the administration of justice, with private rights, and with the public security; a privileged order, claiming and securing to its members unequal advantages over their fellow citizens, veiling its proceedings by pledge of secrecy, collecting funds to unknown amounts and for unknown purposes, and operating through our extended country at any time and on any one subject, with all the efficacy of a perfect organization, controlled and directed by unknown hands. On the other side, a portion of your fellow-citizens ask for equal rights and equal privileges among the freemen of this country. They say it is vain that this equality of rights and privileges is secured in theory by our constitution and laws, if by a combination to subvert it, it is no longer enjoyed (in McKerrow, p. 282).

McKerrow (1989) argues that the Antimason Party’s egalitarian stance inferred that Freemasonry did not allow for “equal opportunity” in a republican form of government. They concluded that the group subsequently must be destroyed. The Masonic order also received verbal attacks due to its secrecy. At an Antimason convention the phrase “honesty needs no cloak” was heard. The order further received criticism from its mandatory oath to other brothers, even if they were in violation of the law:
When the obligations which bind them [members of the order] 'to vote for a brother before any other person of equal qualification' – to always support his 'military fame and political preferment in opposition to another' – to aid and assist a brother in difficulty, so far as to extricate him from the same 'whether it be right or wrong' – to keep his secrets in all cases inviolably, 'murder and treason not excepted' – then it becomes a question of serious import whether such an institution can be tolerated in our free government. By the force of these obligations a member can claim the vote of a brother for any elective office, in derogation of that quality guaranteed to us by our Constitution (in McKerrow, 1989, p. 283).

Part of the Antimason’s strategy was to expose the secrets and oaths of the order, revealing the order’s penchant for violent persecution of its own members. If an organization has virtuous qualities, why would that same organization need such mandatory oaths of commitment? At the 1830 Antimason convention it was entered into the record that:

> Every Masonic obligation is entered into under the penalty of death; except one or two for the maiming of the limbs. . . . Here is, then, a perfect system of machinery, for capital condemnations and executions. If the sign handed down from a lodge, is a regular sign to put a masonic offender to death, it must be obeyed. . . . The lodge is the sole judge. There is no appeal (in McKerow, 1989, p. 284).

Vaughn (1983) notes that other lurid details were given at the convention of the Masonic disposition to violence. At this time in history, the Antimason Party was based on fear of the group and upon moral indignation. But, as was mentioned
earlier, the party's inception was also at a volatile time in political history.

The 1830 convention (Vaughn, 1983) was a success in that delegates came from every northeastern state. The party set the date for a presidential nominating convention in 1831. When the convention met there were party members who were not concerned with Masonry at all, but who saw a chance for political gain from the growing young party. Many politicians feared and loathed President Andrew Jackson, a Mason, and saw an opportunity to beat Jackson in the 1832 election. Former Whigs and anti-Jacksonian forces felt they had found a home with the Antimasons. The party also attracted anti-aristocrats. The party nominated William Wirt as its presidential candidate.

Masons saw their membership numbers begin to decline because of the public and political attacks levied against them. When Jackson was reelected in 1832, the Antimason Party lost impetus. Zealots remained, but the party was not a significant factor afterwards. As the resentment against them lessened, Masonic membership lodges began to increase.

The Antimason Party was started by people who sincerely believed the order was a threat to society. However,
interlopers used the party's attacks to try and increase their political power and prestige. What is pertinent to this study is that a group was scapegoated for political gain. The scapegoating group, however, did not survive, whereas the scapegoat rebounded and was once again strong.

The Masons were persecuted for their order, but the persecution was but for a short time. However, the Catholic Church endured organized persecution in America for some time, principally by the Know-Nothing Party.

THE KNOW-NOTHING PARTY

Johnson (1983) notes that the Catholic Church has been persecuted for centuries. Protestants in part feared the Pope because he was distant and mysterious to them. The Pope was accused of being the Antichrist, and the Church in general was seen as "agents of an ecclesiastical conspiracy" (p. 91). As many of the United States' 19th century immigrants were Catholic, resentment and fear of the Church increased.

In the early 19th century the Federalists (Johnson, 1983) claimed that the Church was a threat to Protestants. The Democratic Party feared the Federalists would accrue political advantage and began their own anti-Catholic rhetoric.
Because of so much fervor and fear, some areas enacted laws stating that Catholic Church members could not run for office, testify in court, and be seen in public places. Some communities even barred Catholics from living in their boundaries. In the 1830s and 1840s immigration significantly increased. Myths were spread that priests were seducers of women, and then forgave them in confessional. Employment was scarce, and the competition between Catholics and Protestants caused fear and anger to grow. In New England there were instances of beatings, burnings, and riots. It became politically popular to be anti-Catholic.

In 1854 immigration more than doubled, and many newcomers were of the Catholic faith. An anti-Catholic secret political faction, the Know-Nothing Party, was formed in New York in 1852, and spread quickly to Baltimore and Boston. Its primary goal was “to oppose the progress of the Roman Catholic Church” (Schmeckebier, 1899, p.11). The party mantra was “Put none but Americans on guard tonight” (in Schmeckebier, 1899, p. 11). Some questioned the new order’s secrecy, yet its goals of serving light and liberty. The leaders claimed that they were fighting Jesuits sworn to secrecy and stated that: “When you fight the devil, you have a right to fight
him with fire” (in Schmeckebier, 1899, p. 12). So powerful was the organization that in 1854 nearly 75 percent of all congressmen pledged to wage political war against the Catholic Church (Johnson, 1983). The Know-Nothing Party had seized control of the Massachusetts state government, and had successes in both Delaware and Pennsylvania. After the 1855 elections the Know-Nothing Party controlled the state houses of Rhode Island, Connecticut, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New York, and California.

At the 1855 national Know-Nothing Party convention a plank was adopted saying the party stood against the: “aggressive policy and corrupting tendencies of the Roman Catholic Church” (in Schmeckebier, 1899, p. 23). Beale (1960) states that at the convention it was proclaimed that “the three great principles of the American party (Know-Nothing) were to secure native-born-American control of the government, to fight the Catholic Church, and to maintain and preserve the Union” (p. 254).

The Know-Nothings believed the Catholic Church wanted to dominate politically and economically, and was a direct threat to the sovereignty of the United States. The party used the argument that Catholics were harming Protestants by
taking their jobs. In 1856 election literature the Know-Nothings argued "Public lands should be kept out of their hands; native labor should be given preference . . . . for nine-tenths of the people it was a foreign power" (In Beale, 1960, p. 251). The party also took advantage of poor economic conditions to publish literature stating: "Why are you poor? Because of the labor market gutted by foreigners" (Beale, 1960, p. 263). The claim was made that the Catholic Church was increasing its power and that religious liberty was at stake because: "against the encroachment and corrupting tendencies of the Roman Catholic Church" (in Beale, 1960, p. 270).

But the strongest attacks upon the Church were aimed at the Pope, seen as distant, monarchal, mysterious, and a threat to the country. The Know-Nothings distributed literature claiming Catholics were bound to allegiance to the Pope:

"If the Pope directed the Roman Catholic of this country to overthrow the Constitution, to sell the nationality of the country and annex it as a dependent province to Napoleon the Little's crown, they would be bound to obey" (in Schmeckebier, 1899, p. 59).

The Know-Nothings also publicly spoke and then published a tract stating that the Church believed it had sovereignty over other nations:
The temporal order is subject to the spiritual and consequently every question that does or can arise in the temporal order is evidently a spiritual question and within the jurisdiction of the Church, as the spiritual authority, and therefore of the Pope. . . . has the right to pronounce sentences of deposition against any sovereign when required by the good of the spiritual order (In Schmeckebier, 1899, p. 60).

Due to the anti-Catholic bashing (Johnson, 1983), public fear, and discontent with the other two major parties, the Know-Nothings groundswell of support spread quickly. Protestants who were disappointed with the Democrats and Whigs joined the party. Several newspapers predicted the Know-Nothings would capture the presidency in 1856, but a rift occurred in the party that had nothing to do with the Catholic Church. Northern and Southern delegates split over the slavery issue. When the party (Beale, 1960) failed to adopt an anti-slavery plank in its national platform, many northern delegates left the convention and returned to their former parties. Due to the split, the once-favored party came in third with only 25 percent of the popular vote, and an even poorer showing in electoral votes. Some anti-Catholic sentiment remained, but a powerful organized force ceased to exist.
THE POPULIST PARTY

After the Civil War the United States was in a monetary crisis. Speculators and investors made strong financial gains, but working-class people and especially farmers were in dire financial straits (Palmer, 1974). Farmers in the South were devastated by Reconstruction and great drought in the Midwest drove many farmers near or into bankruptcy. Farmers believed that the National Banking System was unfair to them, interest rates were too high, and the banks favored large corporations. As a result of the discontent a political movement that had always been near the surface began in the United States, and thus the Populist Party (also called The People's Party) was born.

Distrust of bankers originates with Biblical times and the banking system is well suited for scapegoating. National meetings are not public, banks are seen as distant and unfriendly (Argersinger, 1974). The farmers saw the banks as a threat to their way of life. Farmers argued (Palmer, 1974) that by a mans' sweat does he eat. Bankers were seen as soft, lazy, and profiteers from the hard work of others. In the 1880s taxes were high, and the federal government had a monetary surplus. Citizens expected the revenue to be returned to the
states, but a large part of the excess was made available to the National Banking System. Farmers in economic turmoil were outraged, and directed their anger at the federal government in general, but the National Banking System in particular.

Famed Southern writer, C. Vanned Woodward, summarized the farmer’s plight by saying:

The farmer pledged an unplanted crop for a loan of an unstipulated amount at an undesignated but enormous rate of interest averaging about 60 percent a year. Trapped by the system a farmer might continue year after oppressive year as a sort of peon, under debt to the same merchant and under constant oversight (Woodward, 1981, p. 102).

Argersinger (1974) studied the writings of Populists and stated that the farmers perceived that the banking system was implementing high interest rates in part to foreclose on and then seize their lands. Because of this perceived threat and the feelings of hopelessness, the need to organize was increased.

By 1892 (Durden, 1965, Reid, 1988) the Populists were well organized in the South and Midwest. Political opportunists saw a chance for power and joined the movement, and the party had enough Republican and Democratic converts to be a viable force. That year they held a national convention in Omaha, Nebraska, and nominated a presidential candidate. The party claimed that the banks were
leading a “carefully laid conspiracy between capitalists of the loaning classes against the business and debtor classes” (in Nugent, 1963, p. 108). This was at the height of the robber-barons, the notorious Gilded Age. The combination of the greed and banking practices made it easy for the Populists to attack the banks. They claimed to attack “greed and avarice” (Nugent, 1963, p. 194). Their party platform clearly spells out their complaints:

The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few, unprecedented in the history of mankind; and the possessors of these, in turn despise the Republic and endanger liberty. From the same prolific womb of governmental justice we breed the two great classes - tramps and millionaires (in Carstensen, 1974, p. 90).

Their party platform also blamed the system for allowing the poor to serve the rich.

The national power to create money in appropriated to enrich bond-holders; a vast public debt payable in legal tender currency has been funded into gold-bearing bonds, thereby adding millions to the burdens of the people (in Carstensen, 1974, p. 90).

The platform claimed that the working class were a "plundered people," and that the financial system was dishonest: “They propose to sacrifice our homes, lives, and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in
order to secure corruption funds from the millionaires” (in Carstensen, 1974, p. 90).

The party’s attempts to tame the banks failed (Palmer, 1974). In 1892 the convention nominated James Weaver as its presidential candidate. Weaver captured just 10 per cent of the national vote. The party had high hopes for the 1896 election based on the same scapegoating of 1892. However, the most profound effect of the 1896 election was that enough Republicans voted for the Populists to elect a Democrat for president and to give the Democratic Party control of both houses of Congress.

Although effort was made to continue the Populist Party, it never again garnered enough national support to be considered a threat to the status quo.

All three scapegoating groups in this chapter share in common that their redemption was articulated and achieved as an appeal to the simplicity and openness of the Founding Fathers. The groups believed that the way to proceed forward was by capturing the best of the past.

CONCLUSION

The three scapegoating groups were similar in that they began their movements as opponents to an organization that
they saw as threatening their way of life and as being immoral. The Antimasons feared that the Masonic order was becoming so powerful that it would dominate the legal system, business sector, and private matters as well. The Know-Nothing Party’s fear of the loss of freedom of religion by the Catholic Church in general and the Pope in particular culminated in a force so powerful that it perhaps was stopped only by an implosion over the issue of slavery. The Populists feared they would lose their farms due to the greed and practices of the National Banking System. All three of the scapegoating group’s rhetoric point to a fear of conspiracy, that their enemies were getting stronger, and that something had to be done to deal with the mounting crises.

All three of the scapegoats had an aura of secrecy about them. All three groups were seen as being outside the regular community, and all three suffered some sort of short-term punishment. Each of the three scapegoating groups wanted to subdue their opposition with political force. However, the three scapegoating groups were failures. All of the three had initial success, but it was short-lived. After the scapegoaters demise, all three scapegoats rebounded and to this day continue to thrive.
CHAPTER 4: PRIMARY CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESIDENT REAGAN'S RHETORIC

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the dissertation will identify the ten speeches chosen for analysis and justify their selection. The primary goals of the chapter are to identify President Reagan's characteristic patterns of narrative discourse, his metaphorical vision, argumentation style, and his public personae. This chapter demonstrates how Reagan’s rhetorical style complemented his use of the benign scapegoat.

The Selected Speeches.

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NOTE: All speech material, both quoted and paraphrased, was taken from The Public Papers of the President.

JUSTIFICATION FOR SELECTION

Seven of the speeches are State of the Union Addresses delivered to a joint session of Congress. This is the genre of meta-narrative. Here, if nowhere else, a chief executive makes large assessments of the nation's past, present prospects, and future goals. Both Weiler (1992) and White (1988) note the great importance of these speeches for any president. It has become a ceremonial media event with a wide audience and broad media critique. During this speech, the President not only outlines goals and policies for the immediate upcoming year and for the years beyond, but evaluates the past and signals any change in style and substance. Following, is a brief historical context for each of the speeches.

First Inaugural: January 20, 1981

According to Kathleen Jamieson, Reagan's first inaugural was a "revolutionary act" (1988, p. 165). During this address, Reagan was successful in inaugurating not only his administration, but also a new epoch in presidential communication. The effects of this speech proved the "power of a prime-time presidency" (p. 165). Kurt Ritter and David
Henry argue that it was also during this speech that Reagan demonstrated the "priestly tone and content" that came to symbolize his oratorical style while in office (1992, p. 63).

Jamieson (1988) argues that preceding presidential inaugural speeches were constructed to read well, but having electronic media in perspective, Reagan's inaugural was devised to sound and look well. Jamieson (1988) also maintains that Reagan's oratory was more conversational than his predecessors, and this manner was adopted as his speaking style throughout his presidency. This conversational style made Reagan appear as more verbally accessible and as more of a regular person than past presidents.

Early in the speech Reagan claimed: "These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions" (p. 1). But Reagan also had words of hope, leading The New York Times to say: "Ronald Reagan left the impression that he aspires not to lead a revolution, but a revival" (Enter President Reagan, January 21, 1981, p. A22).


In the first few months of his presidency Reagan outlined his economic agenda. This speech was pivotal in that excitement was beginning to wane over the new president and
his economic ideas. Reagan needed this speech to keep momentum going for his policies. His proposal for simultaneous tax cuts and spending cuts was controversial. Reagan had already spent a great deal of time the first two months of his presidency speaking not only to business leaders, but also to trade union representatives. His long-term goal was to garner support from all segments of the workforce (Ritter & Henry, 1992).

On March 30 John Hinckley attempted to assassinate Reagan, severely wounding the president. Less than one month later Reagan delivered his Economic Recovery Speech to a joint session of Congress and the American public. In order to surmount strong Democratic opposition, Reagan took his case to the living rooms of Americans via television.

With unemployment at 8.2% (Facts and Figures, 1998) Reagan had cause to seek a better way. His speech with its “Reaganomic” proposals was generally touted as a good play, but the Washington Post sounded warning that his bold plan might result in increased national debt (Mr. Reagan’s gamble, April 29, 1981).
State of the Union Address: January 26, 1982

At the end of Reagan's first year in office, unemployment had risen above 10 percent and for the first time in the history of the United States the national debt had surpassed $1 trillion. Reagan had begun to receive harsh criticism for his policies. In this State of the Union Reagan mandated a shift from federal to state administration of funds for welfare and other indigent programs. This devaluation of power had long been a staple of conservative intellectuals. The day before this address, The New York Times labeled Reagan as the "Great Benign Leader" (Wishful thinker, January 25, 1982, p. A12). After the speech The Washington Post criticized Reagan for his assumption that all states would be fair to the poor (The state of the union, January 27, 1982). The speech was an implication of Reagan's promise to return government back to the people and to transfer power from Washington D. C. to local centers.

State of the Union Address: January 25, 1983

The rate of inflation was beginning to decline by 1983, and the overall future economic projections had improved (Facts and Figures, 1998). In this speech Reagan called for no overall increase in federal spending, yet, at the same time he intended to continue increasing the defense budget, a reversal
of the shift from military to domestic priorities that had been going on since the Nixon administration. He also called for an increase in government-sponsored industry retraining. The Washington Post and The New York Times criticized Reagan for his budget agenda, but the Reagan administration publicly stated the intention to continue enacting its conservative priorities.

State of the Union Address: January 25, 1984

This speech took place at the beginning of the last year of Reagan's first term in office. In this speech he proudly hailed "America is back." Because of greatly improved economic conditions he was able to claim that his policies were in place, and that those policies had been rewarding for the country. So successful was Reagan in this speech that The Washington Post stated that: "We don't know about America, but it does looks to us as if Ronald Reagan might be back" (Ronald Reagan is back, January 26, 1984, p. A22).

Second Inaugural Address: January 21, 1985

By most reasoning Reagan's first term was a success. Inflation had abated, unemployment had fallen, and the economy was expanding. His opponent was a self-proclaimed liberal, Walter Mondale. After years of attacking liberal policies,
and by giving the voters a very clear choice in ideology, Reagan was elected in a landslide. In his inaugural, Reagan touted his success, but focused much of his speech on rebirth. With the mandate of the public, the press gave Reagan high marks at the beginning of his fifth year in office, while still sounding alarms at the burgeoning yearly federal debt and national debt. He could remind voters that he had recommended cuts but that Congress had resisted them.

State of the Union Address: February 6, 1985

In the first State of the Union Address of his second term, Reagan renewed his call for decreasing federal spending, while at the same time continuing a spending increase for national defense.

Because the national debt was rapidly increasing, Reagan met with some criticism on this score from the media. But, the speech was well received by the American people (Van der Linder, 1987). Beginning his second term, Reagan enjoyed job performance approval rates of 64 percent, and, 55 percent of Americans felt he would go down in history as a great president (Gallup, 1998). Morris (1999) claims the speech was so effective that even Democratic Party leaders marveled at his oratorical performance. Polls suggest that the media response
was increasingly uncharacteristic of the general response to Reagan.

State of the Union Address: February 4, 1986

This speech was delayed until February 4 due to the destruction of the Challenger space shuttle. In this speech, Reagan paid tribute to the American people for their hard work and dedication. He spoke of 37 months of steady economic growth and a bright future. Despite his recommendation for even greater military expenditures, he continued his call for a reduced federal budget. Despite this glaring weakness, the president claimed that great progress had been made, but that there was still much to be done.

State of the Union Address: January 27, 1987

Much of this speech concerned the accomplishments of the Reagan administration. As evidence, Reagan touted that the inflation rate was the lowest in 25 years, and that interest rates had been reduced from 20 percent to seven percent. He also apologized for the catastrophe that would soon come to be called Iran-Contra. When the scandal first broke, Reagan denied his administration had been involved. Now he admitted that his previous statements were inaccurate, but spent few words on the issue. National media (Morris, 1999) outlets

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denounced Reagan's vagueness. The Democratic Party finally saw an issue upon which to attack this most popular president, and did so. This speech restored some of his popularity, but he never regained the immense mandate of his first six years.

State of the Union Address: January 25, 1988

In Reagan's final State of the Union Address, the country had mixed feelings about him. Over 70 percent of the public thought he was a good person, yet because of Iran-Contra his job performance rating had dropped below 50 percent (Gallup, 1999). Yet Reagan could point to the fact that the unemployment rate was the lowest in over a decade (Facts and Figures, 1998), and the stock market was hitting record highs after nearly seven years of business expansion.

Reagan spoke of all the gains that had been made in his seven years as president, but continued to call for reductions in government expenditures and for increasing the defense budget.


In summary, these ten speeches represent major rhetorical high points, delivered upon occasions when Reagan was under strong public expectation to set his agenda and to
explain his solutions. They were also occasions on which it was incumbent on him to express his vision of the nation, articulate the main obstacles standing to its realization, and to engage in what Jamieson has called moments of self revelation. They represent the essence of his presidential mission.

Further, I have selected these ten speeches because they offer characteristic snapshots of Reagan's views of the nation. Finally, the speeches span the full eight years of his administration and exhibit both continuity and change in his presidential discourse.

A consistent thematic narrative emerges from these speeches. It undergirds their rhetoric, logic, and tactics. The United States had been weakened by a wasteful and oppressive federal government. This government has siphoned private resources that might have been productively invested. It had squandered them in paternalistic programs that institutionalized dependancy and broken families. Further, it had been irresolute in the face of an international communist enemy. The way to restore American greatness was simple: lower taxes to allow America to build and invest. Reduction of wasteful and intrusive programs and a strong revitalized
military after the debacle of Vietnam. If freed from taxes, regulations, and paternalism, America could and would rise to the challenges, and present an example the whole world would follow.

In order to fully appreciate and understand Reagan’s rhetorical prowess, it is pertinent to give a brief biographical sketch, because Reagan’s world view was shaped by his past.

BACKGROUND

Ronald Wilson Reagan was born in the small Midwestern town of Tampico, Illinois in 1911. He matured watching and admiring the industrious shopkeepers of the small town. This, in part, was the foundation of his conservative and moral ideology; even when he was a Democrat, Reagan was conservative (Boyarsky, 1981).

Reagan's world view was partly shaped by his reading habits. He loved the stories of Horatio Alger and Edgar Rice Burroughs, and was excited and stimulated by stories about sports heroes. In his reading, he tended to focus upon the "ideals and mythology of American culture" (Schaller, 1992, p. 6). Young Reagan saw many people living the life of his dreams, but he saw others barely existing and being dependent upon welfare programs from the government. Witnessing
people relying upon government assistance and still living in poverty caused Reagan to have contempt for governmental relief programs. This is where he attained the ideology that neighbors should help one another in times of need (Cannon, 1982).

Young Reagan’s mother was a religious woman of great strength. His father was ambitious, and used his gregarious and likable nature to at times become a successful businessman. However, Jack Reagan had a serious drinking problem, changed jobs, and frequently moved due to public disgraces caused by his binges (Morris, 1999). The first fifteen years of Reagan’s life was spent living in various towns in Illinois and Iowa. Reagan recounted one of the most traumatic events of his young life when at the age of 11 he found his father drunk and passed out in the snow in front of their house. Still, his father remained optimistic, but never achieved the sought after prosperity.

Reagan had various odd jobs as a young man and, by age 16, was a steady wage earner. One of the jobs he recalled with fondness was the seven years he spent as a lifeguard at a nearby river. In those years, Reagan rescued 77 persons that
were in danger of drowning from the swift current of Rock River (Pemberton, 1997).

Reagan graduated from Eureka College in 1932 and went to work as an announcer for WOC radio in Davenport, Iowa. He barely escaped being fired when he forgot to read an advertiser’s piece, and the station manager sent him to a sister station, WHO, in Des Moines, Iowa where he was sports director (Morris, 1999).

In 1940 Reagan’s acting career began. He had modest success in films, but like his father, never reached sought after fame. In the late 1940s he did become powerful in the Screen Actor’s Guild. During the 1950s, still as a conservative Democrat, Reagan developed a strong anti-communist ideology. He felt pain from the turmoil caused by the communist inquiries in his then home of Hollywood, California, but never lost his optimism for America and its future, always believing that the country would endure and be strong. While working as a spokesman for General Electric, Reagan made hundreds of speeches, always ending them with strong moral pleas. "God, home, and country" were the ideologies that Ronald Reagan believed in and what he professed to his audiences (Boyarsky, 1981, p. 34).
Many of the speeches he made during his tenure as a spokesman for General Electric were addressed to General Electric executives and factory employees. The conversations Reagan had with these people, and hearing the often repeated complaints about government regulations and taxes, caused him to start rethinking his Democratic Party endorsement (Boyarsky, 1981). Coupled with his childhood memories, Reagan officially changed his party affiliation in 1962, complaining that rather than his abandoning the Democratic Party, it was the reverse; the party he had admired so much under the direction of Franklin Delano Roosevelt had forsaken him (PBS, 1996).

In the fall of 1964, Democratic candidate Lyndon Johnson had a huge lead over conservative Republican Barry Goldwater in the presidential race. Reagan and his political advisors (he was already thinking about running for Governor of California) proposed a televised speech in support of Goldwater. Goldwater's advisors were skeptical of the plan, but succumbed from party pressure to endorse Reagan to speak. This speech delivered on October 27, 1964, was nationally touted a success and catapulted Reagan into the national political spotlight (Cannon, 1982, Van der Linder, 1987).
Reagan wanted public office, and was twice elected governor of California, but his mission was dissimilar from many others, who were oftentimes career politicians. Reagan felt a calling for office, that he was needed to save America and its people from evil forces. As when he was a lifeguard, he felt that he was on a rescue mission, but this time it was to save an entire country.

Following are the analyses of Reagan's rhetorical style.

REAGAN'S GENERAL RHETORICAL CHARACTERISTICS

While Chapter Five will detail Reagan's use of scapegoating, this section will discuss his general rhetorical practice. "The Great Communicator" had developed a consistent rhetorical signature over more than four decades of practice. Four areas will be discussed: his use of narratives, his dominant metaphors, his style of argument, and his public personae. Even a casual reader could see that Reagan favored certain rhetorical formats and strategies over others; a discussion of these forms provides an important context for any analysis of Reagan's linguistic practice.

The Use of Narratives

Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) states that people are "essentially a storytelling animal" (p. 34). Fisher (1987)
supports MacIntyre and claims that: "Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings" (p. 64). The rational-world paradigm argues that humans make decision based on logic; the narrative paradigm argues that narratives are a guiding principle for humans. Fisher says that narratives help people make sense of and causes them to see the world in certain ways, and to help them make decisions. These narratives give a sense of right and wrong and are in a state of constant recreation. The narrative is so powerful that it can transcend time, culture, and history.

Narratives enable a rhetor to create a set of facts that which without the narrative would not be persuasive. Narrative gives a lucid point of view to an otherwise abstract concept (Smith, 1998). Through narratives, a rhetor can sometimes make the point by bringing in irrelevant material in a factual manner. The intertextuality of narratives can help the audience perhaps understand an idea that otherwise might be foreign to them. The narrative can set the expectation within the audience that stasis is ending, and that a change is about to, or should, occur.

Reagan's biographer claimed that Reagan was the greatest storyteller of all time (PBS, 1996). Reagan
successfully used a set of narratives in appealing to the American electorate. Ritter & Henry (1992) and White (1988) note that Reagan's storytelling was a large part of his appeal to all parts of the country. He felt that a story could illustrate as well as pictures (Ritter & Henry, 1992), and he developed this significant rhetorical maneuver long before he had political ambitions (Boyarsky, 1981). So adept at storytelling was Reagan that "he was a powerful re-creator, he recreated our experiences" (PBS, 1998). He created an ideal which could be achieved, and something for which to strive.

Narrative form would become Reagan's rhetorical "trademark" (Houch & Kiewe, 1989, p. 1).

More importantly is what these short, usually patriotic stories accomplished in the context of Reagan's speech-making. Instead of the stories functioning as anecdotal evidence for some broad claim, these stories functioned more as truths in Reagan's rhetorical schema. One of the contributing factors in Reagan's legacy as a 'teflon president' involves his predilection for storytelling. Since the grounds for his claims were often surreptitiously embedded in his stories, only a competing story with different characters could effectively refute Reagan on his terms (p. 1).

Smith and Smith (1994) note that narratives are a rational choice for a president who appreciates essential moments in history by speaking of good and bad, of stories of human
interest and who rely upon theatrical reasoning. "Narrative logic can transcend world views" due to less dependence on factual propositions than for the capacity to exhibit aggregate beliefs and objectives in an emphatic adventure that may be conceptually and historically inaccurate (p. 102).

Reagan's training, even before his Hollywood career, enabled him to achieve success as a narrator (Smith & Smith, 1994). As a radio baseball sportscaster, Reagan, not actually seeing the game, would read ticker-tapes and then give his listening audience vivid narratives of play by play action. Oftentimes, Reagan added a great deal of drama to the events, letting the audience visualize through his partially fictive account exciting plays, many of which did not occur as he related the information. Smith & Smith (1994) claim that Reagan thought visually, and he spoke that way, aiding his audience to see his idyllic world. "The result was a verbal style of such powerful visual images that his words often seemed to have been confirmed by visual inspection" (p. 21).

There are two forms of narratives I will critique: anecdote and myth. An anecdote is a short story. The rhetor usually gives names, dates, and context. The myth, however, is different, but can be as effective as an anecdote.
The success of Reagan's narratives was in part dependent, interdependent, and intertwined with myths of American culture. Bolman (1991) notes that the term myth is often used in negative connotation, implying that truth is absent. Myths are not empirical as are theories, however, they may relate truths even though the truths are not verifiable. Myths can note the origin of something, speak about the present, and also predict the future.

These myths fulfill an important role in a culture (Bolman, 1991). "Myths are necessary for establishing and maintaining meaning, solidarity, stability, and certainty" (p. 255). These myths enable a society to have cohesion. Myths "explain, express, and legitimate." Myths also accommodate anecdotes to moor the present to the past.

Reagan used the combination and interdependence of narrative anecdotes and myths to his rhetorical advantage, but he was also something of a myth himself. Reagan embodied the great myth of the American West. He was "The independent cowboy standing tall, a tough-minded heroic figure, someone who is coming to the rescue" (PBS, 1996). This myth caused him to be seen as an honest man, someone who spoke the hard truth. Myths are more than devices for
cohesion; they provide models for conduct and frames for people to measure themselves against.

In Reagan's speeches he sometimes tells anecdotes to illustrate a point. But more often his speeches are a story within themselves. From my analysis I have determined that Reagan had four dominant messages coming from his myth and anecdotal narrative structure: Three of these will be covered now. One, dealing with the embattled present is covered thoroughly in Chapter Five in the guilt section; to address it now would be redundant. (1). Reagan told of an heroic past. He felt that America was a chosen land. He felt that America had overcome great hardship through fierce independence, individualism, and a determination that did not allow its people to quit; (2). He presented the narrative of a country living in embattled times. Reagan laid this blame on the federal government due to over-taxing and over-regulating; (3). He related stories of contemporary Americans as heroes. Reagan did this to state an ideal. These heroes were every-day people who were selfless, honorable, and epitomized American spirit. (4). Reagan felt America had a bright future if the course was changed. Usually, he would extol that the country should return to the values and practices of the past, the
independence spoken of above that was the county's beginnings.

In essence, Reagan felt the country had lost its way and needed to return to an era of growth and responsibility that could only be achieved by restricting the role of the federal government in the management of the country. The following section will highlight these three avenues of Reagan's speeches based within the narrative framework given earlier. When possible I will paraphrase. However, in order to get the essence of Reagan's discourse, it will be necessary to quote a great deal.

**Heroic Past**

Reagan used a combination of both myth and anecdote when praising the heroic past. In his inaugural Reagan spoke directly of the past and the successes that arose from the era:

> If we look to the answer as to why for so many years we achieved so much, prospered as no other nation on Earth, it was because here in this land we unleashed the energy and individual of man to a greater extent than has ever been done before (1981, January 20, p. 2).

Quotes such as this are indirect accusations of the regulative federal government and supported his deregulating agenda. As Reagan finished that speech he told
the story of an American military hero, Marvin Treptow, a young man who left home for WWII, was killed in France. In his diary these words were found: “America must win this war. Therefore, I will work, I will sacrifice, I will save, I will endure. I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost, as if the issue of the whole struggle depended on me alone” (p. 4).

Reagan’s telling of this pledge and the subsequent death not only evokes patriotism but also says that if an individual will make such great sacrifices, other individuals also can. The pledge also reinforces selfless action for the sake of others.

In his first State of the Union Reagan tied the mythic past to goals for the future:

We speak with pride and admiration of that little band of Americans who overcame insuperable odds to set the nation on course 200 years ago. But our glory didn’t end with them. Americans ever since have emulated their deeds (1982, January 26, 78).

Reagan’s paradigm for the country was based on a new approach to governance. This change caused a great deal of apprehension among the electorate and the media. But Reagan embraced the notion of change, calling upon Americans’ ability to adapt. In his next State of the Union Reagan reiterates the country’s heritage: “The very key to our success has been our ability, foremost among nations to preserve our lasting values

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by making change work for us rather than against us" (1983,
January 25, p. 103). Later in that speech he reinforced this
concept by claiming: "Our country is a special place, because
we Americans have always been sustained, through good
times and bad by a noble vision. . . " (p. 109).

Sometimes Reagan seemed to challenge the country:
"Americans have always been greatest when we dared to be
great" (1984, January 25, p. 90).

Reagan’s use of American heritage, its tradition, is a
powerful means of evoking pride and patriotism. In his 1987
State of the Union Address Reagan made a series of statements
concerning the unity of Americans and finished with:

We the people – starting the third century of a dream and
standing up to some cynic who’s trying to tell us we’re
not going to get any better. Are we at end? Well, I
can’t tell it any better than the real thing – a story recorded
by James Madison from the final moments of the
Constitutional Convention, September 17th, 1787. As the
last few members signed the document, Benjamin
Franklin – the oldest delegate at 81 years and in frail
health – looked over toward the chair where George
Washington daily presided. At the back of the chair was
painted the picture of a Sun on the horizon. And turning
to those sitting next to him, Franklin observed that artists
found it difficult in their painting to distinguish between a
rising and a setting sun (p. 60).

Reagan later tells his audience that Franklin knew that it
was a rising sun, he, Reagan, proclaimed that: “Well, you can
bet its rising because, my fellow citizens, America isn’t finished. Her best days have just begun” (p. 61). Reagan again speaks of the country’s heritage when he says:

But my thoughts tonight go beyond this, and I hope you’ll let me end this evening with a personal reflection. You know, the world could never be quite the same again after Jacob Shallus, a trustworthy and dependable clerk of the Pennsylvania general Assembly, took his pen and engrossed those words about representative government in the preamble of our Constitution. And in a quiet but final way, the course of human events was forever altered when, on a ridge overlooking the Emmitsburg Pike in an obscure Pennsylvania town called Gettysburg, Lincoln spoke of our duty to government of and by the people and never letting it perish from the earth (1988, January 25, p. 90).

Reagan told numerous stories in which heroes were quite popular. He would evoke the names of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln, but more often he picked ordinary Americans who had risen to the challenge. He would tell stories of great courage and/or perseverance to overcome great odds. I think Reagan did this because for his agenda to be actualized he needed the policy support and he needed common American citizens actualizing the acts of heroism and in some cases actualizing the American Dream. His rhetoric narrative enabled Reagan to anchor the present to the greatness of the past.
Heroes Present

Reagan was also fond of paying tribute to contemporary American every-day heroes. This enabled him to publicly honor actions, but could also be a means by which to set standards and ideals. Reagan would tell stories of life-saving heroism, but he would call people heroes who were dedicated to family or job, and who did public service.

In 1982, as his administration was facing stiff criticism, Reagan extolled the heroism of an individual at a plane crash.

Just 2 weeks ago, in the midst of a terrible tragedy on the Potomac, we saw again the spirit of American heroism at its finest – the heroism of dedicated rescue workers saving crash victims from icy waters. And we saw the heroism of one of our young government employees. Lenny Skutnik, who, when he saw a woman lose her grip on the helicopter line, dived into the water and dragged her to safety (p. 78).

After the success of the Grenada invasion, Reagan acknowledged the heroism of a soldier:

Sergeant Stephen Trujillo, a medic in the 2nd Ranger Battalion, 75th Infantry, was in the first helicopter to land at the compound held by Cuban forces in Grenada. He saw three other helicopters crash. Despite the imminent explosion of the burning aircraft, he never hesitated. He ran across 25 yards of open terrain through enemy fire to rescue wounded soldiers. He directed two other medics, administered first aid, and returned again and again to the crash site to carry his wounded friends to safety (p. 93).

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This quote is of interest because Reagan chose to honor a medic, not a rifleman. Perhaps this was because Reagan had received criticism for the Grenada invasion. House Speaker Tip O’Neill (1987) went so far as to say that Reagan planned the Grenada invasion as diversion to the 200 Marines just killed in Beirut. The choice of the medic is non-controversial.

Reagan related the story of a child hero in 1986:

We see the dream being saved by the courage of the 13-year-old Shelby Butler, honor student and member of her school’s safety patrol. Seeing another girl freeze in terror before an out-of-control school bus, she risked her life and pulled her to safety. With bravery like yours, Shelby, America need never fear for our future (p. 130).

Reagan would also occasionally sing the praises of people who worked in the community and by their selfless efforts were making a difference in the country.

A person like Father Ritter is always there. His Covenant House programs in New York and Houston provide shelter and hope to thousands of frightened and abused children each year. The same is true of Mr. Charles Carson. Paralyzed in a plane crash, he still believed nothing is impossible. Today, in Minnesota, he works 80 hours a week without pay, helping pioneer the field of computer-controlled walking. He has given hope to 500,000 paralyzed Americans that someday they may walk again (1984, January 25, p. 93).

The next year Reagan applauded a senior-citizen for continuing to work and attempt the betterment of society:
Now, there's someone else here tonight, born 79 years ago. She lives in the inner city, where she cares for infants born of mothers who are heroin addicts. The children, born in withdrawal, are sometimes even dropped on her doorstep. She helps them with love. Go to her house some night, and maybe you'll see her silhouette against the window as she walks the floor talking softly, soothing a child in her arms. Mother Hale of Harlem, and she too, is an American hero (p. 135).

Reagan, being both focused on heritage and the future was exhorting the virtues of what it means to be an American. He spoke of issues with which all could identify. In 1986 he salutes a boy for community service:

And we see the dream born again in the joyful compassion of a 13 year old, Trevor Farrell. Two years age 11, watching men and women bedding down in abandoned doorways – on television he was watching – Trevor left his suburban Philadelphia home to bring blankets and food to the helpless and homeless. And now, 250 people help him fulfill his nightly vigil (p. 130).

Reagan believed strongly in the special characteristics of ordinary Americans. His belief in rugged individualism cemented his oratory to his policies. He believed, as did his father, that had work was the primary ingredient necessary for success. He also believed in hope and opportunity. In 1986 he related an incident that summarizes well his faith in, and vision for America:

Ten years ago a young girl left Vietnam with her family, part of the exodus that followed the fall of Saigon. They came to the United States with no possessions and not

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knowing a word of English. Ten years ago – the young girl studied hard, learned English, and finished high school in the top of her class. And this May, May 22d to be exact, is a big date on her calendar. Just 10 years from the time she left Vietnam, she will graduate from the United States Military Academy at West Point. I thought you might like to meet an American hero named Jean Nguyen (p. 135).

This story epitomizes what Reagan thought America stood for. The story is about hardship, opportunity being actualized, and success.

These last few quotes reveal that Reagan though that everyday heroes were important to the republic. These stories also display some of the most attractive human attributes. These stories could make people feel proud to be Americans because they reinforced the ideas of American exceptionalism. America was not leveling down but about leveling up.

Elsewhere, he gave tribute to a Naval officer who put his career in jeopardy to help a solitary foreign refugee receive citizenship. He spoke of the baseball player, Rick Monday, who left the dugout during a game to thwart an American flag-burning during a Major League Baseball game (Ritter & Henry, 1992), and he talked about the pain he saw his father endure when he lost his job on a Christmas Eve. The invocation of the ordinary hero became a staple of Reagan’s
speeches, and his speech-writers kept files of heroes available to use in his speeches. Ritter & Henry (1992) concluded that Reagan's speech-writers used the heroes "to control the substance of the speech, because the heroes would embody the values enhanced in Reagan's public address" (p. 107). In each of the speeches analyzed in this dissertation, Reagan had stories of heroism or overcoming hardship by ordinary Americans.

Occasionally the media discovered discrepancies or blatant errors in Reagan's heroic portraits. One of his most embarrassing moments concerned the tale of a World War II bomber that was going to crash. A wounded airman aboard was trapped and unable to parachute to safety. An officer aboard the doomed plane calmed the young man, and told him he would stay with him to certain death. Reagan affirmed that the officer posthumously received the Medal of Honor. Not surprisingly, members of the press began to wonder just who survived to tell the story. Research revealed that the story came from a World War II movie starring Dana Andrews (White, 1988).

Reagan also told stories of corruption fostered by paternalistic government. In a speech which coined the term
'welfare queen,' Reagan cited the example of a woman who had been convicted of defrauding the federal government of $150,000. Actually, the woman was convicted of defrauding the government of only $8,000 (Ritter & Henry, 1992).

Whatever the accuracy of his narratives, they still were an effective rhetorical maneuver in his many political speeches. Reagan used these stories as a synecdoche for his larger political program. The mythical WWII officer exemplified selfless heroism, duty, honor and country. Whereas the welfare woman evoked traditional fears of a powerful centralized and unaccountable government.

**Hopeful Future**

Schaller (1992) and Cannon (1982) note that Ronald Reagan personified optimism. Despite his attacks on the federal government, he constantly expressed his belief that America could recapture its great tradition and again become a world exemplar. This optimism struck a chord with the citizenry. Shenkman (1999) notes that cynicism does not come naturally to Americans. "Americans are believers. Even after Vietnam and Watergate they desperately wanted to continue believing" (p. 335). The ever-optimistic Reagan gave
Americans something in which to believe and something for which to strive.

Reagan's optimism was expressed in two major narrative themes: (1). Americans must choose to be great, and (2)., they have a tradition of confident acceptance of challenge. It is important to remember that Reagan had already spoken of a nation that had a heroic past. In many ways, the journey to the future was also a return trip to the past, in which it renewed American values of work, neighborhood, and freedom.

Americans Have a Choice

In his inaugural address, Reagan claimed "With the idealism and fair play which are the core of our system and our strength, we can have a prosperous America, at peace with itself and the world" (1981, January 20, p. 2). And, from later in that speech:

It is time for us to realize that we are too great a nation to limit ourselves to small dreams. We're not as some would have us believe, doomed to an inevitable decline. I do not believe in a fate that will fall on us no matter what we do. I do believe in a fate that will fall on us if we do nothing (p. 2).

In these two quotes Reagan expressed that Americans face a critical choice. In the first quote he used the word "can." However, the achievement of the desired outcome is reliant
upon the "idealism" and "fair play" that America mythically stands for. His words about decline gain salience when one recalls that the country was in a deep economic recession when Reagan took office. Against the naysayers Reagan's dismissal of "fate" asserted that America has a significant choice, and that choice is more about will and spirit than economics.

Reagan frequently spoke as if the country was in a Herculean battle against some giant adversary.

And that is why I can report to you tonight that in the near future the state of the Union and the economy will be better -- much better -- if we summon the strength to continue on the course we have charted (January 26, 1982, p. 73).

Later in this speech Reagan linked economic recovery to a higher mission as he urged Americans to "Seize these new opportunities to produce, to save, to invest, and together we'll make this economy a mighty engine of freedom, hope, and prosperity again" (p. 74). To encourage Americans to undertake the great challenge, Reagan employed the conventional metaphor of a sailing ship remaining on her course. To stray away from the course would be to lose the opportunity to get stronger in the future. His engine metaphor connected unity and collective progress. For an engine to
properly work, all cylinders must fire in sequence. Reagan saw "freedom, hope, and prosperity" as dependent upon one another. If his policies are left in place and Americans grasp the "opportunities available, the economy will flourish.

Confident Acceptance of Challenge

Reagan can also be seen as an advocate, almost as a cheerleader, or coach, leading the way toward prosperity.

Well, I believe we, the Americans of today, are ready to act worthy of ourselves, ready to do what must be done to ensure happiness and liberty for ourselves, our children and our childrens' children (1981, January 20, p. 3).

On several occasions Reagan quoted Carl Sandburg to revive the confident vision of an earlier America:

The poet Carl Sandburg wrote, 'The republic is a dream. Nothing happens unless first a dream.' And that's what makes us Americans, different. We've always reached for a new spirit and aimed for a higher goal (April 28, 1981, p. 394). How can we not believe in the greatness of America? How can we not do what is right and needed to preserve this last best hope of man on Earth? After all our struggles to restore America, to revive confidence in our country, hope for our future. After all our hard earned victories earned through the patience and courage of every citizen, we cannot, must not, and will not turn back. We will finish our job. How could we do less (January 25, 1984, p. 93).

Whereas Reagan’s predecessor, Jimmy Carter, spoke of American decline, Reagan presented the future as a
charismatic term representing hope rather than fear, victory rather than defeat.

One other thing we Americans like -- the future - like the sound of it, the idea of it, and the hope of it. Where others fear trade and economic growth, we see opportunities for creating new wealth and undreamed of opportunities for millions in our own land and beyond (January 25, 1988, p. 85).

Reagan cleverly used the imagery of the past to describe the mission of the future: "My fellow Americans, this nation is poised for greatness. The time has come to proceed toward a great new challenge -- a second American Revolution of hope and opportunity" (1985, February 6, p. 130).

Charles Larson (1992) notes that the myth of the intrinsic value of challenge is strong in America and Reagan presents challenge as exciting, desirable, and productive. Reagan frequently spoke of the challenge of forwarding America, of the struggles of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and others. When speaking of them he would highlight unusual resolve, their broad vision, and the odds against their accomplishments. The American Revolution was a rich source of iconic myth for Reagan’s audience. The heroic virtues of the past were tied to the American belief in progress as Reagan spoke of being "confident in our future," "secure in our values," and "striving
forward to embrace the future" (1986, February 4, p. 128), and later concluding: "So, now it's up to us, all of us, to prepare America for that day when our work will pale before the greatness of America's champions in the 21st century" (p. 130).

Overall, the evocations of mythic narratives exhibit Reagan's understanding of past, present, and the future. They are devices for communal identification. To be an American is to share in a virtuous past and to stand ready to engage in a glorious future. How does a dissenter present discord and argue against patriotism, against valor, honor, and responsibility. Reagan asks the American people to actualize the potential he thinks is inherently bred within their human nature.

Vision Through Metaphor

Reagan's speeches exhibit a pattern of master metaphors. Until the 20th century, metaphors were looked upon as mere decoration; in modern rhetorical theory they are viewed as powerful persuasive frames. Foss (1996) states that the metaphor is useful in "organizing reality in particular ways, our selected metaphors also prescribe how we are to act," and can "contain implicit assumptions, points of view and evaluations." Metaphors can also structure point of view (p. 360).
This linguistic device has other functions. Smith (1998) says that the metaphor "compares something from one category to something from another category to clarify meaning" (p. 95). The function and uses of the metaphor can aid a rhetor in many persuasive contexts. Bolman (1991) notes that "Metaphors compress complicated issues into understandable images, and they can affect our attitudes, evaluations, and actions" (p. 266). Bolman goes on to say that metaphors can define confusion in a fashion that can be comprehended by the audience. Through the metaphor, a rhetor may not only entertain the audience, but it is also a tool to advance political argument (Smith, 1998). Of course, while metaphor highlights certain aspects of a problem, they obscure others. For example, if education is viewed as a "machine," we are attentive to efficiency, cost, and production. On the other hand, there is the tendency to ignore socialization and learning through failure because they are organic processes rather than mechanical features. This section will reveal Reagan's use of metaphors in advancing his vision of and for America, and will also denote how difficult it would be or a dissenting voice to argue against his vision.
In analyzing Reagan's metaphors, I found three dominant patterns of use. Two of these were used in attacking the government (identifying the problem), and one theme was used to advocate and bolster change (solving the problem). His first metaphorical attack image cast the government as a monster and a machine. The second of the two attack methods was an overall health metaphor. Reagan primarily used this metaphor in the first three years of his presidency. After those first years his discourse reflected, due to his policy initiatives, that he felt the country was much improved. The positive metaphorical impression concerned how to make the country better. Reagan used the metaphorical images of a great battle in a war.

The Government as a Monstrous Machine

Machines, being mechanical in nature, are based upon repetition, consistency, and power. The more efficient the machine, the greater the production. In Reagan's view, the paternalistic government was based upon the abstract machine features of control, regulation, standardized productivity and efficiency. Reagan, being a believer in the American people, fought against the machine because it failed to capture, even stifled, creativity, originality, and uniqueness.
To enact his controversial policies Reagan needed to make the case that change was mandatory. To prove the necessity, it was important for him to portray America as if it were in a crisis situation. The office of the presidency is uniquely suited for such a pursuit; the president has the bully pulpit and Reagan was in the honeymoon period most presidents enjoy the first few months in office. Reagan cast the government as an oppressive entity, using Orwellian terms and imagery. The tenor he created was of an oppressive Federal Government that was punishing its citizens, repressing economic and personal growth, and threatening the American way of life. The nation’s ills were caused by the machine-like qualities of the government, which are standardization, uniformity, and bureaucracy. The nonhuman machine was making decision rather than individuals.

Much of Reagan's election campaign rhetoric and presidential discourse concerned inflation, high taxes, government spending, deficits, and the damage these economic factors were doing to the nation. In his first two years in office Reagan frequently spoke of inflation; after that he took credit for inflation reduction and was referred to only in administrative success terms. However, taxes, government
spending, and budget deficits were pervasive throughout his administration. According to Reagan, governmental mismanagement was the cause of these inherent problems.

Reagan blamed inflation on high taxes and too much governmental domestic spending. In his inaugural Reagan stated: "Ending inflation means freeing all Americans from runaway living costs" (January 20, 1981, p. 1). In the second speech, Reagan said the country must deal with "runaway inflation" before the country could prosper (1981, February 18, p. 251). In his first State of the Union Reagan again mentioned "runaway inflation" (1982, p. 74). These metaphors direct a view of a government that is out of control and that has lost direction. Runaway is a term that was coined from either a horse or train being out of control. Reagan frequently spoke of the government being out of control, and, like a horse or train, the only way to gain control is either to rein in or reduce power. Reagan’s solution was a simple one. Whereas the machine was based upon uniformity, the future’s key lay in the people: "If we look to the answer as to why for so many years we achieved so much, prospered as no other people on Earth it was because here in this land we unleashed the energy and
individual genius of man to a greater extent than has ever been
done before" (1981, January 20, p. 2).

The metaphors Reagan used were broadly framed and
consistent throughout his eight years in office. I think they
showed his experiences of reality. These metaphors, seen
through the screen of Reagan's ideology, organized both
Reagan's and the audience's view of the government. The
metaphorical images of the government as a machine, as a
monster, as a giant, gives the transactional impression of
something to fear and to perhaps even loathe. The images
could generate apprehension and a sense of dread. To many
people the concept of the government is one that is abstract.
By relating the government to the concrete images of a
machine, Reagan made the government itself seem more
concrete, and thus easier to attack.

Americans are in a culture that values privacy; the
Constitution guarantees that freedom, and Reagan frequently
alluded to that right. But Reagan cast the government as
violating this principle by saying that the machine was
"pervasive," "intrusive," and "un manageable" (1982, January 26,
p. 76).
Reagan's outlook of governmental structural threat also concerned the deficit, which he portrayed in gloomy, even menacing terms. "But the looming deficits that hang over us and hang over America's future must be reduced" (1983, January 25, p. 106). Rather than accept any blame, he continued to attack the machine as the cause of the debt and many other problems. Reagan was much concerned about spending and deficits. He said that "The last decade saw domestic spending surge literally out of control" (1984, January 25, p. 89). The government was also seen as a "lumbering giant, slamming shut the gates of opportunity, threatening to crush the very roots of our freedom" (1986, January 4, p. 126). The freedom was attained by individuals, but the gears of government were uncaring and unable to address human needs and qualities.

In 1987 Reagan attacked the welfare machine saying "We've created a welfare monster that is a shocking indictment of our sense of priorities" (January 27, p. 58). In his last State of the Union, Reagan claims:

Federal welfare programs have created a massive social problem. With the best of intentions, government created a poverty trap that wreaks havoc on the very support system the poor need most to lift themselves out of poverty: the family.
Dependency has become the one enduring heirloom, passed from one generation to the next, of too many fragmented families (p. 87).

These machine metaphors that Reagan used constructed a reality through his conservative ideological screen of a crisis caused by the governmental machine and system as being out of control and crushing the very lifeblood from the economy and the populace. Reagan eschewed the strict, programmable models of government, partly because of government’s inefficiency, and partly because of its stifling the creativity and ability of the American citizen. He wanted “Big Brother” to step back and allow people to succeed or fail on their merits, initiative, and creativity.

The Health Metaphor

One of the most basic human needs is health and security. Reagan occasionally used health metaphors as an implicit argument in his discourse about reducing the size of the federal government. In his inaugural, Reagan stated: “These United States are confronted with an economic afflictions of great proportions” (1981, January 20, p. 1). Extending the disease metaphor he claims: “The economic ills we suffer have come upon us over several decades” (p. 1).
In his Economic Recovery Speech, Reagan continued to use medical metaphors: “Because of the extent of our economy’s sickness, we know that the cure will not come quickly” (1981, April 28, pp. 391-392). “The massive national debt” he argued is a consequence “of the government’s high spending diet” (p. 392).

In 1983, Reagan, despite apparent success with his economic policies, lamented the ills of the economy: He framed the problem in biological terms, then solved it in a like fashion. “Quick fixes and artificial stimulants repeatedly applied over decades are what brought us the inflationary disorders that we’ve now paid such a heavy price to cure’ (p. 104). He also claimed that “The deficit problem is a clear and present danger to the health of our republic” (p. 105). Finally, “The Federal budget is both a symptom and a cause of our economic problems” (p. 105). After explaining the problems he offered the solution by saying: “First, in my budget message, I will recommend a Federal spending freeze. I know this is strong medicine”. Reagan seemed to see the government as an organism, perhaps even a virus. In 1984, an election year, Reagan argued for more than “a Band-Aid solution which does
nothing to cure an illness that's been coming on for half a century" (p. 89).

By the midpoint of his second term Reagan was receiving a considerable amount of criticism for his continuing attacks on welfare. His policies were being attacked for primarily benefitting the wealthy, and the 80s were being called a decade of greed. In his 1986 State of the Union Address Reagan answered those critics using medical metaphors. Rather than accepting any blame, Reagan agreed that the poor are suffering, but places the system to be condemned for the hardship. He counter-attacked calling welfare a "debilitating illness" (p. 128), and stated that "Welfare is a narcotic; a subtle destroyer of the human spirit" (p. 129).

These metaphors are powerful, vivid, easy to understand. They complement Reagan's view and condemnation of a government that has gone out of control, and is threatening the very health, even life, of the country.

But Reagan also used metaphors to explain his vision of what was wrong, and what was right with the country through the images of a great battle for freedom.
The War Metaphor

In most of Reagan's speeches there are direct references to American soldiers' heroism throughout the country's history. This view works well in American society. America rose from a revolution, the country was founded as the result of a war for independence. As the country spread westward there were battles and wars with Native Americans and other countries. War was necessary to keep the nation intact during Lincoln's administration, and the United States twice became involved in world wars. The fight for independence and the struggle for growth and freedoms was many times accomplished by war. Repeatedly Americans have risen to the challenge, either from internal or external threats. Reagan assured the American citizens with the war metaphor, and war is something that Americans understand well.

The war metaphor focuses on conflict, it brings ideas to the surface, is based on drama and challenge, and is exciting. However, it can also be destructive, negative, and can polarize people and ideas.

In his inaugural address, when speaking of the country's problems, Reagan revealed optimism over the battle when addressing the nation's troubles: “They will go away because
we as Americans have the capacity now, as we've had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom" (1981, January 20, p. 1). Bastion is a synonym for fortification, bulwark, and defense, all battle terms. One month later Reagan claimed that "The Office of Management and Budget is now putting together an interagency task force to attack waste and fraud" (1981, February 18, p. 259). These metaphors announce a conflict, and a call to arms.

Reagan spoke of progress "coming in inches and feet" (1981, April 28, p. 392). Wars are usually won and lost over geography. He puts the situation in a crisis status by stating "Seldom have the stakes been higher for America" (1982, January 26, p. 72). This last quote does two things for Reagan: It claims urgency, but also opportunity. He reiterates his pledge to the people by saying: "In other words, the Federal Government will hold the line on real spending" (1983, January 25, p. 105).

Reagan also uses the framework of struggle to reveal he is a leader of vision: "the tide of the future is a freedom tide" (p. 88), and "opening wide the gates of opportunity" (1984, January 25, p. 88).
By the beginning of his second term Reagan's metaphors reflected that he felt the battle was being won, his vision being enacted. In 1985 he claims: "There are no limits to growth and human progress when men and women are free to follow their dreams. . . . We are creating a nation one again vibrant, robust, and alive" (January 21, 1985, p. 55). The next year he continued to state the war was being won, yet issues a challenge: "Americans can win the race to the future, and we shall . . . . So, now it's up to us, all of us, to prepare America for that day when our work will pale before the greatness of America's champions in the 21st century" (1986, January 24, pp. 129-130). Reagan's words not only claim victory, they also suggest the unity of Americans.

Reagan's drama depicted a nation that was near hostage status: "We've had great success in restoring our economic integrity, and we've rescued our nation from the worst economic mess since the depression" (1987, January 27, p. 58). Reagan, as general, is touting the American citizens -- his soldiers -- for the rescue mission. Reagan always gave credit for successes to "his" citizens.

I believe that these metaphors suggest Reagan's overall political and social outlook. They helped structure his logic and
judgment not only of the country’s problems, but also the solutions. The problem with the battle metaphor is the way in which the government is cast. It demonizes the government as the enemy, and does not allow for rhetorical compromise in the public sphere. Reagan’s word pictures indicated how he saw Americans’ struggle, and how he saw America’s future. His metaphors structure a view of a government that is actually threatening the populace’s liberty and even life. Reagan’s rhetorical challenge was the political support of the citizenry. He set the stage, pitting American citizens against the power and size of the Federal Government. If the people wanted the improved life Reagan promised, then they would need to join him in war against Washington D. C.

Argument Style

While campaigning for and then serving as president, Reagan reduced significant problems into simple conflicts between good and evil. Reagan framed the relationship between the American populace and the Federal Government into a struggle between right and wrong. He wanted to right what he saw as the abuses of the government over its citizenry.
In order to make his arguments, Reagan would separate what he was for and against into two substances. To the good substances, positive words (god-terms) were attached; to the evil substances, negative words (devil-terms), were associated. Burke explains the usefulness of this rhetorical strategy in his theories concerning god versus devil terms and identification versus division. Analyzing polar terms can be useful in helping a critic determine the views and motives of a speaker. Burke says that it allows one to delve into a rhetor's mind. The use of the stimulating polar terms also enables a rhetor to stir emotion in the audience, and to frame decisions into an either-or situation (Burke, 1969, Burke, 1969a, Rueckert, 1963).

The narrative and metaphor sections indicate that Reagan's antithetical reasoning forms the drama of a struggle. It is the good guys against the bad guys -- the white hats against the black hats. In most of his speeches, Reagan used his devil terms early in the address, then gave the solution to the problems the devil terms indicated with his policies in god terms. Reagan cast the government as an exploiter and his agenda as a savior. His terms can also be seen in the context of liberal versus conservative.
In his inaugural Regan contended that "economic ills" were caused by current economic practices (p. 1). Reagan cast his agenda in god-terms such as the: "administration's objective will be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy" (1981, January 20, p. 2). In his next speech he said that due to present policies the country could not take: "repeated shocks" (1981, February 18, p. 264). However, his tax cut proposal would "expand our national prosperity, enlarge national income, and increase opportunity for all Americans" (p. 261).

In his first State of the Union, Reagan cast the exploitive government in devil terms of "trillion dollar debt, runaway inflation, runaway interest rates and unemployment" (1982, January 26, p. 74). While his plan would "pull the economy out of its slump and put us on the road to prosperity" (p. 73). The next year he claims that: "The deficit problem is a clear and present danger to the health of our republic" (1983, February 18, p. 105). His program to cut the deficit by cutting taxes would be based on "fairness: (p. 105). Reagan needed to address the fairness issue, as he had been criticized as caring only for the rich and affluent.

As he started his second term he had a fresh mandate from the public. But Reagan's agenda and strategy had not
changed. The devil terms he used to describe the government claimed that "Nearly 50 years of government living beyond its means has brought us to a time of reckoning" (1985, February 6, p. 132). He touted his smaller government policies as "New freedom in our lives has planted the rich seeds for future success" (p. 130). He reiterated this theme the next year by saying in devil terms that the budget process was "broken" (1986, January 24, p. 126), but the American people were "striving forward to embrace the future" (p. 128). Reagan (1988, January 25), also claims that the budget reports were "behemoths," (p. 86) and that Washington D. C. had "an obsession with dollars" (p. 87). In godlike terms he cast the American people as having "thousands of sparks of genius" (p. 87) within their midst.

This antithesis, using polar terms, has advantages for such a believable rhetor as Reagan. He casts the drama in narratives and metaphors and clearly delineates the differences between the old way liberal way (devil terms), and his new conservative way (god-terms). It is difficult for a politician to define a policy in strict technical terms. However, Reagan defines his policy by saying that it was against something. This was made even more powerful when one considers the
fact that the American voters were already disgruntled with the current system. When Reagan was criticized, casting the government in devil-terms and the American people in god terms provided a clear separation between an authentic America and a usurping authority. Indeed, in all of his rhetoric, Reagan characterized America as a homogeneous people where division of race, class, and gender were unimportant.

**Value Appeals**

Reagan's appeal to the American public was because he made value-laden arguments to prove his point. Rokeach defines a value as: "A standard that guides and determines action, attitudes towards objects and situations, ideology, presentation of self to others, evaluation, judgments, justification, comparison of self with others and attempts to influence others" (1968, p. 25). Hart (1984) claims that these values can only be transferred to others by rhetorical means.

Reagan had a difficult rhetorical challenge. He wanted to make economic cuts, and in some cases eliminate many social programs, yet he needed to appear sensitive to the needs of those seen as less fortunate. He was able to successfully do this by his appeals to values. When he advocated making budget reductions in such popular programs as student-loans,
school lunch programs, and housing, all popular with the middle-class, White (1988) says that Reagan was able to advocate and justify his controversial agenda, and receive middle-class support, because he communicated a sense of "shared values -- not different ones -- that transformed him into one of us" (p. 4). It seems that he put people into the psychologically difficult position of going against their own values to disagree with him. Weiler (1992) said that Reagan's rhetoric was based upon moral practicality.

In his first inaugural, Reagan simplistically compared the government's budget to situations American families faced daily: "You and I, as individuals, can, by borrowing, live beyond our means, but for only a limited period of time" (1981, January 20, p. 1). Thrift and money management are a basic value for prosperity. Reagan then based this common sense approach to the federal budget: "Why, then, should we think that collectively, as a nation, we're not bound by the same limitation" (p. 1). This method of considering the government's budget is non-complicated, to say the least, but showed the American people that Reagan could take a common sense, practical, approach to governance. Reagan was criticized for being a rich mans' president, and addressed that issue by
appealing to the value of generosity in his first State of the Union Address: “Contrary to some of the wild charges you may have heard, this administration has not and will not turn its back on American’s elderly or America’s poor” (1982, January 26, p. 74).

Bennett (1988) noted that fairness is a key component of the American ethos. Reagan routinely addressed this issue pertaining to women and minorities throughout his presidency. As an example, he claimed: “Our commitment to fairness means that we must assure legal and economic equity for women . . . . We will not tolerate wage discrimination based on sex” (1983, January 25, p. 107). A few lines later, Reagan pointed to needs of minorities: “Also in the area of fairness and equity, we will ask for extension of the Civil Rights commission . . . . The commission is an important part of the ongoing straggle for justice in America. . . . fair housing laws is also essential to ensuring equal opportunity” (p. 107).

PUBLIC PERSONAE

The public’s affection for Reagan has been documented. According to Gallup polls, Reagan’s popularity was at 51% when he assumed office, and soared to 68% by May of that year. Except for a brief dip in the polls in 1983, Reagan’s
approval ratings stood well above 50% on the average. In 1982 Gallup reported that Reagan was the most admired man in the nation. In early 1986 his approval for performance was 64%. Except for the month when the Iran-Contra scandal broke, Reagan’s approval ratings were high, and were over 60% when he left office (Note: all poll data comes from the Gallup organization).

Morris (1999) says that even Democratic Party rivals were personally enamored by his charm. Reagan had a knack for appearing as a regular guy. Boyarsky (1981) said that Reagan sought to deliver himself as one of the people, and that in actuality he is a very friendly person. According to Ritter and Henry (1992) Reagan’s advisers decided to let Reagan just be himself, because the public trusted his character. And Jamieson (1988) says that Reagan was able to appear intimate in public as had no other president before him.

Speech Delivery Style

One of Reagan’s most popular and best used tools was his style of delivery. Reagan made numerous mistakes about policy and history when speaking, yet appearing to be in charge at all times was mandatory. Reagan and his advisors
also felt it was essential to remain calm at all times, and to look confident, never rattled.

Jamieson (1988) said that all of Reagan's speeches are written and delivered in a conversational style and tone. She noted that he self-discloses with ease and that this causes the viewers "to conclude that we know him and we like him" (p. 165). Reagan's critics claim that he was heartless toward the underclass, yet his demeanor states otherwise. When his political enemies, such as former House Speaker, Tip O'Neill, (1987) claimed he was a radical, their target did not appear on television as to fit that type of person. To thwart liberal attacks upon his policies Reagan paid tribute to common people: "Well, our concern must be for a special interest group that has been too long neglected . . . It is made up of men and women who raise our food, patrol our streets, man our mines and factories, teach our children keep our homes, and heal us when we're sick" (1981, January 20, pp. 1-2). His simple dialogue bolsters the belief "that his is a presidency based on common sense and trust in the people" (Jamieson, 1988, p. 166).

As a politician, Reagan relied upon this delivery style, which he had mastered as a radio sports announcer (Boyarsky, 1981). His voice was reassuring and he refused to appear as
alarmed, but as concerned (Ritter & Henry, 1992). His voice was strong, but never harsh. In viewing his speeches, I noted confidence, assurance, and believability. Perhaps one of his biggest advantages was that he spoke as a common person, lacking the flowery style of some presidents. His words were not complicated, anyone could understand him and his ideas.

Reagan also (Jamieson, 1988) self-disclosed his feelings to the national audience. Self-disclosure builds trust and empathy between the speaker and the audience. In his first speech after the assassination attempt and his wounding, Reagan revealed his appreciation to the nation:

I’d like to say a few words directly to all of you and to those who are watching and listening tonight, because this is the only way I know to express to all of you on behalf of Nancy and myself our appreciation for your messages and flowers and, most of all, your prayers. . . . The warmth of your words, the expression of friendship, and, yes, love, meant more to us than you can ever know (1981, April 28, p. 391).

Jamieson believes this self-disclosure is one of the reasons that even detractors liked Reagan interpersonally.

Controlling the Press

In order to fully understand his success, it is also necessary to understand the importance of Reagan’s use of the medium of television. This medium allows a rhetor
simultaneously to speak directly to millions. But television also comes into each individual home, and Jamieson (1988) said that Reagan mastered the art of appearing to speak to individual people directly.

Though Reagan never achieved the stardom of many actors of his day, his acting training were to play a large part in his political speeches, and ultimately his political success; he was adept at using theatrical acting skills in the political arena. Reagan was always aware of the power of television and what it took to execute an effective performance. Some politicians never learned that the camera catches most everything at all times, but Reagan was astutely aware of this fact (Boyarsky, 1981).

Reagan, as California governor and later as president, and his advisors took the strategy of always controlling what the media saw and heard. Michael Deaver served him well as press secretary while Reagan served in both offices. In a CNN interview, Leslie Stahl, a national correspondent, said Reagan only let the press see him in positive situations (1997, August 28). At times, Stahl said he was able to manipulate the press into airing a positive story that was not quite accurate. As an example, Stahl said that in 1982 Reagan met with a group of
senior citizens at a government-sponsored retirement home and pledged his support to all American senior citizens. At the same time he was advocating legislation which would reduce Housing Urban Development's (HUD's) budget, the sponsor of the retirement homes. Stahl said it took the press several years to realize that they, the media, were doing exactly what Reagan wanted (1997, August 28, CNN interview). By his second term, there was a groundswell of national support for Reagan and his controversial policies.

When the space shuttle Challenger was destroyed in 1986, Reagan spoke to the nation in prime time. When a national tragedy occurs, the president is the best person to console the country. In this performance Reagan spoke to America's children, many of whom witnessed the explosion via television: "I know it is hard to understand, but sometimes painful things like this happen" (1986, January 26, p. 89). Reagan closed the speech with poetic words to soothe the nation's soul:

The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and slipped the surly bonds of earth to touch the face of God (p. 90).
Ritter and Henry (1992), and Jamieson (1988), along with other rhetorical scholars think this speech was a masterpiece of rhetoric.

As both governor and president he would not hesitate to bypass arguing with legislators and go straight to the people via television to gain support for his policies (Boyarsky, 1981). In his first year in office, Reagan was battling the Democratic House of Representatives over the budget. Reagan spoke to the nation twice in February (Dallek, 1984) and again in April. By May his approval ratings were at 71%, and he secured the support of enough Democrats to easily pass his legislation. His popularity with the public caused some in Congress to change their minds.

Secular Preacher, Prophet,

As was asserted earlier, Reagan felt the American people had a destiny to fulfill, and many times his rhetoric took on the aspects of a preacher delivering a sermon (Ritter & Henry, 1992). This speaking as a preacher began early in his public speaking career. Usually, when preachers give such sermons they talk about the responsibility of the congregation, and Reagan was no different in speaking to his congregation -- the American people. But this promised destiny would not be
forthcoming by easy means. In his first State of the Union Address, Reagan challenges the country to rise to the task: "Let it be said of us that we, too, did not fail; that we, too, worked together to bring America through difficult times" (1982, January 27, p. 79). The good preacher not only challenges, he/she encourages. Reagan does so by claiming: "So, now it's up to us, all of us, to prepare America for that day when our work will pale before the greatness of America's champions in the 21st century" (1986, February 4, p. 130).

President Clinton has been labeled as a great negotiator. Reagan, however, due to his preacher style, was more of a persuader, and like a preacher does not rely on data or scientific analysis; the preacher speaks of faith. Reagan not only had faith in his plans, he also had faith in the American people, and Reagan's priestly tone was well suited for this need when he spoke of the American people: "I believe this, because I believe in them - in the strength of their hearts and minds, in the commitment that each one of them brings to their daily lives, be they high or humble" (1983, January 25, p. 110). Reagan mentioned God in all ten speeches, and led a silent prayer at the beginning of his second inaugural.
Charisma

Schiffer (1973) states that at periodic times people feel a loss in their lives, and this can also be transferred to a collective of people. At these times, society may feel powerless, and seek to improve their situation, they seek a leader. He notes that "we embrace, at times with a frenzied, a charismatic rescue agent" (p. 82). From a political sense the rescuer may experience a "charismatic coup" (p. 83). The charismatic figure usually speaks about crisis and hope, and promises collective renewal.

After the malaise of the Carter presidency, enter the optimistic Reagan. With the nation's economic woes so profound Reagan was uniquely situated in time, and with his media skills, in a good position to achieve the "charismatic coup." In his first inaugural, Reagan labeled the country's economic conditions a crisis by stating: "We must act today in order to preserve tomorrow" (1981, January 20, p. 1). He said that "Idle industries have cast workers into unemployment, human misery, and personal indignity" (p. 1). But the leader also offers promise and hope by proclaiming: "They will go away because we as Americans have the capacity now, as we've had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to
As will be demonstrated in Chapter Five, the promise of renewal was a cornerstone of Reagan’s rhetoric.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter justified the selection of the ten speeches for analysis. It also gave a brief biographical sketch of Reagan’s background, and analyzed Reagan’s use of narratives from the perspective of the past, and that there is a hopeful future. The metaphors analyzed were from the perspective of the government as a machine, from the perspective of health, and finally from the view of war.

The chapter also critiqued Reagan’s argument style and value appeals. Finally, Reagan’s public personae were viewed from his speech delivery style, his media relationships, Reagan as preacher, and his charismatic personae.

Chapter Five will utilize a modified version of Kenneth Burke’s cycle of guilt, victimage, and redemption/rebirth to analyze Reagan’s discourse.
CHAPTER 5: REAGAN’S GOVERNMENTAL ATTACK

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss Reagan’s rhetorical use of the scapegoat. Analysis will be guided primarily by the work of Kenneth Burke.

According to Burke, scapegoating rhetoric has a sequential form: guilt, victimage, redemption, and rebirth. This chapter will survey each of the phases in turn, providing examples that illustrate Reagan’s unique modification of the process, a benign rather than a tragic scapegoat. It will provide insights into Reagan’s use of the scapegoat as a permanent, renewable resource with a happier outcome than exile or slaughter.

GUILT

Burke (1989) says that society resides in a form of social hierarchy. This hierarchy attaches people together in an infrastructure of rights and commitments. Brummett (1981) states:

A hierarchy is a social order that binds people together in a system of rights and obligations. A hierarchy is based upon a set of values or principles, a constitution that defines those rights and obligations. Hierarchies may be constructed around principles as explicit as the
laws and rules governing the twelfth precinct, values as moral, social, ineffable as a Southern community's commitment to racial harmony. An economic system, is a hierarchy based upon values of capitalism or socialism, expansion or conservatism, etc. (pp. 254-255).

Because humans cannot obey all the rules within the hierarchy, guilt occurs. It is a natural condition to want the guilt purged. The primary method of purging the guilt is victimage. This method can be very dangerous because the guilt is laid upon another. As noted in Chapter Two, scapegoating has led to human atrocities. After the purging, there is redemption, rebirth, and a new beginning, a dawning social hierarchy, which itself will soon be violated.

Guilt is the condition that something has gone wrong, or awry within the system (Brummett, 1981, and Kiewe & Houck, 1989). There is social failure. In each speech Reagan describes failures of the system in broad, easy-to-understand terms. The description was usually accompanied by statements which explain the effects of the guilt; threats to American identity, unmerited suffering, and collective mortification. While individuals suffer, guilt was collective or communal. Reagan typically invoked guilt by one of three means, (1) by citing hardship visited on an innocent American
public; (2) by connecting economic woes to market intervention, and, (3) by indicting the government’s attitude, policies, and actions.

After describing the situation Reagan typically victimized, or scapegoated, the federal government. This act made national failure intelligible and manageable.

Early in his first inaugural address Reagan defined the rhetorical pace for his administration in emotional terms. He claimed that:

These United States are confronted with an economic affliction of great proportions. We suffer from the longest and one of the worst sustained inflations in our national history. It distorts our economic decisions, penalizes thrift, and crushes the struggling young and the fixed-income elderly alike (January 20, p. 1).

The situation “threatens to shatter the lives of millions of our people. Idle industries have cast workers into unemployment, human misery, and personal indignity (p. 1).

In describing the situation Reagan has used the emotional terms of suffer, affliction, distort, penalizes, threatens, human misery, and personal indignity, an essentially spiritual vocabulary to frame the meaning of material losses. In the early months of his first administration, Reagan emphasized the human dimension of economic weakness: “Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price
Index, has continued at a double-digit rate. Mortgage interest rates have averaged almost 15 percent for these six months. And these conditions keep Americans from living the myth of the American Dream by "preventing families across America from buying homes. There are still almost 8 million unemployed. The average worker's hourly earnings after adjusting for inflation are lower today than they were six months ago, and there have been over 6,000 business failures" (1981, April 28, p. 391).

In his first State of the Union Address, Reagan decried the economic woes and assigned blame throughout most of the speech.

The last decade has seen a series of recessions. There was a recession in 1970, in 1974 and again in the Spring of 1980. Each time, unemployment increased and inflation soon turned up again. We coined the term 'stagflation' to describe this (1982, January 26, p. 72).

Then Reagan attempts to deflect accountability by blaming the Carter Administration and the chaotic economic environment:

The budget in place, when I took office, had been projected as balanced. It turned out to have one of the biggest deficits in history. Another example of the imponderables that can make deficit projections highly questionable -- a change of only one percentage point is unemployment can alter a deficit up or down by $25 billion (p. 74).

To Reagan, the economic question was really a question of
value: "Our citizens feel that they've lost control of even the most basic decisions made about the essential services of government, such as schools, welfare, roads, and even garbage collection" (p. 75). American civic culture was at risk.

At the beginning of his third year as president, the Republican Party had done well in the mid-term elections and for the next four years had a majority in the United States Senate. And although Reagan remained a popular personality with the media and the public, his policies were often under attack. To prevent this mis-identification, Reagan continued to remind voters of who was at fault and who was transforming past failures plagued with guilt: "As we gather here tonight, the state of our union is strong, but our economy is troubled. Far too many of our fellow citizens – farmers, steel and auto workers, lumbermen, black teenagers, working mothers – this is a painful period (January 25, p. 103). Just a few lines later Reagan made a more damning assessment of the country’s plight, which was not caused by his administration:

First, a decade of rampant inflation drained its (Social Security) reserves as we tried to protect beneficiaries from the spiraling cost of living. Then, the recession and
the sudden end of inflation withered the expanding wage base and increasing revenues the system need to support the 36 million Americans who depend on it (p. 103).

Elsewhere in the speech Reagan places responsibility squarely on preceding administrations: “The problems we inherited were far worse than most inside and out of government had predicted. Curing those problems has taken more time and a higher toll then any of us wanted. Unemployment is far too high” (p. 104).

By early 1984 most indicators agreed that the American economy was improving substantially. Reagan had already announced that he was going to seek reelection, and thus enjoyed an opportunity to contrast past failures and present success. He did that in the January 25, 1984 address, and issued a progress report on the taming of irresponsible government: “As we came to the decade of the eighties, we faced the worst crisis in our postwar history. The seventies were years of rising problems and falling confidence. There was a feeling that government had grown beyond the consent of the governed,” The effect was that: “families felt helpless in the face of mounting inflation and the indignity of taxes that reduced reward for hard work, thrift, and risk-
taking. All this was overlaid by an ever-growing web of rules and regulations (p. 87).

Of course, all the mischief of past mismanagement had not been fully undone: “But we know that many of our fellow countrymen are still out of work, wondering what will come of their hopes and dreams” (p. 88). Later is that speech Reagan again referred to the conditions when he first took office, playing upon fears that citizens might invite its return:

The last decade saw domestic spending surge literally out of control. But the basis for such spending had been laid in previous years. A pattern of overspending has been in place for half a century. As the national debt grew, we were told not to worry (p. 89).

The beginning of Reagan’s second term featured many of the same rhetorical themes, strategies, and challenges as did his first term. Ever the consistent rhetor, Reagan unceasingly described the American political, economic, and personal landscape as he saw the situation. Reagan began the January 21, 1985 second inaugural oration with a few words thanking American citizens for their support and confidence, and then attacked the government machine:

That system (method of governance) has never failed us, but for a time we failed the system. We asked things of government that government was not equipped to give. We yielded authority to the National Government that properly belonged to States or to local governments or to the people themselves. We allowed taxes and inflation to rob us of our earnings and savings and watched the
great industrial machine that had made us the most productive people on Earth slow down and the number of unemployed increase (p. 55).

This type of quote is of special interest. Reagan was the deliverer of a message that absolved the citizenry of involvement, a dangerous thing for a democratic republic, of one of its principle roles in governing, being policy watchdogs.

As Reagan began his second term he always began his State of the Union Addresses by noting the successes that his administration had accomplished.

In his first State of the Union of his second term, Reagan began as the previous speech by thanking the American citizen for their faith and belief in him, and then implicitly began to depict the situation and its effects on ordinary citizens. “We’re here to speak for the millions in our inner cities who long for real jobs, safe neighborhoods, and schools that truly teach. We’re here to speak for the American farmer, the entrepreneur, and every worker in industries fighting to modernize and compete” (p. 130).

Reagan then separates the citizens from its government, breaking the social contract between the governing body and the governed. “Nearly 30 years of government living beyond its means has brought us to a time of reckoning” (p. 132).
Again, the focus on the government absolves the citizenry of responsibility.

Reagan began his 1986 State of the Union Speech again claiming redemption: “I am pleased to report the state of the Union is stronger than a year ago and growing stronger each day” (February 4, 1986, p. 125), but then portrayed the current situation and out-of-date bureaucracy, and relating then to the future with a penal metaphor: “But we cannot win the race to the future shackled to a system that can’t even pass a Federal budget” (p. 126).

A bit later Reagan again put the condition in human terms by making the citizen the victim: “How often we read of a husband and wife both working, struggling, from paycheck to paycheck to raise a family, meet a mortgage, pay their taxes and bills, and yet some in congress say taxes must be raised” (p. 126).

Later in that speech, Reagan again explains the plight of the American people and their relationship with the Federal government, and in this quote cause and effect are linked together: “As we work to make the American dream real for all, we must also look to the condition of America’s families. Struggling parents today worry how they will provide their
children the advantages that their parents gave them,” and this was caused by, “the welfare culture, the breakdown of the family, the most basic support system, has reached crisis proportions – in female and child poverty, child abandonment, horrible crimes, and deteriorating schools.” Reagan then identified the government as the culprit: “After hundreds of billions of dollars in poverty programs, the plight of the poor grows more painful. But the waste in dollars and cents pales before the most tragic loss, the sinful waste of human spirit and potential” (p. 128). The government has not only failed, it has made the situation worse.

By 1987, Reagan was able to claim many successes by his administration’s economic policies, yet had Iran-contra damaging both his administration’s policies and his ethos. However, he still labeled guilt in the political system. In his January 27 State of the Union, Reagan stated: “For starters, the Federal deficit is outrageous.” But Reagan was not at fault because, “For years I’ve asked that we stop pushing onto our children the excesses of our government.” Reagan gives the solution as: “what the Congress finally needs to do is pass a constitutional amendment that mandates a balanced budget and forces government to live within its means. States, cities,
and the families of America balance their budgets. Why can’t we” (p. 58).

The last three sentences again reveal the separation of the citizen, and Reagan, from the government. A few words later, Reagan reveals again how the social hierarchy has been violated by bureaucratic welfare programs: “Our national welfare system consists of some 59 major programs and over 6,000 pages of Federal laws and regulations on which more than $132 billion was spent in 1985. “Reagan provided a way in which: “I will propose a new national welfare strategy, a program of welfare reform through State-sponsored, community-based demonstration projects. This is the time to reform that out-moded social dinosaur and finally break the poverty trap (pp. 58-59).

In Reagan’s final State of the Union Address, 1988, he gave some of his most stinging depictions of hierarchal breach: “We have had a balanced budget only 8 times in the last 57 years” (p. 85). Reagan then repeats his often made portrayal of the current situation and government incompetency in common-sense terms: “Now, its also time for some plain talk about the most immediate obstacle to controlling Federal deficits. The simple but frustrating problem
of making expenses match revenues – something American families do and the Federal Government can’t.” Reagan supplies a machine-like remedy: “The budget process has broken down; it needs a drastic overhaul” (p. 86).

And then Reagan gave the image of the monstrous governmental machine’s ability to be efficient: “And then, along came these behemoths. This is the conference report – 1,053 pages, weighing 14 pounds.” The machine was so big and cumbersome that: “It took 300 people at my Office of Management and budget just to read the bill so the Government wouldn’t shut down (p. 86). Other effects of the machine was that: “Over the last few weeks, we’ve all learned what was tucked away behind a little comma here and there . . . . . . millions for items such as cranberry research, blueberry research, the study of crawfish, and the commercialization of wildflowers (p. 86).

And finally in his last State of the Union Address, Reagan finished his depiction of the situation with humor by saying: “My friends, some years ago, the Federal Government declared war on poverty, and poverty won” (p. 87).

Throughout his administration Reagan attempted to separate both himself and the citizenry from the massive
federal government, which is guilt-ridden, out of control, and punishing the populace. The next section reveals Reagan’s rhetorical attacks on that government.

**VICTIMAGE**

Reagan’s rhetoric expresses the actual community formula, community identity is formed through blame and victimage. When a community is faced with its own failure, it seeks to transfer responsibility, and as Burke (1969a) tells us: “The search for a cause is itself a search for a scapegoat” (p. 290). Scapegoats must be seen as fitting vessels for the sins of their constituents. Not just anyone or anything will do. Burke (1989) says that the scapegoat selected must be worthy of sacrifice. Either the scapegoat appears as worthy in a legal sense, so that it “deserves” to be killed (p. 294); (2). Or the scene and evidence point to the scapegoat’s guilt so that he is seen as a “marked man” (p. 294); A third worthy scapegoat is too good for the world. It smashed the cycle to establish a community of love in which further scapegoating is not an option. Reagan established his government scapegoat through the ritual of cleansing. It differed from the classical scapegoat in that it was not killed or violated. It must be reformed through an exorcism of liberal practices. The
government is not intrinsically wicked. Its elitism, intrusiveness, and sheer size must be eliminated.

Early in his first inaugural, delivered on January 20, 1981, Reagan articulated the dominant style note of his entire eight years in office; the government is damaging American culture: “In this present crisis, government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem.” Reagan uses a common sense argument approach to scrutinize policy: “Well, if no one among us is capable of governing himself, then who among us has the capacity to govern someone else?”

The sheer size of government is destructive of ordinary social practices: “It is no coincidence that our present troubles parallel and are proportional to the intervention and intrusion that result from unnecessary and excessive growth of government.” But Reagan relied on the myth of a Shining City on a Hill: “It is time for us to realize that we are too great a nation to limit ourselves to small dreams” (p. 2). Further, the intrusive policies of government subvert economic growth: “It is time to reawaken this industrial giant, to get government back within its means, and to lighten our punitive tax burden” (p. 3).
Reagan presents government philosophy as a creed that has lost its legitimacy. It is merely: "the failed policy of trying to balance the budget on the taxpayer’s back" (p. 392). Finally, the present government has lost its capacity to learn from its mistakes so that "more of the same (taxes and spending) will not cure the hardship, anxiety and discouragement... imposed on the American people (p. 392).

Reagan uses health and diet metaphors to argue for change: "Let us cut through the fog for a moment. The answer to a government that’s too big is to stop feeding its growth.” The result of the unbridled growth is Government spending has been growing faster than the economy itself. The massive national debt that we accumulated is the result of the government’s high spending diet." Reagan offers a solution that is also health related: "Well, it’s time to change the diet and to change it in the right way (p. 392). Reagan makes the government appear as a beast that has grown and will continue to grow if not checked.

In his first State of the Union Address Reagan continues to argue that big government is a bad idea and is harming the country by noting the poor reaction to economic crises: "Government’s response to these recessions was to pump
up the money supply and increase spending.” The effect on the citizenry was “Inflation remained in double digits, and government increased at an annual rate of 17 percent. Interest rates reached a staggering 21 \( \frac{1}{2} \) percent. There were 8 million unemployed (p. 72). Not only are citizens suffering from government action, when they try to take control of situations they are met with a “maze of interlocking jurisdictions and levels of government confronts average citizens in trying to solve even the simplest of problems” (p. 75).

In 1983 Reagan laid a blistering attack on the bureaucracy, utilizing all the methods announced at the beginning of this section: “Projected Federal spending – if government refuses to tighten its own belt – will also be far too high and could weaken and shorten the economic recovery now underway” (p. 104). Later is that speech Reagan uses the health metaphor to claim: “The Federal budget is both a symptom and a cause of our economic problems.” He noted the urgency of the situation and places the onus on Congress with: “Failure to cope with the problem now could mean as much as a trillion dollars more in national debt in the next 4 years alone” (p. 104).
After having some economic successes, Reagan was able to argue that the future was dependent upon rebelling against the ways of the past. With his public ethos in his favor he stated: “To assure a sustained recovery, we must continue getting runaway spending under control to bring those deficits down.” The results of failing to do so would be: “the recovery will be too short, unemployment will remain too high, and we will leave an unconscionable burden of national debt for our children (p. 104).

Following is another ploy by Reagan to separate himself from the government which he led: “The Government has continued to spend more money each year, though not as much more as it did in the past. Taken as a whole, the budget I’m proposing for the fiscal year will increase no more than the rate of inflation. In other words, the Federal Government will hold the line on real spending” (p. 105). Reagan failed to note he was the most powerful government figure.

In this 1983 speech Reagan was attempting to garner support for his policies. He had to battle the ever-popular and powerful House Speaker, Tip O’Neill, and public angst over dire economic conditions. The economy was beginning to
improve slightly, and perhaps Reagan felt he had credibility to
attack the government

In the election year of 1984, Reagan spent a great deal of
his oratorical energy touting the successes of his
administration. But, he still attacked the government, not
accepting the ideas of big government as feasible:

The problems we’re overcoming are not the heritage of
one person, party, or even one generation. It’s just the
tendency of government to grow, for practices and
programs to become the nearest thing to eternal life we’ll
ever see on this Earth (p. 87).

Reagan’s goat is a rather abstract creature. The
government principle itself contains a tendency to unbridled
growth. His abuse of the government served a pre-policy
function, what Oraves (1976) calls a capacity to form the mind
of the audience so it is receptive to future policy. Thus,
Reagan’s audience is pre-disposed to act against old policies
when he finally came to articulate a specific agenda: “We
must act now to protect future generations from government’s
desire to spend its citizens’ money and tax them into servitude
when the bills come due.” The Federal government has not
demonstrated control, and the solution is to: “Let us make
it unconstitutional for the Federal Government to spend more
than the Federal government takes in” (p. 57).
Thus, Reagan used a “cut” in “rates by almost 25 percent,” and later was able to advocate even more against the “tax barriers that make hard lives even harder” (p. 131).

In focusing on what the government effects were, Reagan asks the congress to: “Let us resolve that we will stop spreading dependency, and start spreading opportunity; that we will stop spreading bondage and start spreading freedom” (p. 132). This statement clearly shows Reagan’s view of what the people needed/wanted, and what the results of government actually were. Later in that speech Reagan proclaims: “To move steadily toward a balanced budget, we must also lighten government’s claim on our total economy.” But Reagan promises not to return to past methods of governing: “We will not do this by raising taxes. We must make sure that our economy grows faster that the growth in spending by the Federal Government” (p. 132).

In that speech Reagan also gives evidence of the effects of the free market versus governmental involvement with analogical reasoning: “we must remove or eliminate costly government subsidies. For example, deregulation of the airline industry has led to cheaper airfares.” However, when Government is involved: “but on Amtrak taxpayers pay about
$35 per passenger every time an Amtrak train leaves the station. It’s time we ended this huge federal subsidy” (p. 134).

By reinforcing free market values, Reagan reinforced the underlying presupposition of his economic program. His attack upon the Federal government was accompanied by praise of the free market.

Since Aristotle, rhetorical theorists have recognized that epideictic speeches are particularly adapted to serve a value reaffirmation function. For example, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca argue that epideictic “strengthens the disposition toward action by increasing adherence to the values it lauds” (1969, p. 50). No American political leader since Franklin Roosevelt has used epideictic more skillfully than Ronald Reagan. Reagan both reinforced basic values and drew on those values to redefine how people should look at the Administration.. For example, on January 15, 1983, Reagan spoke about the meaning of the life of Martin Luther King Jr. He used the talk to clearly state his opposition to discrimination and bigotry and strongly praised King, Rosa Parks, and others within the civil rights movement for their courage and commitment to equality. In making this address, which was presented several years before the creation of the
King holiday, Reagan both reaffirmed basic values such as freedom, equality, and justice, and also attempted to redefine how the American people understood his administration’s record on race. And in Reagan’s epideictic, the dead hand of government was placed in striking contrast to the heroic “extraordinary ordinary American” (Smith, 1987, p. 22) who were to be the true partners in achieving the administration’s goals. As opposed to management by bureaucrats Reagan proposed the “strength of spirit and common sense” of the American people (October 27, 1984, p. 847)

Reagan seems to have modified Roosevelt’s Fireside Chats. During the Great Depression, FDR delivered his thirty-one Fireside Chats in order to take the American people into his confidence, and it gave them a sense of communal purpose. Like his hero, Reagan expressed confidence in the average American. In the midst of recession, Reagan quoted FDR’s warning that “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” (October 16, 1986, p. 910). He acknowledge the large unemployment problem because the government had “no plan” and had been “adrift” (October 23, 1982, p. 732).

In his February 4, 1986 address, Reagan postures as an avenging angel: “not by breaking faith with bedrock principles
but by breaking free from failed policies. Let us begin where storm clouds loom darkest - right here in Washington D. C” (p. 126). These lines might have been uttered by FDR in defense of different policies: “Members of Congress, passage of Gramm-Rudman-Hollings gives us an historic opportunity to achieve what has eluded our national leadership for decades: forcing the Federal Government to live within its means” (p. 126) said Reagan after framing the legislation as a means of disciplining the appetite of government for ruinous and excessive spending.

But out of the crisis a new order arises: “we must revise or replace programs enacted in the name of compassion, . . .” old programs “that degrade the moral worth of work, encourage family breakups, and drive entire communities into a bleak and heartless dependence” (p. 127).

These programs he reasoned “made it hard or impossible for people to afford the homes, the cars, the other purchases that keep our economy moving and provide jobs” (October, 16, 1982, p. 821).

Reagan’s strong focus on economics and foreign policy belies his ideological presidency. Very few of his speeches focused on issues that were of special concern to the right
wing of his party. Reagan presented only four addresses on social issues. In 1982, 1983, and 1984, and none after that. After looking at all of his radio addresses, it is clear that he did not deliver a single speech on the subject of abortion. Nor is there one on pornography or feminism. A single speech on school prayer represents the “hot issues” of the so-called Right Wing.

Reagan’s focus on the government’s sins and freeing the marketplace is relentless because it is so pervasive. Only foreign policy begins to rival it in breadth and passion, and there his center-piece is another scapegoat, the government of the Soviet Union.

REDEMPTION AND REBIRTH

To complete the four stage cycle, there is redemption and rebirth (Burke, 1984). Foss et. al, (1991) says that the condition is short-lived, and also represents “symbolic rebirth” (p. 197). At this juncture change has occurred. Redemption may be a new form of identification, a new outlook or initiative. There may be a feeling of moving onward, of more achievement to attain. At least for a short period there is optimism and hope. Redemption may be spoken of by
referring to the past, by indicating present victories, and by stating hope and optimism for the future.

When Reagan became President, the economy was in dire straits. From the early months of his administration, Reagan’s optimistic rhetoric promised a better future. By Fall of 1982 Reagan was crediting the American people with staying the course by saying: “thanks to you, we are nearing the end of a long and painful ordeal” (October 14, 1982, p. 781). By the beginning of his third year, with inflation and unemployment both lower, Reagan applauded the redemptive force of “the strength of the last three years in spirit” of the American people (October 27, 1984, p. 724). In 1985, after his landslide reelection victory, Reagan lauded the successes of his administration. He argued that his administration could provide “a freedom train” to give formerly dependent persons “a real job” (July 23, 1985, p. 448).

His last three years in office Reagan primarily spoke of redemption as a process that had begun to unfold. Perhaps this allowed him to claim a mandate to continue and even broaden his conservative agenda. Reagan had a rhetorical vision full of hope and promise, a vision of restoration, and his
first initiative on welfare reform was launched on February 15, 1986.

Reagan’s economic rhetoric featured a prophetic voice. During the deep recession of 1981 he predicted that our troubles “will not go away in days, weeks, or months, but they will go away . . . . because we as Americans have the capacity now, as we’ve had in the past, to do whatever needs to be done to preserve this last and greatest bastion of freedom” (p. 73).

Reagan ties the redemptive future to the faith in his administration’s policies. He promised no quick fix but offered a simple description of the world with an optimistic prediction of future programs.” “The economy will face difficult moments in the months ahead. But the program for economic recovery that is in place will pull the economy out of its slump and put us on the road to prosperity and stable growth by the latter half of this year” (p. 73).

Reagan used to his advantage that the ways of the past have been a failure. Plus, he had the rhetorical advantage that if his policies were tampered with he had a scapegoat to blame. Reagan assured the public that he would not deter from his plans by saying; “I promise to bring the American
people— to bring their tax rates down and to keep them down, to provide them incentives to rebuild our economy, to save, to invest in America’s future. I will stand by my word” (p. 74).

In an FDR-like move Reagan involved the American people in his program: “Tonight I’m urging the American people: Seize these new opportunities to produce, to save, to invest, and together we’ll make this economy a mighty engine of freedom, hope, and prosperity again (p. 74).

Like Roosevelt, Reagan understood that the success of his administration’s economic program depended upon involving citizens with that program and giving them a sense of ownership. To achieve this involvement, Reagan called on individual citizens to act as partners in achieving his administrations’ goals. For example, Reagan spent a portion of his first radio address discussing America’s economic problems and explaining why he was not willing to abandon his program and raise taxes. He compared this idea to “trying to pull the game out in the fourth quarter by punting on the third down” (April 3, 1982, p. 212). Instead of a “quick fix,” Reagan promised that his administration would “stay the course” and produce a “solid economic recovery based on increased productivity and jobs for our people. With your help
and prayers we’ll find it” (p. 212). Thus, Reagan made his audience partners in his program and pledged that a great future was certain. Reagan’s promise for the future was not tied to the government, but rather his faith in the American citizen: “The American people have already stepped up their rate of saving, assuring that the funds needed to modernize our factories and improve our technology will once again flow in business and industry” (p. 104). Reagan asserted that discipline is paying off by saying: “We’re witnessing an upsurge of productivity and impressive evidence that American industry will once again become competitive in markets at home and abroad, ensuring more jobs and better incomes for the nation’s work force” (p. 104).

The enterprise of ordinary Americans is more than a material calculation; it is part of a large spiritual mission of rescuing the nation from failed systems. Thus “the big story about America” is about “millions of confident, caring people – those extraordinary ‘ordinary’ Americans” and these are people who do “make the headlines and will never be interviewed.” It is these citizens who “are laying the foundation, not just for recovery from our present problems but for a better tomorrow for all our people” (p. 110).
With this sort of rhetorical advantage, Reagan was even more optimistic in the election year of 1984. By that time recovery was dramatic enough to begin to celebrate good times as evidence of transformation and spiritual transformation. "There is renewed energy and optimism throughout the land. America is back, standing tall, looking to the eighties with courage, confidence, and hope" (p. 87).

Reagan praised the American citizens for the successes and possibilities of his redemptive vision. He noted that from the start of his administration: "Americans were ready to make a new beginning, and together we have done it." He had lifted the yoke of government so that "Hope is alive tonight for millions of young families and senior citizens set free from unfair tax increases and inflation" (1984, January 25, p. 87).

Reagan then sounded a Biblical note: "Tonight, we can report and be proud of one of the best recoveries in decades. Send away the hand wringers and doubting Thomsen" (p. 87). He used the two most charismatic words in the political lexicon, "hope and vision": "Hope is reborn for couples dreaming of owning homes and for risktakers with vision to create tomorrow's opportunities" (p. 87). In language that was medical, priestly, and shamanistic, Reagan noted:
"The heart of America is strong," and that "America never was a sick society" The nation had been healed: "We're seeing rededication to bedrock values of faith, family, work, neighborhood, peace and freedom – values that help bring us together as one people, from the youngest child to the most senior citizen" (p. 88).

Reagan used the figures of the priest, America was on a spiritual journey: "to preserve this last best hope of man on Earth" and "to revive confidence in our country, hope for your future." But the nation was still on its path and "must not, and will not turn back. We will finish our job. How could we do less? We're Americans (p. 93).

In his January 21, 1985 Second Inaugural Address, Reagan was able to tout success with a celebratory tone concerning the present: "We are creating a nation once again vibrant, robust, and alive" (p 55). Reagan extols the rebirth of the nation through the restoration of economic freedom that "unleash the drive and entrepreneurial genius that are the core of human progress" (p. 56).

In this celebratory address Reagan mixes patriotism with redemption: "My fellow citizens, our nation is poised for greatness. We must do what we know is right, and do it with
all our might. Let history say of us; ‘These were golden
years – when the American Revolution was reborn, when
freedom gained new life and America reached for her best”
(p. 56).

Reagan’s February 6, 1985 State of the Union Address,
scarcely two weeks after his Second Inaugural, waded deep in
myth and metaphor. Reagan noted that the nation had been
on a journey for “4 years” and the difficulties “has brought
forth a nation renewed” (p. 130). The nation’s quest had been
directed under “our guiding stars.” They “show us truth,” and
their guidance “leaves us wiser than we were” (p. 130). The
nation had also “rediscovered that work is good in and of
itself, that it enables us to create and contribute” (p. 130).

Speaking as a high priest who has presided over the
recovery of American’s “invincible spirit, Reagan points to
such signs of renewal” as “increased attendance in places of
worship; renewed optimism and faith in our future, love of
country rediscovered by our young, who are leading the way.”
Reagan noted that the nation had coaxed a “powerful new
current from an old and honorable tradition – American
generosity” (p. 133).
The pattern of Reagan's language is instructive: renewed faith, the future, truth, and hope. These are the charismatic words that are so characteristic of religious leaders, and by contrast, so uncharacteristic of managers and bureaucrats. It is worth noting that even secular Americans are utterly familiar with charismatic metaphors. It is the language of advertising: crisis, sacrifice, hope, and redemption are the staple of our commercial messages and characterize every product from barbells to new cars to deodorant.

In his February 4, 1986 State of the Union Address Reagan celebrated economic victory; only the deficit remained unconquered. He finds marks of spiritual favor in a rising America, firm of heart, united in spirit, powerful in pride and patriotism" (pp. 125-26). He contrasts the awakened spirit with the nation that had begun its journey. When "we looked out on a different land," it was a land of "locked factory gates, long gasoline lines, intolerable prices." It was a land where inflation and "interest rates" had turned the "greatest country on Earth into a land of broken dreams" (p. 126). In coupling a pro-business agenda with concern for the ordinary citizen, the president pre-figured "compassionate conservatism," a concept currently associated with G.W. Bush. Throughout the
speech Reagan associated economic growth with the generous spirit of America. He boasted of "37 straight months of economic growth, for sunrise firms and modernized industries creating 9 million new jobs in 3 years, interest rates cut in half, inflation falling over 12 percent in 1980 to under 4 today," and immediately associated it with the "record $74 billion in voluntary giving just last year alone" (p. 126). Rising prosperity is also associated with "3 straight years of falling crime rates, as families and communities band together to fight pornography, drugs, and lawlessness and to give back to their children the safe and yes, innocent childhood they deserve." Future evidence is cited as a "renaissance in education, the rising SAT scores for 3 years – last year’s increase, the greatest since 1963." And what caused the success "wasn’t government and Washington lobbies that turned education around," but belonged to "the American people who, in reaching for excellence, knew to reach back to basics" (p. 128).

Characteristically, Reagan treats statistics as symptoms of a higher destiny. In a transcendent close he spoke of "our deepest longing" which is "to leave our children a land that is free and just and a world at peace" (p. 129). There is little
blame remaining in Reagan’s rhetoric, and the “dream” and “vision” metaphor are dominant. He spoke of the “destiny of our dreams” (p. 129). Americans must be concerned with higher things: “not just those of our union, but the state of the world” (p. 130).

Reagan separates the success associated with American spirit and the government’s spending habits by noting that the nation will soon gain “a level of excellence unsurpassed in history,” but our “quest for excellence that will not be measured by new proposals of billions in new funding, it involves an expenditure of American spirit and just plain American grit” (1987, January 27, p. 59).

Reagan conceptualizes his policies within a larger vision: “History records the power of the ideas that brought us here those 7 years ago. . . a vision if you will, of American herself.” An America made of “strong families and vibrant neighborhoods,” and the people living the American myth of receiving prosperity and accepting the responsibility by “the value of work, of family, of religion, and of the love of freedom that God places in each of us and whose defense he has entrusted in a special way to this nation” (1988, January 25, 84). This is the great Puritan myth that evokes a special
people in a special land entrusted with a unique mission from God.

Reagan articulates the stock image of American orators: overcoming "fear" with "hope" in a good vision of America's special destiny. He characterizes the American spirit by stating: "One other thing we Americans like – the future – like the sound of it, the idea of it, the hope of it." And Americans are different because: "Where others fear trade and economic growth, we see opportunities for millions in our own land and beyond. Where others seek to throw up barriers, we seek to bring them down. Where others take counsel of their fears, we follow our hopes." (1987, February 27, p. 85).

Reagan’s redemptive vision was in large part a return to the myth and narratives of the past. He felt American had been a Shining City on a Hill, and could return to that same greatness. But government would not be responsible, but an impediment. Ordinary Americans were responsible for the nations’ fate.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

By proving that the social hierarchy was in disorder, Reagan was able to scapegoat the abstract government for the nation’s problems. Reagan argued that the government’s
policies were punishing the citizenry. To Reagan, governing will inherently lead to bad government.

The myth of the fruits of challenge are strong in the United States, and Reagan used that myth, along with the myth of America as a chosen land, to encourage the populace to strive for a better way of life. By not categorizing people in his orations, Reagan was able to present the narrative of all Americans facing the same hurdles and reading the same rewards.

The last two years of his administration Reagan continued to scapegoat the government, but to a lesser extent. Economic issues were the main focus in Reagan's speeches, and through them he was able to claim redemption, thus restoring the violated social hierarchy.
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND CONSEQUENCES

INTRODUCTION

The final chapter of the dissertation concerns an interpretation of Reagan's scapegoating practice. It will cover the functions of Reagan's scapegoat and his adaptation of the benign specimen, and Reagan's use of myth and metaphor. It also concerns scapegoating consequences and effectiveness, and Reagan's legacy in that regard. Finally, future research in the area will be addressed.

The function of scapegoats is to provide a society with a way to alleviate communal guilt. Reagan used the scapegoat to unite disparate factions of Americans in a single cause for national prosperity, and perhaps greatness. The government was cast as against the American way of life, rather than a booster of that cause. Whereas traditional theory claims that the goat is either killed or driven out, Reagan made a unique use of a benign scapegoat, one that offered an easy target for attack, especially considering the economic plight of America when he was elected. Reagan swore to tame big government, but in actuality the government was left structurally unscathed throughout, and after the termination of his eight-year
administration. A strength of the undying benign scapegoat is that the scapegoater can keep reusing the goat. In essence, can kill the goat over and over.

America has had many scapegoats throughout its history, King George, and the groups that Chapter Three addressed. Big business caused the Great Depression. No wars are the country’s fault, blame is placed elsewhere.

MYTH AND METAPHOR

Reagan strategized his scapegoat through a rhetorical pattern of myth and metaphor. Even a nation as young as the United States has its myths of hard work, success, and destiny. Reagan felt that America’s destiny was the same as when John Winthrop announced in 1620 that the land would be as a “Shining City on a Hill.” Reagan viewed America as unique because of its liberty, its opportunities and, its spirit. He felt that if given the chance all who sought to succeed would succeed. The only barriers were caused by doubt and big government. Reagan felt that America was on a journey, destined by God, blessed by God, and that to fail would be breaking a covenant with God. Though I did not address foreign policy, Reagan’s saw mythic America as a beacon of freedom and opportunity for all the world, not just Americans.
He felt the example of the American Dream and success could be actualized all over the world and by all people.

In this myth the era of Big Government is seen as an aberration. The government has misidentified American problems and American people. The government must be subdued in order for the country to return to its mythical destiny and journey as liberator of the genius of ordinary people and as an exemplar for the world.

The combinations of Reagan’s metaphors leaves us with a metaphor of spirit that unites different parts of the nation’s body and allows Reagan to praise individuals and the community at the same time. This is analogous to the Pauline metaphor (St. Paul) as the body of the church is held together by the spirit. It is organic. Citizens are arms, legs, eyes, and shoulders and yet all relate to the larger organism, the American body, united by a common American spirit. Thus Reagan can endorse individualism without fragmenting society.

This metaphor was secularized by Adam Smith with the invisible hand. According to Smith, Americans did not need big government regulations because the spirit of enterprise would bond citizens together. What is competition on one
level would be cooperation on a higher level. Competition of products and prices would break monopoly power that could hurt social purification and community. This was the magic bullet, the spirit of capitalism. Reagan was able to reconcile organicism and the individual soul at the same time. People were separate in individual aspirations, goals, and jobs, but came together for the great national mission.

EFFECTIVENESS AND CONSEQUENCES

Reagan won the nickname The Great Communicator by his powerful use of rhetoric. Ritter and Henry (1992) note that part of Reagan's effectiveness was due to his "skill in refocusing public attention" (p. 62). Jamieson (1989) credits Reagan's ability to "understand the power of dramatic narrative to create an identity for an audience, to involve the audience, and to bond that audience to him" (p. 137). This ability made Reagan likeable and believable.

Reagan's scapegoating was effective, but it is fair to ask: at what price? The scapegoater may get desired results and power, but damage can be done to society. The tactics of scapegoating the government are questionable. It is desirable for the community to be strengthened, but is it desirable to build community by exclusion? Another risk is that the

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citizenry is not held accountable for society’s ills, it is much easier to blame the government. In a democratic society ideas should be presented, challenged, and debated, but the practice of scapegoating demonizes rather than engages.

Many religions, Christianity chief among them because its founder, Jesus Christ, became the scapegoat himself and accepted his victimage as a sacrifice, eschew this manner of community building. Most moral systems claim that the cycle of guilt and punishment must be broken by a community founded upon love and acceptance of one’s own guilt, and ultimately acceptance of accountability.

From a Burkeian perspective, the scapegoat has the quality of being paradoxical. Society detests, perhaps even hates, the goat, yet at the same time is reliant upon the goat for social solidarity. The functional use of the scapegoat is crucial during times of crisis to not only society’s leaders, but the masses as well.

It is extremely difficult to assess the effects of any one person’s rhetoric, but I will speculate that Reagan’s methods of damning the federal government could have had some part in the decline of civil discourse. Although Reagan dealt with his governmental attack with grace and dignity, others have
been more critical and damning with their scapegoating. I will stop sort of saying that Reagan created Rush Limbaugh, but I will claim that Reagan popularized the anti-government theme so prevalent today.

While Reagan sugarcoated his message and extolled the transcendent American spirit, some of his legatees have emphasized his anti-institutionalism and his individualism without the redeeming values of service and world responsibility. Listeners do not hear much about civic responsibility, America’s world duties, or governmental responsibility from Rush Limbaugh or G. Gordon Liddy.

Presently, there is the emergence of a third way in the United States and Western Europe. An example is President Clinton’s optimism coupled with his pro-business approach to governing leading to a more chastened sense of government responsibility. With an aging population and a more chaotic economy, some of Reagan’s heirs are speaking about compassionate conservatism. This type of conservatism frees the individual to succeed, but promises a safety net for the possibility of economic failure.

Reagan’s rhetoric was unique in a unique point in time. His ability to use mass media is documented, but the world
has rapidly changed since he was elected. Reagan’s America has been radically altered by changes in demographics, world economy, and technology. His demonic scapegoats, the Soviet Union and liberal spendthrifts, are either dead or greatly changed. However, the scapegoating that is so poisonous to a humane discourse and civil society continues unabated. The special nature of America and its mission and the adulation of the entrepreneurial spirit are firmly in the saddle. Not only are they ascendent in America, but all over the world. Reaction to this sacrilization of material culture seems to be rising, but it lacks widely accepted spokespersons, coherent political expression or party apparatus of any significant sort. In this sense the nation remains on a Reaganite course.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this study suggest other areas of inquiry. As scapegoating is pervasive in society, just how pervasive is it in everyday governance, and who practices it with success and why? As stated above there is currently a “third way.” How will this way be scapegoated in the future, and by whom, and for what reasons.

Reagan was reared with the myth of American exceptionalism. The stories of Horatio Alger and other heroic

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figures were prevalent in his day. With all the forces in America, and considering that anti-American books are now popular in France, will the myth of American exceptionalism and greatness become scapegoated for power? Research might find these attacks already at work with this county.

CONCLUSION

Ronald Reagan's rhetoric, his words, style, and dignity, have endured and created a rhetorical legacy to stand for decades. He was admired by people in both parties for his oratorical prowess. He has had an impact on President Clinton, and no doubt will on the next president. His style of exhortative rhetoric was well used by Clinton, and no doubt will furnish a model for future presidents.
REFERENCES


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VITA

Stephen Wayne Braden was born in a small farmhouse near Bruner, Missouri, on October 3, 1951. In 1969 he graduated from Sparta High School. For the next several years he had various vocations: carpenter, small business owner, and forest patrol with Missouri’s Department of Conservation.

In 1979 Stephen went to work for Kraft Foods in Springfield, Missouri. Due to the loss of part of his eyesight, Stephen began college in 1987 at age 35. He graduated in 1991 with a bachelor of arts degree in socio-political communication from Southwest Missouri State University, and 1993 received a master of arts degree in communication from that same school.

In 1993 he moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana and entered the doctoral program in the Department of Speech Communication at Louisiana State University.

In 1997 Stephen married Elaine Rogers of Marietta, Georgia, and soon afterward became a lecturer in the Department of Communication at Georgia State University. He became director of public speaking there in 1999 and remains in those positions at this time. He is also a certified court mediator.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Stephen Wayne Braden

Major Field: Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: The Rhetoric of the Benign Scapegoat: President Reagan and the Federal Government

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman
Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

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