

THOMAS F. EAGLETON: A STUDY
OF HIS 1972 POLITICAL
RHETORIC

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Election year 1972 undoubtedly qualifies as a unique chapter in the annals of American politics. Presidential visits to China and Russia, voting franchise for eighteen year olds, the attempted assassination of Governor George Wallace, rumors of an impending peace settlement to the war in Vietnam--all had their influence on the political climate surrounding the campaign. Yet, when its history is written, the political narrative of 1972 will be best remembered as the year of the Eagleton Affair. The conflict of party partisans, traditionally centering on the Republican versus the Democratic candidate, became diverted in the midst of a bipartisan drama unfolding across the nation's headlines.

In eighteen incredible days in July, the political fortunes of Senator Thomas Francis Eagleton had climaxed in the glory of the Democratic nomination to the second highest office in the land and rapidly waned to the agonizing frustration of a pressured withdrawal. As Senator Eagleton stood on the Miami Beach Convention Hall podium, it seemed almost ludicrous that he should hear his presidential running mate, Senator George McGovern, announce to the Convention:

I assume that everyone here is impressed with my control of this convention in that my choice for Vice President was challenged by only 39 other nominees. But I think we learned from watching the Republicans four years ago as they selected their vice-presidential nominee that it pays to take a little more time.¹

Almost immediately rumors of a "skeleton in the closet" past spread throughout Convention Hall and across the nation. As the rumors persisted, the McGovern staff was forced to concentrate their attention on the nature and implications of Eagleton's health instead of on campaign preparations. A reluctant Eagleton was finally prodded into the revelation of a medical history involving three instances of hospitalization for nervous exhaustion and electric-shock therapy for treatment of depressive melancholy. The announcement alarmed the nation and produced a political uproar over Eagleton's alleged health concealment and McGovern's inept preparations in the selection of a running-mate and irresolution toward a removal decision. On 31 July, in the Senate Caucus Room, Senator Eagleton was dropped from the Democratic ticket under mounting pressure of unfavorable press reviews and public opinion polls.

With Sargent Shriver as his new running mate, Senator McGovern began an unsuccessful attempt to spark life into his faltering campaign. When the final votes

¹"McGovern's First Crisis: The Eagleton Affair," Time, C (August 7, 1972), 12.

were tabulated, it became obvious that the Democratic Party had been humiliated by one of the worst presidential election defeats in United States history. Only the states of Massachusetts and the District of Columbia saved Senator McGovern from suffering the first electoral shutout in modern American politics.

Methodology of Study

Although many political observers doubt that vice-presidential candidates affect the outcome of presidential elections, it is felt that Senator Eagleton and the unfortunate circumstances surrounding his removal from the Democratic ticket were major factors contributing to the eventual result. In the midst of the national turmoil generated by the Eagleton Affair, it would appear that the capabilities, achievements, personal dynamism, and persuasive potential of Eagleton-the-Politician became momentarily closed to the eyes of the American public. While Senator McGovern did suffer a staggering defeat, support for both the national Democratic ticket and the Democratic Party as a whole was evidenced. This thesis will be primarily directed toward an investigation of the role Senator Eagleton played in gaining this voter support, and his effectiveness as a rhetorical speaker.

Study Rationale

It is believed a rhetorical study of Senator Eagleton can make a significant contribution to the Speech Communication field for two reasons: first, Eagleton is an important figure in national politics whose career can be considered meteoric in its brilliance. Graduating cum laude from both Amherst College and Harvard Law School, Eagleton was elected, in quadrennial ascension, the St. Louis County circuit attorney at age 27, Attorney General of Missouri at 31, Lieutenant Governor of the state at 35, and United States Senator at age 39. The Saturday Evening Post characterized him in a 1961 feature article as the "hurry-up man of Missouri politics . . . favored by many Democratic kingmakers for next state governor or US Senator."² Life magazine, in 1962, listed Eagleton as one of the nation's top 100 young leaders.³ Senator McGovern, during the joint announcement of Eagleton's removal from the Democratic ticket, praised him as "a talented, able United States Senator whose ability will make him a prominent figure in American politics for many, many years."⁴

²"People on the Way Up," Saturday Evening Post, CCXXXIV (October 21, 1961), 29.

³"A Red-Hot Hundred," Life, LIII (September 14, 1962), 4.

⁴"George McGovern Finally Finds a Veep," Time, C (August 14, 1972), 17.

Totally devoted to a life of politics, Eagleton is still considered to be growing in stature and importance. Rising from the relative obscurity of local state politics to the national fame of a candidate appears to have benefited rather than hindered his career. Commenting on the traumatic public disclosure of his health, Eagleton said, "I suspect I'll be a bit more famous now as a senator than before the Miami convention. . . . I can rationalize that the events of the summer were a mixed blessing from a personal political standpoint, despite the agony."⁵

Wide sympathetic support throughout the nation is evidenced by the more than 90,000 favorable and only 300 critical letters, postcards, and telegrams thus far received by his office.⁶ Prior to his nomination as a vice-presidential candidate, his office estimates Eagleton received an average of between 25-30 requests weekly for speaking engagements. After his nomination, and continuing through the present, requests for the Senator have risen to 80-100 per week.⁷ Whereas the earlier requests were confined mainly to Missouri, half of them now come from Missouri and half from other states.

⁵Kansas City Star, December 15, 1972, p. 6.

⁶Thomas F. Eagleton, interview on the Dick Cavett Show, December 15, 1972.

⁷Based on personal correspondence between Michael J. Kelley, Press Secretary to Senator Eagleton, and the writer.

Secondly, Eagleton has weathered the unique experience of being the only vice-presidential candidate ever forced off a national ticket due to an unfavorable medical history. Although Senator Albert Gallatin, nominated by the Democratic-Republican ticket in 1824, was forced off by Party Leader Martin Van Buren, and two other men have refused to run after being nominated,⁸ Eagleton's replacement because of a national uproar can be considered virtually unprecedented. Yet, amid the turmoil characterizing the 1972 election, Eagleton rode out the storm and emerged with a new, broad following. He exhibited both good humor and grace following his removal and continued to campaign locally and nationally both for the Democratic Party and for the man who had demanded his withdrawal. Eagleton, then, can be viewed as a unique persuader whose rhetoric and skill in speaking deserve special attention.

Study Design

Studies of political campaign speaking have long been of major interest to students of speech communication. The extensive and still growing list of theses and dissertations devoted to rhetorical analysis and criticism of political speakers attest to this historic concern. Despite this scholarly activity, little is known about the

⁸Senator Silas Wright in 1844 and former Illinois Governor, Frank Lowden, in 1924.

role of campaign communication in modern elections.⁹ The challenge to students of the discipline is further complicated by two problems characteristic of the field:

1. Disagreement over definition and dimensions of the term "rhetoric." Common parlance appears to treat the term as empty language, or language without honest intent used to deceive. As an example, John Scali, in presenting his credentials as the new United States Ambassador to the United Nations, said he aimed in his ambassadorship to achieve practical successes and to lessen "rhetoric and fiery speeches."¹⁰

The classical definition of Aristotle as the discovery of all the available means of persuasion in any given case contrasts sharply with contemporary media usage. Webster's New World Dictionary, College Edition, defines rhetoric as "the art or science of using words effectively in speaking or writing so as to influence or persuade." A more definitive definition is that offered by Brockriede. He conceives rhetoric broadly as "the study of how interpersonal relationships and attitudes are influenced within a situational context . . . in such diverse acts as a speaker addressing an audience face to face or through

⁹James H. McBath and Walter R. Fisher, "Persuasion in Presidential Campaign Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LV (February, 1969), 17.

¹⁰Kansas City Times, February 21, 1973, p. 2.

mass media, a group of people conferring or conversing, a writer creating a drama or a letter to an editor, or a government or some other institution projecting an image."¹¹

A variation of these definitions is best suited to the design of this study as it coincides closely to that espoused by Eagleton himself.¹² Rhetoric will be thought of as the faculty of discovering in a particular case what are the available means of persuasion and consciously applying these means in a situational context for purposes of modifying or changing the opinions or behavior of an audience.

2. A lack of standardized methodology and meaningful perspective from which to view campaign contests. McBath and Fisher observe, "No method presently exists by which campaign communication can be analyzed and evaluated to the mutual satisfaction of those who are party to the process and those who study it."¹³

The traditional approach to the study of campaign rhetoric has been to apply generally agreed upon standards of excellence to selected speeches of the candidate, much

¹¹Wayne F. Brockriede, "Dimensions of the Concept of Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LIV (February, 1968), 1.

¹²Thomas F. Eagleton, private interview held after speech at Kansas University, February 11, 1973.

¹³McBath and Fisher, p. 17.

as any rhetorical situation would be treated. Myopic concern with oratory, however, tends to ignore the other forms of communication which comprise a candidate's total campaign. Swanson, writing in the Quarterly Journal of Speech, notes the "New Politics" of the 1970's are grounded in scientific theory and research which determines the issues and images to be emphasized in the campaign and the media of communication to be used.¹⁴ Pre-occupation solely with speeches, then, appears to be an inappropriate response to modern election campaigns.

It is also to be noted that the techniques of criticism available to the prospective rhetorician are often inappropriate for the judgmental task. Simons has observed that "designed for microscopic analysis of particular speeches, the standard tools of rhetorical criticism are ill-suited for unravelling the complexity of discourse in social movements or for capturing its grand flow."¹⁵

The approach I have selected for this study is an adaptation of Swanson's recommendation for a "full-blown" view of rhetoric in a functional context.¹⁶ By analyzing

¹⁴David L. Swanson, "The New Politics Meets the Old Rhetoric: New Directions in Campaign Communication Research," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVIII (February, 1972), 32.

¹⁵Herbert W. Simons, "Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVI (February, 1970), 2.

¹⁶David L. Swanson, pp. 37-40.

persuasive messages in terms of the function they perform in the broader strategy of the campaign, it is believed the speeches can effectively be viewed as rhetorical acts functioning as one of the variables in the complex communicative process. The thesis will be directed toward answering the question: How influential was the rhetoric of Thomas Francis Eagleton in gaining support for the 1972 Democratic campaign?

Following the introductory and study design material presented in this chapter, pertinent material about the candidate himself with emphasis on the background experiences which contributed to his political growth is presented in Chapter II. Summarization of the Senator's previous election contests and various position statements serve as evolution for his later selection as a vice-presidential contender.

Chapter III presents a discussion of the campaign context. The rhetorical situation in terms of the temper of the country and the growing political fervor become the setting within which the candidate finds both political exigence and constraint. Macroscopic in perspective, the chapter views Eagleton's overall strategy in its relationship to the McGovern campaign and its appropriateness to the mood of the American electorate. The Eagleton Affair and its rhetorical impact is discussed as a situational modifying factor.

Within Chapter IV is found a microscopic analysis of the Senator's campaign speeches. The functions of particular tactics and messages are evaluated for their success and wisdom in terms of the results of numerous studies into the process of social influence. It is not the intent of this study to confine the analysis of Eagleton's speeches to only his eighteen days as a Vice-Presidential candidate. Selected specimens of oratory from before, during, and after his selection are considered in the analysis and adjudged in terms of their adaptation to the changing rhetorical situation. Rhetorical influence is discussed through an examination of the observable elements of persuasion.

The final chapter serves as a conclusion to the study of Eagleton's 1972 political rhetoric, makes observations on the rhetorical analysis process, and points to areas of future study.

Source Materials

Previous Studies

A review of recent theses, dissertation abstracts, and publications in the field has failed to disclose any works devoted to this contemporary politician. Related studies on campaign rhetoric which proved helpful to the design development of this thesis included two works by David L. Swanson, and a paper by James H. McBath and Walter

R. Fisher. Of those by Swanson, the first was a 1968 M.A. thesis at the University of Kansas, which presented "An Analysis of the Rhetorical Design of George C. Wallace's 1968 Presidential Campaign," and, second, a paper entitled, "The New Politics Meets the Old Rhetoric: New Directions in Campaign Communication Research," published in the Quarterly Journal of Speech. McBath and Fisher's paper also appeared in the Quarterly Journal of Speech and was entitled, "Persuasion in Presidential Campaign Communication."

Primary and Secondary Sources

The problems in gathering source materials for this study were many. Having no previous literary works available for background information on the Senator's career and having been politely denied a formal interview with Senator Eagleton, I faced the challenge of pulling together bits and pieces garnered mainly through diligent correspondence with the Senator's aides at offices in St. Louis and Washington. A short, informally arranged interview did take place with Senator Eagleton during a recent speech at Kansas University and proved to be most helpful in the development of the thesis. This, plus taped television broadcasts of the 1972 election, campaign speeches and national news interviews comprise my primary sources.

Secondary sources include two transcripts from his appearances on CBS telecasts of Face the Nation and a news Special Report, numerous press releases provided by the Senator's offices, congressional records, analyses and commentary in recent periodicals, and accounts of the election campaign in daily newspapers.

CHAPTER II

"TOM WHO?"

Thomas Eagleton, a 42-year-old freshman senator from the state of Missouri, was the product of a choice for the vice-presidency agreed upon after a half day's furious scrambling to meet the 4 P.M. certification deadline. Other party notables, such as Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, and Senator Edward Muskie of Maine, had either refused the nomination honor or had been rejected by the McGovern staff on the basis of incompatibility. From a list of 24 prospective candidates, McGovern's campaign manager, Gary Hart, and national political coordinator, Frank Mankiewicz, narrowed the field to seven and presented their recommendations to Senator McGovern.

Later, on the day of 13 July, Senator Eagleton said, "I've been told I'm on the final list of three."¹ Reacting with jubilant surprise to his selection shortly thereafter, Eagleton told reporters, "I'm flabbergasted. I know I'm 'Tom Who?.' I realize I'm not a household word. But when Muskie was picked in '68, he was 'Ed Who?' and

¹New York Times, July 13, 1972, p. 22. The other two candidates were Senator Abraham A. Ribicoff of Connecticut and Leonard Woodcock, President of the United Auto Workers.

when Agnew was picked, he was 'Spiro Who?' It's going to take a lot of work on my part."²

Although Eagleton was largely unknown outside of Missouri even among the convention delegates who nominated him for vice-president, colleagues and the press long ago recognized Eagleton as one of the brightest young stars of the Senate. This chapter will view Eagleton's political profile for an understanding of the man and the rationale surrounding his eventual selection as McGovern's running mate.

Evolution of the Candidate

The Early Years

Thomas F. Eagleton, born in St. Louis, Missouri, on September 4, 1929, was groomed for politics from an early age. His father, the late Mark D. Eagleton, was a successful lawyer and part-time politician who won election to the city school board and board of police commissioners. Frustrated in his own political efforts to run for mayor of St. Louis in 1953, the elder Eagleton invested his political ambitions in his son. Mark Eagleton worked carefully at acquainting his son with national and international affairs. Tom's indoctrination into politics came early and was intensive. His father, then a Republican,

²"Why Eagleton Was Picked," U.S. News & World Report, LXXIII (July 24, 1972), 25.

took Tom with him to the 1940 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, an experience that turned them both into Democrats. Just 10 at the time, Tom manifested an early maverick streak by differing with his father, a Missouri delegate who supported Wendell Willkie. Tom said he favored Thomas Dewey because "he had better buttons."³

Tom first made the front pages of St. Louis newspapers at age 16 when his father, then counsel for the Missouri Senate and a prosecutor in the trial of Senator Joseph Falzone, informed the press he was withdrawing from the case because his son had been threatened with kidnapping. Both Tom and his father were featured in a picture depicting this early traumatic event.

Later, his father took Tom, now 16 years old, with him to hear Winston Churchill's famous "Iron Curtain" speech at Fulton, Missouri, in 1946. Dr. Mark Eagleton, Jr., St. Louis radiologist and elder brother of Tom, recalled those years and remarked, "In our family, politics was a common, everyday affair. It was constantly drilled into us to be interested in current events."⁴ It was not long before Tom was hooked on politics. "I became fascinated. The way other kids wanted to be farmers or firemen or cowboys, I wanted to be a politician."⁵

³"Eagleton: McGovern's Man from Missouri," Time, C (July 24, 1972), 20.

⁴St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 14, 1972, p. 4A.

⁵Time, p. 20.

Commenting on the political education Tom received at home, William Kottmeyer, former St. Louis school superintendent and speech coach for Eagleton, noted, "Tom received what you might term a vocational education, in that he was educated for political office." Kottmeyer recalls that Tom's father used to bring him to school board meetings "to learn about conducting public business."⁶

While receiving a formal education, Tom Eagleton was never far from politics. His brother recalls that while at Country Day School, "Tom was always running some campaign." His high school yearbook contains the words, "Has taken up where Harry Truman left off."⁷ It was also during high school that his father hired Kottmeyer to tutor Tom in speech for a school-wide oratorical contest. Tom patterned his speech after a radio commentator's description of the funeral cortege of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. "Tom thought that was a touching speech, but lost to a boy who chose a livelier topic." He "came in second, and ever since he's insisted that he lost it because of the poor coaching."⁸ Until his abortive vice-presidential candidacy, it was the last contest Tom would lose in his political climb.

⁶St. Louis Post-Dispatch, p. 4A.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 6A.

After graduation from high school in 1946, Tom entered Amherst College for his bachelor's degree. He described himself then as "the Jim Farley of my class, the manager, the campus politician with a deep interest in the machinery."⁹ Every summer while in Amherst was taken up with study. "My Dad," Eagleton says, "thought it asinine for a mind to lie fallow for four months."¹⁰ Interrupting his college education to serve a year in the Navy where he entered and left an apprentice seaman, Tom returned to graduate cum laude from Amherst in 1950. Upon his return he said, "I knew that politics was for me. Somehow, somewhere I had to get into it and the law seemed the best avenue."¹¹

From Amherst it was a summer studying history at Oxford and then Harvard Law School where he again graduated cum laude. At Harvard he is noted for having read five newspapers a day and for taking a special interest in the campaign of Adlai E. Stevenson. Mrs. Eagleton, the former Barbara Smith whom he married in 1956, recalls from people who knew him during his college days that he "was thought of as an intellectual. He was known not only as a person who was fun, with a good personality, but as somebody who

⁹Ibid., p. 4A.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹"Questions and a Wrong Answer," Life, LXXIII (August 4, 1972), 31.

was especially bright. The first thing that appealed to me about him was his sense of humor."¹²

Eagleton also attended Northwestern for the sole purpose of studying speech. Asked during a recent interview about the influence of these speech courses on his political career, the Senator indicated they were helpful and influential. He said his father had always believed in speaking the English language as it was designed and impressed upon him that good speech and correct usage of words was in itself an attribute for which to strive.¹³

Returning to St. Louis in 1953, Tom joined the legal department of Anheuser-Busch as assistant general counsel and worked in his father's law firm. With the credentials of an eastern education and a mid-western upbringing, Tom Eagleton now began to consider running for public office.

Circuit Attorney: 1956-1960

At age 27 Eagleton made his first sally into politics. His brother, Mark Jr., recalls, "He walked into the house one day and just announced out of a clear, blue sky that he wanted to run for circuit attorney. Dad said, 'You're kidding. I don't think you have a chance.' Tom's

¹²"Mrs. Eagleton's Own Story," Ladies Home Journal, LXXXIX (October, 1972), 154.

¹³Thomas F. Eagleton, private interview held after speech at Kansas University, February 11, 1973.

response was, 'You gotta start somewhere.'"¹⁴ With enthusiastic family backing, Eagleton won the race and became the nation's youngest prosecuting attorney. Appearing as a contestant a few months later on the national television program, "What's My Line?," Eagleton's boyishness stumped the panel. One of his primary opponents in the race cited Tom's lack of courtroom experience and offered him the assistant attorney position if he would pull out. Eagleton refused and went on to win by a 3-to-1 margin.

Once elected, he promptly revived his maverick streak and shocked his elders with attacks on wire tapping. Demanding prison reform, Eagleton called the state penitentiaries "colleges of crime."¹⁵ He is credited with reducing a backlog of criminal cases and he espoused firm views about prison and parole reform. "We dealt with 2,000 felons a year there," he said in a 1968 interview. "Merely meting out 25-year and 50-year sentences wasn't going to accomplish a lot unless we set up dozens of penitentiaries in Missouri and other states."¹⁶ Eagleton also headed a drive for enforcement of the St. Louis merchants and manufacturers tax, and prosecuted a school board member for

¹⁴St. Louis Post-Dispatch, p. 4A.

¹⁵"People on the Way Up," Saturday Evening Post, CCXXXIV (October 21, 1961), 29.

¹⁶"Eagleton: Not Widely Known Outside Missouri," Congressional Quarterly, XXX (July 22, 1972), 1810.

personal gains at the school's expense.

Mrs. Eagleton recalls the Circuit Attorney's job was truly fascinating.

He was in charge of prosecuting all felony cases in St. Louis and, according to the press and the public, did a terrific job. He felt it was an opportunity to continue to grow and to face new challenges. But he was already looking ahead to broader opportunities in the profession he had now definitely chosen--politics and public service.¹⁷

Attorney General: 1960-1964

Successful in his first political efforts and now an experienced attorney, Eagleton began his move up the political ladder. After a hard-won primary battle against a veteran state Senator, Eagleton threw himself into the general election campaign. Although physically exhausted, he ran basically a one-man campaign with himself as manager, chauffeur, writer, and speechmaker. In addition to his own political campaigning, Eagleton still carried his Circuit Attorney responsibilities, and actively supported John Kennedy and the Democratic ticket throughout the state. Remembering those hectic times, his wife Barbara said, "When the November election was over, his fatigue was obvious and in this state he gradually edged into his first, now famous, depression."¹⁸ Treatment for his depression and melancholy at the Barnes Hospital in St. Louis

¹⁷Ladies Home Journal, p. 155.

¹⁸Ibid.

included electric shock treatment.

A practitioner of the new politics long before the game became popular nationally, Attorney General Eagleton played politics differently from the Old Guard. His stands on issues would frequently send shudders through old-time Jefferson City politicians. Although avoiding controversy was then a rule seldom broken among Missouri politicians, Tom Eagleton was never one to avoid an issue. Ignoring the "don't rock the boat and you'll last a long time" advice, Eagleton spoke out clearly on abolition of capital punishment, state's rights, strict enforcement of laws banning Sunday selling, legalized parimutuel betting on horseracing, strong support for civil rights measures and prohibition against wire-tapping. Consumer protection from fraudulent contractors and shoddy goods, recalls a St. Louis lawyer who worked with him then, was one of his prime interests.¹⁹ Working to update the state's criminal code, Eagleton finally established a division of consumer fraud. Declaring in his first opinion as Attorney General that a salary increase for legislators would not become effective for 90 days did not endear him to the Missouri legislature when he later sought approval of his budget request.

Eagleton's ruling against raises for Missouri's legislature, his fight for honest sales tax collections,

¹⁹New York Times, July 14, 1972, p. 10.

and action on substandard nursing homes and boarding houses did qualify him for Life magazine's "top 100 young leaders." Stressing their rigid criteria, Life characterized these leaders as men possessing tough, self-imposed standards of individual excellence, a zest for hard work, a dedication to something larger than private success, the courage to act against old problems, the boldness to try new ideas, and an undaunted hopefulness about men.²⁰ The description aptly fitted Tom Eagleton.

The speaking out also got Eagleton needed publicity--his face on television, his picture in the newspapers. According to a former associate, Eagleton "was an effective prosecutor but didn't like the job and always saw it merely as a stepping stone."²¹ He never had his heart in prosecution work and felt he had to keep moving up. The youngest Missouri Attorney General and the first Catholic to win state-wide office in this century carried the election by almost 284,000 votes. Reacting cautiously to talk of the governorship or a senate seat, Eagleton said, "Right now there's a belief in young men. But if there is a war or recession, the people may decide they want age, and a young man may not be able to get elected street cleaner."²²

²⁰"A Red-Hot Hundred," Life, LIII (September 14, 1962), 4.

²¹St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 13, 1972, p. 5.

²²Saturday Evening Post, p. 29.

The year 1964, however, found him aspiring to a higher office as predicted.

Commenting in 1968 on his experiences as Attorney General, he said,

In terms of the education of Tom Eagleton, serving as attorney general was the most broadening experience of my life. As attorney general, you are the lawyer for every department in the state, from the governor on down. To give a legal opinion, you have to have all the facts and know how the situation arose. I became very cautious about thinking that legislation will solve everything.²³

Lieutenant Governor: 1964-1968

Although Eagleton's rise in Missouri politics coincided with disintegration of the old-style St. Louis and Kansas City Democratic machines, which together had long controlled nominations to state offices according to an unofficial but time-honored line of succession, his advance was best promoted by an ability to stay clear of the intra-party feuding. A St. Louis lawyer and friend of Eagleton's recalled him as "the one politician I've known who hasn't made a political enemy."²⁴ Eagleton sometimes went to great lengths to avoid delicate situations. When Warren E. Hearnes, then secretary of state, challenged the party machine and won the Democratic gubernatorial primary over Lt. Governor Hilary Bush (supposedly next in line for the

²³Congressional Quarterly, p. 1810.

²⁴New York Times, July 14, 1972, p. 10.

governorship), Eagleton mysteriously disappeared on the weekend of the Democrats' traditional Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner. Eagleton was finally found at the St. Louis Cardinals' spring training camp in St. Petersburg, Florida. Eagleton explained simply, "I'm a baseball nut."²⁵

Once Hearnese won the nomination, Eagleton, unopposed in the primary, quickly joined the ticket as candidate for lieutenant governor, winning by 90,000 votes better than Hearnese's own margin. Though successful politically, victory had been achieved at the expense of his health; six weeks later he entered Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, for a second treatment of nervous exhaustion. A third hospital stay was required in 1966 and his staff thought it serious enough to publish a false report that he was at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore for treatment of a gastric disturbance.²⁶

Governor Hearnese used Eagleton more than any recent governor. Eagleton received assignments to direct investigations into the state penal system, penal reform and education, and the associated areas of crime and delinquency. He also supervised the state Department of Corrections and Department of Probation and Parole, was co-chairman of the Governor's Conference on Education in

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Life, August 4, 1972, p. 31.

addition to his constitutional duty of presiding over the state senate.

Having built a statewide reputation without making any significant enemies, Eagleton was in the ideal position to make his bid for a Missouri senate seat.

United States Senator: 1968

Eagleton, though now a popular politician and a strong vote getter, faced a tough battle in his challenge to the seat of incumbent Democrat Edward V. Long. Eagleton's Catholicism had long been considered a barrier to attainment of high office in Missouri, and his "young liberal" stance on issues placed him left of where most observers felt the state as a whole stood. His domestic platform was interpreted as being close to that proposed by the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy. After Ted Kennedy made a campaign film with him, Eagleton was tabbed the "Kennedyesque liberal" for the remainder of the election. While disdaining political labels, Eagleton acknowledged at that time, "I hold certain positions and I shall continue to hold them. I haven't devised any method to reshape my attitudes. We shall see what the political consequences are."²⁷ Calling for an end to the bombing in North Vietnam, he said, "The first matter of business

²⁷St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 14, 1972, p. 4A.

must be to seek a cease-fire."²⁸ His stand favoring enactment of federal gun control legislation and his dovish bombing position were not popular topics in hawkish Missouri.

Senator Long, meanwhile, stood on his middle-of-the-road record. His seat was considered vulnerable, however, because of disclosure of charges that he had accepted legal referral fees from a St. Louis attorney who helped defend Teamsters Union President James R. Hoffa. Long's consistent backing of President Johnson's legislative programs had also contributed to his decline in popularity. Senator Long, however, still had the support of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and the powerful AFL-CIO unions. Commenting on the potential opposition of the unions, Eagleton said at one point during the campaign: "I have known all along that the steamfitters and teamsters would raise a pile of money for the senator [Long]. . . . I do not believe that the hierarchy of the steamfitters and teamsters will be able to deliver the votes [for Long]."²⁹

Eagleton won his challenge in the August primary and unseated Long by winning 36 percent of the vote. Long received 32 percent and W. True Davis, a St. Joseph

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Congressional Quarterly, p. 1811.

businessman and former assistant secretary of the treasury, received the bulk of the remainder in the three-way primary.³⁰

Recognizing the narrowness of the primary vote, Eagleton modified his position for the general election and adopted a more traditional tone. "My position on the issues won't be changed," he said, "but the emphasis will be."³¹ Running against Representative Thomas B. Curtis, a widely known and normally strong Republican from the St. Louis area, Eagleton proved himself an adroit politician by again linking his campaign to that of Governor Hearnes, a conservative favored for re-election. Governor Hearnes and Eagleton were pictured side by side on the campaign literature of the state party.

Although Eagleton now had the support of most of the labor unions, he was acutely aware of the threat presidential candidate George C. Wallace was presenting to a labor sweep. Noting he had detected a trend for Wallace among industrial workers traditionally voting for liberal Democrats, Eagleton, after campaigning outside several manufacturing plants, said, "At one plant three out of 10 [workers] indicated Wallace support. Wallace buttons and Wallace signs, but nothing for Humphrey or

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ New York Times, September 9, 1968, p. 41.

McCarthy or anyone else."³² At the time, Eagleton was worried that Democrats who defect to Wallace might not return to the Democratic ticket in the senatorial race.

Eagleton, in carrying the election with 51.4 percent of the vote, seemed well on the way to achieving satisfaction of his political ambitions. Speaking just after his election, he said, "I want to be a great United States Senator. I'd like to be re-elected three terms, acquire some seniority and get some good committees and hear James Reston or David Brinkley say someday, 'He's a pretty good senator. He works hard at it.'"³³

Eagleton on the Issues

Since the early days of his entry into the Senate, Eagleton has been classified as a "comer" among the new young liberals in the Democratic Party. He has become known among his colleagues as an excellent debater with a nail-them-to-the-wall style. His public poise and capacity for hard work were two of the qualities admired by many senior Senators. In Washington he has followed the same outspoken pattern which was so successful during his rapid rise in politics. He moved with unusual speed for a freshman senator on a wide range of issues. Here, then, is the Eagleton position from the standpoint of the major issues

³²Ibid.

³³New York Times, July 14, 1972, p. 10.

addressed during his Senate years.

Vietnam

Almost immediately upon his entrance into Congress, Eagleton joined a growing group of Senate opponents to United States involvement in Vietnam, and rapidly became a strong supporter of all resolutions aimed at cutting off war funds. During his first year in office, he spoke four times on the Senate floor against the war. The war, he said, "defies military solution and cries out for a political and diplomatic resolution."³⁴ Early in 1971 Eagleton foresaw the North Vietnamese build-up and forthcoming attack on South Vietnam a year later. Predicting the President would be forced to retaliate by bombing or slowing down troop withdrawal, he said in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, "I believe the United States could avoid this dilemma by announcing a fixed withdrawal date now, and tailoring our policies accordingly."³⁵ Addressing the Senate on April 19 of this year, he said, "We must leave Vietnam to the Vietnamese. Our Vietnam policy should be one of disengagement. Our only goal should be the release of our prisoners of war. And we can only pursue this policy at the conference table, . . . our bombs cannot strengthen the South Vietnamese

³⁴St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 14, 1972, p. 4A.

³⁵Congressional Quarterly, p. 1812.

army, . . . they can only increase dependence on our air support and further Americanize the war."³⁶

Responding to an interview question concerning his opinion on the bombing of North Vietnam, Eagleton further explained,

I think any escalatory act is not conducive to a negotiated settlement, and certainly the bombing--the intense, terribly intense bombing of the north and the bombardment from the ships off the coast-line I view as impediments to³⁷ a negotiated settlement and not as inducements.

War Powers and Defense

It has become easier in this country to go to war than to make peace. We must begin today to restore balance between the executive and legislative branches so that decisions of such consequences as those involving war and peace do not depend upon the wisdom of one man. Deliberation and collective judgment have been pre-empted in favor of efficiency. Congress not only has the authority, it has the obligation to act to protect its role in our system.³⁸

This excerpt from a Senate speech on March 29, 1972, was presented as justification for Eagleton's cosponsorship of the War Powers Act, a bill designed to limit the power of the President to engage the country in hostilities without congressional approval. "I had considerable input into that proposition," Eagleton commented, "I think it's a very meaningful piece of legislation with future

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Washington Post, July 14, 1972, p. A13.

³⁸ Congressional Quarterly, p. 1812.

significance for the country."³⁹

Eagleton, on numerous occasions, led the fight to trim the defense budget. He commented during an interview that he came of age as a Senator on August 8, 1969, when he debated for four hours with Senator John Stennis and several others over funds for a new Army tank.⁴⁰ Eagleton proposed an amendment deleting funds for this tank, and although his fight failed to get support for the amendment, it did force the Army to conduct a new feasibility study. His efforts also won him wide respect and the nickname of "Tank."

He has been a vigorous opponent of the antiballistic missile system and has urged a cutback in the nation's standing army for economy purposes. Both issues undoubtedly attracted him to Senator McGovern. Still a supporter of the draft, however, Eagleton remarked in a Senate speech, "An all-volunteer army will be a poor boy's army. I believe that America is not only the land of opportunity but also the land of obligation. One of these obligations is to bear arms in time of war--even a foolish one."⁴¹ Replying to an antiwar activist's question "Would you have served in Vietnam?," Eagleton replied on 11 February 1973,

³⁹Washington Post, p. A13.

⁴⁰St. Louis Post-Dispatch, p. 4A.

⁴¹New York Times, p. 10.

"Yes, ma'm--not happily."⁴²

Busing

Senator Eagleton is something less than an enthusiastic supporter of busing to end school segregation. He has voted in favor of House-Senate compromise anti-busing amendments to the higher education aid bill but has also voted against an amendment that would have barred federal courts from ordering busing on the basis of race, color, religion, or national origin.⁴³ Explaining his position during an interview with the Washington Post, Eagleton said,

One, it's improper to bus solely for the purpose of racial balance. Two, it is improper to bus where the quality of the education at the receiving school district would be inferior to that which the student would receive in his neighborhood school. And three, it's improper to bus where, for reasons of time or distance you would affect the health of the student being bused. I think those are three pretty good guidelines that should not be violated in busing.⁴⁴

Law Enforcement

Recalling that his stand on unregistered handguns had proven detrimental during his Senate campaign, a reporter once asked Eagleton, "Now that you're here in the

⁴²Opinion expressed by Thomas F. Eagleton following an address at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973.

⁴³Congressional Quarterly, p. 1811.

⁴⁴Washington Post, p. A13.

Senate, what do you plan to do when gun-control legislation comes up for debate?" Eagleton replied: "Cringe."⁴⁵ Somewhat more vocal in his reply to an interview question on the subject, he replied: "Well, I am not in favor of further gun control legislation. The simple reason is that I don't think it will be effective. I think the ones we've put on the books haven't worked, and I would not favor further meaningless forays into the gun control field."⁴⁶

While criticizing the administration's law enforcement record, Eagleton, along with three other former attorney generals, attempted a comprehensive criminal justice reform bill in 1971. The plan was to end the "piece-meal" previous approach to crime fighting but received no legislative action. Commenting on crime control, Eagleton said,

Crime is going to be controlled only when two things occur. One, when you get to some of the root causes of crime, which goes into the whole question of poverty, education, lack of job opportunity and the like. And secondly, when the system of criminal justice, as a system, can function quickly, efficiently, and effectively.⁴⁷

⁴⁵"Tom Who? The Man Named Eagleton," Newsweek, LXXX (July 24, 1972), 29.

⁴⁶Washington Post, p. A13.

⁴⁷Ibid.

Domestic Programs

In a speech at the University of Texas, February 10, 1972, Eagleton, speaking on the national economy, said, "Credibility in government's economic management capacity will be further eroded as the present exercise in wage-price controls continues. Before we take on any more responsibilities we had better rationalize what we are already doing."⁴⁸ Speaking in Cameron, Missouri, two days later, he said, "I think the present wage and price controls are necessary, and I only wish the President had acted much earlier so the medicine could have been less severe." Addressing the availability of money for major domestic programs, he said, "Any so-called peace dividend is a figment of imagination." Money will come from "cuts in other parts of the federal budget, and an increase in federal income taxes . . . I mean defense cuts of a substantial nature."⁴⁹ Although calling for a reordering of spending priorities in the Federal Government, Eagleton was cautious on revenue sharing programs. "I don't reject the concept of revenue sharing, but I want to be certain, to my complete satisfaction, that the moneys will go to the areas of greatest need. By that, I mean the cities."⁵⁰

⁴⁸Congressional Quarterly, p. 1813.

⁴⁹Washington Post, p. A13.

⁵⁰Ibid.

Rationale for Selection

Senator George McGovern had long insisted that if he were the presidential nominee he would choose a running mate cast in the same political liberal mold from which he himself had emerged. Although under considerable pressure to find a compromise candidate to balance the ticket, McGovern was insistent that his choice for vice-president reflect a desire to continue his "new politics." Conscious of the assertion by party analysts that many minority elements were slipping from the Democratic fold, McGovern sought an experienced politician, either Catholic or Jewish.

Sharing a common political philosophy with Senator McGovern, Eagleton appeared to meet all the qualifications. The voting records of Eagleton and McGovern indicate they are very similar on national issues. Subtle differences appear over gun control, busing, and a volunteer army which Eagleton opposes and McGovern favors. Comparing the ratings in Congressional Quarterly Vote Studies, over a three-year period the similarities become more striking:

	1971		1970		1969	
	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>
Presidential support	13	41	43	43	40	47
opposition	41	49	44	45	53	38
Voting Participation	52	83	84	83	89	89
Party unity	48	78	80	76	88	82
opposition	2	6	5	5	44	10

	1971		1970		1969	
	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>
Conservative Coalition support	1	18	4	6	1	17
opposition	49	63	84	77	94	72 ⁵¹

Note: Voting participation: percentage of roll calls on which candidates voted "yea" or "nay."

Party Unity: percentage of roll calls on which candidates voted with a majority of his party.

Party opposition: percentage of roll calls on which candidates voted in disagreement with a majority of party.

Conservative coalition support: percentage of roll calls on which candidates voted with position of conservative coalition (a majority of voting northern Democrats and a majority of voting southern Democrats take opposite positions, and the southern bloc sides with the Republicans).

Presidential support: percentage of roll calls candidates voted in agreement with President's position.

Presidential opposition: percentage of roll calls candidates voted in disagreement with President's position.

Eagleton had marked up a strong prolabor voting record and held claim to close ties with organized working people. Although his labor rating slipped somewhat in 1971, a comparison of Special Interest Group Ratings indicated he again complemented McGovern and added support where McGovern rated low.

⁵¹Comparison data compiled from Congressional Quarterly, pp. 1795 and 1812.

	1971		1970		1969	
	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>E.</u>
ADA	96	89	84	91	94	94
ACA	9	24	5	4	6	0
COPE	75	67	100	100	100	100
NFU	100	100	100	100	86	88 ⁵²

Note: ADA: Americans for Democratic Action
 NFU: National Farmers Union
 COPE: AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education
 ACA: Americans for Constitutional Action

In announcing Eagleton as McGovern's choice for vice-president, Frank Mankiewicz, McGovern's political coordinator, former newspaper columnist and press secretary to Robert F. Kennedy, said, "Eagleton brings a good deal to the ticket. He's a young, vigorous campaigner."⁵³ He was a Roman Catholic running with a prairie state Methodist, a crime fighter and reformer, a product of big city politics with strong ties to the regular Democratic organization. He brought to the ticket an understanding of big-city problems which McGovern lacked. In a sense, he became a bridge between the old and new politics, and, hopefully, a conciliator to help repair the party splintering caused by McGovern's rebuff of the Democratic "Old Guard." "The important thing," noted one McGovern adviser, "is that Eagleton has ties to the people we McGovern people don't

⁵² Comparison data compiled from Congressional Quarterly, pp. 1809 and 1811.

⁵³ St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 14, 1972, p. 1.

have close ties with--the more conservative types, particularly. It's not that Eagleton is a conservative. He's not. But he has a tone that commends himself to them and to moderates."⁵⁴

In an effort to help guide the selection of a vice-presidential running mate, Pat Caddell, one of McGovern's talented pollsters, made an in-depth opinion study in which he surveyed public attitudes on running mate choices. His survey indicated people wanted bright, new faces instead of old established politicians.⁵⁵ Tom Who? became this new fresh face. Eagleton himself noted this trend and, commenting on what he thought influenced Congress, said, "I guess the attention span of senators and House members--and more importantly, the public--is such that you can play any one record only so often. The fact is, in the minds of some, we have become boringly repetitious."⁵⁶ McGovern's longstanding opposition to the Vietnam war had caused many political analysts to look on him as a one-issue candidate. Eagleton produced a highly informed and vocal medium by which other topics and issues considered important could be made public.

⁵⁴U.S. News & World Report, p. 25.

⁵⁵St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 14, 1972, p. 5A.

⁵⁶"Democratic Ticket: Two Liberal Midwestern Senators," Congressional Quarterly, XXX (July 15, 1972), 1716.

CHAPTER III

THE RHETORICAL CONTEXT

As the nation embarked on the year 1972, it did so filled with both hope for answers to the complex domestic and foreign issues needing resolution and uncertainty over the direction in which the nation itself was heading. The one element of certainty was the forthcoming national election with its assurance of increasingly verbose discourse directed toward the American electorate. Political speeches by candidates at the local and national level were both predictable and, in a sense, expected by the public as appropriate responses to the growing political climate. The events of the time, certainly of historic significance as milestones in the national identity of our country, demanded their due recognition. This chapter takes the position that the presence of this climate of politics and events created a rhetorical situation, a situational context of persons, events, relationships, and demands which strongly invited public address.

Since it is felt that the rhetoric of Thomas Eagleton cannot be effectively evaluated apart from the rhetorical setting in which it occurred, this writer deems it necessary to discuss the situational variables adjudged most operative within this context.

The Campaign as a Rhetorical Situation

In discussing the rhetorical situation, Lloyd Bitzer notes there are three constituents to be considered prior to the development and presentation of rhetorical discourse. The first is the exigence, which he defines as an imperfection marked by urgency. In order for an exigence to be rhetorical, it must be capable of positive modification or assistance through discourse. The second element is the audience. Bitzer stresses that, as with exigences, not all audiences are rhetorical. Only those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse or being mediators of change constitute this rhetorical element. The third constituent is the constraints of the situation which restrict decision and action needed to modify the exigence. Sources of constraint which Bitzer includes are beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images, interests, and motives.¹

The speeches of a political candidate become rhetorical when they are adjudged to be fitting responses to the rhetorical situation which called them into being. Since we will be studying Senator Eagleton's speeches in the next chapter in terms of his response to the situation, it becomes necessary now to view the situational components

¹Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," Philosophy and Rhetoric, I (January, 1968), 8.

as they existed in the country at the time of his rhetorical discourse.

Exigence

In the viewing of any context, it becomes apparent that numerous exigencies exist. While not all of these exigencies are rhetorical within themselves, they can be used as factual or circumstantial justification in the address of an exigence modifiable by rhetoric. For example, the fact that we have sent men to the moon, while not alterable, may be cited as evidence of "wasteful spending" when the rhetor is addressing the lack of monies for rehabilitation of the nation's slums. There will be at least one controlling exigence in a situation, and that exigence may or may not be perceived clearly by the rhetor or the audience. Its strength will depend on the clarity of the audience's perception and the level of their interest.² The political candidate searches for this exigence as the plank upon which to base his campaign.

On the domestic scene, political fuel for rhetorical discourse existed in many areas. The national economy, while recovering from a long recession, was plunging headlong into a growing inflation. Full, noninflationary prosperity remained remote as living costs and consumer food prices soared. Wage and price controls enacted by

²Ibid., p. 7.

the government failed to halt the price climb or stimulate consumer spending and, instead, led to public discouragement and new outcries for more drastic action. Trust and confidence in the administration was shaken first by headlines accusing International Telephone and Telegraph of agreeing to help finance the Republican National Convention in return for a favorable settlement of a controversial antitrust case, and later, by charges of political spying linked to the Committee for the Re-Election of the President in connection with an arrest of five men at the Democratic National Committee headquarters in Washington's Watergate complex.

It was a time of increased vocalization both for the nation's silent majority who felt their political system was being challenged by those who were under represented, and the minority groups who were demanding an increased role in the national decision-making process and felt present efforts on their behalf were inadequate. Busing became the prime focal point for both of these groups and eventually came to symbolize a continuing bitter struggle over integration.

Internationally, it was a period of triumph and frustration. The Apollo Program continued to devour vast sums of money in its survey of the moon's surface and was still very much in the world news. Enacting a new policy of dialogue between China and the United States, the

President, after three years of secret diplomacy, made an official visit to a country that had refused our overtures for 25 years. A later visit to Russia stimulated the removal of international barriers of distrust with this country. The nation became caught up in the difficulty of trying to shift national gears suddenly from confrontation to conciliation.

The war in Vietnam continued to elude the peace efforts of both the President and international mediators. Responding to a new Communist thrust into South Vietnam, the President renewed the air war over the North and seeded the harbors of North Vietnam with mines. The shattering North Vietnamese attack temporarily halted the United States' unilateral troop withdrawal and placed the Administration in the dilemma of not daring to intensify the ground war yet not daring to wholly retreat and vacate its previous pledges.

The American dollar was in trouble abroad. Having been devalued in December of 1971 by international agreement, the dollar fell victim to an explosion of currency speculation. The nation's huge balance of payment deficit further weakened the dollar's value both at home and in Europe. The dollar was rapidly losing its pre-eminence as the currency for international trade.

Audience

The audience sought by the political candidate must, ideally, be a group of people capable of enacting the discourse functions of the rhetor. Swanson found, for purposes of the political persuader, that audiences relevant to the outcome of a campaign fall into three general categories: the moderately and strongly committed partisans, the independents and the weakly committed partisans, and the voters experiencing considerable cross-pressure.³ The first group, moderately and strongly committed partisans, identify strongly with a political party or candidate. These are the voters most likely to vote. They tend to reach voting decisions early in the campaign and, because of the intensity of their commitment, make rhetorical attempts at political conversion difficult.

The second group, weak partisans and independents, display only minimal loyalty toward a party, or are nearly apathetic over election outcomes. This group will likely enter the campaign period uncommitted and reach a late decision or no decision at all. Swanson found this group susceptible to persuasive efforts within the limitations of their lack of interest. McBath and Fisher identify this middle group of voters as the prime target of campaigners.

³David L. Swanson, "The New Politics Meets the Old Rhetoric: New Directions in Campaign Communication Research," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVIII (February, 1972), 80-81.

This group, they feel, is the most critical audience of the populace in that they will actually decide the election. The principal task of the politician is to attract this audience while not alienating those already predisposed toward him.⁴

Lastly are the voters under cross-pressures, voters who have psychological inconsistency introduced through information contradictory to their beliefs. As their inconsistency increases, they are likely to exhibit less and less political enthusiasm and their chances of voting at all decreases accordingly. They tend to delay their voting decision and, while uncommitted, become susceptible to political persuasion from both parties. Assuming the candidate can identify and conveniently classify the voting public in this manner, he then faces a different rhetorical task with each group. He must reinforce the strongly committed, convert the non-partisans, activate the politically apathetic, and either change or remove the inconsistencies in the pressured voter.

The political communicator, in his attempts to generate a suitable audience, faces the problem of selective exposure. His campaign could lose important persuasive impact because he has mainly activated and reinforced

⁴James H. McBath and Walter R. Fisher, "Persuasion in Presidential Campaign Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LV (February, 1969), 18.

pre-existing preferences or predisposition, and not produced new converts to his cause. Selective exposure refers to any bias whatever in the composition of a communication audience. The speaker finds audience bias in the direction of agreeing to an unusual extent with his stand on relevant issues. A Democratic candidate directing a speech to a mass audience, for example, will find the audience composed primarily of people predisposed to a Democratic point of view. Although not proven conclusively, evidence is sufficient to indicate the existence of this phenomenon.⁵ People, in general, expose themselves to information with which they already agree and under some circumstances prefer to avoid nonsupportive or dissonance producing information. A political rally, then, would appear to be composed primarily of partisan followers already politically activated to the speaker's cause. In terms of Swanson's categories, the audience reached will be sympathetic "moderately and strongly committed partisans." Under these circumstances, the need exists for total media exposure of the candidate's message to reach the uncommitted and unsympathetic audience elements.

A more full-blown view of the audiences which attend to presidential candidates is that of Theodore

⁵David O. Sears and Jonathan L. Freedman, "Selective Exposure to Information: A Critical Review," in The Process of Social Influence, ed. by Thomas D. Beisecker and Donn W. Parson (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 161-179.

White in his The Making of the President 1960. Stressing that the heart of effective public address is the speaker-audience relationship, White finds the candidate plying his message first to the national audience through newspaper copy and television film clips. The remoteness of this audience makes it difficult to assess message effects. A second audience is the strategically calculated audience which comprises the states and their electoral votes. Each state must be handled differently, and the impact of the personal visits is used to kindle support in other states. Thirdly, and most importantly, is the personal audience comprised of ". . . the men in work shirts and sport shirts, the women in house dresses with babies in arms. . . . These are the people who gather at whistle stops, at airports, at crossroads, in numbers so tiny that there is no point in expending the effort of formal speech writing or policy making to capture their attention."⁶

This is the audience from which the candidate can judge warmth or indifference to his message.

While categories of voters are helpful in identifying rhetorical audiences, a breakdown more pertinent to the conduct of the current campaign is that offered by Louis Harris, American pollster. Writing for the Los

⁶Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960, Mentor Books (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1967), pp. 290-291.

Angeles Times in 1968, Harris saw political divisions emerging in terms of three vital issues: America's role in the world, equal rights for minority groups, and youth protest. In response to these issues, he saw a change coalition consisting of Negroes, Spanish-speaking and Jewish people, the young, the affluent and the educated. In the nochange coalition Harris placed deep South whites, low-income whites in Northern industrial centers, conservative suburbanites and older people. Either of these groups, Harris felt, could become a decisive factor in future elections.⁷

Constraint

When an orator enters a rhetorical appeal, his discourse is constrained both by the situational or contextual factors which are operating as modifiers and those constraints which he himself brings to focus by way of his assumptions and style. Aristotle identified the first class of constraints as "inartistic proofs" in that they were not subject to modification by the rhetor and the second as "artistic proofs" or constraints which were manageable by the rhetor and his method of persuasion. Although these constraints are interrelated, it is possible to separate them for rhetorical analysis.

⁷Cited in McBath and Fisher, p. 19.

The most dictating constraint of a situation appears to be its demand for a fitting response. For it to have rhetorical significance and effect, it must address the relevant features of the event or exigence which invited its existence. In a political campaign, there is an appropriate time for developing or generating an issue and a time for response. The propitious moment for rhetorical address decays as rapidly as the exigency of the situation. The theme, purpose, content, and often the style of the response are constrained considerably by a strong situation or critical event which demands address. Situational constraints, while limiting the range of discussable topics have the advantage of providing direction for the rhetor. Compelling constraints have historical significance and are real rather than contrived. The constraints are located in the world of reality and are as observable to the public as to the speaker. When highly structured, they provide a convenient base about which a response can be structured. Bitzer notes that constraints may be limited in number and force and can be even incompatible; as such they weaken the structure of the situation and the response.

The personal techniques of a candidate and his special use of vocabulary, grammar and style are formulated as he responds to similar type situations over the years. As such, his persuasive methods themselves tend

to function as a constraint upon his exercise of new rhetorical techniques. The standard source of constraint upon a speaker are the beliefs, values and assumptions he holds about the psychology of his audience. The audience, notes McBath and Fisher, "is assumed weak in its political knowledge but strong in its feelings about what is good or bad, right or wrong, in the society. The process of persuasion is, therefore, more a matter of communicating values than logical information."⁸ While one does find facts and arguments in political communication, validity, relevance or soundness are not necessarily expected. The language available to the candidate does not in itself become a constraint; only his usage limits its impact.

The American electorate imposes its own constraints on the campaign communication of a candidate. No longer a beguiled public, unable to distinguish between reality and sham, the electorate of the 1970's appears to have broad awareness of marketing techniques, advertising, and public relations gimmicks used by the candidate's campaign organization. This writer believes the electorate is becoming increasingly sensitive to the candidate who avoids discourse on pertinent topics, deliberately misquotes and engages in unfair personal attacks, or emphasizes the irresistibility of the media for proselyting. It is from the

⁸McBath and Fisher, p. 18.

rhetorical decisions made by the candidate that the electorate estimates the candidate's total capacity to see the voters as they see themselves--an informed, discerning audience capable of rational political judgment. The candidate is not asked to prove his qualifications for office but only to show that he possesses a value orientation which is consubstantial with the public he hopes to represent.

The Political Context

Characteristic of national elections, the quadrennial race for the nation's electoral vote began in numerous primary battles as both parties set their sights on the forthcoming national convention. While the re-running of the incumbent President was a foregone conclusion, the Democratic Party vacillated in uncertainty over their choice. Maine's Ed Muskie, viewed by many political observers as a certain first-ballot winner at the July convention, rapidly lost both his "trust Muskie" image and support in one state after another. Hubert Humphrey, the Minnesota Pollyanna of relentless drive and energy, could not translate affection and warmth into votes. Henry Jackson of Washington continued to suffer from a massive problem of nonrecognition, while John Lindsay, Mayor of New York, failed to define a constituency. George Wallace ran a strong anti-establishment campaign and until an

assassination attempt during the Maryland primary, continued to receive protest vote strength from the public his "little-man" rhetoric addressed. As convention time approached, however, it became clear that the man who was influencing the direction of the Democratic Party was George McGovern.

The Populist Movement

Were a label to be fixed to the Democratic candidates for president in the year 1972, the consensus of opinion would most certainly center on the term "populist." As the race progressed, it became fashionable to evoke the populist image and boast of populist credentials. Wallace played up his "poor boy" image across the South; Humphrey pointed to his populist record over the years; Lindsay attempted to project himself as an "urban populist"; Muskie sought to capitalize on the romance of the populist image after the Florida primary. Although he shunned the label, George McGovern parlayed the rising fever of New Populism into the Democratic nomination.

Populism today has become both a catch-phrase and a symbol of social unrest. Covering disparate policies and passions, it describes the classic struggle of the "haves" against the "have-nots," or the "have-not-enoughs."

At the heart of the movement is the man in the middle. He is squeezed by a system he wants to respect but feels he has no control over. He is the pursuer of the American dream, but stalled in mid-passage. . . . He is self-reliant and reasonably

industrious, he holds a steady if not too exciting job, owns and takes pride in a modest home, likes sports, wants his kids to go to college. Yet he can never quite make ends meet, especially in the last few years of runaway inflation.⁹

The populist movement had its origins in the agrarian populism of the late 19th century when poor farmers, both black and white, in the South and Midwest pitted themselves against the industrial strength of the Northeast. They formed their own third party and a formidable power base. Many of their programs were adopted and written into law. While today's populism is no longer rural based, it still contains the call for economic reform and social reaction to perceived oppressive conditions. It seeks the closing of tax loopholes, public ownership of big business, and redistribution of power to the people.

In 1968 the populist was identified by President Nixon as the Middle American, the Silent Majority who yearns for stability in times of unrest and upheaval. Robert Kennedy, a strong antiwar spokesman of the time, drew wide support in a campaign centered on an advocacy for social change. Eugene McCarthy's campaign that year provided a rallying point for many frustrated Americans. His contribution to the social movement has been to justify the historical foundations of its existence and its

⁹"The New Populism: Radicalizing the Middle," Time, XCIX (April 17, 1972), 27.

inevitability as a political force. "His true believers were 'new politicians,' perhaps the significant political force of the future."¹⁰ Although neither Kennedy nor McCarthy was successful in uniting the "change coalition," both had struck a responsive note in the American electorate.

In its confusion of ideologies, populism in 1972 appeals both to the political left and the right; it is seen as a means of providing "a common denominator for those who feel ignored and bypassed, and voice their imperative demand for new solutions, bolder ideas--and bolder men."¹¹ The Democratic Party of 1972 came out of its transition period and attempted to accommodate these forces of social change. Its champion became a liberal Senator from South Dakota who attempted to forge a coalition of followers from both the Kennedy and the McCarthy camps, and capture the voice of the Silent Majority.

The McGovern Primary Campaign

As the first candidate to declare for the nomination, McGovern began an 18-month preconvention campaign by concentrating on those populous states sending the most delegates to the convention. Strategically planning his entrance into the states holding presidential primaries,

¹⁰Time, p. 28.

¹¹McBath and Fisher, p. 20.

McGovern rapidly developed an efficient, well-organized grass-roots campaign organization which included thousands of volunteers. Mostly students, these volunteers began an unprecedented effort to contact either by telephone or in person every registered Democratic voter. In the primaries he struck hard on the pocketbook issues of taxes and inflation as he attempted to capitalize on the national impatience with more traditional candidates and the deep undercurrent of economic dismay.

The clues to this political strategy came to McGovern in the form of polling information provided by the Cambridge Survey Research Inc., a young group of psychologists from Harvard University. Their voter interviewing in October of 1971 strongly suggested McGovern attempt to change his one-issue stance of vocal and long-standing opposition to the Vietnam war, and address voter discontent over the economy. The pollsters further suggested that "the electorate preferred straight talk to rhetoric this year and was fed up with slick media campaigns."¹² Indeed his primary campaigns emphasized the direct personal appeal of the candidate in face-to-face contacts. "The day of the media candidate is over," claimed one of his press releases. "People have stopped watching television commercials and started listening to

¹²"Advice from Harvard," Time, XCIX (May 1, 1972), 19.

details."¹³ Later on in the campaign, when it became apparent that he was not closing rapidly enough on President Nixon, McGovern cut back his personal appearances and finally resorted to a three element media effort composed of half-hour programs during which he spoke on Vietnam, the economy and morality in government; five-minute advertisements of question and answer sessions; and 30-second spots aimed at the administration record on inflation, crime, and campaign financing.¹⁴

McGovern now brought his strength to the July Democratic Convention. Fresh from his sixth straight primary victory, his youthful organization had shut down the party machines and astonished the party regulars with its liberal reform rules. Party veterans and major office holders were shoved out of their delegate seats and replaced with the young, women, blacks, and other minority groups. A new group of the alienated arose. Observed one pollster from California, "McGovern has got a great issue with alienation, but I wonder if he knows the cause. The people who are alienated are the ones who don't want pot, who don't want abortion, who don't want to pay one more

¹³"Success at Last for George," Time, XCIX (April 17, 1972), 17.

¹⁴"Presidential Election: Brink of Republican Sweep," Congressional Quarterly, XLV (November 4, 1972), 2885.

cent in taxes."¹⁵ However, while popular with the youth, to many other voters McGovern presented an image of inconsistency with his vacillating stands on legalization of marijuana, abortion, and an ill-defined economic position. Although he demonstrated his strength in beating back a California electoral vote challenge mounted by Humphrey and the party regulars, and secured a first ballot victory, McGovern found himself fighting to live up to the high doctrinaire expectations of his young followers while actively seeking a re-marriage with the party regulars. His selection of Thomas Eagleton was the first step in this direction.

An apt summary of the political climate for the forthcoming election race was that given by Fred Dutton, one of McGovern's top theorists: "The contest is between two candidates representing the classic WASP culture, competing in an atmosphere of volatility, unpredictability and alienation. It will be one of the most exciting roller-coaster rides ever."¹⁶ The statement was true but only for the Democratic Party.

¹⁵"The Battle for the Democratic Party," Time, C (July 17, 1972), 13.

¹⁶"St. George Prepares to Face the Dragon," Time, C (July 24, 1972), 17.

Campaign Strategies

As he set out on the campaign trail, McGovern philosophized the purpose of his candidacy by saying:

I believe the people of this country are tired of the old rhetoric, the unmet promise, the image makers and the practitioners of the expedient. The people are not centrist or liberal or conservative.¹⁷ Rather, they seek a way out of the wilderness.

He obviously sought to portray himself as the man with the solution, the leader who could unite the Democratic family, the spokesman for the mood of the nation.

McGovern's overall strategy for assembling enough vote blocs was to hold onto the traditional Democratic constituency of blue-collar workers, blacks, Spanish-Americans, and other minority groups, push heavily for a majority of the newly franchised youth, and add a substantial amount of votes from women and the well-educated, affluent suburbanites. In order to accomplish this, the strategy called for a concentration of organizational resources. No region of the country would be automatically written off as a potential loss. Each state was to be analyzed independently in terms of its changing political mood; when the mood appeared to be favorable, the organization would move in and attempt to win a majority of its electoral vote. The starting point was to be the states that Humphrey won or narrowly lost in 1968. Thereafter,

¹⁷Time, April 17, 1972, p. 19.

they would aim at "second- and third-level states" where it was felt Nixon was vulnerable and the Republican victories of 1968 could be reversed.¹⁸ Crucial to this strategy was the continued support of labor and the influential party bosses.

The basic strategy was to be implemented through several thrusts. First, a concentrated effort among previous Wallace voters was envisioned as beneficial. "All of our analyses show that for a lot of Wallace voters, McGovern was their second choice. Given enough time, McGovern would begin to erode Wallace's populist support. The Senator goes a giant step forward in answering the concerns that Wallace has raised."¹⁹

Second, an early beginning, before the traditional Labor Day starting date, where McGovern would stress public exposure in a low-key August campaign designed to meet voters informally instead of in big rallies.

Third, part of the strategy was to portray Nixon as the champion of bigness and the most prominent representative of a system the voters wanted to change. While the Administration was depicted as deceptive and secretive, McGovern would provide contrast as a man of honesty and total candor.

¹⁸Time, July 24, 1972, p. 10.

¹⁹Ibid.

A fifth strategy thrust, forced upon him by an inability to find sufficient situational constraints in the issues he addressed, was to flay Nixon for his failure to campaign directly and speak publicly on the issues. The Republicans relied heavily on "surrogate" candidates, members of the Nixon family, Vice-President Agnew, cabinet members, members of Congress, who concentrated on attacking McGovern and his controversial positions in an attempt to portray McGovern as a radical representing neither his party nor the nation. The Republican strategy was so successful that it brought forth the irate comment from McGovern,

The news media somehow feel that under the fairness doctrine every lackey who goes out across the country to speak as a surrogate for the President should be given equal coverage with what I'm saying. He's [the President] my opponent. I'm not running against [Secretary of Agriculture] Earl Butz or Spiro Agnew.²⁰

Herein lay McGovern's major rhetorical problem: finding a target for his rhetoric. Having predicted in his acceptance speech to the Democratic convention that Nixon would be "the fundamental issue of this campaign," McGovern found only frustration in his attempt to attack the President.²¹ While McGovern sought to confront, President Nixon remained aloof and played the role of a statesman

²⁰Congressional Quarterly, p. 2884.

²¹Ibid., p. 2885.

making few concrete pledges to the electorate. As he attempted unsuccessfully to spark an issue, it became clear that McGovern, not the President, would be the central issue of the campaign. Criticism of McGovern, more than praise for Nixon, was responsible for the President's commanding lead.

Eagleton's Campaign Role

In a national election, because the contest is basically between the presidential candidates, the running mate traditionally serves the purpose of "balancing the ticket" in both geographical and political philosophy. Neither of these customary criteria appears to satisfactorily explain the role Eagleton was to serve in the McGovern campaign. Missouri, Eagleton's home state, is geographically more Mid-Western than Eastern oriented and would not in itself be an effective balancer to McGovern's Plains-state provincial following. McGovern purposely selected another liberal rather than a politically expedient conservative as his choice of running mate. It would appear, therefore, that Eagleton the person best bespeaks of his campaign purpose--that of an image modifier.

The image of McGovern as a "one-issue" candidate, a transient radical out of step with the times, a criticizer without positive programs of his own, a ruralist in an urbanist society was to be offset by Eagleton's

astonishing political record, big city experience, eastern education, wide political support base, and uncanny ability to speak with knowledge and force on almost any issue. Eagleton was to play a communicative role of projecting to the American people the image of a progressive politician who, while a liberal, would exercise an element of restraint in dealing with the problems between the races and between the disaffected and the government. With Eagleton on the ticket, McGovern's radical image could be replaced by one which held an optimistic promise for change without intransigence, for progress through goodwill and trust.

Eagleton's Strategy

In a campaign which lasted only 18 days, questions of strategy are, at best, based on conjecture. A request for information which I sent to Michael Kelley, Press Secretary to Senator Eagleton, on 14 February 1973, produced a paucity of usable data in this area. In response to my questions as to the issues the Senator was to emphasize, the image he sought to portray to the public, his planned use of campaign commercials and filmed biographies, the states in which he planned to campaign, and the types of audiences to which his appeals would be addressed, the following answer was received:

Because of the shortness of the campaign period, there was really not time for developing formal strategy and specific campaign plans. Consequently,

there are no answers for several of the questions you posed. Senator Eagleton did intend to concentrate his efforts in the general area of domestic affairs while Senator McGovern would primarily address himself to foreign affairs.²²

Somewhat more detail was provided by the Senator himself as he responded to the strategy question during a recent question and answer session:

We did discuss some campaign strategy, yes, both at Miami Beach for a few minutes and in the Black Hills of South Dakota the day or so that I visited him [McGovern] out there. My role in the campaign, at least as it was initially described to me, was to concentrate mostly on urban issues, on law enforcement issues and the like since I'd had a background in both of those, . . . and I was to deal mostly in the domestic sector with emphasis on urban problems while he was to enunciate the foreign policy programs, defense programs, and the like; . . . in terms of emphasis and thrust that was to have been the breakdown in the role.²³

Since Senator Eagleton was to concentrate on urban areas and urban issues, it could be surmised that his primary audience was to be labor unions, minority groups, and the Catholic blocs of the East and Middle Western cities. Although a progressive on race, Eagleton was popular with the highly conservative, Southern Democratic Boot-Heel section of Missouri. His good connections with the trade union hierarchy point to his usefulness as a swayer of the

²²Cited from personal correspondence between Michael J. Kelley, Press Secretary to Senator Eagleton, and the writer.

²³Statement by Senator Eagleton following an address at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973, from a tape supplied by Gary Shivers of radio Station KANU.

labor force. Playing up his religion in the heavily populated Eastern region of the country would appear to be an advantageous strategy to draw the Catholic vote. Although circumstances did change Eagleton's vice-presidential strategy, it is to be noted that these are precisely the audiences to which Sargent Shriver, Eagleton's replacement, later addressed himself.

Apparently Eagleton's campaign was to have included numerous appearances on television. His telegenic appeal was noted by his former speech teacher. Kottmeyer said of Eagleton: "Tom looks like the All-American Boy. He is not a phoney. He is going to have an enormous appeal to people of discriminating judgment and intelligence. . . ."; "A television screen will sooner or later filter out dishonesty, and if you weigh political expediency against honesty, I think Tom will come up on the side of honesty."²⁴

The last element of the Eagleton strategy appears to have been an attempt to promote a vice-presidential image which would contrast with that of Agnew. Where Vice-President Agnew was open to criticism for his outspoken and sharp attacks on the press and Democratic party leaders, Eagleton, allegedly a non-controversial candidate, would stress the dignity of the office and the need for

²⁴St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 14, 1972. p. 6A.

close political, personal, and philosophical compatibility between the two national executives.

The Eagleton Affair

While the purpose of this thesis is not to analyze the many factors contributing to the downfall of the McGovern campaign, a study of the 1972 situational context would be incomplete without an inclusion of a synopsis of the campaign's most damaging blow--the Eagleton affair.

The Revelation

Shortly after Eagleton's selection as the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, rumors linking him with alcoholism and mental problems began circulating. The McGovern staff was not unaware that Eagleton had been hospitalized on several occasions in the 1960's. A pre-nomination check by Gordon Weil, McGovern's executive assistant, however, disclosed only that the hospitalizations were for stomach ailments and a problem with alcohol ingestion. No evidence of psychiatric treatment was found. Weil later acknowledged that the story about Eagleton's incapacity to ingest alcohol was probably planted over the years by the Eagleton camp to throw investigators, like himself, off the track. He said he was taken in by the "cover story for the cover story" for Eagleton's real problem.²⁵

²⁵"Did Tom Eagleton Do Anything Wrong?," Esquire, LXXIX (February, 1973), 62.

Frank Mankiewicz recalls asking Eagleton several questions about his past prior to the official announcement of his selection. To questions concerning anything in his past that could damage or compromise the ticket such as booze, dames, college escapades, or political associates Mankiewicz says Eagleton answered "No" or "Nothing at all." Eagleton himself says only one question was asked of him: "Are there any old skeletons rattling around in your closet?" and that he responded negatively.²⁶ The rumors were adjudged to be typically political by McGovern and he proceeded with the Eagleton selection.

Mankiewicz, however, was still not satisfied with Eagleton's answers in the face of the rumors. While vacationing in the Virgin Islands, he placed a call to Eagleton on Saturday, July 15. When asked about his hospitalization, Eagleton replied, "Yeah, that's right, twice." Mankiewicz pushed a little deeper and when asked what words appeared on the medical records, Eagleton said, "Depression, exhaustion, melancholy."²⁷ The conversation ended with Eagleton agreeing to meet with Mankiewicz the following Thursday in Washington.

While the McGovern-Eagleton organizations made their plans for the forthcoming campaign, Clark Hoyt, a

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 63.

reporter for the Knight Newspapers' Washington bureau, was doing some routine background research for a profile on the newly named vice-presidential nominee. Assisted in his informational search by a caller who knew Eagleton had been treated for mental disorders, Hoyt had uncovered enough for a major exclusive story. He turned over a summary of the information to Mankiewicz in return for a corroboration and a chance to interview Eagleton.²⁸ The anonymous caller had also contacted McGovern headquarters with the same details and furthermore indicated Knight newspapers would shortly make the story public.

On Thursday, 20 July, Eagleton and Mankiewicz met in the Senate Dining Room for their breakfast appointment. Armed with the information now available, Mankiewicz's confrontation drew from Eagleton the fact that he had been hospitalized three times, had received electric shock therapy, and that he still, on occasion, consulted with a psychiatrist.²⁹ Although Eagleton then volunteered to withdraw from the ticket if that were what McGovern wanted, the issue was postponed until McGovern and Eagleton could discuss the matter. This occurred on Monday, 24 July, at McGovern's temporary headquarters in Sylvan

²⁸"Knight v. Eagleton," Time, C (August 7, 1972), 32. (The anonymous caller was later confirmed to be True Davis who ran against Eagleton in the three-way 1968 primary for Senator Long's Senate seat.)

²⁹Esquire, p. 142.

Lake Resort, South Dakota. There Eagleton apparently convinced McGovern that his health was sound and that he could convince the American people that his psychiatric history was not relevant to his capacity to serve as vice-president. McGovern decided not only to retain Eagleton but to have him make a full public disclosure. After Eagleton finished his revelation, McGovern publically committed himself by saying: "I'm fully satisfied and if I had known every detail that he told me this morning, which is exactly what he has just told you here now, he would still have been my choice for the Vice-Presidency of the United States."³⁰

The Response

Both candidates seemed eager to continue with the campaign, and hoped the episode would be somehow forgotten by Labor Day. Eagleton's operating instructions from McGovern now were: "Convey great self-assurance, say as little as possible on the subject of health, and try to create the kind of visible public support that will be contagious."³¹ Although he tried to adhere to McGovern's instructions of not discussing his health, Eagleton found the pressure continued wherever he went. At first he tried humor or digression to parry the thrusts. To one

³⁰Ibid., p. 144.

³¹Ibid.

group of reporters he said his most recent physical had shown only that he was "two pounds overweight and had half a hemorrhoid"; to another group he said he would attempt to "educate" the voters on the nature of mental depression; to a third group he said he would submit to psychiatric examination if Nixon, Agnew, and McGovern were similarly tested.³²

Eagleton's medical history, however, continued to make newspaper headlines and retain its position as the primary topic of political conversation. Although visits to psychiatrists have increasingly become a more common and accepted practice in our society, public revelation of emotional disturbance is still looked upon with disdain. Egan notes, ". . . therapy implies illness, and even counseling implies problems, so that, to a large extent, self-disclosure is still associated with weakness."³³ The prospect of Eagleton ascending to the Presidency in his emotional state was not receiving public acceptance. After columnist Jack Anderson raised unfounded charges of drunken and reckless driving, Eagleton resorted to a harder line and announced firmly to the press: "I have never been more determined in my life about any issue than

³²Ibid., p. 146.

³³Gerard Egan, Encounter (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1970), p. 201.

I am today about remaining on this ticket. I'm not going to bow to Mr. Anderson. I'm not going to let a lie drive me from the ticket."³⁴ To a retail clerks convention in Honolulu he evoked the image of Harry Truman. "I hope I have some small measure of the guts he possessed," he said. The delegates responded with "Give 'em hell, Tom!"³⁵ Eagleton's strategy now was to run against Jack Anderson and retain the nomination by defeating him.

It was McGovern, however, who was beginning to bend under the pressure. While Eagleton was receiving and reporting warm receptions from sympathetic audiences, McGovern was facing the stark realism of dealing with the objections of party officials and influential money donors. His public announcements on the issue changed from "I am one-thousand percent for Tom Eagleton and have no intention of dropping him from the ticket," to "I do not know how it will come out . . . ; I ask for your prayers and your patience for Senator Eagleton and me while we deliberate on the proper course ahead."³⁶ While it was not conveyed to Eagleton directly, the signal for a change in running mates was clear.

³⁴Esquire, p. 148.

³⁵"McGovern's First Crisis: The Eagleton Affair," Time, C (August 7, 1972), 13.

³⁶Esquire, pp. 146 and 148.

Senator Eagleton made one last attempt to retain his position on the ticket. Appearing on a CBS News telecast of Face the Nation and a CBS News special report entitled Campaign '72--The Election Year: The Eagleton Case on Sunday, 30 July, he attempted to defend his position while conveying a poised and commanding presence over the networks. In responding to reporters' questions,³⁷ four notable attempts were made in his defense. The first three were directed at Senator McGovern as the primary audience and the last to the nation as a whole. Undoubtedly Eagleton was aware of Senator McGovern's concern over the adverse results of national opinion polls. When asked if he thought his presence on the ticket might not detract some percentage points, Eagleton answered, "No, I'm convinced of exactly the opposite." He then elaborated on the reasons for his selection by saying, "Fourth, and I think that's most important of all, I was to serve as some kind of liaison between the new politics of George McGovern and the old-fashioned politics, if we want to call it that. I've sort of grown up in politics under both R's, so to speak." He then discussed his contacts in various states and finished his answer by saying: "I think these are pluses, because George McGovern knows, as I know, to win this election in November, against the incumbent President

³⁷ Reporters were George Herman, CBS News; Jack Anderson, Syndicated columnist; and Barry Serafin, CBS News.

of the United States, which is a difficult undertaking--we both realize that--to win it we have to have the full-fledged support of all of the various elements of the Democratic Party, not just one wing, but all." The implication was that only he, Eagleton, could provide and coordinate this support.

A second attempt to justify his continuance on the ticket was made early in the discussion. Responding to a question as to his visible determination to stay on, Eagleton replied: "I think my candidacy meets with a favorable response in the most important area of the world, insofar as an election is concerned, the people. I don't live in a house of self-delusion; I'm a pretty pragmatic politician; and I can pretty well tell the response of people." Eagleton's plea to McGovern here was to ignore the pressure from hard-nose politicians and go with the people's choice.

One last attempt was made to convince McGovern. This time Eagleton stressed his potential assets in answering a question which suggested his support in the opinion polls came from Republicans who wanted him on the ticket because of his vulnerability. Eagleton reversed the connotation and replied: "Well, there's probably some Republicans who voted to get Eagleton off the ticket because they thought he'd be an asset to the ticket and let's get rid of this young, energetic fellow who likes a good fight."

His appeal to the national audience fits into "self-defense rhetoric" or discourse designed to defend his character or vindicate his position. Recounting the gist of his conversation with Frank Mankiewicz on the afternoon he was selected, Eagleton first engaged in a denial that he had acted inappropriately by saying:

Then he asked this question--he said, Tom, do you have any skeletons rattling around in your closet? Now that's the sentence as far as I'm concerned. I'm not trying to make a case as a Philadelphia lawyer or as a nitpicking semanticist. I answered that question cogently, directly, and the word is no. And that's the word I used. If that question were asked of me today, that same question, the word is no, because I did not consider the fact that I have had some hospitalization for a health problem to be a skeleton.

He then attempted an act of differentiation where he tried to separate the public attitude toward mental depression from its portentous context. "What's a skeleton to Eagleton?" he said. "A skeleton is something that's dirty, filthy, corrupt, illegal, sinister. There's nothing about having been fatigued and exhausted and being in a state of mild depression that I find sinister, dirty or ugly." Lastly came an act of transcendence designed to associate his actions with something the audience could view as honorable. "Maybe that isn't the happiest facet of my life, the fact that I've had some medical treatment. But I at least had the courage to seek out medical treatment, the best that was available, and try to do better."³⁸

³⁸ Quotes taken from an official transcript of the Face the Nation program provided by CBS News, Washington, D.C.

His appearance on the election special later that evening repeated his defensive techniques and included one additional appeal to the people. This time the emphasis was placed on his qualifications for office and the instilling of public confidence:

As a younger man, I must say that I drove myself too far, and I pushed myself terribly, terribly hard, long hours, day and night; . . . But I believe, and I have every confidence, that at age forty-two I've learned how to pace myself, I've learned how to measure my own energy, and to know the limits of my own endurance; . . . I consider myself to be in sound, solid health and competent and capable to hold a public office--I've held some very important ones--and I think that I would be a competent, capable, successful Vice President.³⁹

Eagleton's appeal to Senator McGovern and the nation fell on deaf ears; McGovern had already made his decision to replace Eagleton. On Monday, 31 July, McGovern and Eagleton faced the press in the Caucus Room of the Old Senate Office Building. After McGovern had confirmed Eagleton's health and stressed the need for public debate, the need for party unity and a discussion of the real issues of the campaign, he ended the candidacy of Senator Thomas Eagleton by saying, "Therefore, we have jointly agreed that the best course is for Senator Eagleton to step aside." Eagleton followed with this explanatory statement:

³⁹Quote taken from an official transcript of the CBS News Special Report.

As Senator McGovern has stated, he and I are jointly in agreement that I should withdraw as the Democratic candidate for Vice President. Needless to say, this was not an easy decision for Senator McGovern or me. Literally thousands and thousands of people have phoned, telegraphed or written to me and Senator McGovern urging me to press on. I will not divide the Democratic Party, which already has too many divisions. Therefore, I am writing to the Chairman of the Democratic Party withdrawing my candidacy.

My personal feelings are secondary to the necessity to unify the Democratic Party and elect George McGovern President of the United States. My conscience is clear. My spirits are high. This is definitely NOT my last press conference and Tom Eagleton is going to be around for a long, long time. I'm for George McGovern and I'm going to continue working to see him elected President of the United States.⁴⁰

From then until Election Day, Eagleton conducted a 15 state campaign in support of the McGovern-Shriver ticket and was an active supporter of local Missouri Democratic candidates.

Reflecting on the implications of his publicized mental illness, Eagleton appeared optimistic. In response to a question concerning his political future, he replied:

I found the American public to be far more sophisticated about mental problems than I would have suspected they would be. No, I don't think it has necessarily destroyed my political career. I run for re-election in Missouri in 1974; time will tell; but I don't think the Eagleton Affair, the summer of 1972, is going to be determinative of the outcome."⁴¹

⁴⁰ Texts of Senators McGovern and Eagleton statements provided by Senator Eagleton's Washington offices.

⁴¹ Statement by Senator Eagleton following an address at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973 (tape supplied by Gary Shivers of radio station KANU).

The question of whether or not Eagleton's response to the Affair was appropriate is best answered by Eagleton himself. In reply to a query as to why he didn't appeal to the people on national television, Eagleton responded:

I was asked, would I give a "checkers" speech? We gave some thought, that is, would I buy a half hour of time and give a nation-wide half hour speech sort of analogous to President Nixon's speech that he gave in '52 when his position on the Republican ticket was then in jeopardy as mine was on the Democratic ticket. I said no because I said I'd had an adequate opportunity to take my case to the people. The Sunday before I went off the ticket, I was on for a full hour of nation-wide television, free of charge. I was on Face the Nation for a half hour on CBS, and then there was a one hour special on Eagleton that night on CBS in which I consumed about 20 minutes of that 60 minutes. It was an interview with me. I thought those two appearances, by the way they were a lot cheaper than buying it, gave me an adequate shot at going to the people. It wasn't that I wasn't willing to take my case to the people. I wasn't going to take it through the medium of buying a half hour nation-wide time.

You ask me now in retrospect, do I wish I had-- no, not really. I think that the appearances that I did make that Sunday gave me an adequate opportunity to be seen and heard, and I don't gripe that I didn't get a fair shake.⁴²

Eagleton, perhaps, survived the affair better than McGovern. While Eagleton could rely on time erasing all, McGovern found himself robbed of at least three weeks needed for assignment of staff responsibilities and making of campaign plans. His image of candor had been marred, his demonstrated indecisiveness further accentuated, and his rhetorical problem shifted to a necessity to defend his ability as a leader.

⁴²Ibid.

THE RHETORICAL RESPONSE

The purpose of this chapter will be to view the persuasive content of Senator Eagleton's speeches as a means of understanding how his rhetoric functioned to influence public opinion and behavior in favor of the 1972 Democratic campaign. This functional perspective of campaign communication would appear to meet Swanson's¹ criteria for adoption of a more sophisticated perspective toward the analysis of persuasive specimens and, at the same time, provides useful insight into the ingredients of successful campaign persuasion.

The centering of our analysis on persuasive means permits a discussion of Eagleton's rhetorical responses to the situational context outlined in the previous chapter and allows for a microscopic examination of the communication variables inherent in the speech specimens. This approach toward rhetoric is well within the parameters of my original definition of the term and correctly conveys the intent for which it was proposed.

Justification for measuring influence through a study of persuasive content finds validity in the writings

¹David L. Swanson, "The New Politics Meets the Old Rhetoric: New Directions in Campaign Communication Research," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVIII (February, 1972), p. 40.

of Cartwright. In an article entitled, "Influence, Leadership, Control," he observes, "Of the many means of influence, persuasion is commonly advocated as most suited to a democratic, or rational, social system." He further notes that more research has been devoted to persuasion than to any other means of influence, and that much of this research has concerned itself with the problem of how to design effective messages. Cartwright listed eight properties of messages which he felt have received the most attention:

(a) rational versus emotional content, (b) positive versus negative appeals, (c) one-sided versus two-sided arguments, (d) extreme versus moderate positions, (e) degree of explicitness of conclusions to be drawn from factual propositions, (f) sequence of arguments, (g) attention-arousing devices.²

Some of these dimensions of a message used in conjunction with other investigated properties will form the basis for my analysis of the Senator's speeches. Influence will be measured both through judgment of the applicability of the message components to the audience and the situation and through an evaluation of the persuasive techniques employed. While in-depth public opinion polling and other measurement techniques would perhaps produce a more accurate indication of influence, mere mechanistic categorizing of opinion would produce little insight into the reasons for the

²Dorwin Cartwright, "Influence, Leadership, Control," in Handbook of Organizations, ed. by J. G. March (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965), p. 18.

favorable or unfavorable public response. Similar thoughts would appear to be the basis for Beisecker and Parson writing, "One might view the persuasive message and the process by which it comes to the attention of receivers as central to the concept of persuasion, regardless of whether or not the message succeeds in eliciting a desired response."³

Analysis of Message

Speech Themes

The speeches which were analyzed encompassed the time frame 11 June through 20 October 1972. The 21 speeches involved are considered representative of those given by the Senator during the 1972 election campaign and produce an adequate sampling of his oratory before, during, and after his withdrawal as a vice-presidential candidate.

The themes which Eagleton addressed in his speeches are considered important indicators of his ability to judge the mood of the country. "What makes or breaks a politician," Eagleton said during an interview, "is how he perceives the public pulse, the public mood."⁴ Commenting on the issues upon which he felt the Democrats could

³Thomas D. Beisecker and Donn W. Parson, The Process of Social Influence (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 4.

⁴"Eagleton's Own Odyssey," Time, C (August 7, 1972), 15.

effectively argue for a change of national leadership, Eagleton listed the economy in terms of unemployment rates, rates of inflation, and balance of payments; failure of the national leadership to bring the country together; health care; quality education; and pollution control to a limited extent.⁵ A review of the speeches indicates that, with the exception of pollution, all issues became either central themes in his speeches or received major emphasis in conjunction with other themes. The economy and national leadership issues received major theme treatment in fourteen of his addresses, which included attacks on Presidential economic policies, government waste of funds, societal problems, handling of the Vietnam war, unemployment, and growing racism.

Since the majority of these speeches were given while Eagleton was no longer a vice-presidential candidate, it is felt they were not intended to be personal promotion efforts. Instead, the issues addressed, when viewed in the context of the rhetorical situation, suggest they served to function as support catalysts for feelings many people wanted legitimized by a plausible source. Eagleton lent the authority of his position as a Senator and national candidate to the support of a stance people wanted to hear and believe. This was particularly true during and

⁵Washington Post, July 14, 1972, p. A13.

immediately after Eagleton's candidacy when he acted as a role modifier. Although many people wanted to believe in the McGovern half of the ticket, McGovern's image as a radical and his controversial stands on some issues prevented the public from believing in some of his less controversial and better thought-out programs. Eagleton, for these undecided people, became the point about which they could rally with confidence; his communications were not viewed as being radical and fell within the bounds of attitude acceptance.

Sherif, Sherif, and Nebergall have found that the problem of attitude change involves a person's evaluation of the degree of divergence between the position advocated in a communication and the position of the subject exposed to it. They note that the attitude of a person represents a range of acceptances and a range of rejections for a particular position on an issue. While communications viewed as only minimally divergent from one's position can be accepted, those viewed as falling outside of the range of acceptance are appraised as more discrepant than they actually are.⁶ Communications displaced in this manner are seen as unreasonable, propagandistic, false, and, in the

⁶C. W. Sherif, M. Sherif, R. E. Nebergall, "Attitude and Attitude Change: The Social Judgment-Involvement Approach," in The Process of Social Influence, ed. by Thomas D. Beisecker and Donn W. Parson (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 105-106.

case of Senator McGovern, radical. Osgood and Tannenbaum theorize that the direction of this attitude change tends to move toward extremes of polarization.⁷ Politically, this would suggest people tend to judge the communication of a candidate as being at one end or the other of the political spectrum. Related concepts presented by the candidate are viewed in a similar manner. Once people classified McGovern's communication as "radical," virtually all his discourse became similarly classified. While McGovern sought attitude change by presenting large political and social discrepancies, Eagleton sought to maximize attitude shift through more moderate presentations; whereas McGovern's speeches produced either negligible positive change or even negative change, Eagleton's speeches yielded contagious public support.

Strategy Implementation

The speech themes, besides being indicators of Eagleton's response to the climate of the time, provide insight into the manner in which he implemented the campaign strategy. Before his selection as a vice-presidential candidate, Eagleton sought primarily to garner support for the forthcoming Democratic Party ticket through local campaigning. In a June address to the Missouri Democratic

⁷Robert B. Zajonc, "The Concepts of Balance, Congruity, and Dissonance," ibid., p. 52.

State Convention, his theme of party unification was in a set strategy designed to portray the Nixon administration as the perpetrator of national divisiveness:

It is abundantly clear in retrospect that a united Democratic Party could have won in 1968. And a united Democratic Party can win in 1972. We must never lose sight of the price we have paid as a party and as a nation for our divisiveness and disunity in 1972. Richard Nixon assumed the Presidency. Remember his words? He would 'bring us together.' He would bind the wounds, heal the scars, and give this nation the 'lift of a driving dream.' But rather than this unifying 'driving dream' we have instead acquired a pervasive psychological depression. Division is the key word for the Nixon Administration.

While operating under the constraint of an early advocacy for the campaign of Ed Muskie, Eagleton made it clear to the convention that he would put personal consideration aside in the interest of national betterment:

Let me say here and now that I will support whoever becomes the Democratic nominee at Miami. I will do so because the election of a Democrat as the replacement for Richard Nixon is the indispensable first step toward a cure for our beleaguered nation.

In closing the speech, Eagleton urged strong support for the nominee by all Democrats, and then again reminded the audience of his unity theme:

Diversity has always been the keystone of our strength as a party. When the dust from intra-party battles has settled, unity has never failed to bring us victory. Unity will give us victory again in November.⁸

⁸Thomas Eagleton, address delivered to the Missouri State Democratic Convention, Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri, June 10, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

Although the majority of Senator Eagleton's time before his selection as McGovern's running mate was spent in attendance to his Washington duties, he did not miss any opportunity to chide the Administration. On the Senate floor, while introducing the National Reading Improvement Act of 1972, he made it clear that the right to read for every American had become a "game of educational politics" in the hands of the President. Pushing his strategy of saddling the Administration with the responsibility for the nation's ills, Eagleton said:

The Right to Read program, sadly, appears to be just another chimera--a Flying Dutchman born in the nether world of Presidential promises and fated to wander from one island of federal bureaucracy to the next. At the outset of his Administration, Richard Nixon warned America of the threat of a 'precipitous decline in public confidence.' It has become obyious⁹ that Mr. Nixon should have heeded his own words.

The address of Senator McGovern, as he accepted the Democratic Party's nomination for the office of President, set the tone for a strategy stressing change. "We are not content with things as they are. We reject the few of those who say: 'America--love it or leave it.' We reply: 'Let us change it so we may love it the more.'¹⁰ The Theme became "Come Home America." Yet, while the

⁹Thomas Eagleton, address delivered in the U.S. Senate, June 24, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

¹⁰"McGovern: 'American Politics Will Never Be the Same Again,'" U.S. News & World Report, LXXIII (July 24, 1972), 87.

coinage is McGovern's, the idea bears marked resemblance to a philosophic thought expressed by Eagleton. Stressing the multitude of polarizations within our society, he said:

Democracy is not only a system, it is a state of mind. It is not only an institution and an ideology, it is an attitude and a mentality. Politically, man is what he does; morally he is what he thinks. Between the idea and the deed lies the condition of the mind and heart.

We must go about the business of improving the institutions of our country. We must also go about the business of curing our depressed national spirit.¹¹

This compares favorably with McGovern as he continued the theme of his acceptance address, saying: "It is time for this land to become again a witness to the world for what is just and noble in human affairs; . . ." "Come home to the affirmation that we have a dream."¹² The two candidates indeed espoused a similar dedication of purpose.

The speeches of Senator Eagleton during his candidacy are strongly supportive of the "Come Home America" Democratic Party campaign theme. In his acceptance address, Eagleton hit hard on the theme by saying:

Ladies and gentlemen, George McGovern offers us the opportunity to return to the principles upon which America was founded, to ask what we can do for one another, and, together, what we can do for our country and for mankind. And let us so conduct ourselves and conduct our campaign and, indeed, let us conduct our lives that in later years men may say--

¹¹Thomas Eagleton, address, June 10, 1972.

¹²U.S. News & World Report, p. 87.

1972 was the year, not when America lost its way, but the year when America found its conscience.¹³

The following day, to a Kansas City audience, the theme is repeated:

There are a few moments at the outset of a national campaign when a candidate has the luxury of reflection, an opportunity to look within himself and consider those fundamental principles to which he adheres and on which all he will say and do in coming months must rest.

America has a similar opportunity every four years. The atmosphere surrounding a presidential election may smack more of the circus than of quiet contemplation but, at its best, this quadrennial exercise offers the country a chance to look again at our own first principles, to determine if we are keeping faith with them, and to renew our resolve for the future. These are the principles we draw from our roots as a nation, tenets gained from our traditions and from hard-won experience. These principles were alive and real to the founding fathers. And so they should be to us today. . . .¹⁴

In a speech just prior to his removal from the ticket, it becomes obvious that Eagleton's dedication to the theme has not changed. Addressing a Jefferson City, Missouri, audience, he said:

Americans have the unique opportunity this year-- as we do every four years--to look at ourselves and our nation closely--and to decide our future. I have an abiding faith that our citizens will vote to return

¹³Thomas Eagleton, Acceptance speech, Democratic National Convention, Miami Florida, July 14, 1972 (from a tape supplied by Gary Shivers of radio station KANU).

¹⁴Thomas Eagleton, address to the Annual Convention of National Audio-Visual Association, Muehlebach Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri, July 15, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

our country to the principles and ideals that made America great.¹⁵

One of Eagleton's strategies was to provide a favorable contrast to the often criticized incumbent Vice-President. Expressing his feelings on Mr. Agnew, Eagleton said during an interview:

Well, I think that some of the more bombastic and caustic divisiveness has been executed by the Vice President of the United States, Mr. Agnew, on behalf of the President. . . . Agnew is Nixon's Nixon, . . . that is, where the President on occasion is projecting the role of statesman and taking the high, noble road, he has his Vice President running around the country in a fashion that is divisive, that is contentious.

Responding to the question as to what should a Vice President do, Eagleton remarked:

I think a Vice President very much has to be philosophically, politically and personally compatible with the President. We have only one President. It's not a shared executive.¹⁶

Although not referring to Mr. Agnew by name, Eagleton publically assailed his handling of the office early in the campaign. In his acceptance speech at the Convention, Eagleton addressed the office of Vice President by saying:

And, most importantly, it's an office whose occupant must understand and appeal to the highest, to the highest, not the basest motives of our fellow Americans. If there is one thing which the present occupant of the White House has made perfectly clear,

¹⁵Thomas Eagleton, address on the occasion of Governor Warren E. Hearnes's birthday dinner, Jefferson City, Missouri, July 29, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

¹⁶Washington Post, July 14, 1972, p. A13.

it is that he does not share that view of the role of his Vice President. And so, tonight, I pledge to you that we will restore the dignity of the office of the Vice Presidency. It will not be a platform for cheap rhetorical attacks that divide our nation.¹⁷

Senator McGovern's efforts to implement a strategic portrayal of the Administration as the untrustable champion of "special interest" groups also received reinforcement from Eagleton. To a local Missouri audience he said:

Government is meant to be the servant of the people, but left unfettered, government will become the master; . . . It is the task---indeed, it is the highest goal of this campaign---to reclaim the trust in government that this Administration has forfeited; . . . Trust can only be founded on the people's confidence that the men and women they elect will be sensitive to their needs and act in their interest. For the small businessman, this means . . . an equitable tax policy that gives the little fellow an even break with the big conglomerates.¹⁸

To a Hawaiian audience he waged a timely attack in the form of rhetorical questions:

Is the Pay Board working in your interest when it restricts your wage increases to a low percentage of an already low wage, while permitting corporate profits to increase? Is the Cost of Living Council working in your interests when it exempts many of your employers from controls for 'administrative convenience,' while continuing to try to keep the raises of as many of our lower paid workers as possible under the 5.5% guidelines? These are the issues that make

¹⁷Thomas Eagleton, Acceptance speech, July 14, 1972.

¹⁸Thomas Eagleton, Muehlebach Hotel, July 15, 1972.

a difference to you and to your family.¹⁹

His appeals to urban audiences attacked the "bigness" of the Administration in terms of the effect on the average citizen.

The ensuing three and a half years have reminded us that when the Democratic Party fails, the ordinary American suffers. The big fellows do very well indeed under a Republican Administration, but the men and women who work for wages, the housewife trying to get by at the supermarket, the local businessman, the farmer caught in a cost-price squeeze, the senior citizen on a limited income. . . . They are the ones who suffer when the Democratic Party loses. And the man who campaigned against big government has instead increased the size of the Federal bureaucracy. The layers of government are more impenetrable than ever, now--unless you're a high powered executive for ITT.²⁰

The speeches presented during his candidacy reflect his strategy of emphasizing domestic problems. Most of the speeches are presented to urban audiences and address the soaring crime rate, the unended war in Vietnam, the need for better schooling and hospitals, the rising inflation, and the need for more jobs. Representative of his rhetoric of the time are the following excerpts from local speeches.

---For the farmer, it means a reasonable return on his investment and labor in a marketplace not dominated by actions taken in distant board rooms; for

¹⁹ Thomas Eagleton, address to the Retail Clerks International Association Convention, Hawaiian Village Hotel, Hawaii, July 27, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

²⁰ Thomas Eagleton, Governor Hearnes's birthday, July 29, 1972.

ordinary people everywhere, it means an immediate end to war and a chance to live in safety, obtain a decent education for their children and access to a health care system in which bankruptcy is not the inevitable bedside attendant of serious illness; for all Americans, it means an end to an Administration that spends dollars for bombs and pennies for educating our next generation.²¹

---The man who campaigned in 1968 on a theme of 'law and order' has instead presided over a soaring crime rate. His 'program' to end crime is bogged down with bureaucracy and politics. We still get mugged in the streets--but now we get fleeced by corporate chicanery as well.²²

---There are other parts of the Nixon record that are of particular interest to American working men and women. It is a record that features:

- Tax revisions that favor big businessmen
- A virtual doubling of unemployment
- Continually rising inflation
- A new economic plan which has allowed corporate profits to rise while freezing wages
- Token enforcement of the Job Safety Laws
- Administration of the labor laws of the United States by businessmen rather than by neutral parties.²³

It was theorized that a close comparison of the speeches made during and after his candidacy would reveal a distinct strategy shift or modification in presentation technique brought about by the traumatic Eagleton Affair. The only evidence to support such a hypothesis is Eagleton's concentration on the bolstering of local Democratic candidates during mid-October. This apparent shift could

²¹Thomas Eagleton, Muehlebach Hotel, July 15, 1972.

²²Thomas Eagleton, Governor Hearnes's birthday, July 29, 1972.

²³Thomas Eagleton, Hawaiian Village Hotel, July 27, 1972.

easily be explained as a strategy envisioned before his selection as a Vice Presidential candidate and, therefore, not be an Eagleton Affair resultant. When asked if after his withdrawal he found it necessary to modify in any way his role as a campaign persuader, Eagleton replied:

Well, I worked very hard for the ticket. I visited 15 states and then gave dozens of speeches in the state of Missouri. Every state I visited McGovern lost but that wasn't just my fault. I never was asked to speak in Massachusetts, and had I been asked I probably would have jinxed that one as well. (audience laughter) But no, my role was not compromised or in any way modified. I was strongly for the ticket and did as much as I could to see that it was elected.²⁴

Eagleton did confide during an interview that the one change required to his speaking style was a conscious effort to forgo a noted gesture. He said he had the habit of bowing his head and wiping his forehead to remove accumulated sweat. The press, Eagleton said, delighted in photographing him in this position and used this to justify captions reflecting adversely on his health.²⁵

An analysis of Eagleton's speeches after his withdrawal reveal little change to his previous hard-hitting, vibrant speaking style. Until his switch to local politics, Eagleton continued to hit hard on government waste,

²⁴Statement by Senator Eagleton following an address at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973 (from a tape supplied by Gary Shivers of radio station KANU).

²⁵Thomas Eagleton, private interview held after speech at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973.

problems of society, and Administration mismanagement. In a speech to a Grand Rapids, Michigan, audience he branded the President as "unskilled and unpredictable" in his handling of the country's economy. Referring to the huge unemployment rate, Eagleton said:

Think of the cars, the refrigerators, the clothing these people could be buying! The business you could be doing! The tax load they could be sharing, if Richard Nixon had never been President and we could have kept his fearful inept hand off the economic thermostat. . . . Come home, America; from the waste of idle hands to the joy of useful labor. Come home, America.²⁶

Campaigning for the election of McGovern in South Dakota, he said to a Rapid City audience:

The people don't expect to elect a royal potentate who can produce answers for everything that's troubling our country. What they do want, however, is a President who will work for them, not for ITT, . . . not for the big grain dealers, . . . not for secret special interests who funnel millions in campaign contributions through the side doors of Washington law offices.

Go home and watch the evening news any night this week. What do you see? The Republican half of the news is all about who funneled what money through Mexican banks to whom in the Nixon Re-election Committee. It is about the Republican plot to burglarize and bug the Democratic Headquarters. It is about how Nixon is running a surrogate campaign--sending the entire U.S. cabinet out on a purely political mission while he hides out in Washington.²⁷

²⁶Thomas Eagleton, address to the Michigan State Democratic Convention, Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 27, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

²⁷Thomas Eagleton, address at the Abourezk-McKeeever Dinner, National Guard Armory, Rapid City, South Dakota, September 16, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

To a convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, the caustic comments continued:

The 'merchants of crime and corruption' are still in business. On November 7, I ask you to remember what the history books will say about this Administration. I ask you to remember the India-Pakistan decision, remember the failure of the invasions of Cambodia and Laos, remember Haynsworth and Carswell [Supreme Court nominees], remember the ITT affair, remember the Russian wheat deal, and remember that the Democratic Party apparently has been the target of the most incredible espionage scheme ever perpetrated on the American political system.²⁸

Influence by Persuasion

Political campaigning, McBath and Fisher note, is essentially a persuasive process. There is no single theory solely concerned with how persuasion functions in political communication nor any one work to consult for learning why an election turned out in favor of any one candidate.²⁹ The same can be said for the problem of measuring the influence exerted by any one person in a campaign. It is felt, therefore, that an analysis of the persuasive elements in the speeches of a candidate can be effectively used as a means of rhetorical criticism. The validity of the persuasive technique then becomes the basis for speculating on matters of political influence.

²⁸Thomas Eagleton, address at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Dinner, Marion County Democratic Committee, Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana, October 19, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

²⁹James H. McBath and Walter R. Fisher, "Persuasion in Presidential Campaign Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LV (February, 1969), 17.

For a candidate to exercise influence by means of persuasion, he must first have a base from which this influence can be exerted. The most common of these bases, notes Cartwright, is the ability to use an effective medium of communication. This medium can range from the "mass media," such as television, radio, and the press, to the personal interaction between the candidate and the individual voter. The function of a particular speech made by a candidate may be to gain access to this media dissemination rather than simply being an address targeted to an attendant audience. While this address may gain media coverage through prior arrangements by the candidate or his staff, exactly what is reported is largely out of the candidate's hands. David Berg, in his research into the functioning of the mass media, has found the media does more than just reflect spontaneous events of the time; they sometimes create them. This media-produced reality, Berg found, contains a higher incidence of exigences than that reflected by direct experience. Reporters interpret events sometimes for the sole purpose of reporting them and tend to selectively focus on the dramatic or extreme elements of a story.³⁰ The political candidate takes his chances with media accuracy; the candidate could find

³⁰David M. Berg, "Rhetoric, Reality, and Mass Media," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LVIII (October, 1972), 256.

himself addressing one issue or theme while another is being reported. In the case of Senator Eagleton, his emphasis on the issues and appeal to the people during the Eagleton Affair was largely subverted by press play on his mental illness. A review of newspaper and magazine articles of the campaign indicates a communication media bias toward this dramatic reporting. The overwhelmingly unfavorable newspaper reaction of such influential papers as the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, and the Baltimore Sun can be credited with shifting McGovern's previous support of Eagleton.³¹

Another indirect base of persuasion is the power possessed by the candidate. While power can take the form of promising rewards, threatening punishment, displaying similar attitudes, or possession of wealth, the term is encompassing enough to "include any mediating activity through which the person exerting power affects the recipient of the power attempt."³² Some writers, such as Eugene White, have gone so far as to say: "Rhetoric is equivalent to persuasion. In politics, persuasion is

³¹"McGovern's First Crisis: The Eagleton Affair," Time, C (August 7, 1972), 11.

³²Wally D. Jacobson, Power and Interpersonal Relations (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1972), p. 39.

power."³³ Eagleton held power both from his role as a United States Senator and from his position as a national candidate. His communications carried more weight with the public than that of a local candidate in that he had the prestige of his office and the tacit support of the Democratic Party behind his efforts. His Senate experience lent credibility to his arguments on prominent Congressional issues and his training as a professional lawyer promoted a knowledgeable image in the field of law and law enforcement.

"Even if an agent has access to a medium of communication and has the necessary properties to be an effective source," stresses Cartwright, "his effectiveness is further dependent upon certain properties of the message transmitted."³⁴ His skill in constructing effective messages becomes another base of influence. It is upon this base, the observable persuasive properties of the communicated message, that the influence evaluation of Senator Eagleton will now be concentrated. While the Senator admitted to the employment of his staff in an occasional "ghost writing" role, he made it clear the principal ideas in all of the speeches were his own, and reflected

³³Eugene E. White, Presidential Rhetoric: The State of the Union Address," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LIV (February, 1968), 71.

³⁴Dorwin Cartwright, p. 19.

his style and technique of speaking.³⁵

Audience Adaptation

An observable element of persuasion present in Eagleton's speeches is an attempt to adapt his message to the audience. Kenneth Burke observes, "A speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience."³⁶ One of his techniques to identify with the audience is to promote similarity of goals. Speaking to the American Optometric Association on health legislation before Congress, he said:

Health care is today's hot public issue--after the economy, perhaps the most avidly debated domestic issue of them all; . . . As one of those closely involved in developing the amendments to this Act passed in 1971 [the Health Professions Educational Assistance Act], I can assure you that an overwhelming majority of my colleagues in both the Senate and the House recognized the need for continuing this record of progress in expanding training opportunities in optometry; . . . As Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Aging, I am particularly interested in the special vision needs of older Americans; . . . Your profession and your organization historically have been among the strong supporters of sound health legislation in the past. I urge your support in the

³⁵Thomas Eagleton, private interview held following a speech at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973.

³⁶Kenneth Burke, A Rhetoric of Motives (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 46.

future, as I pledge mine to our mutual goal of providing better health care to all Americans.³⁷

In a speech to the Press Association, his subject became freedom of the press, and he identified thus:

The case of Peter Bridge should be a red flag to every American who believes in a free press. It is another link in a chain being pulled tighter around the neck of one of our most important institutions; . . . I do believe they represent an officially sanctioned loss of reverence and respect for the very concept of a free press. . . . If the First Amendment means anything, it means that the government cannot simply step in and tell a newspaper what it can or cannot published. . . . I do think that we have been given more than fair warning that freedom of the press is not a routine fact of life, but rather a prize which must be continuously fought for and guarded.³⁸

A second technique of identification was used only in local Missouri speeches in that it involved the stressing of his native background. Sample excerpts from speeches wherein this technique was used are as follows:

---My responsibilities are different now, for I speak not only as the junior Senator from Missouri, but as the spokesman of a great party---and of a great movement. It is fitting that this effort--this quest--have its beginning here in Missouri. It is my home. My roots are here. What I know of people . . . their problems and their strengths, what I know of government, its capacities and

³⁷Thomas Eagleton, address to the American Optometric Association, Sheraton-Jefferson Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri, June 19, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

³⁸Thomas Eagleton, address to the Inland Daily Press Association, The Drake Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, October 16, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

weaknesses, I learned in Missouri.³⁹

---This evening is a nostalgic one for me. The Governor of Missouri and I have shared many happy experiences in political life. We started out together in statewide politics and we have been close allies ever since. It is appropriate that I begin my campaign for the second highest office in this land here in Jefferson City and at Warren Hearnes' side.⁴⁰

A third audience identification method is the use of humor. A writer for The New Yorker who accompanied Senator Eagleton on one of the Senator's visits to his constituents in rural Missouri noted Eagleton's friendly and informal manner led to most people addressing him by his first name.

He also has to his advantage a Midwestern, non-senatorial way of not taking himself completely seriously--so that he can tell a group of college students that he is always available to deliver his "superbly emotional commencement address," or can arrive at a library-groundbreaking ceremony held outdoors in a driving rain and announce to the committee that the only library-groundbreaking speech he knows takes forty minutes.⁴¹

Although humor was found by Gruner not to be a potent persuasive technique in tests with college students, he also concluded that final judgments about the use of humor in persuasion must await the outcome of further research.⁴² Eagleton indicated he normally began his

³⁹Thomas Eagleton, Muehlebach Hotel, July 15, 1972.

⁴⁰Thomas Eagleton, Governor Hearnes's birthday, July 29, 1972.

⁴¹Calvin Trillin, "U.S. Journal: Missouri," The New Yorker, XLVI (May 16, 1970), 110.

⁴²Marvin Karlins and Herbert Abelson, Persuasion (New York: Springer Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 39-40.

speeches with a joke or humorous reference to a local situation because he found it effective in achieving audience identification and in increasing his credibility with the audience.⁴³ As he prepared to begin his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, for example, he prefaced his remarks with, "May I ask a rhetorical question--Didn't I give Roger Mudd a heck of a beating?"⁴⁴ Reporters noticed he would occasionally pull into a small town, jump out of his Cadillac and announce: "Here I am, Folks, in living color," or, addressing soybean farmers, he would drawl, "I know that you don't want to hear this on a hot day. But somebody wrote this speech for me and said it was a 'major political address.' So I guess I've got to give it."⁴⁵

Occasionally humor was also interjected into the body of his speech. One notable example was its use in an appeal to party unity:

I confidently say tonight that the ranks of the Democratic Party will be missing few of its old pros on November 7.

Deep in the annals of our party's history there is a story about a little boy who asked his father

⁴³Thomas Eagleton, private interview held after speech at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973.

⁴⁴Thomas Eagleton, Acceptance speech, July 14, 1972, making reference to news commentator Roger Mudd's name being mentioned for the vice-presidency (from a tape supplied by Gary Shivers of radio station KANU).

⁴⁵"McGovern's First Crisis: The Eagleton Affair," Time, C (August 7, 1972), 14.

what a convert was. The father said, "Well, son, if a Republican becomes a Democrat he is a convert." And what, asked the boy, is a Democrat who becomes a Republican? With a scowl his father said: "Why a turncoat, of course!"⁴⁶

Use of Evidence

One of the most consistent techniques for attitude change employed by Eagleton is the use of evidence within his speeches. Evidence refers to "factual statements originating from a source other than the speaker, objects not created by the speaker, and opinions of persons other than the speaker that are offered in support of the speaker's claims."⁴⁷ He frequently would make reference to statements issued by or quotes from well-known national figures in the fields of politics, religion, and law to support his position. His stance on virtually every issue became accentuated through a selective presentation of available evidence:

---Speaking on the necessity for continued government aid to children in private schools he said: Currently about 15% of all Missouri children attending elementary and secondary schools are enrolled in non-public schools, with the overwhelming majority of these in parochial schools. Next year the cost to the public of educating children who have transferred to the public schools because of the closing of private

⁴⁶Thomas Eagleton, Governor Hearnes's birthday, July 29, 1972.

⁴⁷James C. McCroskey, "A Summary of Experimental Research on the Effects of Evidence in Persuasive Communication," Quarterly Journal of Speech, LV (April, 1960), 170.

schools will be about \$60 million. Nationally, it has been estimated that the taxpayers would have to pick up a tab amounting to nearly \$4 billion if all Catholic schools were to close.⁴⁸

---Stressing the inability of the Administration to halt the rising crime rate he cites this data: In the last year of the Johnson Administration 4.5 million serious crimes were reported. In 1971, after 3 years of the Nixon Administration's "law and order" program, 6 million serious crimes were reported.⁴⁹ That is an increase of 33% in 3 years.

---Rising in the Senate to defend Senator McGovern's amendment to reduce the defense budget he notes: The Nixon Administration has requested \$83.4 billion for defense in Fiscal 1973, an increase of \$6.3 billion over last year's budget. In addition, the Secretary of Defense has recently indicated that he may seek a further increase of 5 billion dollars. . . . According to a recent GAO [Government Accounting Office] study cost overruns totalled \$28.7 billion this year. . . . The Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported that 1 billion defense dollars can generate 60,000 jobs. One billion dollars in the civilian economy can, on the other hand, produce 100,000 jobs.⁵⁰

McBath and Fisher have noted that "one naturally expects to find facts and arguments in legal speaking, but not necessarily in political communication."⁵¹ Eagleton's speeches appear to be structured in a traditional lawyer "brief" format where the major issues or areas of

⁴⁸Thomas Eagleton, address at the Church of St. Joseph Centennial, Josephville, Missouri, June 11, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

⁴⁹Thomas Eagleton, John F. Kennedy Dinner, October 19, 1972.

⁵⁰Thomas Eagleton, address delivered in the U.S. Senate, August 1, 1972 (from a press release supplied by the Senator's office).

⁵¹McBath and Fisher, p. 17.

argumentation are supported by the presentation of examples, statistics, authoritative evidence, and logic necessary to advance one side of a position. When questioned on his use of evidence, the Senator said, "It's the lawyer in me," and indicated he tended toward listing his points to be made in numerical order and emphasizing them through the use of facts.⁵²

While it is true that the specific techniques of persuasion are principally defined by the circumstances of their presentation and the demands of the audience, certain conclusions can be drawn about the use of evidence as a persuasive element. McCroskey, in reviewing nine studies conducted on the effect of evidence on attitude change, was unable to arrive at firm generalizations on its effect; he later conducted twelve studies in which he hypothesized a relationship between evidence and other situational variables. His results indicate that the inclusion of evidence in a message can produce attitude change only if the source has moderate-to-low initial credibility. In this case, the credibility of the speaker is also increased. The evidence employed by the potential persuader was found to be effective for immediate audience attitude change only if the message was well delivered, and the evidence was new to the audience. However, sustained audience attitude change

⁵²Thomas Eagleton, private interview held after speech at the University of Kansas, February 11, 1973.

occurs with the use of evidence regardless of the source's initial credibility, the quality of the message, or the medium employed.⁵³ It is my impression that Eagleton's credibility ranges from low to high depending on the audience addressed; an overall rating of moderate credibility seems justified. In Missouri and surrounding local areas he would project high credibility as a Mid-West Senator; to other areas of the country he was a "freshman" Senator and a relatively unknown national candidate. My review of the speeches indicates his evidence was "new" in that it was specifically edited for each speech and tended toward the dramatic revelation of startling facts, and the message was highlighted by his informed platform delivery techniques.

Use of Repetition

The advertising industry has long recognized that repeating a communication tends to prolong its influence. Specimen studies on the persistence of opinion change have also determined that re-exposure to an appeal produces a greater persistence effect than does a one-time argument.⁵⁴ While Eagleton's messages reflect repetition in themes, they also reflect repetition of individual phrases. Although the repeating of words and phrases was

⁵³McCroskey, pp. 169-176.

⁵⁴Karlins and Abelson, pp. 78-79.

undoubtedly used for achievement of emphasis, it is believed a bonus of message persistency was also induced.

His speeches are replete with examples:

---From his acceptance speech: My friends, America has been stalled for four long years; stalled in a senseless war in Vietnam; stalled economically here at home; . . . stalled in the desperate fight to save our beleaguered cities; stalled in providing adequate funding for our schools; stalled in the effort to preserve our precious and vanishing environment; stalled in its deeply felt need to find a new direction, a new direction for its citizens.⁵⁵

---In Hawaii: We believe that the minimum wage level should be set above the poverty level; we believe in the maximum possible coverage the law; . . . we believe that loopholes in the minimum wage law should be closed; we believe that young people doing the same work as older persons are entitled to the same wage.⁵⁶

---In Missouri: Not only have Americans learned to doubt their leaders, they have begun to doubt themselves. Senator McGovern and I intend to change that; . . . but now we get fleeced by corporate chicanery as well. Senator McGovern and I intend to change that; . . . [the phrase is repeated three more times].⁵⁷

---In Michigan: But we Democrats are not afraid. We marched with Roosevelt for social security and the WPA; we marched with Truman for the Fair Deal; we marched with Kennedy and Johnson for medicare and human rights; we will march with McGovern and Shriver for jobs; we will march with McGovern and Shriver to end an awful nightmare in Southeast Asia.⁵⁸

---In South Dakota: Americans want a President who will go to the people. Americans want a President

⁵⁵Thomas Eagleton, Acceptance speech, July 14, 1972.

⁵⁶Thomas Eagleton, Hawaii, July 27, 1972.

⁵⁷Thomas Eagleton, Governor Hearn's birthday, July 29, 1972.

⁵⁸Thomas Eagleton, Grand Rapids, August 27, 1972.

who isn't bought and paid for by special interests. Americans want a President who's on their side for a change.⁵⁹

Other Discernible Elements

Senator Eagleton occasionally employed a low-key threat in his speeches. Sometimes the threat was veiled, sometimes more direct in its fear arousal appeal.

---The public cannot afford to stand by in indifference when their free press is threatened. We will enjoy a free press only so long as we work for and cherish it.⁶⁰

---And now, I repeat: Are we going to repeat the suicidal folly of '68? Is each participant at this State Conyention going to say, "I must rule or I will ruin"?⁶¹

--This blind escalation of the arms race results in a net loss of security of the United States.⁶²

Janis' experiments on the effects of fear arousal on attitude change suggest that threat appeals can exert an effect on what is both learned and retained from a communication, and that threat arousal of a slight or moderate degree of fear tends to facilitate acceptance of the speaker's recommendation.⁶³

⁵⁹Thomas Eagleton, Rapid City, September 16, 1972.

⁶⁰Thomas Eagleton, Chicago, Illinois, October 16, 1972.

⁶¹Thomas Eagleton, Lincoln University, June 10, 1972.

⁶²Thomas Eagleton, U.S. Senate, August 1, 1972.

⁶³Irving L. Janis, "Effects of Fear Arousal on Attitude Change," in The Process of Social Influence, ed. by Thomas D. Beisecker and Donn W. Parson (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 277-300.

The citing of a conclusion to be drawn by the audience has received experimental support in many studies. The findings suggest that the stating of a conclusion rather than implying it makes little difference to an intelligent audience, but becomes more important to less intelligent subjects. The communicator, if unsure of his audience, achieves the most consistent attitude change by validating his arguments through a final, explicit statement.⁶⁴ Virtually all of Eagleton's speeches conclude with a stated direction or action that he desired the audience to take. The majority of the conclusions centered on his urging of the audience to opt for a change in national leadership and to support either a given political candidate or the Democratic Party in the November election.

A last element which deserves consideration is Eagleton's use of emotional appeals. It becomes difficult to judge the emotional content of a speech purely from the message itself. Most, if not all, of the speeches Eagleton gave are not accurately reflected in the releases distributed to the public. A comparison of his taped acceptance speech at the Democratic Convention with that distributed for release, as an example, indicated numerous additions and deletions of material. The speaker's ability to interject emotion depends to a large degree on his oral techniques of emphasis, voice timbre and modulation,

⁶⁴Karlins and Abelson, pp. 12-13.

and gesturing. Based on the few speeches I personally heard and a review of the content of his speeches as printed in the press releases, I believe emotion was used but played down to the rational and logical appeal.

Although White, in his book, The Making of the President 1960, states, "It is to reach instinct and emotion that the great election campaigns are organized. Whatever issues are discussed, are discussed only secondarily, in an attempt to reach emotions,"⁶⁵ experimental studies into emotional appeals are not so conclusive. Findings suggest that the kind of message and kind of audience largely determine its use. Sometimes emotional appeals are more effective, sometimes factual ones.⁶⁶ The choice appears to rest on the persuader's ability to correctly analyze his audience.

⁶⁵Theodore H. White, The Making of the President 1960, Mentor Books (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1967), p. 243.

⁶⁶Karlins and Abelson, pp. 35-37.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The primary purpose of this study has been to arrive at an answer to the question posed at the beginning of the investigation: "How influential was the rhetoric of Thomas Francis Eagleton in gaining support for the 1972 Democratic campaign?". The question itself was purposely designed with the assumption that Eagleton's rhetoric was effective. This presumption has merit in that the ability to sway audiences was a prerequisite for the attainment of public support during his rise in politics.. The supposition was also necessary to demonstrate my belief that each of us employs rhetoric in our daily lives to influence the opinion and behavior of others. We are influential to the extent that our individual uniqueness as human beings is permitted to flourish; that we are effective is confirmed by our continued survival. The question, then, resolves itself to a measurement of the degree to which rhetoric influences the attainment of our goals.

Conclusions to Study

As the study progressed, it became obvious that the answer to the question of Eagleton's effectiveness rested in his ability to respond to the rhetorical situation. While his boyhood experiences and previous election contests

sharpened his rhetorical tools, more importantly they instilled in him a dedication to change and a liberal political philosophy that was to serve both as a reference point for his later life and as a channel within which his political responses would be framed. Within the constraints presented by his philosophy and the mood of the country, Eagleton's response to the situational exigencies was highly effective. The issues Eagleton stressed demanded rhetorical address and were skillfully woven into his advocacy for change. His artful use of the available techniques of persuasion was instrumental in promoting the image of an effective campaigner and is considered to be the basis for his ability to draw support.

To say that Eagleton's rhetoric was highly effective, however, requires further qualification. It is to be noted that the 1972 Democratic campaign resolved itself into two distinct goals: first, to gain support for the National ticket, and, second, to gain support for the Congressional and state-wide elections in progress. In reference to gaining voter support for the McGovern-Eagleton ticket or McGovern-Shriver ticket, it is believed Senator Eagleton was not as influential as a more middle-of-the-road candidate would have been. While I agree with Eagleton's comment that President Nixon "orchestrated policies and events so ably from a vote-getting point of view that

in 1972 he was unbeatable--by anyone,"¹ I also believe that Eagleton's national support was confined largely to a political minority of voters sympathetic to the liberal appeal, and that his espoused philosophy, not his rhetorical ability, defined the limitation of this support. Although the National election was a political disaster for the Democrats, the reverse was true in their goal to control Congress and elect local candidates. It is this area of the political arena which became Eagleton's forte and it is concluded that here, freed of the constraints of having to modify the McGovern image, Eagleton performed a highly effective support role for the Democratic campaign.

It is also concluded that although the Eagleton Affair dealt a crippling blow to the Democrat's chances for a National victory, a major portion of the problem could have been resolved by Eagleton's making his appeal to the nation one week earlier than he did. The combination of his two appearances on CBS television did afford him excellent media coverage for presentation of his case to the American people, and his defense was adjudged highly effective in swaying public support toward his retention. The timing, however, was wrong. There was insufficient time within which his growing support could be reflected by opinion polls and media efforts. While

¹Kansas City Star, March 15, 1973, p. 25.

undoubtedly Eagleton's defensive appeal would function to bolster his chances for retention of his Senate seat in 1974, it had a negligible effect in promoting his continuance on the 1972 Democratic Party ticket.

Lastly, if a comprehensive conclusion or meaning can be derived from the thesis, it would be that Eagleton's political rhetoric cannot be divorced from the overall aura of the campaign. The many factors and variables which were operative served both to constrain and modify Eagleton's public speaking. By far, the most influential of these factors was Senator McGovern and the political course he chose for national recognition.

Observations on Rhetoric

I am, in a sense, regretful at having to conclude a work which has consumed many months of daily effort and has assumed obsession proportions. As each chapter grew in length, so grew both my knowledge of the subject and my desire to probe deeper into other areas of rhetorical concern. In closing the study, it seems fitting to reflect upon some thoughts that this author deems germane to an analysis of rhetorical communication. First, there appears to be a tendency to concentrate analytical efforts on the message portion of the hypothetical sender-message-receiver model. The message becomes the vehicle by which the speaker's persuasive efforts are evaluated largely

because of the availability of oral and written material. In so doing, it is felt that the speaker or sender enters the picture only as a generating mechanism and the audience or receiver plays the passive role of a "sounding board." What appears to be neglected, then, is that the speaker does not always transmit exactly what he wishes conveyed nor does the audience always hear or interpret the speaker's message as it was intended. An area of future study in Eagleton's case would be a determination of his rhetorical ability through a detailed examination of his persuasive intentions before speaking, an analysis of the speech as presented, and an in-depth opinion sampling of the audience both before and after his rhetorical address.

Second, as has been noted earlier, a determination of the function of a particular message rests largely with sender. A communicator addressing a speech to a limited audience may have the ulterior motive of aiming his message to a larger audience or simply of receiving media coverage on his appearance. This becomes particularly true of political candidates who cannot afford to overlook any means of persuasion nor any channel of dissemination in their search for potential voters. In the limited time available for preparation of a thesis, this important area of concern was largely neglected. A profitable study could be undertaken through a comparison of Eagleton's

attempts at media coverage with that actually obtained. Each of his major speeches in various states could receive a functional determination and then be judged in terms of state-wide and national radio, television, and newspaper coverage through a review of the Broadcasting Yearbook and other available publications.

Third, if one accepts the premise that "man is a political animal," the study of rhetorical communication becomes open to the inquiry of all disciplines concerned with man's adaptation to his environment. As the term "politics" can be broadened to assume the connotation "organized society," rhetoric can and should be viewed as the principal means by which man makes this adaptation. It is believed that an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of rhetoric holds the key to a future comprehensive analysis of this larger function of rhetorical communication. An election campaign becomes an ideal time in which to attempt such an integrated approach. The wealth of material which presented itself during this 1972 campaign should not be permitted to slip into the historical records without the careful analysis of our scientific community.

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