

1-1-1990

A Historical-Rhetorical Analysis Of The 1980/ 1984 Campaign Rhetoric Of Ronald Reagan

Mark A. Herman

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Speech Communication](#) at Eastern Illinois University.
[Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Herman, Mark A., "A Historical-Rhetorical Analysis Of The 1980/1984 Campaign Rhetoric Of Ronald Reagan" (1990). *Masters Theses*. 688.
<http://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/688>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

A HISTORICAL - RHETORICAL ANALYSIS
OF THE 1980/1984 CAMPAIGN
RHETORIC OF RONALD REAGAN

HERMAN

THESIS REPRODUCTION CERTIFICATE

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

8-4-90

Date

Mark A. Romano

Author

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because _____

Date

Author

A Historical-Rhetorical Analysis of

The 1980/1984 Campaign Rhetoric of Ronald Reagan

(TITLE)

BY

Mark A. Herman

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1990

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

8-3-90

DATE

B. J. McClernan

ADVISER

8/3/90

DATE

Greg Berk

DEPARTMENT HEAD

ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study was to identify and evaluate the most salient image-making rhetorical skills employed by Ronald Reagan on television during the presidential campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

The Hypothesis of the Study: It was hypothesized that Ronald Reagan employed a variety of television image-making skills during his campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

Materials of the Study: Research was limited to a study of the materials available in the libraries of Eastern Illinois University and the University of Illinois. The materials selected were chosen on the basis of overall benefit to the study, and contain the most salient discussions of Ronald Reagan and the presidential campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

All the materials concerning Reagan's campaign rhetoric in the libraries of Eastern Illinois University and the University of Illinois were researched. Some of the materials looked specifically at the campaigns themselves, others viewed the role that television played in politics, and still others revealed Reagan's use of television as a tool to communicate his ideas to the public.

Criteria of the Study: The study was focused by the

following question: What unique rhetorical skills were employed by the Reagan campaign, including: video choreographed media events, image-laden themes and symbols, and Reagan's overall persona? Denton asserted, "Presidential campaigns, in a broad sense, are complex exercises in the creation, re-creation, and transmission of symbols, themes, and images through communication... Campaigns, then, are great sources of potential information and contain elements that impact our decision-making" (Denton, 1988, p. 33). These bits of potential information can thus be used to modify the voter's attitudes and opinions.

Conclusions: The hypothesis of this study was supported. In fact, following a careful analysis of all the material presented, there is strong evidence that suggests Reagan's victories in 1980 and again in 1984 were based largely on his ability to manipulate the medium of television to his advantage. Using TV as his podium, Ronald Reagan clearly used preplanned media events; video-oriented images, symbols, and themes; and his charismatic conservative personality to dramatically and permanently change the presidential campaign.

The following suggestions for further study are

offered:

- 1) A study attempting to determine the impact video has on TV viewers, versus the audio portion of a television news story.
- 2) A study comparing Reagan's campaign rhetoric with that of George Bush, our country's first president.
- 3) A study replicating the Roper Report, attempting to redetermine the reliability the general public has places on TV in comparison to radio, newspapers, and magazines.
- 4) A study surveying reporters to find out how they report preplanned media events.
- 5) A study surveying presidential campaign managers to determine the most important parts of a campaign-- from their perspective.
- 6) A study to find out what presidential candidates believe about the status of the modern campaign, and what they believe are the most important campaign strategies today.
- 7) A study of modern technologies used by presidential candidates in 1992.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The creation of a thesis is an exhaustive effort requiring the talents and support of many patient, thoughtful individuals and not just one solitary mind. There are several people I wish to single out for their assistance in the completion of this work.

First, my thanks goes out to Dr. B. F. McClerren, who served as the director of this thesis. Dr. McClerren provided a wealth of experience and wisdom to its creation, and was instrumental in its successful completion. In fact, I would have never embarked on this journey without his kind encouragement.

Advice and constructive criticism is always important in completing a study of this size, and my committee members, Dr. Frank Parcells and Dr. Floyd Merritt assisted in this regard. My thanks to both for being an important set of editorial eyes. (Even if the past appears to sometimes read like the present).

Next, a very special word of gratitude must be given to a fellow graduate student of mine, John Wiley, whose computer and friendship made the job of typing this thesis much more bearable. Thanks John, for I'd

probably still be typing without your help!

Finally, my family and friends must be recognized for the moral support they provided while I labored over this thesis. Their unfailing love and care has been a blessing during these months of intense research. To all these people I owe my thanks in this accomplishment.

The Meaningless Messenger

The New Age Wants Action
The New Age Wants Thrills
The Children Want Motion
So Swift That It Kills
The Peaceful Generation
Fills Their Lungs With Smoke
Only To Die Early
Ignoring What Was Spoke

-Eric Skoog-

1990

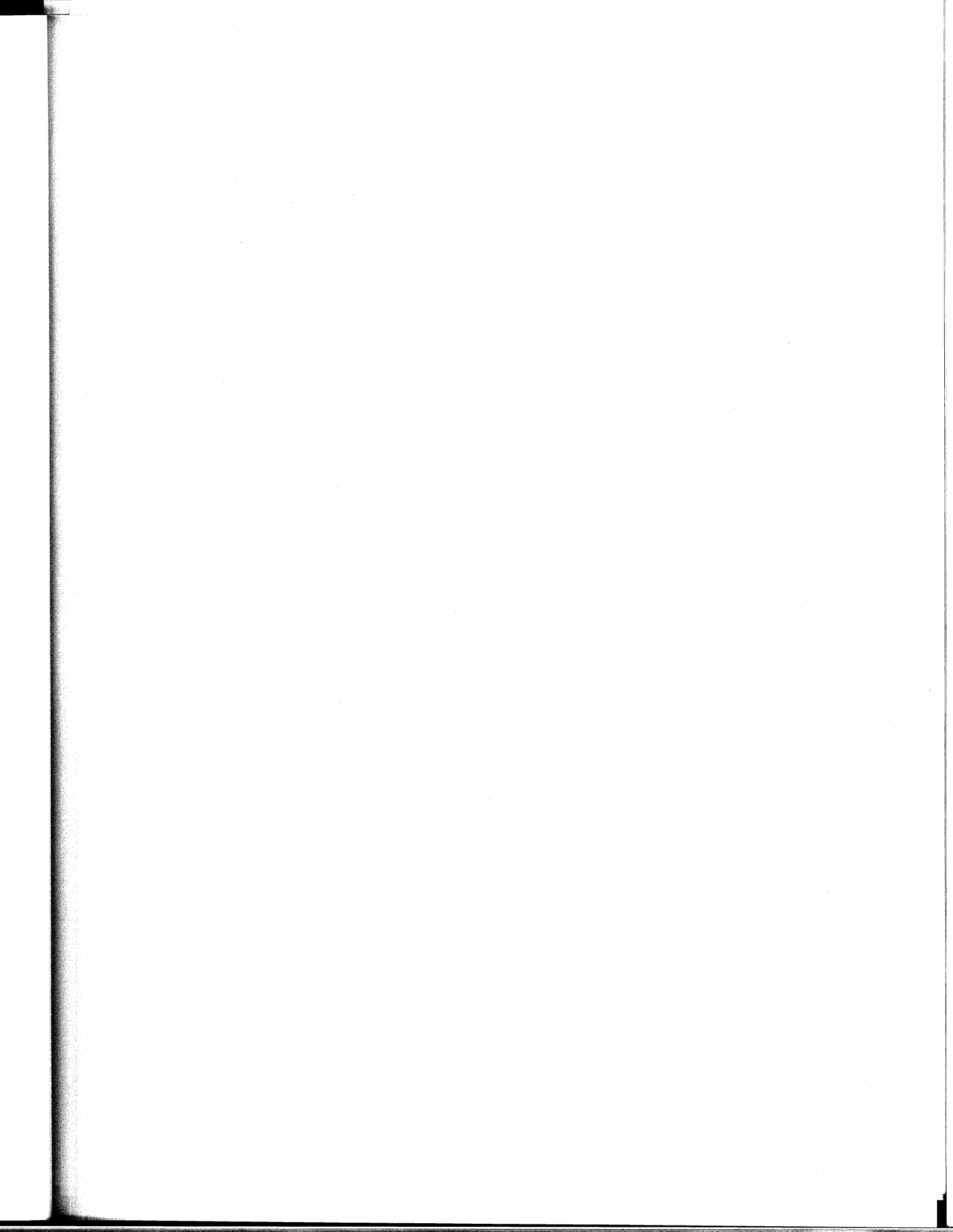


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY.....	1
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Limitation of the Study.....	4
The Working Hypothesis.....	5
Criteria of the Study.....	5
Materials of the Study.....	10
Significance of the Study.....	11
Review of Literature.....	13
Organization of the Study.....	13
II. THE MEDIA AND PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS.....	16
An Historical Overview.....	16
The 1952 Campaign.....	23
The 1956 Campaign.....	28
The 1960 Campaign.....	31
The 1964 Campaign.....	35
The 1968 Campaign.....	37
The 1972 Campaign.....	44
The 1976 Campaign.....	46
III. THE REAGAN BIOGRAPHY.....	51
IV. THE ELECTION OF 1980.....	64
Controlled Media Events.....	65
Images, Themes, and Symbols.....	84
The Reagan Persona.....	101
Conclusions on Campaign '80.....	105
V. THE ELECTION OF 1984.....	107
Orchestrated Media Events of 1984.....	108
Images, Themes, and Symbols in 1984.....	129
The Reagan Persona in 1984.....	141
The Bully Pulpit.....	147
Conclusions on Campaign '84.....	149
VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	151
Summary.....	151
Conclusion.....	153
Suggestions for Further Study.....	169
REFERENCES.....	171

Chapter I

The Nature and Purpose of the Study

In a span of only 40 years, the medium of television has developed from a fascinating experiment into the nation's communication life blood. Television signals were being picked up in almost 95 percent of all U.S. homes within fifteen years of its introduction (Gilbert, 1972, p. 3), and today, that figure comes close to total penetration. In a majority of those homes, at least one TV is on an average of more than six hours a day (Swerdlow, 1988, p. 18), and Denton (1986, p. 270) wrote, "It regulates our work, sleep, play, sex, and even our bathroom habits."

The Roper Report (Rubin, 1967, p. 3) found conclusive evidence that television news was more believable, and more frequently turned to than newspapers, magazines, or radio. In fact, the majority of those surveyed considered TV the dominant source of information and entertainment (Iyengar, 1987, p. 1).

Thus, it comes as no surprise that this immensely popular, generally trusted medium, with its ability to reach large numbers of people, has become an important tool for politicians. Television has made it possible for a president to appear and speak directly before not

only the nation, but the entire world. Television is literally the structure upon which presidential politics is based (Arterton, 1984). Minow (1973, p. vii), however, warned that "the drafters of the American Constitution strove diligently to prevent the power of the president from becoming a monopoly, but our inability to manage television has allowed the medium to be converted into an electronic throne." Minow believed that TV has changed the relationship between the speaker and the audience. Instead of addressing live people in the flesh, the speaker addresses a camera. And while there may be a "live" audience at the rally, the number of people present at the event is insignificant when compared with the numbers who watch the broadcast on TV. "The viewers are presented a package-- the picture and sound they see on their sets at home. In this context, power to affect public opinion shifts to the packagers, the technicians and advisers who construct the TV program" (Lowe, 1981, p. 50).

Presidential hopefuls have been quick to make their campaigns more visual and image oriented for the millions of viewers who tune in to watch the news each evening. Taking advantage of photo opportunities and image-making

has become the most important aspect of any successful campaign (MacNeil, 1968, p. xiii). The issues the candidate chooses to address have become less important than how the images are portrayed to the nation. Who is the most photogenic? Who projects the best, and appears to be strong, but natural "on the air"? In short, television has helped create a situation in which being a successful political leader means little more than being a great television actor.

Walter Mondale said it following defeat by Ronald Reagan in the 1984 presidential elections: "Modern politics requires a mastery of television... I've never warmed up to television, and it's never warmed up to me. I like to look people in the eye. There's something about television I've never been comfortable with" (Denton, 1988, p. i).

Ronald Reagan, on the other hand, has had no problem speaking to the unblinking eye of the TV camera; conforming himself, his words, his image, to the constraints of the TV screen. Dye (1986) wrote of his television presidency:

Reagan does little without an assessment of its visual image. When employment was in double-digit figures, Reagan avoided black-

tie dinners and began to appear at job-training centers. His trips abroad are as carefully arranged as motion pictures, down to the last detail of the best camera angle to show him gazing across the Berlin Wall or walking up to the Great Wall of China. (p. 242)

Reagan and his image-makers, more than any other president in history, used his acting skills, cinematic language, and orchestrated settings, to take full advantage of the medium of television both in 1980 and 1984 and become one of the most popular presidents ever (Erickson, 1985, p. 1).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify and evaluate the most salient image-making rhetorical skills employed by Ronald Reagan on television during the presidential campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

Limitation of the Study

The study was limited to Ronald Reagan's use of television during the 1980 and 1984 presidential campaigns.

The study focused on Reagan as the primary

television rhetorician, although as Dow (1961, p. 317) noted, "the message is devised by a cooperative effort of various creative persons and technicians."

Paid political advertisements and presidential debates are two other important aspects of any modern television campaign. I chose not to study advertisements because they are invented largely by the campaign team, and least resemble any type of traditional rhetoric. Campaign debates were not included for study largely because they have already received consideration by a wealth of other practitioners.

The Working Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that Ronald Reagan employed a variety of television image-making skills during his campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

The Criteria of the Study

The study was focused by the following question: What unique rhetorical skills were employed by the Reagan campaign, including: video choreographed media events, image-laden themes and symbols, and Reagan's overall persona? Denton asserted, "Presidential campaigns, in a broad sense, are complex exercises in the creation, re-creation, and transmission of symbols, themes, and images through communication... Campaigns, then, are great

sources of potential information and contain elements that impact our decision-making" (Denton, 1988, p. 33). These bits of potential information can thus be used to modify the voters' attitudes and opinions.

Adams (1983, p. 164) has compiled a list of seven primary elements that comprise any modern political campaign communication: a) themes, b) agenda, c) treatment, d) endorsements, e) advertisements, f) persona and g) entertainment. He suggests that these various areas need to be considered in any attempt to assess differences in media messages.

Saldich's (1979, p. 31) list is slightly different in her book on television's impact on the political process. TV campaigns, according to Saldich, generally include formal speeches, debates, news coverage, political advertisements, filmed biographies, interviews, and planned press conferences (Saldich, 1979, p. 31).

Because I dealt specifically with television, I combined and reduced these two lists, and developed the three aforementioned television criteria that had an observable impact on the outcomes of the elections of 1980 and 1984. In order to gain a more complete understanding of the criteria, a thorough definition of

each was included.

Pseudo-Events:

Nimmo (1970) defined pseudo-event as:

Contrived and illusionary-- planned to deceive in that it is contrived to appear as spontaneous without being so. It is designed to catch the attention of the news media and be widely reported, it camouflages the actual situation so that the underlying reality is ambiguous and obscure, and it is intended to produce consequences to the advantage of a particular group, interest, or person. (p. 26)

Press conferences, rallies, protest demonstrations, and trips to locations that visualize an issue are common "medialities" (Ranney, 1983, p. 23). Many argue that media events have changed the form of traditional campaign rhetoric irreversibly. For example, Ward Just, a newspaper reporter, described a 1980 Edward Kennedy campaign rally that he both personally attended and watched that night on TV. The speech he witnessed in person bore scant resemblance to the one that was on the news that night. "The event seemed to me arranged by television, for television, and the TV reporter was in

the middle of it the way a newspaper reporter seldom is" (Lowe, 1981, p. 54).

Symbols, Images, Themes:

Nimmo (1970) said that symbols are selected and employed by politicians largely to:

impress a large audience, evoke a sympathetic response from spectators, identify the candidate with the most cherished traditions, rules, and folk heroes of the party and of America, and convey a sense of relevance, meaning, timeliness, and appropriateness to what the candidate is saying. (p. 23)

Nimmo and Savage (1976) also wrote Candidates and Their Images, and Boorstin (1962) wrote The Image: Or What Happened to the American Dream. Both books defined the importance of creating a positive image for any successful politician. Boorstin wrote, "Images are artificial representations or imitations of the external form of any object, especially of a person. They are synthetic, believable, passive, vivid, simplified, and ambiguous" (Boorstin, 1962, p. 185; Arterton, 1984, p. 107). Nimmo and Savage (1976, p. 5) expanded these adjectives to help pin down an image and how it is used

by the candidate.

Images are synthetic in that they are created especially to serve a purpose, to make an impression... An image is passive in that it does not change; rather, a person lives up to it... An image is vivid in its portrayal of reality in concrete ways... An image is simplified in that it is not the object or person it represents, rather it is a far simpler depiction... Finally, an image is ambiguous in that it is partial, incomplete, an outline that we are left free to fill in with a combination of our senses and imagination. (p. 5)

In short, voters take an interest in selected candidates, form images of them, and on election day, those images help them make up their minds.

Persona:

Nimmo's book The Political Persuaders (1970), described a candidate's personality as:

A composite of how he performs on the medium, his political role, and his personal qualities... The television adviser exploits the best features of the candidate's personality to form the 'television

personality'. By research, rehearsal, and staging events, the candidate is never allowed to expose his 'naked personality'. (p. 144)

Materials of the Study

Research was limited to a study of the materials available in the libraries of Eastern Illinois University and the University of Illinois. The materials selected were chosen on the basis of overall benefit to the study, and contain the most salient discussions of Ronald Reagan and the presidential campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

Some of the research looked specifically at the campaigns themselves, others looked at the role television played in politics, and still other materials revealed Ronald Reagan's use of television as a tool to communicate his ideas to the public. Material from each of these specific areas has been gleaned to uncover the specific role television played in Ronald Reagan's campaign rhetoric. The most significant sources for the study included the following:

Arterton, F. C. (1984). Media politics. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath and Company.

Blume, K. (1985). The presidential election show: '84 and beyond on the nightly news. South Hadley, Mass.:

Bergin and Garvey Publishers, Inc.

Dallek, R. (1984). Ronald Reagan: the politics of symbolism. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Denton, R. E. (1988). The prime time presidency of Ronald Reagan. New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.

Drew, E. (1981). Portrait of an election: the 1980 presidential campaign. New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster.

Erickson, P. D. (1985). Reagan speaks: the making of an American myth. New York, N.Y.: New York University Press.

Gilbert, R. E. (1972). Television and presidential politics. North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House.

Schram, M. (1987). The great American video game: presidential politics in the television age. New York, N.Y.: New York University Press.

Significance of the Study

This study is of value to persons having an interest in public address, political science, and history. Many sources provide the reader a general overview of the relationship now existing between the medium of

television and politics. Still more look at Reagan's persuasive abilities, and his use of TV. This thesis attempted to bring together this wide variety of material to provide a more complete and specific compilation of Ronald Reagan's television rhetoric in the campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

This study is of historical value, as it reveals a definite time frame in which to differentiate the presidential campaign rhetoric of 1980 and 1984; the campaigns when Reagan made the use of television a requirement and other traditional forms of rhetoric obsolete. Historians will be able to look at this study as a means of finding out the tactics our first made-for-TV President used. Denton (1988, p. 5) wrote, "We are witnessing the evolution of the 'new presidential rhetoric' that differs in both form and content from that of only 20 years ago.

Thus, it is useful to focus on some of these changes."

In addition, this thesis is heuristic, as it provides future practitioners in the field of communication with a perspective upon which to study the symbiotic relationship that exists between political campaigns and television.

Finally, this study is of personal value. It was a great learning experience, and gives me much personal satisfaction and pride. Thompson (1947) noted that a thesis:

is a rich educational experience which provides training in research methods; requires the integration of the knowledge and the skills of several fields... makes the student an expert within a defined area, and leads to conclusions regarding the theory and practice of rhetoric in our own time. (p. 227)

Hockett (1955, p. 12) noted the value of a thesis as well. "A master's essay may make a real even if minor contribution to historical knowledge and thus become a source of justifiable pride on the part of the author."

Review of Literature

A review of literature revealed that this study is an original topic for an historical/rhetorical analysis. The Index to Journals in Communications Studies Through 1985 revealed no relevant studies concerning the television campaign rhetoric of Ronald Reagan.

Organization of the Study

This study was divided into six chapters as follows:

Chapter One, is the nature and purpose of the study, which provided the reader with a general introduction, limitation, significance, and the hypotheses to be reported in this study.

Chapter Two, is a historical overview, and looked into the development of television and how it has altered the course of presidential campaigning in the 40 years of its existence. Each of the seven prior TV campaigns were considered as sources of innovation and rhetorical change.

Chapter Three, provided the reader with a biography of "The Great Communicator", Ronald Reagan, the country's first made-for-TV president.

Chapter Four, looked at the three strategies used in the successful 1980 presidential campaign of Ronald Reagan, and the various reasons for its eventual success.

Chapter Five, contained a report of findings on the 1984 campaign bid of Reagan. Again, the three criteria outlined earlier were used as a guide for this chapter.

Chapter Six, the summary and conclusion, provided me with an opportunity to reveal some opinions about the importance of TV in presidential politics, as well as take a look at the future and what may be in store for

Ronald Reagan

15

presidential aspirants in 1992.

Chapter II

The Media and Presidential CampaignsAn Historical Overview:

The purpose of the research demonstrated in this chapter was to provide a panoramic view of the role of television in American presidential campaigns, specifically from 1952 to 1976. Such an overview provided a more complete perspective for studying the 1980 and 1984 television campaigns of Ronald Reagan.

In general, the advent of television in the political process has been a mixed blessing. It brought people closer to politics and government, but it may have distorted the view. It brought distant events into the living room, but provides only part of the picture-- usually the most dramatic. It gave political image-makers a new, handy, all-purpose tool for electing candidates to public office. But the tool is just as useful for creating a false image as for projecting the real one. Finally, while television has also reduced the gap between the citizen and government, it has also furnished the manipulators of information a handy device for creating events which barely justify the effort (Mickelson, 1972, p. 25, 26).

Effective use of television has become the key

factor to political success; an evolution that Denton (1988, p. 5) called a "mediacracy," and Rubin (1967, p. 1) called "polivision." This new presidential rhetoric of sound bites and staged events differs drastically from the public address of our founding fathers 200 years ago. America has always had great communicators, and our political leaders have always been those who mastered the communications technology of their age best (Denton, 1988, p. 2).

Four time frames have been developed to divide separate periods of public address in the United States. They are: the Colonial, the Early National, the Later National, and the Contemporary. The divisions were created to show significant alterations in American rhetorical styles and societal issues and events. Similarly, American political campaign address has been divided up into time frames. Denton (1988, p. 19, 20) Gilbert (1972, p. 11) and others have created breakdowns to show how changes in political speaking style tends to coincide with the advent of new media and campaign tactics.

The first of Gilbert's five periods began with the writing of the Constitution, and lasted until the late

1820's. This was a time of newspaper domination and limited public campaigning. The candidate did little in the way of formal campaigning, but instead had friends, supporters, and local newspapers debate the issues of the times (Gilbert, 1972, p. 11).

The second period began in 1828 with Andrew Jackson and lasted until 1880. It was characterized by torchlight parades and 'stump speeches'. Political parties often sponsored their own newspapers dedicated to publicizing the party's position (Gilbert, 1972, p. 11).

Beginning in 1880, there was an even heavier reliance on the printed word. Newspaper advertisements were used, and the wire service assisted in nationalizing events, but generally, political communication depended on face to face contact (Gilbert, 1972, p. 11). During the third period, a local party chairman was to be acquainted with as many voters in his territory as possible. Regular contact was maintained and favors were distributed to ensure election victory. Few people moved, which also helped to keep things stable (Arterton, 1984, p. 7).

By the turn of the century, the modern campaign was already beginning to be put in place. The emphasis now was on the personality of the candidate, not the party; a

push toward the national campaign, not community events; and, a campaign of packaging, posed pictures, and slogans (Gitlin, 1990, p.24). This change was signaled by Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address in which he established a trend towards brevity and simplicity in oratory (Denton, 1988, p. 4).

The only thing that was missing was a national medium. In fact, following the presidential election of 1912, Woodrow Wilson said, "One of the serious difficulties of politics in this country is provincialism, the general absence of national information and national opinion" (Minow, 1973, p. 26).

That was developed in the fourth period of presidential campaigning, which began at this time and continued until 1952. This forever changed the nature of U.S. politics as Wilson had predicted. The public was now able to hear the candidates respond to various events almost immediately. "Radio crossed ethnic and regional boundaries. Politicians had to speak at audiences, not with them, and the press became filters rather than vehicles of political communication" (Denton, 1988, p. 4).

The national scope of the campaigns also provided a

watchdog function. It forced candidates to be truthful about their issues at all times. For example, Gitlin (1990, p. 24) wrote, "Candidates found it harder to whisper to white southern voters what they were afraid to proclaim out loud in the north." Both Harding and Coolidge used radio as a political tool, and Hoover helped place the first set of regulations on broadcasting with the Federal Radio Act of 1927 (Minow, 1973, p. 28).

But it was Franklin D. Roosevelt that first took full advantage of the medium with his historically famous fireside chats. Roosevelt possessed a commanding voice that melted minds; yet his physical handicap (polio) likely would have hindered him on television. Almost all these chats were delivered during "prime time" when upwards of 60 million Americans were tuned in. "He had an ability to create a feeling of intimacy between himself and his listeners, a skill in placing emphasis on key words, and an adroitness in presenting complicated matters in such simple terms that the man in the street understands" (Minow, 1973, p. 30). Roosevelt was also the first president to appear live on television when he opened an experimental exhibit at the New York World's Fair in 1939.

The current period of presidential campaigning began

in 1952 with the TV campaigns of Eisenhower and Stevenson. TV made the world smaller, more immediate, and the candidates even more intimate (Gilbert, 1972, p. 11). But while the candidates appeared more intimate with the advent of TV, the candidate's organization was much more impersonal and temporary. The candidate had to overcome modern barriers to interpersonal contact such as: upwardly mobile residents, suburban housing patterns, and long commutes to work. Communications techniques also changed. Precinct captains were replaced by telephones, computer assisted targeting, direct mail, and popularity polls (Arterton, 1984, p. 7). The traditional role of political parties, to provide a relatively permanent structure to communicate between candidates and voters, was made obsolete by technological change.

With television, a president can attract an audience of 100 million or more with a single address. To reach an audience of that size in person, a president would have to make over 1,000 speeches to capacity crowds at the nations largest stadiums! (Minow, 1973, p. 19). But what price do we pay for this efficiency in speaking? Presidential campaign observer Theodore White argued that television possesses great power with the public. "It

sets the agenda of public discussion; and this sweeping political power is unrestrained by any law. It determines what people will talk and think about... An authority that in other nations is reserved for tyrants, priests, and mandarins" (White, 1972, p. 327).

McWilliams (1989, p. 140) argued that the price has been voter indifference grown out of superficial media events.

Traditional politics, like older forms of entertainment, drew citizens into public places; (television now) brings politics to individuals in private retreats. Sight is our quickest sense, but it is also superficial, and the media's discontinuity of image and affect encourages emotional detachment, adaption rather than commitment. A politics of the visible comes naturally to, and teaches us to be, a world of strangers...

To classical political theory, speech, not sight, is the most political of the faculties because it is in and through speech that we discover the boundaries and terms of political community. But political speech-- and, especially, listening to political

speech-- is a skill and pleasure that must be learned. It demands an extended span of attention, the capacity for critical reflection, and that art of hearing that lets us separate meaning from its disguises. Always difficult, that command of rhetoric is harder to cultivate in a society as supersonic as ours, and the electronic media actually undermine the arts of speech and hearing. Preoccupied with holding their audience, television programmers shun anything that might bore us, a logic that tends toward the lowest common denominator.

The 1952 Campaign:

1952 was the year that Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson battled it out with TV as the new weapon in their arsenals. By 1952, an estimated 18 million television sets were in use nationwide, and both the Democratic and Republican National Conventions were televised live from gavel to gavel out of Chicago (Thomson, 1956, p. 21; Lang, 1984, p. 59). Many controversial issues were discussed that year, including TV's right to cover various committee meetings, as well

as little known candidate's rights to free television time (Section 315).

The arrival of the television camera necessitated a variety of changes by both the candidates themselves and their supporters. Organizers for the '52 Democratic Convention worked hard to make sure that it would be tailored to TV. Slogans and banners were strategically placed to be in plain view of cameras. Speeches were timed and rehearsed with teleprompters. And the delegates themselves were given flyers asking them to always be on time and behave. "It is likely you will make your first appearance as an actor in a television production (the convention). We can not rehearse our roles. We can not always consciously govern our actions in light of the fact that whatever we do is being viewed by a substantial part of America" (Thomson, 1956, p. 35; The influence, 1954, p. 7).

Obviously, the candidates had to be even more aware of the fact that literally anything they said or did might be filmed for the evening news. And even though General Eisenhower was already the most admired living American (Gilbert, 1972, p. 132), and a household name with most voters, his campaign advisers recognized that

TV, "with its triple advantages of sight, sound, and motion," could make the difference. Thus, a group calling itself the "TV Plans Board" set out to take advantage of television and help to inject some drama into the Eisenhower movement (Barkin, 1986, p. 20).

The technique of selling the president to the public had officially begun. Barkin reported a wide variety of techniques the campaign used to accomplish this, following the release of a pamphlet called, "One Billion Doorbells" (Barkin, 1986, p. 20). For example, at the Republican National Convention, more than 800 straw hats emblazoned with "Ike" stickers were passed out to supporters in an attempt to attract attention on television (p. 22). Later, when Eisenhower hit the campaign trail, the TV Plans Board developed ideas for on-location outings that would likely receive coverage. These included a visit to a nuclear power plant for a discussion of his position on atomic energy, a trip to Boston Commons for a dialogue with voters on the meaning of citizenship, and a discussion of civil rights issues with a group of blacks (Barkin, 1986, p. 23). All these staged situations were intended to create pro-Eisenhower impressions. These tactics attempted to project the image of Eisenhower, the great wartime leader, as a great

family man and civilian leader as well (Gilbert, 1972, p. 132). He would also mention his wife Mamie during his brief spot announcements and thereby underline his fine human qualities. The fact that Eisenhower spoke of his wife while Governor Stevenson was divorced was also a subtle appeal for votes, particularly to the women of the country (p. 132).

Graber (1984, p. 71) pointed out that the Republican team also successfully selected three important campaign issues: "the three K's-- Korea, Corruption, and Communism", to catapult Eisenhower into the White House. These three issues are called "valence issues"-- a proposition, condition, or belief, that is positively valued by all voters (Graber, 1984, p. 71). Thus, the Eisenhower campaign selected issues everyone agreed with, instead of a "position issue" (like abortion) on which voters take a pro/con stance. And while Stevenson came up short in his bid for the presidency (Gilbert, 1972), his campaign manager had this to say about the race and the influence TV had:

"I think that had it not been for television, there would have been one, two, three, or four million votes fewer for Adlai Stevenson. The fact that a

man who was not at all well known on the national scene could garner as many votes for himself as he did, I think that must be attributed in large part to television and radio." (p. 145)

Richard Nixon also made his first appearance before the American public during the 1952 campaign. Nixon was accused of accepting more than \$18,000 in illegal campaign contributions. Eisenhower, on the other hand, had specifically made a campaign issue out of corruption. That left Nixon on the verge of being dropped from the ticket (The annals, 1976, p. 91). The TV Plans Board advised Eisenhower, "If you want to save Nixon, the only way you can do it is with the power and speed of television" (Barkin, 1986, p. 24). Thus, Nixon appeared on nationwide television and adeptly explained that the money wasn't used personally, and he had never accepted any political gift--except for a cocker spaniel puppy named Checkers (Nimmo, 1970, p. 1). During his speech, Nixon also said, "Pat (his wife) doesn't have a mink coat. But she does have a respectable Republican cloth coat. And I always tell her she'd look good in anything" (Wyckoff, 1968, p. 55). The speech was full of honest, emotional, family images that touched the hearts of millions of people who watched. Eventually, more than

one million letters, telegrams, and calls came in begging Eisenhower to keep Nixon on the Republican ticket (Wyckoff, 1968, p. 55). Television drama had saved Nixon's political career... at least in 1952.

The 1956 Campaign:

Adlai Stevenson returned to the presidential horse race as a known entity in 1956, and more experienced in the role television needed to play in his campaign (Gilbert, 1972, p. 148). He used regular TV speeches and spot announcements to present his position on the important issues facing the nation.

Stevenson however, still didn't demonstrate complete mastery over the medium that he was attempting to take advantage of. On more than one occasion, he was cut off the air in mid-sentence, and before the conclusion of the speech because he had run out of time. Even his campaign kick-off speech ran into trouble. "Stevenson made an undistinguished speech. His voice was high and thin. He was popeyed in his race with an erratic teleprompter, and so nervous he even mispronounced the name of his running mate" (Gilbert, 1972, p. 150).

On the other side of the political fence, the

biggest campaign issue for President Eisenhower was his health. After suffering a heart attack earlier in the year, questions about his ability to hold office four more years began to surface. However, thanks to television, Eisenhower was able to project an image of health and vitality, and dispel the idea that Vice President Nixon would have to take over mid-term. And while the Republican campaign made a point of showing Eisenhower's good health, it also stressed themes of peace, prosperity and progress (Gilbert, 1972, p. 153, 154).

But beyond the issues of the campaign, it was again Eisenhower's strong personality that held voters. Gilbert (1972, p. 154) cited a research study done just following the election that showed "the popular appeal of Eisenhower was of paramount importance. The public's approval of President Eisenhower as a person was even greater than it had been in 1952."

An interesting feature that developed during the 1956 campaign was the use of shorter blocks of TV time for political "spot" advertisements. The spots varied from 60 seconds to fifteen minutes, but the trend toward brevity and conciseness was continuing (Gilbert, 1972, p. 155). MacNeil (1968), however, noted that while most all

the modern TV techniques were in place, complete TV exploitation had not yet occurred.

The medium had not yet come to dominate the campaign. Something in the characters of the two men nominated for the presidency may have been a restraining influence. It is more likely that the men who could visualize the wedding of television and mass advertising techniques were still not influential enough with the parties involved. (p. 34)

With the outset of television and its "never blinking eye", politicians needed to consider their appearance, speech, and gestures even more. A book written in 1950 entitled Fundamentals In Television had some interesting thoughts on this very topic. Bolen wrote:

A little coaching and study will enlighten the uninitiated actor so that his first television appearance will at least not let him appear as a complete 'amateur'... Makeup is as important for men as it is for women. The blue-black bearded look is often difficult for the men to overcome. Shaving

before the telecast is important if you have a tendency to have such a beard. The pancake base will eradicate what is left. (p. 129)

Republican presidential candidate Richard Nixon apparently hadn't read Bolen's book, and it may have cost him the presidency in 1960.

The 1960 Campaign:

The 1960 campaign is probably the cornerstone election in the development of television and the packaging of presidential candidates. For it was this election more than any other previous to it that showed TV's ability to elevate one candidate's image while at the same time destroy the other. 1960 matched Republican Vice President Richard Nixon versus Democrat and Catholic John F. Kennedy. It was also the first year that a series of four debates was televised live nationally.

Nixon had already been hard at work on his image as a statesman. He had demonstrated his speaking skill by the cool confidence with which he delivered his famous Checkers speech (Lang, 1984, p. 105). Kennedy was in the public eye as well. A hero in the second World War, Kennedy served in Congress 14 years, had written a national best seller, Profiles in Courage, and his marriage to Jacqueline Bouvier was "a major social event"

(Lang, 1984, p. 105). Thus, in the weeks before the first debate, Nixon's image as a politician and TV personality gave him the edge as the candidate most prepared to serve. The dominant image of Kennedy was that of "a fine young man with some potential" (p. 106).

As a means of positioning, the candidates frequently appeared on a variety of news and interview programs during the campaign year. "The Tonight Show," "Meet The Press," "Presidential Showdown," and "Face The Nation," were excellent opportunities for Nixon and Kennedy to receive free television publicity (Gilbert, 1972, p. 165).

But it was the first presidential debate, September 26, 1960, that was forever remembered as the turning point of the election. And it was the two debater's television images that viewers remembered rather than the content of the program and the issues discussed (Wyckoff, 1968, p. 45).

The following provides a physical description of the two men (With the nation, 1979):

Vice President Nixon, who had been ill, and was in pain from a knee injury, looked tired and pale on the television screen, with deep

shadows under his eyes. Because he had declined to use professional television makeup, he also looked unshaven, and the gray suit he wore provided little contrast with the gray background of the TV set. To millions of TV viewers, Nixon looked 'half-slouched, his face streaked with sweat, his eyes exaggerated hollows of blackness, his jaw, jowls, and face drooping with strain.

In contrast, Kennedy appeared with a natural sun tan, well rested, and vigorous.

(p. 32)

Side by side, Kennedy projected the image of a dynamic, intelligent, articulate leader. Richard Nixon, on the other hand, looked mean, ugly, and haggard. The major ingredient, therefore, in Kennedy's initial step to the White House was his television image as compared with Nixon's. This can be backed up by the fact that those who listened to the first debate on the radio judged Nixon to have turned in a much better performance. But because most of the country watched on TV as history unfolded, Kennedy emerged the clear-cut winner (Gilbert, 1972, p. 169).

The results were devastating. The Nixon campaign

had been relying heavily on the slogan that "experience counts," but in one incredible hour, Kennedy deflated the Republican argument, and furthered his cause of being mature, knowledgeable, and quick-thinking (p. 172). Kennedy gained ground by proving he was able to "stand up the man who stood up to Khrushchev." And while Nixon attempted to make changes in his image for the remaining debates, he failed to gain back the support he had already lost.

One final effort to change voters' minds in favor of Nixon occurred on the day before the election. Following a request by Nixon to take his plea before the people (as he had done in 1952 with his Checkers speech), the Republican party bought four hours of television time and conducted a political telethon. During this time Nixon answered hundreds of questions phoned in to him by viewers all over the country (Gilbert, 1972, p. 182, 183). And while the telethon helped make the election of 1960 one of the closest ever, it could not overturn the momentum generated by the strong TV image Kennedy possessed.

Numerous authors agreed that Kennedy was a speaker made for television. Phillips (1968, p. 38) wrote,

"Kennedy had a pleasing voice, but it may not have been effective on radio. His striking appearance and hand and facial expressions were the factors most instrumental in making him an ideal television speaker."

Likewise, Hoover (1988, p. 41) performed a study on Kennedy's use of television and its effects on the nation. She stated that Kennedy used TV to end all objection to him being a Roman Catholic. He confronted hostile ministers on a panel discussion in Houston, Texas, September 12, 1960. Their visible anger rendered his calm remarks about absolute separation of church and state plainly and reasonable to viewers. From that point on, he received massive Jewish and strong liberal Protestant support (Hoover, 1988, p. 41).

The 1964 Campaign:

The election of 1964 brought two new participants into the political spotlight. Following the assassination of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson had taken over the country as well as the reins of the Democratic Party. Richard Nixon chose to stay out of the running in 1964, and Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater was nominated on the Republican side to replace him.

The use of paid political ads, especially from the Democrats, became more common in 1964 than they had been

up until then. There was the "Daisy" ad, seen by more than 50 million viewers on September 7, 1964. The advertisement, designed to paint the image of Goldwater as warmonger, showed a little girl picking up a daisy and then dissolving into a cloud of atomic dust (Hollander, 1985, p. 88).

The Goldwater team realized it was trailing badly as the campaign got underway, and looked to TV to close the gap (Gilbert, 1972, p. 207). They believed that their candidate was more effective in his use of TV than was Johnson. Therefore, they put great stress on television campaigning, and purchased a substantial amount of TV time for 30-minute addresses, 15-minute talks, and 5-minute spots (Gilbert, 1972, p. 228).

Conversely, the media event which gave President Johnson the greatest positive image exposure and the largest audiences didn't cost the campaign a penny. Research estimates (Gilbert, 1972, p. 212) that more than 75 million homes tuned in to hear Johnson address the country on the sudden communist-oriented problems in the Soviet Union and China. And while Johnson made no specific references to his presidential campaign, he did remind the country that "the key to peace is to be found

in the strength and good sense of the United States of America" (Gilbert, 1972, p. 212, 213). And the Goldwater campaign clearly regarded the speech as a powerful piece of campaign propaganda.

Years before, President Theodore Roosevelt had called the office of the president the "bully pulpit" because of the tremendous opportunity it gave him to preach to the people (Minow, 1973, p. 26). Since then, our presidents have attempted to use the media in such a way that they are always in control. In fact, Denton (1988) wrote,

Presidents Johnson and Nixon attempted to plant favorable questions among the reporters to insure opportunities for presenting their views. In addition, Nixon used a blue curtain as a backdrop and got rid of the lectern to give a more calm, candid, and informal look to the press conferences. (p. 275)

The 1968 Campaign:

The Great Debate of 1960 had a profound effect on the United States political system in the age of TV. Nixon certainly had a different approach to his campaign when he ran again in 1968. His amazing image turnaround

is one of the most impressive stories in the history of video politics. Nixon had learned much from his stinging campaign defeats--mainly that he comes across on television as being dull, boring, and not very presidential. With the help of some of the best brains in the TV and advertising industry, he changed all that (McGinniss, 1969; Hollander, 1985, p. 89). Further, Hollander (1985) described the 1968 Nixon campaign this way:

There would be no debates, no "Meet the Press" or other interview shows... There would be public speeches, press releases, and television. Nixon would become the test tube candidate. Straight from Madison Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue with no stops in between where his beard might show or his suit become rumpled. The campaign would be antiseptic, sterile-- and absolutely phony. (p. 89)

Joe McGinniss' revealing book The Selling of the President 1968 (1969), discussed how Nixon's army of campaign advisers restructured the entire campaign to repackage him in a way less objectionable to the electorate of 1960. McGinniss (1969) wrote:

Television was the only answer despite its sins against him in the past. But not just any kind of television. His would have to be controlled. He would need experts to find the proper settings for him, or if they could not be found, manufacture them. These would have to be men of keen judgment and flawless taste. He was, after all, Richard Nixon, and there was certain things he could not do.

Wearing love beads was one of them. (p. 34)

Nixon hired on a full staff of speechmakers and image-makers, who went to work in the fall of 1967. One area that received attention was Nixon's personality-- or lack of it. For his lack of humor, lack of warmth, and lack of emotion, the response was: "'If we're going to be witty, let a pro write it.' And, 'He should be presented in some kind of a situation rather than cold in a studio-- and it should look unstaged even if its not'" (McGinniss, 1969, p. 36). Nixon was restrained and retrained like no other candidate before or since; a fact that McGinniss (1969) found disturbing. McGinnis stated that, "It was as if they were building not a president but an Astrodome, where the wind would never blow, the temperature never rises or falls, and the ball never

bounces erratically on the artificial grass (p. 39)."

Next, to go along with the made for TV image, a new rhetorical slogan was created. "This Time, Vote Like Your Whole World Depended On It." This coincided with the ongoing conflict in Vietnam, and the overall concerns of the nation.

At the same time, the images of war began to come back in color as film crews switched to color instead of black and white. "Mud and blood were indistinguishable in black and white. In color, blood was blood. In color Vietnamese landscapes hung with the indescribable beauty behind gory actions" (Gilbert, 1972, p. 230).

In his book The People Machine, MacNeil (1968) found similar differences in the appearance of Nixon himself while in a studio that had both color and black and white monitors.

We could watch Nixon both in color and in black and white, and the difference was startling. When the technical director punched u the camera taking a close-up, there was the Nixon of 1960, much like the Theodore White description, although not now under any strain.

On the color monitors, a few feet away, was another Nixon, much nearer the man in the flesh, whom we could also see through the control room window. Nixon in TV color was altogether a more personable individual. Technically speaking, color affords the camera a greater range of contrasts between light and dark than does black and white, particularly in shadowed areas of a picture. Nixon's eyes were quite visible in color and his whole countenance had a more cheerful cast.

It is intriguing to speculate that this man might have been kept out of the White House in 1960 by a tiny lag in technology.

(p. 139)

Another vehicle designed to reveal Nixon's campaign themes to the public was a panel show with a group of "average citizens"-- a series of 10 live televised question and answer shows to help sell Nixon's ideographs. Hollander (1985) found this type of staged event equally disgusting, and wrote:

The people selected for the panels would throw medicine ball questions at Nixon and he

would slam them out of the park. No skilled journalist would get near the candidate. The casual audience could hardly realize that these hometown panel shows were put together with the same degree of spontaneity permitted in the construction of a space shuttle. (p. 89)

In his book, The Selling of the President, McGinniss (1969) quoted some of Nixon's image-makers and the problems they incurred in projecting the perfect transmission to the public on the panel shows.

"Those stupid bastards on the set designing crew put turquoise curtains in the background. Nixon wouldn't look right unless he was carrying a pocketbook." The curtains were removed and three stark wooden panels were brought in to replace them. "The wood has clear, solid, almost masculine lines."

(p. 64)

Even the selection of the panel members was carefully considered. "'One black, but not two, because two would be offensive to whites'" (p. 69). A Jewish attorney, a suburban housewife, a businessman, a newsman from Moline,

Illinois, and a farmer rounded out the group (McGinniss, 1969, p. 64).

It was the job of Nixon's advisers to change his image from that of a dull, boring, pain in the ass (McGinniss, 1969, p. 103) to one that represented competence, serenity, respect for tradition, and faith that the American people were better than people anywhere else. "And through the association of pictures, Richard Nixon would become these things: a man to lead a nation with the tallest buildings, strongest armies, biggest factories, cutest children, and rosiest sunsets" (p. 85).

Mickelson's (1972) book, The Electric Mirror, was critical of the lack of traditional rhetoric and the emphasis on image creation that Nixon's campaign used. But he also had harsh words for television's inability to see beyond the images when he wrote:

Was the Nixon candidacy so carefully packaged by advertising agencies, public opinion specialists, and expert managers, that the average voter was unable to see the real Nixon in action? Was the voter only seeing a candidate who was carefully packaged for him?

If so, where was the x-ray eye? Where was the lens of the television camera that

would cut through the packaging and sham, and reveal the real candidate?... Was Hubert Humphrey the loser in 1968 because he was not so carefully packaged? (p. 17)

The 1972 Campaign:

The same questions could be asked about the 1972 campaign and George McGovern. The Nixon presidential image was well known and respected by 1972, and he won reelection with one of the largest majorities in history (Graber, 1984, p. 64). Again, Nixon spent only a short amount of time on the campaign trail. Instead, he used his advisers to carefully construct a campaign which emphasized certain issues and urged voters to reelect the president (p. 64).

McGovern, on the other hand, in traditional Democratic style, attempted to create a rhetorical vision of his own called New Politics. The New Politics stood for a movement of good against evil... a last chance to bring honesty, decency, ethics, and moral superiority back to American politics. He was portrayed as the life force of the movement; the hero of the drama his supporters saw unfolding (Nimmo, 1983, p. 51).

His campaign rhetoric clearly labeled the

villains-- Richard Nixon, Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, and any other politician who had allegedly turned America into a militarist, racist, closed society... Clean, virginal, visionary. That was McGovern's New Politics. (p. 51)

Patterson and McClure (1976, 29) cited numerous instances where the television press followed along the campaign trail and played right into the image-maker's hand by showing lots of good video. Images of thousands of wildly cheering McGovern boosters, shaking hands, or Nixon riding in a car in the New York City Columbus Day Parade-- "none of which forms the most thought provoking context in which to assess the personal character of a man who could occupy the White House" (Patterson, 1976, p. 36). Their contention was that the networks tend to downplay campaign issues such as unemployment, the economy, or the energy crisis, and instead cover the flag-waving, placard-bobbing, ear-deafening, rowdyism of a campaign. "Issue stories usually require the networks to present the talking heads of the candidates. And by network standards, those stories are dull... The result is issue coverage so fleeting and superficial that it is almost meaningless" (Patterson, 1976, p. 36).

Patterson (1976) provided an excellent example of network television giving Nixon's image-makers what they wanted in this story aired during the 1972 campaign.

A Dixie for Nixon rally is the look the candidate wanted for this Atlanta noon hour, and that's what he got. (VIDEO; bands playing, and a crowd lining the streets to watch the Nixon motorcade go by). A textbook example of how successful a campaign motorcade can be when money is unlimited, advance work is expert, and when the candidate brings with him the canopy of the Presidency. A large crowd gave him a loud welcome, part of the crowd's size attributed to a last minute paid radio and newspaper blitz urging people to turn out. High school bands by the dozen were bussed in. Blowing machines, pre-positioned high in buildings, pumped out quick-cut confetti. A perfect setting for a campaign talk. (p. 62)

The 1976 Campaign:

Various observers who looked at the television aspects of the 1976 campaign believe Ford and Carter were

evenly matched in television persona. In fact, Ford's camp believed that his physical size and presence would come off very well on television, while Carter's advisers worried about his height (Adams, 1983, p. 73). Carter may have held a slight edge due to his ability to convey warmth, use pauses, speak softly, and wield a smile, while Ford came off as sometimes less than poised (p. 173).

In 1976, one of the primary valence issues for the candidates was a show of competence, trust, and integrity. This concern about persona, or character campaigning, followed on the heels of Richard Nixon's resignation and the Watergate scandal.

Several of President Ford's advisers underscored the importance of looking presidential as a campaign strategy (Graber, 1982, p. 145). Instead of campaigning across the country like the other candidates, they suggested Ford concentrate on the publicity that could be generated from his presidential actions (Graber, 1982, p. 146). A major presidential event on television may attract more than 50 million viewers (Graber, 1982, p. 165), and was something Carter did not have available to use.

Because Carter's campaign ran primarily on the character image, the press eventually labeled him as

being "fuzzy" on important policy issues (Arterton, 1984, p. 125). Fortunately for Carter, his advisers realized that if this was left unchecked, Carter's image could begin to gather perceptions of dishonesty and deception. Thus, speech writers worked quickly to diffuse the negative image (Arterton, 1984, p. 126).

Ford also suffered a severe image problem. He became universally symbolized by his physical clumsiness. In fact, much of the public viewed Ford as "the guy who is filling the gap between Watergate and the next election" (Arterton, 1984, p. 127). Pictures of the President's apparent clumsiness began to flood the media: "Ford bumps his head on pool;" "the President falls down an airplane ramp at Salzburg, Austria;" and "Ford bangs his head while boarding the presidential helicopter at the White House" (Arterton, 1984, p. 128).

Campaign teams also learned that they could receive more coverage by considering the TV network's news agendas. For example, if a breaking news story came up, a presidential candidate who was prepared to respond to the issue was more likely to be given news time than one who was not. This is called the "quick response game" (Arterton, 1984, p. 83). With the use of campaign

information specialists, Carter, Reagan, and Jesse Jackson all were exceptional at having some type of response available for the press (p. 83).

Clearly, by the presidential campaign of 1976, all the key players realized the infinite importance of television in creating positive voter impressions. Each campaign day was sure to include a "photo opportunity", but rarely a "typewriter opportunity" (p. 89). Arterton (1984) quoted Jimmy Carter's campaign adviser Barry Jagoda who said, "'The cold essence of presidential campaigning has become the television camera lens. Reporters for newspapers and magazines have been nudged literally and figuratively to the back of the bus by the steady, inexorable encroachment of television'" (Arterton, 1984, p. 89).

Gerald Ford's campaign adviser saw the same type of image reporting going on as well. (Ranney, 1983)

"I saw Carter playing softball in Plains, Georgia, I saw Carter kissing Amy, I saw Carter hugging Lillian. I saw Carter, in dungarees, walking hand in hand through the peanut farm with Rosalynn. I saw Carter going into church, preaching in church, coming out of church... I saw Carter trying

to explain his Playboy interview. And then I saw two full, wonderful weeks of people commenting about Carter's interview... I saw Ford bump his head again... I saw Ford in Ohio saying he was glad to be in Iowa. I saw marching bands and hecklers, and I learned about the significance of the size of crowds. But in all the hours of high anxiety that I spent watching the network news, never did I hear what the candidates had to say about the issues. That was not news." (p. 115, 116)

Chapter III

The Reagan Biography

Few American presidents have enjoyed greater popularity and overall acceptance than our 40th-- Ronald Reagan. Tagged "The Great Communicator" for his extraordinary ability to speak simply and persuasively to millions of people (Dallek, 1984, p. 3), Reagan has turned success on the silver screen into the name recognition necessary to begin a career in politics and generate the support of the nation. Dallek (1984) attempted to describe Reagan's persona when he wrote:

A blend of Catholic and Protestant, small town boy and famous entertainer, Horatio Alger and P.T. Barnum, traditional moralist and modern media celebrity, Reagan speaks for old values in current accents. Like the nation of which he is such a representative figure, he is a contradiction in terms-- a hero of the consumer culture preaching the Protestant ethic. (p. 3)

Ronald Reagan was born February 6, 1911 in the small town of Tampico, Illinois. The second son of Jack and Nelle Reagan, young Ronald spent much of his childhood in transit as his father searched for a job. Chicago,

Galesburg, Monmouth, and Dixon were all home to the Reagans before Ronald's ninth birthday (Cannon, 1982, p. 24). And while "small town main street" was left behind for life in the big city, Reagan has held those memories and traditional values close over the course of his career. Both at home and in school at Dixon High, Reagan was taught the ideals of character building, pride in country, and the work ethic (Dallek, 1984, p. 4; Cannon, 1982, p. 24).

Of his schooling, Reagan was characterized as "an indifferent student, concerned only with making the grades necessary to remain eligible to participate in various extracurricular activities" (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 36). His brother Neil remembered, "'he was never one to crack a book. Instead he had a truly photographic mind, an ability to read a large amount of material and absorb it'" (p. 36).

It must also be mentioned that Reagan had a true love of football. During high school, he weighed only 135 pounds, but was put at offensive guard because he was so near-sighted he couldn't see the ball to catch it (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 34; Cannon, 1982, p. 28). Reagan himself remembered the games at Dixon High as "a matter

of life and death... To make the high school team was your goal and aim in life. Everything is a game except football. It is the last thing in civilized life where a man can physically throw himself, his full body, into combat with another man'" (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 34, 35).

From high school, Reagan moved on to nearby Eureka College where he had a partial football scholarship (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 636). A major in economics and sociology, Reagan again allowed his many extracurricular activities eat into his study time (p. 636). Besides playing for the 'Golden Tornadoes,' he was on both the swimming and track teams. He was also a basketball cheerleader, president of the student council, feature editor of the yearbook, reporter for the school newspaper, and a member of the debate team and drama club (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 637). "Reagan was forever ready to give a speech, act in a play, somersault through the air in the acrobatics of a cheerleader, or do an imitation of a radio sportscaster in a fraternity skit" (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 49). Reagan graduated from Eureka College on June 7, 1932, during the worst days of the depression, and at the age of 22, took his first job as a radio announcer at WOC in Davenport, Iowa (Cannon, 1982, p. 44). His gift to the announcing booth was easily his

voice. Recalled one listener, "'It recedes at the right moments, turning mellow at points of intensity. When it wishes to be persuasive, it hovers barely above a whisper so as to win you over by intimacy, if not by substance...'" (Cannon, 1982, p. 45).

Eventually, Reagan was transferred to WHO radio in Des Moines, Iowa, NBC's primary outlet in the Midwest. His broadcast skills soon made him a regional celebrity as the voice of the Chicago Cubs and the Iowa Hawkeyes. Relying on only a telegraph receiver to tell him the barest outline of each inning of the game, Reagan displayed a lively imagination in creating the details for his listeners (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 640).

In 1937, using "'a combination of bluster, dumb chance, and some talent'" as Reagan himself put it (Cannon, 1982, p. 10), Reagan took his voice and career aspirations to Hollywood where he signed a seven year contract starting at \$200.00 per week (Cannon, 1982, p. 10). An interesting note to Reagan's initial offer was that he apparently received the contract because his voice matched that of another promising young actor who had just committed suicide (p. 10).

Over the course of his 25-plus years as an actor,

Ronald Reagan appeared in some 50 pictures, and was often cast in the role of the clean-cut boy next door. He was cast in the lead role for 'B'-movies, and in supporting roles for 'A'-pictures (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 640). His first truly memorable performance was in the role of the terminally ill George Gipp in Knute Rockne--All American, (1940). Reagan desperately wanted to play the part but he had to beat out the likes of John Wayne, Robert Young, and several other actors who were also up for the role (p. 640). A footnote to the making of this film was that Reagan had to run an 80-yard touchdown scene three times before satisfying the director, an effort that caused Reagan to throw up the sandwich he had just eaten for lunch (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 640).

Many regard Reagan's finest performance as an actor to be his role as "Drake McHugh" in King's Row. In the key scene, Reagan woke up after surgery, only to realize that his legs had been amputated. "His cry, 'Where's the rest of me?' became the title for his 1965 autobiography" (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 640).

But in spite of his success on the screen, Reagan wasn't comfortable with his career as an actor (Dallek, 1984, p. 11). He once said:

"So much of our profession is taken up with

pretending, with the interpretation of never-never roles, that an actor must spend at least half of his waking hours in fantasy... If he is only an actor, I feel he is much like I was in King's Row, only half a man-- no matter how great his talent." (p. 11)

Reagan felt that as an actor he had to become a character that another person had written, and do what another person directed him to do. And yet the second career Reagan chose demanded those same things-- the use of image makers, orchestrated settings, and made-for-TV scripts. Reagan's political career really got a start in 1947 when he was elected President of the Screen Actors Guild, a post which he held a total of seven years.

Politically, Reagan had been committed to Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt mainly because his policies had helped to get his father a job (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 75), and he remained a loyal Democrat through the Truman administration. But beneath the surface there was a strong conservative streak, following after Reagan's Midwest upbringing (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 75).

In 1960, Reagan switched alliances, and delivered more than 200 speeches for Republican presidential nominee Richard Nixon (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 641). But

the speech that catapulted Ronald Reagan back into the national spotlight came in the closing stages of the 1964 campaign for Barry Goldwater. In a nationally televised 30-minute address, Reagan delivered "A Time for Choosing," an address emphasizing Goldwater's conservative program. But the speech instead put an exclamation mark behind the name of Ronald Reagan as a potential Republican leader of the future (Cannon, 1982, p. 98). Time magazine called the speech "the one bright spot in an otherwise dismal campaign" (p. 98), and The New York Times reported that the speech drew more campaign contributions than any other political speech in history (DeGregorio, 1989, p. 641). Cannon said that with the speech, "Ronald Reagan had transformed himself from a fading celebrity into the nation's most conservative politician" (1982, p. 13). The speech was the first presentation of the traditional, conservative values that Reagan has used throughout the remainder of his political career. Values like family, work, freedom, peace, and a strong America-- embodied from his childhood days in Dixon, Illinois in the 1920's; first spoken in 1964; and his continuing message in the Presidential Campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

In the final paragraph of "A Time For Choosing,"

Reagan said (Cannon, 1982):

"You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. We can preserve for our children this, the last best hope of man on earth, or we can sentence them to take the first step into a thousand years of darkness. If we fail, at least let our children, and our children's children, say of us we justified our brief moment here. We did all that could be done."

(p. 98)

Of the speech, Cannon (1982) had this to say:

Reagan, speaking to the future of America with a vision of the past, gave hope of things to come... He spoke in the language of past American leaders, and he spoke to all Americans. His metaphors were derived from the New Deal and from those days of World War II when the struggle between freedom and slavery seemed anything but an abstraction... He came into a family's living room, on television, like the nice neighbor next door who was armed with simple plausible answers to great and complex questions. (p. 14)

Within months of the speech, a group called "Friends of Ronald Reagan" formed in Los Angeles to launch his candidacy for Governor of California (Cannon, 1982, p. 98).

Numerous political observers point to one other eight-year period in Reagan's career that helped plant the seed of the Republican politician. That was his work as a speaker for General Electric (Dallek, 1984, p. 26; Boyarsky, 1968, p. 99). During that time, Reagan traveled to some 135 plants, met a quarter of a million G.E. employees, and spent hours speaking to and conversing with a wealth of conservative businessmen. It was much like a political campaign (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 99) for Reagan, and gave him good experience with the public.

The combination of these two events (the Goldwater speech and the G.E. job), as well as the urging of several close friends convinced Reagan that he could make a successful bid for the California Governorship versus two-time incumbent Pat Brown. But while he had the moral and financial backing of his peers, Reagan still had to prove to the general public that he was a credible candidate. And while his lack of political experience was a negative, potentially more troublesome was his

background as an actor in such pictures as "Bedtime for Bonzo" (Nimmo, 1970, p. 47). With the help of an effective public relations team, Reagan learned and memorized the important issues in 1966 (p. 48). He also billed himself as the "citizen politician," and when all the votes had been tallied, Reagan out-polled Brown by more than a million votes (Locker, 1980, p. 494). The defeat infuriated Brown who said, "'I'm entitled to be reelected. It is ludicrous that the Republican Party would nominate a man without experience'" (Boyarsky, 1968, p. 130). Brown had under-estimated Reagan's mass appeal as a persuasive speaker.

Generally, Reagan's eight years as Governor of California were criticized for a lack of positive direction. In fact, in his first year, Reagan offered an across the board reduction of 10 percent in all government expenditures, but ended up supporting an overall increase of that much more (Locker, 1980, p. 494). One critic had this to say of the Reagan years (Locker, 1980):

"By any objective standard, and measured by promises, the Governor has been a failure. Yet curiously, Ronald Reagan did not leave

office stigmatized by failure. On the contrary, he managed to survive it all by relying increasingly on what he understands and practices best: media politics and public relations. By these means, Reagan demonstrated his durability as a political quantity and his attractiveness as a presidential candidate. (p. 495)

Very early in his governorship, Reagan had apparently decided he would try for the presidency (White, 1982, p. 244). In 1967, when he had been Governor only one year, he made a tentative bid for the nomination. But fearing that his limited experience in government would not be enough to make him a creditable candidate, and reluctant to split conservatives by battling Nixon and possibly throwing the nomination to Rockefeller, he hung back from making an all out effort (White, 1982, p. 244). In 1972, when Nixon ran for reelection, Reagan saw no point in challenging a Republican incumbent (Dallek, 1984, p. 54). But Reagan felt differently four years later. It is generally considered foolish to challenge an incumbent president of one's own party, even though Gerald Ford was not an elected incumbent, having replaced the disgraced Nixon

(Dye, 1986, p. 162).

Reagan's 1976 campaign was loosely based on a program of "creative federalism," but its real strength lay in "The Speech" (Locker, 1980, p. 495).

A carefully honed and successful show-piece of rhetoric. Rather than a static thing worked ragged by repetition, The Speech is more like the seasons-- constantly changing, constantly infused with the nourishment of new phrases, one-liners, comfortable homilies, biting sarcasm that thrills true believers and even some skeptics. But if you ask for a copy of The Speech, Reagan would have to tell you that there isn't one. It exists on hundreds of index cards, never used in precisely the same fashion. As a result, The Speech comes in as many versions as Reagan can produce by shuffling the deck. He will not use a text. He does not do well with one and he feels it robs him of audience eye contact. So he works the index cards like worry beads. (p. 495)

Following Reagan's narrow defeat in 1976, he was fairly

convinced that his second career as presidential aspirant was over. He was getting older, certainly financially secure, and planned to enjoy his free time (Dye, 1986, p. 162). But Ford lost to Carter, Carter stumbled badly in office, and Reagan decided to give it one more try in 1980 (Dye, 1986, p. 162).

"Most politicians spend their lives learning to be actors. Here is an actor learning to be a politician" (Fotheringham, 1980, p. 56). With the help of a complete set of campaign advisers, Reagan took the defeat and learned well for the run in 1980.

Chapter IV

The Election of 1980

In this modern age of electronic politics, one theme emerges again and again: TV is visual, and to use it effectively, a candidate must project the proper image, or picture of himself to the viewer (Patterson, 1976, p. 59). In fact, Patterson and McClure (1976) contended:

The uniqueness of television as a news source rests on the power of pictures to communicate. Network news executives insist that tapes, film, and graphics are as essential as the reporter's words to telling a news story. In a presidential campaign, this means giving as much emphasis to what the candidates do in their day-to-day appearances as to what they say in their public statements. (p. 59)

It is the purpose of this chapter to show that in the 1980 presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan and his staff realized this, and were therefore better prepared to create and employ an effective television campaign rhetoric. Specifically, as outlined in Chapter One, the use of three specific tactics: namely controlled media events, images and themes, and persona, were researched

as the primary parts of Reagan's campaign in his second presidential run.

Controlled Media Events of 1980:

The first criterion for study in Reagan's 1980 campaign was his use of video oriented, pre-planned media events, to improve his image and convey his themes. Carefully staged and controlled pseudo-events greatly help a president project the desired image, obtain free publicity, and establish a national agenda. No president was more aware of the need to use the media with staged television events than Ronald Reagan (Denton, 1986, p. 58). In fact, in another book, Denton said that an entire campaign can be considered an organized news event designed to gain coverage (Denton, 1986, p. 10).

Reporters do realize however, that presidential candidates attempt to use pseudo-events as a vehicle to free coverage. Adams (1983) pointed that out when he provided a script of one of CBS news reporter Leslie Stahl's 1980 critical campaign pieces:

"What did Resident Carter do today in Philadelphia? He posed, with as many different types of symbols he could possibly find. There was a picture at the day care

center. And one during the game of bocce ball with the senior citizens. Click, another picture with a group of teenagers. And then he performed the ultimate media event-- a walk through the Italian market... Over the past three days the President's campaign has followed a formula-- travel to must win states, spending only a short time there, but ensuring several days of media coverage." (p. 18,19)

In reaction to the piece, Carter's press secretary had this to say: "'It made me cringe-- first because it made the President look as if he had done something wrong, something nobody else does; and second because she (Stahl) was absolutely right about all the photo-opportunities'" (Adams, 1983, p. p. 19).

One of the most important events of the 1980 campaign occurred exactly one year before the election. For it was on November 4, 1979 that Iranian revolutionaries took more than 60 Americans hostage (Pomper, 1981, p. 7). And while it wasn't a pre-planned media-event, it certainly acted as a catalyst for a wave of patriotic "medialities." President Carter tried to ride that wave of patriotism to a second term. Flags

were flown daily, Christmas parties were eliminated, prayer vigils were held, and thousands of letters were sent to Teheran as a means of demonstrating support for the hostages (p. 8). At the annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony at the Capitol, the President lit only the top light on the tree, saying the rest would be turned on when the hostages safely return (Drew, 1981, p. 48). And Carter himself decided that he would not conduct an active campaign, but rather, remain at work in the White House (Pomper, 1981, p. 8). Announcing his decision, Carter said:

"I have got to maintain the accurate image that we do not have a crisis, which I will not ignore until those hostages are released. I want the American people to know that I am not going to resume business-as-usual as a partisan campaigner out on the campaign trail until our hostages are back here-- free and at home." (p. 8)

This pseudo-event was clearly designed to make Carter look "more presidential." But as the crisis continued on for more than a year, it actually made him look like an in-effective president...with the help of some Republican

strategies of their own.

Reagan's image-makers feared that Carter might produce a surprise resolution to the Iranian Crisis, and be catapulted into office by the positive press that would be generated. To offset that possibility, they forewarned voters against the "October Surprise" (Martin, 1983, p. 17). This phrase included a number of potential lines of argument for Reagan. If the hostages were released close to the election, it could be argued by Reagan that Carter had manipulated the timing of their release. If the hostages were not released, the Carter administration was simply incompetent. If Carter attempted their release but failed, then it could be argued he timed the possibility of release for political purposes (Martin, 1983, p. 17, 18). But this wasn't the only instance of election planning on the part of the Republicans.

In Drew's all encompassing book, Portrait of an Election (1983), several appendices provided detailed information regarding the Reagan team's strategic and tactical considerations at various points of the campaign. The appendices are memorandums-- notes from Reagan's adviser, Richard Wirthlin. The first memo came in March, 1980, and along with several other messages,

included some possible plans for pseudo-events and image-making in the coming months (Drew, 1983, p. 355):

"In the process of walking through and beyond the hot coals of the Iowa setback, we learned once again that our most effective asset is providing the electorate with in-depth exposure to Ronald Reagan." (p. 352)

"Plans should be prepared to garner the full and active support of George Bush, once he recognizes that his candidacy has lost its viability. Of course, that decision might possibly come as late as the convention in Detroit, Michigan, although I doubt it. His support and resources should be absorbed by our campaign adroitly and enthusiastically." (p. 355)

"For the top 15-20 states, we must develop individual campaign plans. For the top ten targeted states a Reagan campaign member will be given the responsibility of that state to see that the resources are properly allocated to bring home a victory. In each of the top ten states. a campaign

plan similar to the one that will be eventually developed for the general campaign must be created to provide goals, objectives, strategy, tactics, and action steps so that we can monitor our progress and allocate the resources best designed to win those key states-- and, thereby, the fall election." (p. 357)

"Watch scheduling when we fly East and avoid appearances before 10:30 AM on the first or second day out. The Governor is definitely an afternoon person." (p. 357)

"Every trip should be evaluated on the basis of its impact and its effectiveness in achieving the general strategic objectives. We should have someone who is politically sensitive with the Governor on every trip. We need someone to evaluate the schedule in terms of providing enough time for the Governor to absorb the briefings and new materials that he is going to be hit hard and heavy with over the next couple months." (p. 357, 358)

"Increase through briefings, the

candidate's sensitivity to the particular audience, and prepare him in advance for questions that it might generate." (p. 358)

"Ronald Reagan is the only candidate I know of who can sit at a desk, look directly into the camera and hold the attention, interest and grab the emotions, of the television audience. We should use this asset now to expand our general electoral base." (p. 358)

Obviously, Reagan's team worked tremendously hard to make sure that his time wasn't wasted, and that all events were orchestrated to perfection. Here is an example of just one day on the Reagan primary campaign trail. The first stop was a press availability in Sarasota, Florida (Drew, 1981).

The sky is clear and the scene will look good on television. The only problem with the setting is that occasionally Reagan's answers to questions are drowned out by a power boat or an airplane... Reagan is wearing a blue-gray suit, just short of flashy, with double vents; a white handkerchief, is folded in his

breast pocket. (p. 111)

After answering a battery of questions, the Reagans attended a fund-raising brunch and gave an interview to a local radio station (Drew, 1981, p. 111).

Next, in the early afternoon, Reagan moved on to a high school auditorium with a giant American flag in the background. The local band played "The Stars and Stripes Forever," and all his supporters had on straw hats with red, white, and blue bands that said "Reagan" (Drew, 1981, p. 112). Reagan addressed the gathering:

"Balancing the budget is like protecting your virtue; all you have to do is say no" (p. 113). Then he turned to the high schoolers in the band, and with his made-for-TV gesture said, "I want to believe that someday these young people back here will know the same freedom that we knew in this country when we were their age" (p. 114).

After listening to this speech, one Democrat observer was quoted as saying, "He's not programmed. He's simply an actor who reads his lines. He tends to go for the politically effective, and he has a strong instinct for the microphone and the cameras and how things will go over" (Drew, 1981, p. 116).

The next stop on this day was another pseudo-event, addressing another large crowd, in another shopping mall.

Red, white, and blue bunting adorned the platform, and a troop of Cub Scouts holding American flags stood in front (Drew, 1981, p. 116). In this campaign speech, Reagan talked about the ongoing hostage crisis (118 days long at the time), a strong America, and the energy crisis. But he ended his talk with the same words he used at his second address. Waving this time to the flag-bearing Cub Scouts he said that, "'We need the same kind of country in which these young people will know the freedom that we knew when we were their age'" (p. 117).

A visit to the Sun City retirement community was the late afternoon planned event for Ronald Reagan. He was 45 minutes late, but another large crowd was still on hand to cheer for the TV cameras that had followed Reagan on his rounds that day (Drew, 1981, p. 118).

The final stop was a fund raiser at the Tampa Holiday Inn. More red, white, and blue bunting, another band, and an M-C who explained to the crowd that; "'Because this is a media event, the people with Reagan posters should be down front in sight of the cameras'" (Drew, 1981, p. 120).

As one can surmise from the five different locations on the day, there was much that remained constant in the

Reagan media event. As reported earlier, Reagan normally used a standard speech that made from note cards, and varied depending on the people listening, and the issues emphasized. Clearly, American symbolism was emphasized as a backdrop with the heavy use of flags and their colors. Each of the events took into careful account the various considerations Wirthlin felt needed to be achieved for a successful media event.

Another exemplary mediality occurred on Memorial Day at the San Bernardino County Fair in California. Drew (1981) described the event.

On stage at the rodeo field, Dale Wade, the manager and bass guitarist of a gospel group called June Wade and the Country Congregation, who produced this event, announced that Reagan was just about to arrive. "Tell him that Victorville loves him. Tell him that Jesus loves him." The large crowd, about five thousand, gathered in the bleachers cheers as Reagan arrives and takes a seat in a front row to watch the performance. Many in the crowd wave red, white, and blue streamers... June Wade and the other women in the group are wearing long

white dresses. The stage is framed in pink, turquoise, and gold cardboard.... Reagan sits with Miss Victorville and a man in an Abraham Lincoln costume. Reagan smiles, signs autographs, and applauds the singers... Then Reagan gives an unusual speech. He cites our "lack of confidence with regard to the energy crisis" and the "doomsayers in the land who tell us that we will never again have things as good as we've had them, that we must learn to live with scarcity." He says, "I don't believe that. I think that this country is hungry today for a spiritual revival-- one nation, under God, indivisible. There are people in our land today who want to take 'In God We Trust' off of our money. I've never known a time when it needed to be there more." (p. 174, 175)

Thus, speaking to a very large, religious crowd on Memorial Day, Reagan delivered a message that fit best with the images the crowd wanted to hear: God, American courage, and an improved economy. With the help of his many advance people, the event was organized flawlessly,

with traditional color, pageantry, and respect-- perfectly planned and perfectly executed to take advantage of television.

That same day, George Bush officially withdrew from the race, and Reagan was the lone Republican candidate for president. That called for a new set of plans for packaging Ronald Reagan versus Jimmy Carter specifically. Again, a memo from advisor Richard Wirthlin was sent out (Drew, 1981):

"We now face a period of approximately six weeks of no political contests-- a period of the political doldrums. Even though the political winds will blow with little force until the convention, we can, nevertheless, effectively use this period to steer our campaign considerably closer to its goal of electing you the President of the United States." (p. 363)

"Position you so that you are viewed by the media and the public as true presidential timber." (p. 363)

"Control, as best we can, the focus, thrust and scope of media coverage. The primary election process afforded both

opportunity and risk-- the opportunity to gain positive and needed exposure for you that cast you in the role of the winner, and laid to rest the myth that you are too old to seek the presidency... Contrarily, the need for exposure led to the innumerable press availabilities, given the paucity of our paid media and organizational resources, and dictated the heavy schedule of long trips almost entirely structured by the primary calendar rather than by the need to maximize your political strength nationally." (p. 363)

Here, Wirthlin emphasized the fact that television's impact is now probably greatest during the primary campaigns, a fact that Ranney (1983, p. 95) called front-loading. Front loading is the technique of pushing for network coverage early in the campaign. "The candidates who do best in the early primaries are described by the networks as the front-runners with commanding leads. Front-runners find it much easier to raise money and enlist volunteers. Their opponents sink in the polls, find it harder to attract money, and often drop out..." (Ramsey, 1983, p. 95). Wirthlin (1981) continued:

"Over the past five months we have run the primary gauntlet almost every Tuesday capped by an appearance on television. This has led to your now being over-exposed, not in the sense that people have seen too much of you, but rather they have seen too much of you in the same role, either accepting victory with a smile or defeat gracefully. Now that the election process has selected you as the Republican candidate for the presidency, I believe that we can and should exercise much more discretionary power over the kinds of public exposure you are given between now and the convention." (p. 364)

"Primary campaigns by their very parochial nature strongly tempt the candidate to don funny hats, etc. Given the seriousness of the times and the desire of the electorate to have a strong leader, we must now put that kind of political gimmickry far behind us. In sum, each and every trip scheduled between now and the convention should be closely scrutinized against two specific criteria. A) How does this trip

and/or event help us in achieving our campaign objectives in the general campaign?

B) Is this the best possible use of your time, given the tasks he must accomplish between now and the convention?" (p. 364)

"In short, at this point we do not simply need exposure, but rather we need to generate the right kind of exposure. This means that we must pick and choose our forums and maximize the favorable coverage we get during the doldrums... Later, the campaign's focus must of course narrow to certain key states. You do not need the press conferences or the press availabilities to make news. We are now in the position where virtually everything said becomes news." (p. 366)

"I believe that we can generate with comparative ease, at least three or four stories a week that we can control. Some of the prime targets for such stories might be to have those who participated in your administration speak of its strength of

accomplishments... Now is the time to reinforce the good things that were accomplished by you as Governor." (p. 370)

These decisions by Wirthlin apparently came in response to Reagan's exhausting early campaign schedule. He had begun to make mistakes on the platform at various events covered by the media (Pomper, 1981, p. 79).

He called America's intervention in Vietnam a noble cause; he appeared to oppose the theory of evolution; he inaccurately and inaptly criticized Carter for attending a rally at the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan, while he himself visited a Mississippi county fair favored by segregationists. (p. 79)

And not surprisingly, Carter's team of political image makers jumped on the errors to argue that Reagan wasn't knowledgeable enough to be president (p. 79).

The Republican National Convention of 1980 in Detroit, Michigan was undoubtedly the largest, most publicized media-event of the entire Republican campaign (Drew, 1981, p. 194). The week-long convention was little more than a giant, nationally televised, political party, as all other contenders were already eliminated. But Reagan's supporters still did everything they could

to make sure it came off for the TV crews. Drew (1981) described the scene at the first day's events:

Leaflets have been distributed advertising Reagan's arrival here, and a large crowd of people, most of them young, began to gather on the level a good hour and a half before his arrival. Many of them were brought to Detroit by the Reagan organization to paint signs, demonstrate, and cheer. A jazz band entertains them and raises their level of excitement, and a man in a white suit leads them in practicing their cheers. At one point, the man cautions them, 'When Reagan gets here, please do not raise your signs, because it might block the television cameras. (p. 195)

Clearly, then, the creation of signs, practicing of cheers, and preparedness for the TV cameras qualified this as a pseudo-event. And when Reagan finally did arrive, the mediality was complete. "'Nancy and I were just flying by and thought we'd drop in and see what's going on' he said to the cheering crowd" (p. 195).

As part of the evening's events, the Reagan team

enlisted a large group of Hollywood entertainers to appear at the convention. Pat Boone led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Jimmy Stewart, Michael Landon, Richard Petty, Dorothy Hammill, Susan Anton, Efrem Zimbelist Jr., and Donnie and Marie Osmond all spoke on behalf of Reagan (Drew, 1981, p. 196). Again, this group of stars represented nothing more than a pseudo-event to attract attention to the Republican cause and Reagan's image.

There were two significant highlights at the convention of 1980. The first was the selection of a Vice-Presidential running mate. For an entire day, rumors circulated that former President Gerald Ford might make a return to politics to form a dream ticket with Reagan (Drew, 1981, p. 210). However, after flooding the networks with speculation, Reagan, in made-for-TV dramatic fashion, announced that George Bush would take the number two spot (p. 212).

The other pseudo-event of note was Reagan's acceptance speech. While the content of the address will be discussed later for its use of symbols and images, suffice it to say that the speech was a crucial moment for Reagan in his quest for the presidency. It was the occasion for the first national look at Reagan as a potential president. Drew (1981) described the speech:

Reagan brings his skills to bear. He delivers it in a style suited to television-- well modulated, soothing-- as opposed to one (which he used on the road) designed to whip up the audience at hand... And then, voice quavering, he adds something that is not in the prepared text. "I'll confess that I've been a little afraid to suggest what I'm going to suggest," he says. "I'm more afraid not to." Then he pauses, and says, "Can we begin our crusade joined together in a moment of silent prayer?" It is a perfect Reagan touch, drawing on the symbols of prayer and patriotism. It is hard to think of another politician who could pull this off-- or would try to. He bows his head, lifts it, and says, emotionally, God bless America." (p. 220)

Thus, on national television with an audience in excess of 50 million people viewing, Reagan took advantage of the medium to drive home his traditional values with an emotional plea for prayer. Clearly, the speech and the entire convention provided the campaign

with the momentum to move on into the fall campaign and take advantage of the themes and images Reagan projected in conjunction with his irresistible personality.

Images, Themes, and Symbols:

The second area that must be thoroughly considered as an essential part of Ronald Reagan's television campaign rhetoric was his effective use of symbols, themes, and visual images. These back up his words and emphasize the issues he felt were most important to the nation (Arterton, 1984, p. 13, 33).

Nimmo and Combs called the creation of themes or images "fantastic art" (Graber, 1984, p. 150). They wrote:

Candidates dramatize their fantasies by creating rhetorical visions. These visions appear over and over again in each candidate's propaganda. Each speech, brochure, proposition paper, slogan, TV ad, and so on, is a carefully crafted effort to portray the candidate's rhetorical vision... if successful, the candidate's fantasy chains out to become the news media's and the voter's fantasy as well. (p. 150)

Using the appropriate themes, symbols, and images,

Ronald Reagan attempted to seek control of the context of the election-- to define to his own advantage, what Election '80 was all about (Nimmo, 1970, p. 28). Denton (1986, p. 61) wrote, "Ronald Reagan, more than any other contemporary president, clearly understood the importance of the historic, patriotic, symbolic aspects of the presidency."

Other candidates images in the 1980 campaign included (Graber, 1984):

George Bush jogging while he waved and talked, to remind voters he was not like the older Reagan; John Anderson telling the public he was a candidate with ideas, to mark himself off from the Republican pack; and Jimmy Carter dramatizing himself as moral and a good family man to denote that he was no Kennedy. (p. 151).

Meanwhile, Mo Udall's campaign team struggled with what image he should have. "'We had a television piece showing our candidate's home town and pine trees, and him walking around the forests... that was pure candidate. Throughout the campaign we were in dispute about whether the candidate should be projected this way, or through

the issues'" (Arterton, 1984, p. 122).

Reagan, on the other hand, had no problem whatsoever selecting a set of images and themes, for his campaign drive in 1980, as he has been using the same platform since he first got into politics in 1964. (Recall "The Speech," discussed in the Biography section of this thesis.) His traditional values of family, work, a strong America, peace, and freedom, have been the primary images Reagan preached for 20 years. And the images fit perfectly with his television campaign. Several memos that Richard Wirthlin sent Reagan, outlined the campaign's important theme strategies (Drew, 1981):

"By projecting Reagan's peace posture early, we can, if it is handled properly, reinforce a major perceptual strength (decisive leadership), and alleviate a major weakness (dangerous)." (p. 375)

"Always speak in terms of promoting international stability with an aim toward world peace. Rather than a defensive posture, we should use the term 'peace posture'... Also, avoid any reference to 'the arms race', but stress the need to re-establish 'the margin of safety'." (p. 376)

"The color events during this period must be consistent with our major theme and strongly reinforce it visually. Most Americans (60%), see the news on TV, they don't hear it or read about it." (p. 377)

"The pocketbook issues-- inflation, unemployment, the energy crisis, recession and taxes-- dominate the issue agenda in this 1980 presidential election. How we respond to these issues will, in no small degree, determine whether or not Ronald Reagan assumes the presidency in January, 1981." (p. 378)

"President Carter's handling of inflation, the energy crisis and taxes has been rated low throughout his term in office and has recently sunk to all-time lows. Further, voters see the nation as teetering on the brink of economic ruin and perceive Carter as both contributing to the problems and being incapable of finding solutions. Contrarily, voters do believe that inflation can be managed by a strong President. They hold

that a competent President can keep prices from continually rising (74%) and that the federal budget can be balanced over the next five years (77%)." (p. 380)

"In developing the themes and speech elements on the economy, we should keep in mind that there are certain specific demographic targets that will respond even more strongly than the population at large. The aged are most concerned about inflation, while the young and minorities worry about jobs. Targeting our comments to these two groups will help reinforce key elements in the electorate that we need to strengthen. Furthermore, a number of other related economic issues can be tied to specific geographic regions of the country. For example, the automobile, coal, construction and steel industries have been more severely wounded by the recession in certain areas than in others. These targets of opportunity should be recognized and hit." (p. 380)

As Wirthlin pointed out, the poor state of the economy under Carter and the energy crisis were major

campaign issues: two that Reagan jumped on consistently in his TV rhetoric. He called them "major disasters" (Drew, 1981, p. 113). Visual anecdotes and metaphors were used to get his point across to the public. Drew (1981) wrote of his style:

Reagan's mind appears to be a grab bag of clippings and facts and anecdotes and scraps of ideas. People who have worked for him describe him as an intelligent man with an open mind, but with strong political instincts of his own. He is inclined toward uncomplicated concepts: a balanced budget, a strong defense, patriotism. He is in tune with what he conceives to be mainstream American thinking because he shares it. (p. 115)

At one of Reagan's pseudo-events he piled the campaign images of a strong America on high as he spoke to a group of senior citizens (Drew, 1981):

"Since 1968 there have been 63 assassinations of American diplomatic personnel or non-diplomatic but American internationally by terrorist groups. All of these things have

happened to a United States that even where an American was on business, or on vacation, or wherever, and got caught in some little country that was having a revolution, or got caught in a war, all that American had to do was pin to his lapel a little American flag and he could walk right through that war and nobody would lay a finger on him. Well, I want to see that United States back in the world again." (p. 120)

At another mediality, Reagan's image-laden themes continued: "'Yes, if we can get the federal government out of the classroom, maybe we can get God back in'" (p. 121). Then, a little later in the address, "'I do hunger for it (the presidency), because I believe that with the experience I've had I could turn once again to the people of this country and help remove the shackles and the roadblocks that government has put on the people of this country and once again unleash the great power of the American people to go forward...'" (Drew, 1981, p. 121).

These speeches all carried symbols or fantasy themes with them, and allowed the language to tap directly into the feelings of the average person. One type of metaphoric phrase Reagan consistently used was what

Denton (1986, p. 68) called the path metaphor. "Path metaphors suggest choosing between alternate roads... They also suggest movement and action, and thus fit the U.S. penchant for being on the move, striving, mobile" (p. 69). For example: "'The question is, are we simply going to go down the same path we've gone down before...;'" "'The best view of Big Government is in a rear view mirror as we leave it behind;'" "'The nation's fiscal policy is now firmly embarked on a new, sound, and sustainable course;'" and "'We now live at a turning point.'"

Denton (1986, p. 69) also contended that Reagan used something called disease/health metaphors to supplement his images. For example: "'This administration's objective will be a healthy, vigorous, growing economy;'" "'The pounding economic hangover America's suffering didn't come about overnight and there's no single instant cure;'" "'Crime today is an American epidemic.'" Denton (1986, p. 70) suggested that medical metaphors were successful for Reagan because the nation was "into health."

A part of Reagan's imagery also laid with a strong America, at work. He used this combination of themes to

point out his plans on the energy crisis issue: "'I just happen to believe that free enterprise can do a better job of producing the things people need than government can. The Department of Energy has a multi-billion dollar budget in excess of \$10 billion, but it hasn't produced a quart of oil or lump of coal or anything else in the line of energy'" (Pomper, 1981, p. 44). Thus, Reagan emphasized that the energy industry would do much better by being returned to free enterprise. But he didn't just say that; he used visual, emotive language. He put his complete trust in the American people, complete blame on the government, and talked about "a multi-billion dollar budget," that hasn't produced a "quart of oil," or "a lump of coal."

Reagan called inflation, the greatest single domestic threat facing our nation today, but also said "'we can and will resurrect our dreams'" (Pomper, 1981, p. 45). And again, Reagan put faith in the people (his voters) and blamed the government (or at least Carter) when he said, "'We don't have inflation because the people are living too well. We have inflation because the government is living too well'" (Pomper, 1981, p. 49).

In Medhurst's (1984, p. 265) examination of Reagan's

rhetorical visions, he found that Reagan attempted to keep attention focused on his primary issues through repetition. For example, in his acceptance address to the Republican National Convention, Reagan spoke of "three grave threats to our very existence" which he identified as "a disintegrating economy, a weakened defense, and an energy crisis based on the sharing of scarcity" (Medhurst, 1984, p. 264). Repeatedly he proclaimed these as his most important concerns.

Reagan's acceptance speech at the 1980 Republican National Convention was clearly important in letting the nation learn his campaign themes, images, and symbols. A campaign adviser was quoted as saying, "He wants it to be a forward looking speech, striking the theme of a coalition of people with different backgrounds who share the same values and want a sense of steadiness and stability" (Drew, 1981, p. 189). The speech emphasized Reagan's five traditional but visually attractive symbols as mentioned before: a) family, b) work, c) a strong America, d), peace, and e) freedom (Scheele, 1984, 51-61). In fact, in the first breath of his address, Reagan said (A time, 1983):

"I'm very proud of our party tonight. This

convention has shown to all America a party united, with positive programs for solving the nation's problems; a party ready to build a new consensus of values embodied in these words: family, work, neighborhood, peace, and freedom." (p. 219)

Reagan and his cast of speech writers were exceptional at creating a visual image for the audience to follow. The fantasy themes or images he created were easy to picture, understand, and difficult to refute. For example, Reagan compared the Carter Administration's economic program to a bad stew (A time, 1983):

"We must overcome something the present Administration has cooked up: a new and altogether indigestible economic stew, one part inflation, one part high unemployment, one part recession, one part runaway taxes, one part deficit spending, seasoned with an energy crisis. It's an economic stew that has turned the national stomach (disease metaphor)." (p. 222)

Another paragraph full of graphic imagery discussed the horrible scenes of war. Here Reagan tried to vividly point out the importance of an America that was

defensively (A time, 1983) strong without bringing up the potentially volatile issue of the arms race like Wirthlin had told him.

"Four times in my life America has gone to war, bleeding the lives of its young men into the sands of island beachheads, the fields of Europe, and the jungles and rice paddies of Asia. We know only too well that war comes not when the forces of freedom are strong, it is when they are weak that tyrants are tempted." (p. 231)

This tremendous visual-laden imagery is wrapped around the key themes of Reagan's speech to provide further support for them. The first key image in the speech was family. One of his first references to the importance of family in Reagan's America was likely his most emotional. In the appeal (A time, 1983), he said:

"Three hundred and sixty years ago, in 1620, a group of families dared to cross a mighty ocean to build a future for themselves in a new world. When they arrived at Plymouth, Massachusetts, they formed what they call a compact, an agreement among themselves to

build a community and abide by its laws." (p. 221)

His comparison with the pilgrims was an attempt at inspiring some of the same traditional values in today's families.

For Reagan, the family was an economic unit as well. Therefore, Reagan often paired up the terms family with work to create an even more visual image. For example (A time, 1983):

"Thanks to the economic policies of the Democratic party, millions of Americans find themselves out of work. Millions more have never even had a fair chance to learn new skills, hold a decent job, or secure for themselves and their families a share in the prosperity of this nation... It's time to put America back to work, to make our cities and towns resound with the confident voices of men and women of all races, nationalities, and faiths, bringing home to their families a paycheck they can cash for honest money." (p. 228)

Reagan cherished the work ethic, and used forceful images around the term work. "'America must get back to work,'"

"'dedicated and hard-working,'" and "'increased productivity,'" all surrounded his visions (Scheele, 1984, p. 53).

Almost every book and article written on the speaking style of Ronald Reagan has noted the importance given to the notion of a strong and prosperous America. Early in the acceptance address, he announced that he hoped to "'unify our country; to renew the American spirit and sense of purpose'" (A time, 1983, p. 226). Later, after accusing the Carter Administration with many of the country's woes, he said, "'For those who have abandoned hope, we'll restore hope, and we'll welcome them into a great national crusade to make America great again'" (A Time, 1983, p. 228).

The next quote was even more telling about the image he wanted to project about himself and the country (A Time, 1983):

"The administration which has brought us to this state is seeking your endorsement for four more years of weakness, indecision, mediocrity, and incompetence. No American should vote until he or she has asked: Is the United States stronger and more respected

now than it was three and a half years ago?

Is the world a safer place in which to live?"

(p. 231)

Using images of weakness, mediocrity, and safety, Reagan attempted to play on the public's sense of security, and pride, to get them to stand behind his push for a buildup in defense and preparedness.

The fourth key term Reagan emphasized in his acceptance address was the idea of peace. "'Of all the objectives we seek, first and foremost is the establishment of lasting world peace'" (p. 231). This statement revealed the tremendous importance Reagan placed on the symbol of peace-- as well as his understanding of how important it is to most people.

Finally, Reagan employed the image of freedom throughout the speech in a variety of contexts. For example, "'Isn't it once again time to renew our compact of freedom, to pledge to each other all that is best in our lives; all that gives meaning to them-- for the sake of this, our beloved and blessed land?'" (A time, 1981, p. 221).

Social issues also helped define Reagan's 1980 campaign fantasy themes and TV rhetoric. Probably the biggest of these was abortion, and Reagan's pro-life

stance. Clearly, this was a traditional value, but Reagan argued the issue effectively with the use of visual, logical reasoning. For example (Martin, 1981):

"If you came upon an immobile body, and you yourself could not determine whether it was dead or alive, I think that you would decide to consider it alive until someone could prove it was dead. You wouldn't get a shovel and start covering it up. And I think we should do the same thing with regard to abortion." (p. 269)

The issue of school prayer also came up Reagan's TV rhetoric (Martin, 1981):

"Just as Benjamin Franklin believed it was beneficial for the Constitutional Convention to begin each day's work with a prayer, I believe that it would be beneficial for our children to have an opportunity to begin each school day in the same manner." (p. 268)

The idea of America being set apart from the rest of the world (Martin, 1981) was another Reagan fantastic vision:

"I've always believed that this blessed land was set apart in a special way, that some

divine plan placed this great continent here between the oceans to be found by people from every corner of the earth who had a special love for freedom... Can we doubt that only Divine Providence placed this land, this island of freedom, here as a refuge for all those people in the world who yearn to breathe free?" (p. 266)

In all these themes, Reagan spoke in image laden symbols and visuals. Whether comparing abortion with an immobile body; Ben Franklin and the Constitutional Convention with himself and the school prayer issue; or the United States as a divine place, or an island of freedom, his command of traditional symbolism was clearly superior. Henry Plotkin (Pomper, 1981) wrote:

What underlay most of Reagan's positions was a belief that a return of autonomy to the private sector would correct all the abuses of the last several decades. There was a strong element of nostalgic wistfulness in this position, which saw all virtue in the people and vice in government. Implicit was a belief in the natural goodness of men and women, who became corrupted when government

intervened in their lives. (p. 54)

Another image that Reagan worked to plant in the American mind in 1980 was that of a President Carter dumb, dangerous, and incompetent (Martin, 1983, p. 15). Reagan frequently charged Carter with failure to deliver. "His support of the Panama Canal treaty, his initial support of the Shah of Iran, his unsuccessful attempts to free the American hostages, his handling of escalating inflation, all point to his ineffectuality" said Reagan (Martin, 1983, p. 16). Again, looking at Reagan's acceptance address, he said, "Can anyone look at the record of this administration and say 'Well done?... The Administration which has brought us to this state is seeking endorsement for four more years of weakness, indecision, mediocrity, and incompetence'" (A time, 1983, p. 221).

The Reagan Persona:

On the other hand, Ronald Reagan's persona was one of the campaign's strongest features, and is, the third focus of attention regarding the made-for-television aspects of Reagan's campaign in 1980.

Clearly, Reagan had a lifetime of experience portraying this television personality, and took full advantage of

it in his campaign. White (1982, p. 306) agreed, and believed the Reagan persona was one of the integral parts of his victory. "In a season of melancholy, his good nature pleased. The camera stimulates Reagan as catnip does a cat; he loves, as a TV personality does, the one-line quip." Hankins (1983, p. 33) described the seventy year old actor as "a man who bears the fingerprints of a lifetime of selling an image, a rehearsed product." In fact, Hankins' article contended that Reagan's advisers "attempted to cultivate a persona that was quintessentially American-- the classic hero of the Old West" (Hankins, 1983, p. 34).

The public identified with Reagan as "the good guy in the old western movies (Dye, 1986, p. 18), and the "guardian of traditional values" (p. 18). His love for Western clothing and horseback riding, his film and television roles, his rugged appearance, and his personal virtues of honesty, sincerity, innocence, optimism, and certainty all backed this up (Hankins, 1983, p. 41). Hankins also pointed out that political cartoonists overwhelmingly favored a Western hero caricature for Reagan (p. 41).

Further, Drew (1981, p. 116) wrote, "Reagan can talk all he wants about what a competent Governor he was, but

he evokes, deliberately it seems, the Hollywood myth of John Wayne or Jimmy Stewart-- or Ronald Reagan-- riding into town to set things right."

In the 1980 campaign, Reagan's polished style as a kindly, older, soft-spoken, western rancher, deflected Carter's jabs. In fact, when Carter attacked Reagan's persona, the attacks appeared to be more personal, and he was suddenly labeled as "Jimmy the Mean" (Dye, 1986, p. 18). That his persona was considered kindly might be an understatement if Drew's (1981) description was any indication.

On stage as well as close up, Reagan looks fine. His blue eyes are clear, the apple cheeks give an impression of health. His recent triumph seems to have invigorated him, given him a certain buoyancy... Reagan delivers his message in jaunty style, his head tilted slightly to one side. He often smiles that crinkly-eyed smile. He is a polished performer, as well he might be. The voice is husky-silky. There are no oratorical glissandos or gestures, he doesn't need them... He has his lines down well by now.

(p. 113)

His Midwestern upbringing was also the focus of a short campaign movie on Reagan shown at the 1980 Republican National Convention just prior to his acceptance speech. And once again, a media event, filled with visual images, and the Reagan persona were intertwined. The film showed off his strong Midwestern ethic; that he comes out of the heartland, was a hardworking young man, that he was a union leader, and that he had a strong record as Governor (Drew, 1981, p. 217).

On television, Reagan almost always came across as a pleasant, smiling, reassuring figure, and able to combine manliness with the impression of effectiveness as a politician (Martin, 1983, p. 21).

His voice, his speech style, his physical appearance, and his personality all combined to overwhelm Carter in 1980. In fact, Berquist and Golden (1981, p. 132, 133) contended that the candidate's nationally televised debates had very little positive rhetorical value in large part because Reagan's delivery, appearance, and overall manner outweighed the substance of the candidate's oratory on the issues. They wrote, "Reagan clearly has the advantage... Reagan has the

physical appearance, the size, the looks, and most important, the voice to dominate the proceedings. It is a supple, deep, and trained voice, the more authoritative to Carter's breathy squeaks" (Berquist, 1981, p. 133).

Then on election night: "Reagan appeared, tanned after two days in the sun, neatly barbered, handsomely tailored as always, and showing no signs of the wear and tear of five months on the road... Then the director behind the camera pointed the command finger at him, and instantly, Reagan transformed himself for the national audience beyond. He was 'on'..." (White, 1982, p. 310, 311).

Conclusions on Campaign '80:

Reagan's election in 1980 was the first defeat of an elected incumbent since Roosevelt beat Hoover in 1932, and by a comparable landslide (Rogin, 1987, p. 33). So Carter was defeated in 1980 and Ronald Reagan read his overwhelming victory as a mandate for his announced programs. Yet, after looking at the evidence presented, there is a strong argument suggesting that the Carter/Reagan race was determined not by the issues, but largely on the basis of the images constructed from their differing rhetorical forms.

And while Adams (1983, p. 180, 181) did not consider the use of media events as a variable in his analysis of the 1980 campaign, he did have this to say: "In terms of themes, Reagan acquired television's advantage... Persona gave another advantage to Reagan... Reagan's ease, poise, and warmth before the camera may have been the most damaging element to the Carter campaign" (Adams, 1983, p. 181). It is my contention that these two factors, as well as a clear domination in Reagan's ability to use the media-event to gain positive coverage, were the primary determinants in the TV campaign of 1980.

Chapter V

The Election of 1984

The presidential election of 1984 provided yet another opportunity to observe the image-making rhetorical tactics used so successfully in 1980 by the Ronald Reagan campaign. Once again, the primary focus on the 1984 election was Reagan's use of controlled media events; visual images, themes, and symbols; and his persona as primary sources of positive television coverage. In addition, because Reagan had just completed four years in office, his use of position as the President to gain added campaign exposure was also examined.

Blume (1985, p. 2) reemphasized what others have previously stated when he renamed the network nightly news "The Presidential Election Show." His book by the same title, took a close critical look at the '84 election tactics of the two candidates, and was very useful in writing this chapter. "For all practical purposes, the nightly news is the election process," Blume (1985, p. 2) said. "In this culture, if something is not on the TV nightly news, it didn't happen, it doesn't exist, it's invisible."

1984 matched the popular, incumbent, Republican Ronald Reagan against Democrat Walter Mondale. Reagan's strategy was simple. As Blume (1985, p. 24) put it, "He continued to wrap himself in the themes of God and country more than any president in modern history, as well as run the most TV-image-oriented campaign since the beginning of the television era."

Media events played a major role in the campaigns of both candidates, but it was the orchestrated settings developed by the Reagan team that dominated the news from start to finish.

Orchestrated Media Events of 1984:

One of Ronald Reagan's most memorable media events occurred early in campaign '84-- a June commemoration of the Normandy invasion. Sam Donaldson covered the event first-hand, and provided Schram (1987, p. 63, 64) with a telling, first-hand description of how it all came off-- and how it went on the news that night.

"...Reagan was there on the bluff overlooking the beach, fighting back tears, paying true tribute, with the blue of the sea behind him and the wind blowing just a bit, biting his lip and saying in a way that only makes us all proud of our country and our president:

'These are the boys of Pointe de Hoc.'

In with the men who landed at Normandy was one young woman; her father had wanted to make this reunion trip but had died of cancer, and so she had written the president a letter about it, and the White House saw to it that she would be there too. And in one of the most touching moments in any man's presidency, Reagan read the letter, voice choking, fighting back tears as she cried, and soon the men of Pointe de Hoc were crying, and television recorded it all.

... I mean, that was D-day. And there are some things on which you don't urinate... I got back to London to put the nightly news piece together and I sat there thinking, 'I can't trash D-day. I'm sorry. They've got me. They have me. They have me today. Yesterday I put it in. Tomorrow I put it in-- so it's not that my audience isn't going to hear how slick this bunch is. But they've got me today. That's it. You win, Deaver. Here, take it.' (p. 63, 64)

The same video tape was also seen later in the campaign as part of Reagan's half-hour campaign film... and when Mondale's campaigners saw the video, tears streamed down their cheeks too (p. 64). But probably not for the same reasons.

July fourth, 1984 was also one of those days when Reagan's patriotic symbols played exceptionally well on television. The Independence Day pseudo-event went over beautifully for the Reagan juggernaut, but it didn't hurt that the day had been meticulously laid out-- with initial plans drawn up in November of the previous year (Schram, 1987, p. 40). For it was then that Reagan's image-makers chose to attend the Firecracker 400 at Daytona, Florida. By attending the event, Reagan would receive exposure to a crowd of 60,000, a national TV audience on ABC, and would actually be allowed to describe the race for half an hour on a 300 station radio network (Schram, 1987, p. 41).

Schram (p. 37) called it an All-American classic, "an example of what presidential campaigning has become in the television age." A revealing look at the basic differences in the way two sets of strategists chose to use TV to communicate their messages.

Reagan's made-for-TV 4th of July began aboard "Air Force One" (the President's jet), where he telephoned in to announce the starting of the race (p. 42). Later, just as planned, he announced the race on radio ("'Oh, wait a minute here... somebody just went past somebody right here in front of us'")... (Schram, 1987, p. 42). Then, the unplanned happened: Richard Petty, a true blue Republican supporter ended up winning the race. So with a nation watching on "ABC's Wide World of Sports", Petty drove up victory lane, and the first words out of his mouth were: "'God Bless Ronald Reagan'" (p. 48). Tammy Wynette then appeared next to the President, sang her famous song "Stand By Your Man," and then gave Reagan a kiss (p. 42). Finally, Reagan got his turn at the center stage. Schram described the moment best when he wrote: "Reagan assumed his best aw-shucks, almost embarrassed acting manner, which he does quite well, and said: 'I know how you all feel too, because, ah, I'm in, ah, a little race myself this year'" (Schram, 1987, p. 43). And all this received air-play on the three network newscasts that night. In the book, The Great American Video Game, Schram (1987, p. 42-45) included transcripts of each of the reports, and they were, essentially, the very same, image-laden messages that the Republican team

had hoped to achieve when they first began planning the event the previous year. "'We did a super event!'" was one advisor's cry (p. 47). "'We were looking for Independence Day, motherhood, apple pie, patriotism, and families... and we got them.'"

And while the Mondale campaign received about the same amount of air time on TV; Walter Mondale's visual image wasn't nearly as attractive (p. 45). No parades, no fireworks, no picnics... just Mondale seated at a table working with advisers to decide on a running mate.

Another media event during the early months of the campaign was the Summer Olympic Games. The Olympics were held in Los Angeles, in 1984, and Reagan's image-makers made sure the President of the United States got directly involved in everything possible. Patriotism is always at a high point during the summer games, and this was especially true of 1984. Not only were the games played on American soil (a source of national pride for the host country), but this marked the United States' return to competition. In 1980 President Carter decided to pull the U.S. contingent out in protest to the U.S.S.R.'s invasion of Afghanistan earlier that year.

Thus, in 1984, there was a wave of patriotism that

rolled across the country, and Reagan's patriotic symbolism rode that same wave. From the moment the Olympic torch began its hand-carried trek across country, until the flame was put out at the closing ceremonies, "Go For The Gold" became Reagan's rally cry (Schram, 1987, p. 220).

Of the 1984 Summer Olympic Games, Mondale's campaign manager had this to say, "They created the American mood in 1984... It affected everybody. You saw it on TV every day in every way-- the news, the ads, the soaps. When Budweiser ran that series of ads on the Olympic Torch, I, myself was taken..." (Schram, 1987, p. 223).

ABC's Roone Arledge called it "an orgy of patriotism," and conceded that Reagan had indeed won the gold medal for Olympic planned events (Schram, 1987).

"I was concerned... at the opening ceremonies that you give the President his due-- he's there and he's the President and you talk to him-- but you don't turn this into a political event for him.

What happened after that, with all the American victories and the frenzy... it became overwhelming. But the fact

that Reagan would have benefited from all of that was just an extension of the summer. I mean, he benefited from going to China. He had benefited from seeing the Pope. He had benefited from... you name it and they had it." (p. 229)

Describing the journey of the Olympic torch, President Reagan himself painted the red, white, and blue picture even brighter (Erickson, 1985).

"It was carried by former Olympians and handicapped kids, by elderly women and young athletes bright with the speed of youth.

They held the torch high and passed the flame on to one another. They took it up hills and through lonely towns in the darkness, along gray highways at twilight, and through bright towns at noon."

(p. 105)

Reagan's speech made the runners torch carriers seem to stand for the entire public-- a people determined to win. The U.S. athletes themselves also represented the President's images. "'Our young people are running for their country,' he said, 'running for greatness, for

achievement, for that moving thing in a man that makes him push on to the impossible'" (Erickson, 1985, p. 105). Whether it was Greg Louganis' dives, Mary Lou Retton's flips, or the basketball team's dunks, Reagan rarely missed an opportunity to tell all that we were a nation of champions (p. 107). Erickson (1985, p. 106) wrote, "The impressively high number of victories won by U.S. athletes increased the metaphoric value of the Olympics to Reagan's campaign. By taking symbolic credit for the triumphs, President Reagan could turn each American gold medal into votes for his re-election."

The Reagan staffers were proud of their public relations triumphs, such as these. They had even created a new catch phrase for the far-flung photo opportunities; they were known as 'our little playlets' (Gitlin, 1990, p. 20).

An interesting example of the thought process involved in how a Reagan media event was generated was explained by his chief campaigner, Michael Deaver (Hertsgaard, 1988):

"Some of my colleagues came running into my office and said, 'Housing starts are up, let's get the President down to the press room.' I said, 'That's a dumb idea.

Somebody go out and find the three cities where housing starts are going up faster than anyplace else.' And I juxtaposed those cities to key political areas for us, and it came down to Fort Worth, Texas.

So we flew down there and went up to a framed-up house with a couple of hard hats, and Reagan had a sign in front of the house showing the line going up on housing starts.

Now the press can say, 'They brought us all the way down here to Fort Worth, Texas, just to have a show and make the President look good.' But the guy sitting there with his six-pack that night is looking at it and saying, 'What's the President doing there with those hard hats? Oh! Housing starts have gone up. Things must be getting better.'" (p. 88)

Houston, Texas was the site for another 1984 event where Ronald Reagan held a series of speeches. First, Schram (1987, p. 228) provided a short memo from one of Reagan's White House advisers prior to the speeches that provided a nice comparison between how the event was

planned, and what was done to achieve that plan. The target audience was traditional Democrats, and recent Texas residents. As far as content of the message, however, the planned theme was "the Choice of the New Generation," to highlight the differences with the liberal Mondale agenda and Reagan's with a strong emphasis on both the economy and high technology (Schram, 1987, p. 228). Schram then described how they went about reaching the target market:

The Reagan campaign budgeted \$1,470 for signs and flags alone for this rally, and-- in what was sure to be a photo opportunity that local television and newspapers could not resist-- they had arranged to have Houston Oilers' star running back Earl Campbell there to present Reagan with two Stetson hats. It turned out Campbell couldn't make it at the last minute, so the advance man on the scene substituted two Houston Oilers cheerleaders-- in gridiron-scanty costumes-- instead.

Indeed that caught the eye of the television and newspaper camera people, who used shots of the President with two sexy looking cheerleaders. (The hasty selection obviously

did not fit the image originally hoped for, as there was hell to pay). "You know, we were very, very precise about any image or picture that we put out," said chief advance man Bill Henkel. (p. 228)

Blume (1985) made another interesting comparison when he looked at a pair of the candidate's pseudo-events-- one immediately following the other.

On ABC's report, Sam Donaldson made a very important observation regarding the image-making, camera-conscious strategy of the Reagan campaign: "Two and a half hours after Walter Mondale left the hall, President Reagan took the same B'nai B'rith podium, behind which White House aides had carefully moved in the American and Israeli flags, so that unlike Mondale, Mr. Reagan would be seen on television flanked by those patriotic symbols..."

If one reviews the tapes of the news programs covering Mondale's and Reagan's appearances at B'nai B'rith, the importance of Donaldson's report becomes immediately

apparent. The visual difference is like comparing black and white to color. Mondale appears drab in comparison to Reagan, even though he is clearly more comfortable and makes a better delivery in terms of his remarks. This, of course, makes sense, as he is speaking to an audience more receptive to his message than to Reagan's. But this advantage is completely offset in visual terms by the warmth and majesty of the flags surrounding Reagan as he speaks.

Unconsciously, the image of Reagan as leader is reinforced, the image of Mondale as colorless and not on the same level as Reagan in terms of leadership is reinforced. These images are often more available to an incumbent president. After all, the White House is always available as a backdrop for visuals. But the kind of visual manipulation on neutral territory as described in this situation was raised to a new strategic level by the Reagan campaign in 1984. (p. 47)

But of all the staged events that took place in the 1984 campaign, Labor Day stood out as an example that

outdistanced the rest in terms of Reagan's effective use of TV. Schram (1987) described it as:

one of those days in the course of campaign television that demonstrated many things about the way candidates campaign for television and the way TV and newspapers cover them...

It was one of those days that students of politics can cite to illustrate the difference between political aides who are woefully inept and political aides who are extraordinarily ept. And it is one of those days that students of the media can cite to illustrate the difference between the way television covers political news and the way newspapers cover political news.

The Mondale advisers can be seen failing to understand even the most basic aspects of just what it was that television journalists would focus upon as the subject of their nightly news story; they just lost control of their message on the one day when they had weeks to prepare for it and no outside

interference to mar it. The Reagan advisers can be seen at their cinematic best. (p. 238)

Reagan seized the day with a huge rally in Orange County, California. Red, white, and blue balloons filled the air and 40,000 people chanted "'four more years!'... to which the President replied, 'O.K., you talked me into it' (Blume, 1985, p. 27). 'Today, we set out to achieve a victory for the future over the past, for opportunity and retreat, for hope over despair, and to move up to all that is possible and not down to that which we fear'" (p. 27).

But while Reagan was busy at the rally, Mondale's media people chose to have him march in a parade. NBC's Lisa Myers described it this way (Schram, 1987):

"Mondale could only hope that the embarrassingly small turnout at New York's Labor Day Parade wasn't an omen. Way behind in the polls, doubted by members of his own party, he and Ferraro wanted to restore some confidence and convey a sense of optimism. Instead, they opened their campaign to empty streets. Mondale's aides attributed the poor turnout to a nine o'clock start on a holiday

morning. Then it was on to rural Wisconsin, where it sprinkled on Mondale's parade and poured on his rally." (p. 240)

ABC's Brit Hume had much of the same:

"If you saw Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro coming up Fifth Avenue this morning, it all looked and sounded the way a Labor Day Parade should. But in fact, there was almost nobody lining the street, and no wonder, when you got past the band marching with the candidates, there wasn't any parade either. This is what is called a media event and the candidates went along with it to the point of going into reviewing stand for a while even though there was nothing to review. But they didn't stay there long. It was on to Merrill, Wisconsin, population 9,500, where there was a real crowd and a real parade. And when it came time for speeches, there was real rain. And before she was finished with her address, Ferraro was wearing both a raincoat and a cap." (p. 240)

Clearly, the two candidates and their respective

teams had hoped to achieve certain goals, but following the nightly news reports, only Reagan's day was a success. NBC news producer Paul Greenburg, however, said that the success/failure of the two sets of media events was an important issue in the overall context of the 1984 election (Schram, 1987).

"They screwed up... The fact that they were at the parade at the wrong time was indicative of something that was going to plague them throughout the campaign... It's not just pictures, it's more than pictures. This is the guy that's going to run against this other guy-- and this other guy's got the power of the incumbency, he's got the balloons, he's got the helicopters he's got all this stuff. And they're walking down Fifth Avenue with three people!" (p. 242)

Another prime example of the Reagan campaign's use of television as a forum for a produced-in-Hollywood advertisement occurred on September 13th at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee (Blume, 1985, p. 60). Blume looked closely at this particular mediality and its underlying strategies.

Other presidents and other politicians had utilized similar techniques, but President Reagan's acting ability, his stage presence, in combination with the event planning and staging of his campaign apparatus, raised this strategy to almost the level of an art form. And no one previously in the television age had relied so overwhelmingly on such an approach, such a total submersion of substance in favor of style. It is also worth examining in another respect, which is the dominance of visual impression over the spoken word in the nightly news report format, allowing the Reagan-style campaign strategy to be successful in spite of reporter commentary intended to objectively expose it... Sam Donaldson was straightforward and pointed in his remarks about the media event, but the pictures overwhelmed his words. (p. 60)

This particular point is difficult to quantitatively prove or refute, but is nevertheless important to make note of, as the idea has been developed in various situations throughout this thesis. Donaldson's script

read in part (Blume, 1985):

"... The President failed again today, however, to say exactly how he intends to reduce the deficit, if not through higher taxes. None of this talk about deficits and taxes is the essence of the Reagan campaign. The essence of the Reagan campaign is a never-ending string of spectacular picture stories, created for television and designed to place the President in the midst of a huge throng of wildly cheering patriotic Americans. And today's occurred here in Nashville at the Grand Ole Opry." (p. 61)

Clearly, Sam Donaldson's report was critical and sarcastic about the President's image-making tactics. However, Blume's (1985) point was that Donaldson's biting audio was buried under Ronald Reagan's visual tidal wave.

Reagan is shown surrounded by country musicians, all of whom are singing together, along with the audience, Lee Greenwood's patriotic hit song, 'God Bless the USA,' backed by a big band belting out the music. As the song's climax is reached, confetti is

dropped from the ceiling on cue, and the audience cheers with emotion.

Words can not do justice to the audiovisual impact. Donaldson's concluding words are, "God, patriotism, and Reagan. That's the essence this campaign is trying hard to project." It is not likely that the viewer even hears the "is trying hard to project" part of the statement, for at this point, the audiovisual emotional impact has already put "God, patriotism, and Reagan" on more or less equal footing and made them somewhat synonymous. It seems easy to see through when the transcript is read. But seeing the report on television is a totally different experience. (p. 61)

Again, Blume (1983) compared Donaldson's ABC news report with what appeared on CBS and NBC that night. He found that they provided Reagan with much the same vehicle to the voters... and also aired some of his crafted-for-TV one-liners.

"I think we all better remember that the other side's promises are a little like Minnie Pearl's hat. They both have big price

tags hanging from them.... There's an old country and western song called 'Home on the Range', where seldom is heard a discouraging word. I guess they (Mondale/Ferraro) haven't campaigned there yet." (p. 62)

CBS' Mike Wallace ended his report by stating (Blume, 1985, p. 62): "What the president has done very skillfully is to wrap his campaign in what appears to be a new wave of good feeling about this country. So the Democratic attacks against him are made to seem almost unpatriotic." Blume (1985, p.62) agreed wholeheartedly but again wondered if the situation can be changed. "When read, it is evident that Wallace is stating the obvious. But when seen and heard in the context of what preceded it, it is easy to miss the 'made to seem' part..."

This event was clearly an intertwining of the three rhetorical strategies being studied in this thesis. The use of preplanned, orchestrated settings, lade with symbolic images, and presented by the Reagan persona exemplifies what the modern TV campaign is all about.

News reporters weren't the only people to lash out at Reagan for his numerous cameo appearances. Mondale

was also critical of Reagan's seemingly issue-less campaign. Mondale said, "'His managers have cocooned him on the road more effectively and more completely than any other president, including Richard Nixon'" (Blume, 1985, p. 81). Mondale was also quoted as saying that Reagan's speeches and staged events were "'all picket fences and puppy dogs... No one's hurting. No one's alone. No one's hungry. No one's unemployed. No one gets old.... And everyone's happy'" (Erickson, 1985, p. 119).

But while Reagan received some criticism, his campaign staff seemed to have the situation analyzed correctly (Blume, 1985).

As long as they could get their message across through the appropriate images on TV, this would outweigh the criticism for lack of substance or openness with the press. Even when the voice overs on the nightly news might criticize the image over substance approach, the images themselves proved the stronger message. The nature of the medium, and the briefness and lack of substance covered in the reports themselves, combined to make this so. (p. 82)

Images, Symbols, and Themes in 1984:

Ronald Reagan's campaign rhetoric in 1984 continued to use many of the same visual images that had been so effective during the previous four years. The President's artistic strokes created symbols, stories, and themes that Erickson (1985, p. 116) said, "resemble the paintings of Norman Rockwell in their portrayal of simple, cleanly outlined, and unconfused men and women." And the results in 1984 showed that the American people continued to believe those rhetorical visions and New Patriotism. The idea in 1984 was to associate Reagan with everything good in American life... "a postcard version of America" (Blume, 1985, p. 103), with everything sparkling and clean, with everyone employed and prosperous,-- with Ronald Reagan reelected President (Pomper, 1985, p. 38). This vision was supported with Reagan's metaphoric language, his simplified ideas, cinematic language, and the tendency to treat criticism of himself as criticism against the United States (Stuckey, 1990, p. 4). Denton called these images media snapshots: pictures of the world that become the "album" of both our knowledge and memories of the outside world (Denton, 1988, p. 22).

Early on in 1984, the Reagan artistic team advised (Erickson, 1985):

"Paint Mondale as... soft in his defense of freedom, patriotic values, American interests. Paint Ronald Reagan as the personification of all that is right with or heroized by America. Leave Mondale in a position where an attack on Reagan is tantamount to an attack on America's idealized image of itself-- where a vote against Reagan is in some subliminal sense, a vote against mythic AMERICA." (p. 100)

And Reagan followed these directions to the letter, as the following speech pointed out:

"The future according to the Democrats, is dark and getting darker, and Americans are very unhappy. According to the other party, there's nothing to hope for but despair, and we have nothing in store but fear itself. Under the Carter/Mondale administration, American prestige seemed like a memory. Our standing in the world has fallen." (p. 100)

"New Patriotism" and "A New Beginning" were symbolic references to the wave of nationalism that was crossing

the country, with Reagan's help. New Patriotism consisted of such diverse phenomena as a rise in the sale of flags, enthusiasm for the Olympic athletes, and a general rise in nationalist spirit literally anything that bore the U-S-A logo (Erickson, 1985, p. 101).

Reagan's rhetoric only served to more clearly define this new-found spirit (Erickson, 1985).

"There is a new patriotism spreading across our country. It's an affection for our way of life, expressed by people who represent the width and breadth of our culturally diverse society. And the new patriotism is not a negative force that excludes, but a positive force, an attitude toward those things that are fundamental to America, that draws together our freedom, our decency, our sense of fair play as a people." (p. 101)

Along with this new patriotism, Reagan's images continued to include that of a strong America. "'Uncle Sam is a friendly old man,' Reagan once warned, 'but he has a spine of steel... Gone are the days when we meekly tolerated threats to our peace and security'" (Erickson, 1985, p. 103).

Also gone were any specific issues from the following Reagan paragraph-- just images of a strong America (Erickson, 1985).

"Ours is the home of the free because it is the home of the brave. Our future will always be great because our nation will always be strong. Our nation will be strong because we are free. And our people will be free because we're united-- one people under God, with liberty and justice for all." (p. 103)

Reagan's advisers, Michael Deaver, talked in even more detail about the decisions behind the Republican's choice of images in 1984 (Schram, 1987):

"...we've got to go with nice old couples walking down the street eating ice cream cones, and kids waving the American flag, and people buying houses, and more people getting married, and more people believing in America again. We felt not only because of the Olympics, but a feeling we got through research, that this idea of making people feel good was the way to go. As long as it worked, we ought to use it forever... That's

to do was show that visually." (p. 226)

But many criticized Reagan's fantastic visions for being without any clear direction-- no specifics.

Blumenthal (1988, p. 12) wrote, "His campaign is driven by ideology without ideas. Among the virtues of the promised land is its vagueness... Images: Reagan on horseback, Reagan chopping wood... Reagan stands with the Olympic medalists, his arm wrapped paternally around Mary Lou Retton. Then Reagan walks in the White House, his arm around Bush. He's his father too! And if he's our father, then this must be home."

And while Mondale wasn't quite so descriptive in his criticisms of Reagan's imaginary campaign platform in 1984, a live interview with Dan Rather on the CBS Evening News still drove home his feelings: "'The image I want is of an honest man, telling the truth, willing to take the questions, wanting to be with the people, feeling their needs, speaking for them and able to lead'" (Blume, 1985, p. 73).

Mondale also attempted to create an issue out of several misstatements Reagan had made during the course of the campaign, especially those involving nuclear weapons. "'If you believe that nuclear missiles can be

recalled after they've been launched, as Mr. Reagan did, you won't lead towards a safer world. If you don't learn that most Soviet missiles are land based, as Mr. Reagan did not bother to learn, then your efforts at arms control are doomed'" (Blume, 1985, p. 96).

These misstatements of fact, as well as several other blunders, raised what some felt was the only issue that could defeat Ronald Reagan-- his age (He was 74 at the time). At one of the Reagan/Mondale debates, Reagan appeared tired and sounded old, hesitant and confused (Hertsgaard, 1988, p. 82).

For the first time in the 1984 campaign, Reagan the man, rather than the myth, had become the issue. And adding insult to injury, it was the great magician himself who had broken the spell... Reagan's debate performance was reminiscent of nothing so much as the scene near the end of The Wizard of Oz, when Toto the dog pulls aside the curtain and reveals to Dorothy and her companions the well-intentioned but hapless old man who called himself the Wizard. Dorothy called him "a very bad man", for the deception he has used on her and his adoring

subjects... "No, I'm a very good man," the Wizard replied in a sad, weary voice. "I'm just a very bad wizard." For ninety minutes that night Americans saw the real, curtainless Reagan, rather than the pre-packaged version. (p. 82)

But when the age issue was raised at the next debate, Reagan, crystal ball and curtain at his side, was ready. "'I want you to know that I will not make age an issue in this campaign. I am not going to exploit for political purposes my opponent's youth and inexperience'" (Dye, 1986, p. 21). With that remark, the studio audience broke into laughter, and even Mondale chuckled at the classic one-liner. The President had buried the age issue, and won not only the debate, but the confidence of the nation. The President's performance reassured the country that he was not too old or out of touch to hold office (Dye, 1986, p. 21).

On September 25th, 1984, Walter Mondale delivered what many called his most defined, impressive speech of the campaign. The speech was laden with images of Reagan, and the way his policies have changed over the course of four years (Blume, 1985).

"The new Reagan supports economic aid to the developing world. The old Reagan slashed it. The new Reagan wants to settle regional differences. The old Reagan ignored them or made them worse. The new Reagan now praises international law. The old Reagan jumped bail on the international court. The new Reagan criticizes South Africa. The old Reagan cozied up to apartheid. Through four years, they failed for the first time in any modern presidency to reach a single arms-control agreement with the Soviet Union. In fact, they've proposed to extend the arms race into the heavens. But now, just six weeks before the election, they talk about arms control. They dust off the conference table and they brag about blunting an issue. This election is not about jelly beans and pen pals. This election is not about the Olympic torch, it's about the civil rights laws that opened athletics to women and minorities and permitted us to win, in essence. This election is not about Republicans sending hecklers to my rallies.

It is about Jerry Falwell picking justices for the Supreme Court." (p. 86)

This speech followed several months of press criticism of Mondale during his search for a message-- a marketable set of positions and slogans that he could use to comprise a successful television rhetoric (Erickson, 1985, p. 112). In other words, they wanted Mondale and his campaign team to "Reagan-ize" his rhetoric...and that was something Mondale simply was not prepared to do.

In 1984, Mondale did acquire one theme that the media was able to feed on: his question "'Where's the beef?'" (Dye, 1986, p. 155). The phrase came from a Wendy's hamburger commercial that used the same slogan to criticize the competition. Mondale used it to criticize Gary Hart for his lack of substance. "Suddenly, the issue became Gary Hart. Who was he? Why did he change his name? Mondale's remark was meant to require that Hart present for public scrutiny some of his new ideas" (Dye, 1986, p. 1587).

Mondale attempted to use the same strategy on Reagan. But Reagan had four years of success to back up his symbolism and imagery. And his acceptance address at the 1984 Republican National Convention reemphasized that

the election was literally a struggle to retain the soul of America. "'The choices this year are not just between two different personalities or between two political parties. They're between two different visions of the future'" (Erickson, 1985, p. 95). Reagan also asserted that the country needed to renew its commitment to him that they had made initially in 1980 (Erickson, 1985).

"The Poet called Miss Liberty's torch the lamp beside the golden door. Well, that was the entrance to America, and it still is. And now you know why we are her tonight.

The glistening hope of that lamp is still ours. Every promise, every opportunity is still golden in this land. And through that golden door our children walk into tomorrow with the knowledge that no one can be denied the promise that is America.

Her heart is full; her door is still golden, her future bright. She has arms big enough to comfort and strong enough to support. For the strength in her arms is the strength of her people. She will carry on in the eighties unafraid, unashamed, and unsurpassed.

In this springtime of hope, some lights seem eternal; America's is. Thank you, God bless you, and God bless America." (p. 93)

The above paragraph showed Reagan's attempt to push for a continuation of his great plans. Phrases like; "the lamp is still ours," "every opportunity is still golden," and "springtime of hope," all symbolize a rededication to another four years of Reagan at the helm.

Hart's (1984, p. 215-228) analysis of Reagan's rhetorical style identified three unique characteristics that made his speeches more memorable and image-filled. First, Hart found what he termed a "sense of momentum" (p. 215)-- an emotional, take charge, can-do spirit of optimism that deals with broad statements of philosophy rather than of policy. "The image of Ronald Reagan as the nation's First Cheerleader is not far off the mark. Cheerleaders, after all, rarely suggest exactly which procedures the defense might employ in taking the ball away from the other" (Hart, 1984, p. 216).

Second, Reagan's rhetoric identified a clear "sense of place" (p. 220), that described basically who we are, what's on our minds, and what we should do; and did it in short, to the point sentences. "This allowed him to

gloss over the unpleasant facts, reduce complex issues, and create mass appeal" (Denton, 1988, p. 65). Hart further observed, "His words never force his listeners to imagine things they are incapable of imagining, or require that they make a taxing mental association... His language is drawn from life as it is lived most simply" (Hart, 1985, p. 224).

Third, Reagan provided a "sense of tradition" (p. 225). All his public addresses were resplendent, and complete with national symbols and ceremonial settings. His instincts in speech making led him down well worn paths, as has been exhibited already. His press conferences became much more formal as well. For example, Reagan altered the location of White House conferences so that he could enter the room from an open doorway, striding down a red carpet leading to the podium (Stuckey, 1985, p. 21).

The doorway and the red carpet provide a dramatic background as he speaks and at the close of the press conference he turns and exits down the long red carpet through a doorway at the end of the room. The visual image as seen by the television viewer resembles that of a Protestant minister....

The President delivers the homily, opens the conference up for questions, and the ceremony ends. (p. 21)

In addition, President Reagan also required the members of the press to raise their hands to be recognized, symbolically converting the reporters into school children (Denton, 1988, p. 31).

In terms of the overall effect these images had on the campaign, Dan Rather noted, "the Reagan people saw the whole campaign as a movie. The Mondale people at best saw it as a series of quick sound bites" (Denton, 1988, p. 65).

The Reagan Persona in 1984:

As was the case with the election of 1980, the personality of Ronald Reagan had a profound effect on his reelection bid. This was even more true in 1984, after four years as chief. During that time, the U.S. had ample opportunity to see and enjoy the Reagan personality at work. And just as it was used to deflect the age issue, Reagan's congenial presence seemed to reassure the country that things were in good shape.

Pomper (1985) found that, one of Reagan's biggest triumphs over Mondale was with his personality. He

wrote, "The most common explanation for Reagan's victory was Reagan himself... Tens of millions of Americans voted for a likable individual, who successfully combined stirring, if vague rhetoric, a confident personality, an actor's communication skills and a verbal commitment to religion and family" (Pomper, 1985, p. 79).

Reagan's leadership skills were also highly thought of following his first four years as President (Nelson, 1985, p. 98). Pomper (1985) wrote:

Americans, for the most part, want a leader who gives us a sense of direction and moral purpose, but not one who really does dangerous or demanding things. It is significant that Reagan flatters us outrageously; in his rhetoric, the American people are sinned against, but never sinners. A leader must be one of us, an ordinary citizen glorified, and consequently must have faults. Reagan's mistakes enable citizens to feel protective toward the President. (p. 163)

In fact, on the eve of his 1980 victory, when asked what the electorate sees in him, Reagan responded, "'I think maybe they see themselves, and that I'm one of them'"

(Denton, 1988, p. 66). Denton expanded this idea.

Reagan's style is not flamboyant, but simple, and expresses the thoughts of common Americans.... He makes a virtue of acting as if he doesn't know any more than the voters. In our homes, Reagan appears as an informed equal, a reflection of us rather than a superior, star-individual. (p. 67)

Wills (1987, p. 113) reported that Reagan has actually goofed on purpose-- to look more natural. "To do this, he used things like broken grammar, feigned embarrassment, professionally avoided the appearance of being a professional."

Henry backed up this point when he wrote, "As a stump speaker or at a news conference, he phrases his thoughts almost instinctively so that they can become a sound bite, the crisp few words that by their color and brevity can defeat any elaborate footnoted argument made by the other side" (Henry, 1985, p. 57).

Reagan's chief image maker in the 1984 campaign was Michael Deaver. Deaver said that much of Reagan's relaxed, disarming character was developed decades ago in Hollywood. "We've got a guy who has been in front of a

camera for 50 years or so. He is at ease with himself physically, mentally, spiritually. He doesn't have to worry where his hand is going to be..." (Schram, 1987, p. 32).

Surprisingly, one of the demographic groups that Reagan was most popular with were the newest voters-- the 18-24 year old. Of this interesting fact, Blume (1985) noted:

Such conservatism on the part of youth seemed historically odd to many, yet this group was responding less to ideology than image...

Reagan was the charming, reassuring, grandfather figure telling us that we were strong, safe, and proud, and the world looked up to us again...thanks to his policies. His communications abilities-- presence, delivery, the strong, warm optimistic voice-- were unmatched by anyone since Franklin Roosevelt. (p. 17)

In an editorial entitled "Lights, Camera, Reagan," Kitman (1983, p. 22) sarcastically described "the Teflon President's" acting ability:

On TV, the President acts like a man who knows what he is doing. I love seeing the

way he radiates confidence on the big TV specials like The State of the Union Message...The state of the union could be awful, and you wouldn't know it from a Reagan Performance. (Kitman, 1983, p. 22)

Reagan's voice was another important aspect among his personal attributes. In fact, he narrated most of his own advertisements. Not realizing this, "one of Reagan's PR men said, 'I just love that voice.' Then he went flush from embarrassment when he realized it was Reagan's voice. His voice was often electronically augmented by a slight reverberation, making it huskier and warmer" (Blumenthal, 1988, p. 13). And Denton wrote, "Even when he berates Russia, he does it in the tone and voice of Marcus Welby, telling a sick patient to shape up or else. Reagan certainly takes a stand, but does so with humility, righteousness, and anecdotes" (Denton, 1988, p. 67).

Further, Meer (1986, p. 18) reported a study in Psychology Today that indicated Reagan's facial expressions may have played a part in his reelection success. After studying the expressions of viewers who watched some of Reagan's speeches, the research supported

the notion that a candidate's facial expressions created a distinct first impression (Meer, 1986, p. 18).

And for all of Reagan's positive personality traits, Mondale generally came across negatively. One observer noted, "'Mondale should not be elected because he has hooded eyes, like a snake'" (Henry, 1985, p. 53). And Henry himself noted, "Can I stand four years of this voice."

Still another example of Mondale's less than stunning appearance was found during a live interview with Peter Jennings on the ABC Evening News (Blume, 1985).

From a video perspective, there was a stunning image of an exhausted looking Walter Mondale. One wondered how this campaign-weary face, which had never been telegenic to begin with, could possibly compete with a refreshed Ronald Reagan, who had campaigned in vacation style since Labor Day, and who was a master of the video medium. (p. 114, 115)

There was actually one moment during the campaign in which Mondale looked better than Reagan did on TV. With nothing to lose, "he managed to achieve a persona: the

middle-class family man, metaphorically sitting at the kitchen table and talking common sense... He projected an identity that people could relate to and that benefited his campaign themes of fairness and moderation" (Henry, 1985, p. 56).

The Bully Pulpit:

In addition to the three primary rhetorical tactics of the 1984 campaign, one additional aspect of the Reagan campaign needed to be considered: his use of position as the incumbent President to gain additional media coverage.

Light and Lake (Nelson, 1985, p. 86) believed that Reagan, like other incumbents, had a significant advantage over Mondale by being the President.

They occupy the strongest office in the free world, and have all the perquisites that go with it. Challengers must compose their own theme songs; presidents campaign to the tune of 'Hail to the Chief.'

Second, incumbents often have highly seasoned campaign staffers already on the payroll. Reagan hired most of his 1980 campaign aides for administrative slots and

had no trouble reassuring a powerful reelection team for 1984.

Third, the White House machinery offers great electoral advantages, including instant media coverage for presidential events. The Office of Public Liaison, for example, is dedicated to cultivating interest group support for the president, which can be translated into reelection support.

Fourth, the president has the loyalty and support of the vice president. In recent years, the vice president has become a much more important player and now occupies a highly visible campaign role.... Even if the challengers convince the voters that they would be just as good as the incumbent, voters usually prefer to maintain status quo. Other things being equal, continuity is favored over change and certainty over uncertainty. (p. 86)

Historically speaking (since Hoover), only one duly elected presidential incumbent has been defeated for reelection: Jimmy Carter (Robinson, 1985, p. 38). "Given almost any reason to do so, the electorate

generally prefers to re-elect the devil it knows (p. 38)." A 1984 report by the Congressional Research Service backed this up when it found that the President had a considerable advantage in gaining free network access (The TV advantage, 1984, p. 47). Being able to get on television and speak to the people is a clear advantage that the challenger simply doesn't have.

Ranney (1983, p. 140), however, disputed the power of the bully pulpit when he wrote:

Television has in many ways made it harder for a president to succeed than was the case in...Roosevelt's day. By its unblinking stare at what presidential candidates are saying and doing it has not only made them more aware that it is at least as important to look good as to do good, but it has also tempted them to inflate their rhetoric out of all proportion in making their promises, evaluating their achievements, and criticizing their adversaries. (p. 140)

Conclusions on Campaign '84:

Some wonder if anyone could have beaten Ronald Reagan in 1984. Martin Kaplan, Mondale's speech writer

in 1984 had this to say about the election: "the only candidate who could have beaten 'old actor Reagan' was another actor or a TV anchorman, such as Robert Redford or Walter Cronkite" (Denton, 1988, p. 71).

No matter how hard Mondale might have tried, he could not have won the 1984 election without Reagan's help. But Reagan truly ran a masterful campaign. "Repeating his campaign theme of 1980, he asked voters if they were better off now than they were four years ago. The economy was still the voter's main concern, and by election day, 59 percent of them apparently had concluded that they were better off (Nelson, 1985, p. 83).

In 1984, Reagan surrounded himself with professionals of the modern communications technology. They made sure the settings were correct and the images were clear. Reagan delivered the lines to ensure the desired response (Denton, 1988, p. 77). And Walter Mondale was left to sit and ponder if he could be successful in a race without Reagan-- "The Great Communicator."

Chapter VI

Summary and Conclusions

Summary:

The purpose of this study was to identify and evaluate the most salient image-making rhetorical skills employed by Ronald Reagan on television during the presidential campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

It was hypothesized that Reagan employed a variety of television image-making skills during those campaigns including: video choreographed media events, image laden themes and symbols, and Reagan's overall persona.

In both 1980 and again in 1984, Ronald Reagan clearly included the use of preplanned, video-oriented pseudo-events as an important part of his television rhetoric. Reagan and his team of image-makers quickly realized the tremendous importance of selecting visually attractive, video inducing locations for their candidate. By thoroughly planning these media-events well in advance, Reagan's advisers could control the situations more effectively so he would be less likely to make a mistake. Both in 1980 and again in 1984 the implementation of pseudo-events became an art form in the Reagan campaign. It is an art that has become one of the primary tactics used by politicians today.

Ronald Reagan was also a master at using video-oriented images, symbols, and themes as an integral part of his television campaign rhetoric. With his traditional conservative values of family, work, peace, freedom, and a strong America as his guide, Reagan artfully incorporated these images into the words he spoke. In fact, Erickson (1985, p. 116) said that Reagan's images, "resembled the paintings of Norman Rockwell."

Ronald Reagan's persona was equally essential in making him the ideal candidate for president in this age of television politics. A former Hollywood actor, Reagan's handsome appearance, strong voice, and overall delivery created an aura that seemed to pervade the TV screen and reached into the heart and soul of the American public.

Characterized by many as the old-time Western Marshall, Reagan came across as the wizened grandfather whom this country could turn to in its time of need. These attributes made Reagan one of the most popular presidents of all time and one of the most effective political persuaders since Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Reagan was also the most effective of the

presidential candidates in 1980 and 1984, because he spoke in terms that easily translated into the visual images that the medium of television thrived on.

Conclusion:

A generalization, based only on the results of this study, is that video over-rides audio as an image making tool. Throughout this study, various instances of video superiority have been alluded to-- especially those reporting on Ronald Reagan's campaigns of 1980 and 1984.

I saved one example for use in this section, as it seemed to best exemplify this conclusion. The case involved a lengthy, critical campaign story developed by CBS news correspondent Leslie Stahl. The 1984 piece was one of the first to tell the American people that Ronald Reagan's television presence was being choreographed by a group of professionals (Denton, 1988, p. 71; Schram, 1987, p. 23).

For almost four years, Reagan and his advisers had been using television newscasts to create an image of the Reagan presidency that just did not square with the policies of the Reagan presidency. Now Stahl was telling America precisely that-- in the most toughly worded piece she had done in her six years of

covering the White House for the CBS Evening News. (p. 23)

The piece included shots of Reagan at the Special Olympics handing out medallions, at a senior citizen's project, at home chopping wood and horse-back riding, in Normandy, and comforting the families of dead Marines (Denton, 1988, p. 70). The audio portion sounded like this (Schram, 1987):

How does Ronald Reagan use television?

Brilliantly. He's been criticized as the rich man's president, but the TV pictures say it isn't so. At age 73, Mr. Reagan could have an age problem. But the TV pictures say it isn't so. Americans want to feel proud of their country again, and of their president. And the TV pictures say you can. The orchestration of television coverage absorbs the White House. Their goal? To emphasize the president's greatest asset, which, his aides say, is his personality. They provide pictures of him looking like a leader. Confident, with his Marlboro Man walk. A good family man. They also aim to erase the

negatives. Mr. Reagan tries to counter the memory of an unpopular issue with a carefully chosen backdrop that actually contradicts the president's policy. Look at the handicapped olympics, or the opening ceremonies at an old age home. No hint that he tried to cut the budgets for the disabled and for federally subsidized housing for the elderly.

Another technique for distancing the president from bad news is to have him disappear, as he did the day he pulled the Marines out of Lebanon. He flew off to his California ranch, leaving others to hand out the announcement. There are few visual reminders linking the president to the tragic bombing of the marine headquarters....

President Reagan is accused of running a campaign in which he highlights the images and hides from the issues. But there's no evidence that the charge will hurt him, because when we see the president on TV, he makes them feel good about themselves, about America, about him. (p. 24, 25).

After watching the piece, Stahl said she was worried

that it might have come across a bit too harsh, even for Reagan (Schram, 1987, p. 25). However, the next day Stahl received a phone call from one of Reagan's top aides who congratulated her on her great piece. Stahl was truly shocked. "'We love it, we love it,'" the campaigners yelled. 'Thank you very much. It was a five-minute commercial for the campaign.' Stahl replied, 'Didn't you hear what I said?!?! I was tough.' 'Nobody heard what you said. They just saw the five minutes of red, white, and blue balloons and flags. Haven't you people (journalists) figured out yet that the picture always overrides what was said?'" (Gitlin, 1990, p. 20; Schram, 1987, p.23-25). The old adage, a picture is worth 1,000 words, seems even more appropriate in the video election age than ever.

A 1988 article in Time by Zuckerman may have said it best. "TV producers are like nymphomaniacs when it comes to visuals... Television's insatiable need for pretty pictures has cheapened the campaign" (Zuckerman, 1988, p. 66). Another unrelated, but equally forceful example of the power of the picture occurred in June, 1989, with the student demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China. "The most powerful discourse is not spoken; it's

shown. In the case of the China coverage, you don't need words... Turn the sound off and you still know what's happening" (China and the power, 1989, p. 34).

For eight years, the American people listened quietly as Reagan acted as the master-of-ceremonies for the federal government. An interview with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl (Webber, 1986, p. 71) revealed not only his tremendous understanding of the current state of rhetoric, but also his dislike for this new style of oratory. "The successful political leader has to be compared less to a chief executive of a corporation and more to an actor... He might be the best leader, having all the necessary qualities of leadership, but if he is not only ugly but also stutters, he is impossible on the television screen" (Webber, 1986, p. 71).

And while Ronald Reagan is not solely responsible for this demise of meaningful presidential communication, he, nevertheless, has played an important role in the TV buildup.

Increasingly, reporters are aware that there is a major problem in this seemingly symbiotic relationship (Schram, 1987, p. 54). Simply put, it should be much more adversarial. Yet even in the occasional scuffle, politicians seem to have found a way to neutralize the

media. An example of this was seen in the live stand-off in 1988 between then vice-president George Bush and CBS anchorman Dan Rather (Stengel, 1988, p. 16-20).

Searching for a way to shed his wimpy image, and emerge as a strong leader, Bush stumbled into a gold-mine when he and Rather exchanged barbs. The resulting media attention made it appear Bush had been ambushed unfairly by Rather when he brought up the Iran-Contra scandal. But Bush came out smelling like a rose when he pointed out an incident when Rather was less than perfect himself. "'It's not fair to judge my whole career by a rehash on Iran. How would you like it if I judge your career by those seven minutes when you walked off the set in New York? How would you like that?'" (Stengel, 1988, p. 16). Stengel called it, "Video High Noon," a defining moment in which the viewer receives an impression on which to form an opinion, and based on that opinion, a vote may be cast (p. 16). McWilliams went a step further. He felt Bush used the event not only as a catapult, but also as a shield to insulate himself from further criticism by the media. (McWilliams, 1988, p. 139). If this was the case, Bush certainly achieved his goals. More than 6,000 people phoned CBS that night to

voice their displeasure over Bush's treatment (Stengel, 1988, p. 16).

However, that nine minutes of heated debate may have come closer to genuine extemporaneous public address than this nation has seen in years. The live format allowed no editing, no changing on the part of the media. On the other hand, Bush had no chance to say, 'wait a minute, let's start again.'

CBS News President Howard Stringer defended Rather (Stengel, 1988).

The public doesn't often see aggressive journalism on television. This is not the time to be careful how we address the people who want to be President of the United States. If we want to sanitize the evening news all the time, where all the edge is taken off for fear of what the audience thinks, we run the risk of going back to the least objectionable programs. (p. 19)

Stringer made an excellent point, and this philosophy was reemphasized by Hertsgaard (1988). Hertsgaard (1988) focusing on the 1984 campaign, felt that Reagan didn't even have to work to retain the presidency, largely because the press portrayed him as

unbeatable. Polls showing Reagan's popularity were run on a regular basis in 1984; "snapshots of public opinion which possess no great predictive power in themselves" (Hertsgaard, 1988, p. 85). Hertsgaard argued that the polls were turned into more than snapshots by the way the press reported them (p. 86).

He found that many journalists felt that there weren't any real issues in the campaign. Mondale's campaign manager disagreed (Hertsgaard, 1988).

"Issues don't matter if you don't raise them. It's wrong that people don't care about issues. If you present them with a controversy, they do care. They'll listen to it. But if you don't give it to them, if you give them balloons and happy talk and bullshit every night, there's no controversy there." (p. 82)

Gitlin agreed, and wrote that television polling has become the newest media obsession. "One night, ABC News devoted 14 minutes, almost two-thirds of the news section, to a poll-- a bigger block by far than was given to any issue of the campaign" (Gitlin, 1990, p. 18).

I have an even harder time accepting pseudo-events

created to dramatize the issues for the evening news. By 1988 it had gotten ridiculous: Bush spoke to us in a flag factory while Dukakis rode in a tank. In the end, however, if all the networks tag along and cover these pre-staged events, the only fault that can be found is with the press. Once again, ratings prevail over responsible journalism. News is treated as a form of entertainment, rather than as a watch-dog for the nation as it used to. Meanwhile, the fundamental issues regarding the direction of the nation have taken a back seat to one minute-thirty second bits of beautiful imagery.

By doing more original reporting and refusing to let the campaigns set the daily agenda for their newscasts, reporters could force the candidates to change their tactics. Then, perhaps, viewers might witness a return to the days when reporters and editors were the ones who selected the sound bites (Zuckerman, 1988, p. 71).

Patterson (1976), however, disputed the need for any drastic action, and gave the American public more credit for being able to differentiate truth from fiction; image from issue.

The long and short of images is that voters are not fools. Claims that the

public's images can be manipulated by shallow television theatrics take the voters for dupes. The American voter judges presidential aspirants by politics, not entertainment. Voters arrive at their image of a candidate by judging where he stands politically and by assessing his significant accomplishments and failures. A smiling presidential candidate engulfed by thousands of adoring admirers, may make for good television, but it is not the basis on which the electorate evaluates potential leaders. That evaluation is based on politics. Television's image-making power is a myth. (p. 73)

The technology itself continues to change. With the advent of cable television, satellite transmissions, and super computers able to collect and disseminate information in seconds, broadcast television is no longer as fresh and dramatic as it once was (Swerdlow, 1988, p. ii). In fact, Swerdlow (1988, p. 13) also said, "Politicians who understand only broadcast television are

as outdated as the oldtime ward healer."

Beyond political advertisements, but short of satellite hookups, candidate videos are another new source for the modern presidential candidate. Sellers (1987) found that:

No one doubts that the tube is still by far the most influential shaper of votes. But with the rise of VCR's, round-the-clock news coverage, and a widely held view that no incident in a candidate's life is too small or too personal to be newsworthy, old strategies no longer apply. (p. 131)

Thus, various politicians now take advantage of the fact that about half of all the homes in America have VCR's (Sellers, 1987, p. 132).

The amount of news coverage has also expanded with the arrival of cable. Stations like CNN, C-SPAN, and other local access channels have taken an active role in the airing of political events (Abramson, 1988, p. 94). And campaigning on cable allows the candidates to target their ads to specific demographic groups. "It has the impact of television with the personal touch of campaigns that appealed to voters from the back of trains" (The

cable edge, 1984, p. 10).

Further, Chase (1983, p. 20) came up with an option for future campaigns. He helped develop "The Crisis Game"-- an alternative that would allow the nation to watch presidential candidates lead the country under stressful situations. The Crisis Game would call for candidates to develop a cabinet of advisers, and perform role-playing situations involving the economy, unemployment, or a nuclear attack (p. 20). Chase contended that this would provide a significant new way to determine candidate's ability to lead effectively, and not depend strictly on images and TV rhetoric (Chase, 1983, p. 20).

Saldich (1979, p. x) suggested another way to change this trend of issue-less, image-filled politics, and that is to teach "electronic literacy" in schools. "Viewers must learn that what they see is not always what happens in reality; that television is not any more objective than any other medium, that it can distort reality intentionally as well as accidentally, and that it is an inadequate (single) source of information on which to base political actions."

Unfortunately, television appears to be, more than

ever, the medium of choice. As cited earlier, it is considered more believable than any other mass medium. And of all age groups, the young, are least likely to turn to any other form of media for information. A 1989 survey found that in 1967, 73 percent of the people polled said they read a newspaper daily. By 1989, however, the overall figure had fallen to 50.6 percent (Gitlin, 1988, p. 25). During the same period, the number of everyday readers in the 18 to 29 category had been cut in half-- from 60 percent to 29 (Gitlin, 1990, p. 25).

There is also concern that as politics becomes more professional, voter turnout will continue to decline. "In media's version of deliberation, citizens have no voice at all; one can't talk back to a television set; and citizens can assert their dignity only by refusing to listen" (McWilliams, 1989, p. 139).

Denton (1988, p. xii) wrote, "We see our presidents more and more, but we know them less and less. Primarily because of television, presidents and presidential candidates look increasingly alike, sound the same, and unfortunately, act the same. The presidency has become a product."

Further, Hollander (1985, p. 94) argued that the

elimination of party politics as we know it may soon become a reality as well. "The presidential campaigns of 1980 and 1984 brought further evidence that political parties are rapidly becoming as obsolete as the slide rule... Reagan needed a camera lens more than he needed a party label." In fact, in 1984 a record 34 percent of the registered voters in this country called themselves Independents (p. 95).

Clearly, this thesis has raised many more questions about the role television plays in the modern presidential election process than could be considered in this investigation of the rhetorical tactics Ronald Reagan used to vault to the highest position of this country.

One of the most important questions that needs to be studied further is the impact that pictures have in conjunction with the words in a news story. In other words; which is more important, the video or the audio in a reporter's story.

Mickelson's 1972 book, The Electric Mirror, asked this very question. He wrote:

Since there is no reliable (or acceptable) scientific data to indicate the effect on the voter of television campaigning, there is

only circumstantial evidence to rely on. And even that is inconclusive... While science can answer many questions for us, this, unfortunately, is one which scientists have not yet been able to devise the formula to measure. Specialists in the behavioral sciences point out that the fabric of human experience is far too complicated, and the difficulty of isolating any one stimulus a virtual impossibility. The tracking of a stimulus through the thought and reaction processes of the human individual is a virtual impossibility. Sometime, a device may be found for making such measurements, but until that time, the best we can do is make certain assumptions. (p. 25)

What are the effects that television has had on presidential elections? Denton (1988) argued that changes have been both quantitative and qualitative.

From a quantitative perspective, there are simply more campaign messages than ever before in the form of news coverage, debates, ads, and pseudo-events. Qualitative changes

have been equally as noticeable. Campaigns have become more sophisticated and slick... In addition, if you place a contemporary campaign speech beside one of 50 years prior, you find that the newer speech is much shorter, probably only about one-third as long, and it is comprised of much shorter paragraphs. The longer paragraphs of yesteryear contained arguments, which attempted to convert the audience; contemporary short paragraphs contain assertions and conclusions, which attempt to give the audience a position to identify with while simultaneously providing a 10-second bite for the evening news. (p. 36)

This new and improved, fast-paced, edited version of the political process may give the general public the wrong impression of reality. TV has made for a nation of viewers searching for instant gratification with the flick of a switch or turn of a channel. Sex, laughter, murder, love, and quick solutions are all there-- instantly accessible with 35-channel cable TV. Daily reporters have to struggle with the challenge of

condensing a 30-minute press conference into a sound bite, or an important issue shaved into a one minute-thirty second package. Just the highlights please. With distortions like these, it's no wonder that many viewers believe major issues and complex problems should be resolved in similar fashion.

As a former television reporter, I struggled with this problem as well. We all know that democracy, in and of itself, is rarely glitzy. It is often long, dull, and time consuming. It may be time for this nation to return to a President that speaks to the people, not to a TV camera, that discusses the issues, rather than creates the images, and speaks from the heart rather than from a teleprompter.

Suggestions for Further Study:

The following suggestions for further study are offered:

- 1) A study attempting to determine the impact video has on TV viewers, versus the audio portion of a television news story.
- 2) A study comparing Reagan's campaign rhetoric with that of George Bush, our country's first president.
- 3) A study replicating the Roper Report, attempting to redetermine the reliability the general public has

places on TV in comparison to radio, newspapers, and magazines.

- 4) A study surveying reporters to find out how they report preplanned media events.
- 5) A study surveying presidential campaign managers to determine the most important parts of a campaign-- from their perspective.
- 6) A study to find out what presidential candidates believe about the status of the modern campaign, and what they believe are the most important campaign strategies today.
- 7) A study of modern technologies used by presidential candidates in 1992.

References

- A time for choosing: the speeches of Ronald Reagan, 1961-1982. (1983). Chicago, IL.: Regnery Gateway.
- Adams, W. C. (1983). Television coverage of the 1980 presidential campaign. Norwood, N.J.: ABLEX Publishing Corporation.
- Arterton, F. C. (1984). Media politics: the news strategies of presidential campaigns. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.
- Barkin, S. M. (1986). Eisenhower's secret strategy: television planning in the 1952 campaign, European Journal of Marketing, 20, 18-28.
- Berquist, G. F. & Golden, J. L. (1981). Media rhetoric, criticism, and the public perception of the 1980 presidential debates, The Quarterly Journal of Speech, 67, 125-137.
- Blume, K. (1985). The presidential election show: campaign '84 and beyond on the nightly news. South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
- Blumenthal, S. (1988). The Reagan millenium, The New Republic, 24, 12-14.
- Bolen, M. (1950). Fundamentals of television. Hollywood, CA.: Hollywood Radio Publishers, Inc.

- Boorstin, D. J. (1962). The image: or what happened to the American dream. New York, N.Y.: Atheneum, Inc.
- Boyarsky, B. (1968). The rise of Ronald Reagan. New York, N.Y.: Random House.
- Cannon, L. (1982). Reagan. New York, N.Y.: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Chase, B. O. (1983). Devising a broader purpose to the crisis game, Broadcasting, 105, 20.
- China and the power of the tube, (1989). Broadcasting, 116, 34.
- Dallek, R. (1984). Ronald Reagan: the politics of symbolism. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- DeGregorio, W. A. (1989). The complete book of U.S. presidents. New York, N.Y.: Dembner Books.
- Denton, R. E. (1988). The primetime presidency of Ronald Reagan. New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.
- Denton, R. E. (1986). Presidential communication, description and analysis. New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.
- Dow, C. W. (1961). An introduction to graduate study in speech and theatre. Lansing, MI.: Michigan State University Press.
- Drew, E. (1981). Portrait of an election: the 1980

- presidential campaign. New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster.
- Dye, T. R. & Zeigler, H. (1986). American politics in the media age, 2nd ed. Monterey, CA.: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Erickson, P. D. (1985). Reagan speaks: the making of an American myth. New York, N.Y.: New York University Press.
- Fotheringham, A. (1980). A lifetime of rehearsals from stagecoach to stage. Macleans, 93, 56.
- Gilbert, R. E. (1972). Television and presidential politics. North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House.
- Gitlin, T. (1990). Blips, bites, & savvy talk, Dissent, 37, 18-26.
- Graber, D. A. (1982). The president and the public. Philadelphia, PA.: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Inc. (ISHII).
- Graber, D. A. (1984). Media power in politics. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc.
- Hankins, S. R. (1983). Archetypal alloy: Reagan's rhetorical image, Central States Speech Journal, 34, 33-43.

- Hart, R. P. (1984). Verbal style and the presidency: a computer based analysis. Orlando, FL.: Academic Press, Inc.
- Henry, W. A., III. (1985). The president, biggest hit of the TV season, Channels of Communication, 4, 53-57.
- Hertsgaard, M. (1988). The big sellout, Esquire, 109, 78-86.
- Hockett, H. (1955). The critical method in historical research and writing. New York, N.Y.: MacMillan, Co.
- Hollander, R. (1985). Video democracy: the vote-from-home revolution. Mt. Aury, MA.: Lomond Publications.
- Hoover, J. (1988). An early use of television as a political tool, Journal of Popular Film and Television, 16, 41-48.
- Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. R. (1987). News that matters. Chicago, IL.: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kitman, M. (1983). Lights, camera, Reagan, The New Leader, 66, 21-22.
- Lang, G. E. & Lang, K. (1984). Politics and television re-viewed. Beverly Hills, CA.: Sage Publications.
- Linsky, M. (1983). Television and the presidential elections, self interest and public interest. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath.

- Locher, F. C. (1980). Contemporary authors.
Detroit, MI.: Gale Research Company.
- Lowe, C. (1981). Television and American culture.
New York, N.Y.: The H. W. Wilson Company.
- Lower, E. W. (1983). Broadcasting and the 1984
presidential election. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse
Univeristy Press.
- MacNeil, R. (1968). The people machine. New York,
N.Y.: Trident Press.
- Martin, M. A. (1983). Ideologues, ideographs, and "the
best men" from Carter to Reagan, The Southern Speech
Communication Journal, 49, 12-25.
- McGinniss, J. (1969). The selling of the president 1968.
New York, N.Y.: Trident Press.
- McWilliams, W. C. (1989). A republic of couch potatoes,
the media shrivel the electorate, Commonweal, 116,
138-140.
- Medhurst, M. J. (1984). Postponing the social agenda:
Reagan's strategy and tactics. The Westernj Journal
of Speech Communication, 48, 262-276.
- Meer, J. (1986). Reagan's facial teflon, Psychology
Today, 20, 16.
- Mickelson, S. (1972). The electric mirror: politics in

an age of television. New York, N.Y.: Dodd, Mead, & Company.

- Minow, N. N., Martin, J. B., & Mitchell, L. M. (1973). Presidential television. New York, N.Y.: Basic Books.
- Nelson, M. (1985). The election of 1984. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.
- Nimmo, D. (1970). The political persuaders: the techniques of modern election campaigns. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Nimmo, D. & Combs, J. E. (1983). Mediated political realities. New York, N.Y.: Longman, Inc.
- Nimmo, D. & Savage, R. L. (1976). Candidates and their images: concepts, methods, and findings. Pacific Palisades, CA.: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc.
- Patterson, T. E. & McClure, R. D. (1976). The unseeing eye: the myth of television power in national politics. New York, N.Y.: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Phillips, G. D. (1968). The use of radio and television by presidents of the United States. Ann Arbor, MI.: University Microfilms, Inc.
- Pomper, G. M. (1981). The election of 1980. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House Publishers, Inc.
- Pomper, G. M. (1985). The election of 1984: reports and interpretations. Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House

Publishers, Inc.

Ranney, A. (1983). Channels of power. New York, N.Y.:

Harper and Row.

Ranney, A. (1985). The American elections of 1984.

Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Rogin, M. P. (1987). Ronald Reagan, the movie.

Berkley, CA.: University of California Press.

Rubin, B. (1967). Political television. Belmont, CA.:

Wadsworth Publishing.

Saldich, A. R. (1979). Electronic democracy,

television's impact of the American political process.

New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.

Scheele, H. Z. (1984). Ronald Reagan's 1980 acceptance

address: a focus on American values, The Western

Journal of Speech Communication, 48, 51-61.

Schram, M. (1987). The great American video game:

presidential politics in the video age. New York,

N.Y.: William Morrow, and Company, Inc.

Sellers, P. (1987). The selling of the president in '88,

Fortune, 116, 131-136.

Stengel, R. (1988). Bushwhacked!, Time, 131, 16-20.

Stuckey, M. E. (1989). Getting into the game: the pre-

presidential rhetoric of Ronald Reagan. New York,

N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.

Stuckey, M. E. (1990). Playing the game: the presidential rhetoric of Ronald Reagan. New York, N.Y.: Praeger Publishers.

Swerdlow, J. L. (1988). Media technology and the vote: a source book. Washington, D.C.: The Annenberg Washington program.

The annals of the american society of political and social science. (1976). Philadelphia, PA.: ASPSS.

The cable edge, (1984). Broadcasting, 106, 10.

The influence of television on the election of 1952.

(1954). Oxford, OH.: Oxford Research Associates, Inc.

The TV advantage of the presidency, (1984).

Broadcasting, 107, 47-48.

Thompson, W. N. (1947). Contemporary public address, Quarterly Journal of Speech, 33, 275-291.

Thomson, C. A. H. (1956). Television and presidential politics, the experience in 1952 and the problems that lie ahead. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institute.

Traub, J. (1986). His eyes only, Channels of Communication, 5, 7.

Webber, A. M. (1986). The statesman as CEO, Harvard Business Review, 64, 66-71.

White, T. H. (1965). The making of the president 1964:

a narrative history of American politics in action.

New York, N.Y.: Atheneum Publishers.

White, T. H. (1969). The making of the president 1968:

a narrative history of American politics in action.

New York, N.Y.: Atheneum Publishers.

White, T. H. (1973). The making of the president 1972:

a narrative history of American politics in action.

New York, N.Y.: Atheneum Publishers.

White, T. H. (1982). America in search of itself: the

making of the president, 1956-1980. New York, N.Y.:

Harper and Row Publishers.

Wills, G. (1987). Reagan's America. New York, N.Y.:

Doubleday, Inc.

With the nation watching. (1979). Lexington, Mass.:

Lexington Books.

Zuckerman, L. (1988). The made-for-TV campaign, Time,

132, 66-67.

Robinson, M. J. & Ranney, A. (1985). The mass media in

campaign '84: articles from Public Opinion magazine.

Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for

Public Policy Research.