MYTHIC THEMES IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS RHE TORIC
OF JOHN AND EDWARD KENNEDY

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Master of Arts

by
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Approved by

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Chapter One:
The Kennedy Legacy And The Legend

America loves a winner. So did Joseph Patrick and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy. The nine children who found shelter and solace under their roof were fashioned and molded by Joseph's constant admonition to his children, "'In this family we want winners.'" ¹ This challenge took a special significance for the four Kennedy males who were groomed for "public service and [instilled with] ambition to succeed..." ² The Kennedy brothers had inherited driving ambition and motivation to succeed from their Irish ancestors.

The first of the Kennedy clan to make it to America's shores was Patrick Joseph Kennedy. He was driven to this land of opportunity by the mounting social and economic pressures which swept across Ireland in the 1840's. ³ Once in America, he rose to become an influential tavern keeper in the rapidly expanding Irish immigrant community of Boston.

When Patrick's son Joseph later met and married Rose Fitzgerald, this introduced a different side of the Irish personality into the Kennedy blood. Whereas Patrick could be characterized as one who represented "solid, closemouthed Catholic Puritanism, with rigid values and strict boundaries," ⁴ Rose's father John F. Fitzgerald,
known affectionately as Honey Fitz, was characteristically Irish in terms of his "devilish energy ... drive, wit, and charm, and a grandiosity that refused to accept limits." 5 Honey Fitz established a center of influence among immigrants like himself through his dynamic involvement with the public constituency that absorbed "his entire day and evening with speeches, christenings, funerals, and political rallies." 6

The social dynamism and political influence which were the foci of both Patrick Kennedy's and Honey Fitz's lives became standards for Joseph Kennedy. These qualities were further strengthened by Joseph's ability to both read and respond to the times. "It was a time when social Darwinism was part of the pervasive climate of ideas and values... [and] Joseph Kennedy was attuned to whatever dominated the atmosphere." 7 This sensitivity to the "externals" provided him with the ability to manipulate such enterprises as the stock market and various corporate structures. 8

Joseph Kennedy's business savvy was further refined by his unique view of the world; he was determined to succeed and he believed that America was the place where this could be accomplished. This outlook was characterized by its unique fusion of both "Machiavelli and Horatio Alger, a philosophy steeped in the ethic that ends justify means, and that power and public service are proper goals." 9
The constant striving to achieve both success and public service directed Joseph Kennedy's energies into two separate spheres.

In business, Joseph Kennedy was a shrewd, perceptive man who has been likened to J. P. Morgan for his extravagant tastes, high-powered demands, and showy one-upmanship. "On a smaller scale, he was more like J. P. Morgan than John D. Rockefeller, more the magnifico than the Puritan." 10 The same spirit was recognized by another who identified Kennedy as a man who could not have "amassed his great wealth without a combination of shrewdness, single-minded determination, a certain amount of business cruelty and the expenditure of enormous amounts of time." 11 This determined outlook was well rewarded, for Joseph Kennedy became one of the most influential capitalists of his day.

Along with the time and energy which went into amassing a tremendous fortune, Joseph Kennedy reserved much of himself and his money for politics as well. To him, political influence was a supreme goal to be sought after for he believed that it would guarantee every other form of power. 12 Guided by this philosophy, Joseph backed Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the Presidential election of 1932 with personal financial contributions, and by using his influence to commandeer the support of other influential men. 13 The payoff came two years later when FDR appointed him the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. 14
A similar exchange was garnered when Kennedy's support of FDR in the election of 1936 eventually brought him the U.S. Ambassadorship to the Court of St. James. 15

Joseph Kennedy's political aspirations were not restricted to supporting those whom he believed had the power to lead the country. Many feel that he had the same political goal for himself. 16 If Joseph Kennedy did in fact have such a desire in mind, it was soon squelched by his outspoken and politically popular advocacy of U.S. nonintervention even in the face of the advancing threat of Hitler's army. He believed "...that war might destroy the Capitalist system, that Hitler could be outbaffed, that communism was the real enemy...," 17 and as a consequence, he urged all Americans to "'mind our own business and interfere only when someone threatens ... our homes.' " 18

Needless to say, such an unexpected outburst from a political dignitary did not go unpunished. Kennedy soon fell into disfavor with FDR. He no longer had his government to support him. But, as a man strongly driven by political aspirations, Joseph Patrick Kennedy was not one to abandon his political hopes. Instead, he turned to his sons to carry forth his efforts, reasoning that they possessed the youth, the intelligence, and the sense of duty that such a task required. He was rebuffed by the "chastening experience" he had with FDR, and this made him more determined than ever "to found a political dynasty." 19
A POLITICAL LEGACY

The Kennedys were heirs to a growing financial fortune and an exaggerated political obsession which had both been cultivated by their father Joseph Patrick Kennedy. Just as each financial undertaking had been approached with a firm sense of purpose, so had each political endorsement been made to secure a well thought out political dream.

Joseph Kennedy's pursuit of his goals had been fueled by undying drive and ambition. When the father passed the political mantle on to his sons, it took on a new dimension. The future leadership of the Kennedy family was now at stake. There were the far-reaching financial empire and the widely-recognized, powerful family name to protect. This sense of family purpose was especially dear to the Kennedys who were a close and "almost clannish" family. 20 It is important to note, however, that even within this unified group, the lines of authority were clear-cut and recognized by all. One author described the family as "a patriarchal family, in the Old Tradition sense," and he proceeded to report that such an outlook is usually accomplished by the notion that "the first-born [son is] the chosen vessel for transmitting the family's strength." 21

Joseph Kennedy's hopes for his first-born son were dashed when Joe Jr. was killed in World War II. But Joseph realized that the supreme sense of family purpose must supersede the loss that the death had caused. Hence, his efforts turned to the next in line, Jack.
With a boastful aire of accomplishment, Joseph was known to claim that he was responsible for his son's political career; "'I got Jack into politics... I told him Joe was dead and that it was his responsibility to run for Congress. He didn't want to... But I told him he had to.'" 22

As each brother subsequently took his predecessor's place in the political arena, he was impelled by the same sense of responsibility, the same sense of purpose that it was now his turn to "command the family and aim to command the nation." 23 Each had been instilled with the belief that he had a commitment to "pick up the standard of a fallen brother." 24 As a consequence, each brother advanced and perpetuated the Kennedy legacy by building upon the ideas and the policies which had been introduced by his sibling predecessor. 25

The political ambitions which had been so carefully nurtured by Joseph Patrick Kennedy took on a new meaning and were enveloped in a sense of duty as they were passed along to each son. One man's impetus to power became a family legacy; a task, a goal, a commitment which was to be fulfilled by the heirs to the Kennedy name.
LEGACY TURNED TO LEGEND

The Kennedy family was not the first to have more than one of its members aspire to high political office. In the early nineteenth century, the Adams family became immortalized in our nation's political history when two of its members were given the opportunity to command the nation. The Adamses had developed a similar political family legacy decades before the Kennedys undertook the task. What set the Kennedys apart from any other family that had parallel political aspirations was the air of arrogant expectation that the Kennedy males seemed to exude in their quest for political immortality. They treated their political successes as benefits to which they were "entitled." One author concisely sums up this audacity:

The questionable appointment of Robert Kennedy as Attorney General, the aggressive manner in which the Justice Department was then used as a political arm of the White House, the appointment of Edward Kennedy as a senator as soon as he had passed the qualifying age, and of course the general atmosphere of a court that exuded from the White House: all encouraged the notion of a family with a hereditary right to the office, to be passed from brother to brother... 26

The rapid ascent of the Kennedys onto the political scene, and the seemingly total disregard for concerns about arrogance or nepotism, were in part responsible for the altered appearance of the family legacy in the minds of the public. Although to the Kennedys their advances were simply a part of the natural progression toward the fulfillment of their family's destiny, to the public, the
brothers were fashioning an identity separate from the legacy; they were no longer simply sons carrying out their father's wishes.

What was different about the Kennedys was the relentless manner in which they pursued their political goals and the amount of zeal that accompanied them every step of the way. When the Kennedys became everyday news fare, it was these same characteristics that fascinated the American public. The people assigned a special status and importance to the Kennedys; they no longer remained public servants. The elevation of status and importance has been recognized by many who have studied the Kennedys. One pair of authors captured this public sentiment by stating: "The Kennedys are among the figures in American public life who could legitimately be called prestigious national celebrities... ." 27 Another recognition parallels this remark: "Americans have been impressed with the Kennedys ... as celebrities." 28 Their extreme wealth, their youth and vitality, and the self-proclaimed dedication to public service all added a special flavor to the Kennedy males. 

Their celebrity character has been identified as being comprised of a unique "mix of striving gaiety, risk-taking, and a beautiful people way of life." 29 Through their idealization of the Kennedy males, the American public saw them as having "class" and "producing an excitement beyond the norm." 30 The Kennedys were credited with having the rare ability of being able to both "feel the public pulse" and to "quicken it." 31 The legacy which had been fashioned from one man's driving political ambition and desire was
rapidly being over-powered by a legend; a mythic tale of three young brothers who were now national celebrities. The legend was further strengthened by the brother's acceptance of, or response to, their newly appointed status and notability. The public longed to embrace the glamorous and worldly side of the Kennedy life and John Kennedy's term in the White house did more to satisfy this need than any other single event. Once John was President, just the mention of the Kennedy name invited images of style and social grace; the White House seemed to take on "the atmosphere of a court." 32 In a similar fashion, another author observed that Kennedy commanded a "deference toward [him] that 'princes' and 'dukes' would indeed command." 33

The image of refinement and royalty was strengthened even after John Kennedy's death when his widow related to the press that the young president often relaxed by playing songs from the musical "Camelot." The widely publicized and exaggerated emphasis on Kennedy glamour and style was given additional credence by the association with the story-book charm of a mythical kingdom. The Kennedy regime is most often identified with "sentimental memories of the king and queen and the little prince and princess, of beautiful people and their balls and banquets and command performances." 34

The American people sought to idealize the Kennedys. They placed an overwhelming amount of emphasis on glamour, excitement, and dazzling social brilliance. (Hence the equation of the Kennedy
reign with the mythic world of Camelot.) It is essential to recognize, however, that there was an opposing, yet equally strong desire operating at the same time. The public expressed a need to identify with the Kennedys, to see them as having risen above the banality of daily life, yet maintaining a measure of commonness. This opposing tension served to broaden the scope of the legend and expand its influence.

The American people recognized that the Kennedys had all of the means at their disposal to attain any and all worldly comforts and participate in an expansive range of activities. Although this seemingly limitless influence set the Kennedys apart from most other citizens and afforded them a position of expanded prestige, they were still able to maintain the essence of being earthy for they were willing to accept challenges and shoulder responsibilities. People believed that the Kennedys were willing to "get their hands dirty." 35 In some instances, the public even seemed willing to dismiss faults or overlook misdeeds because, in some respects, such weaknesses made the Kennedys refreshingly human. This is best illustrated by the public's reaction when it was revealed that Edward had once cheated on a Spanish exam while he was a student and was subsequently dismissed from school for his action. While it is highly likely that some persons took the incident to be a revelation of the flaw in the Kennedy character, an Achilles' heel, the surprising reaction by many was just the opposite. One author interpreted the public reaction that he encountered as a public sigh
of relief: "Curiously, some even felt that the cheating incident made Ted seem more human, proving that a Kennedy, like anyone else, could be caught up in the kind of worries and mistakes that can plague anyone else." 36

Therefore, at the same time that the public sought to idolize the Kennedy brothers, it also longed to identify with them as equals. The Kennedys as mortals would therefore be plagued by human faults and tragedies as are common to everyone. Certainly, in facing tragedy and pain, the Kennedy family did not fall short. Joseph and Rose had a family of nine children. As one tragic incident after another struck this large Catholic family, there was increased speculation that such events were more than just coincidences or Acts of God. The history is familiar: one of the Kennedy daughters had to be placed under custodial care when it became apparent that her mental retardation required more care than the family could provide; Joe Kennedy, the first-born son and the rightful heir to his father's dreams, died a war hero; and, the careers of John and his brother Robert halted in mid-stream when assassins' bullets found their mark. With each subsequent tragedy that struck the Kennedy clan, there was an increase in the uneasy sense that this family stood apart; that it had somehow been preordained for both greatness and doom.

Because the Kennedys were very much in the public eye, a great deal of what happened to them was automatically revealed to the public. As a consequence, this provided people with the opportunity
to see in the Kennedys "their own individual life histories" as well as "the repetitive patterns that are generic to us all." 37 This led to a haunting sentiment in the public's minds which was comprised of both "sympathy and morbid curiosity." 38

The emotions that greeted the Kennedy males and their ascension into politics were contradictory and perplexing, yet they all contributed in some degree to fashioning a legend that was believed to have captured the essence of the Kennedys. On the one hand, the public expressed a need to see the Kennedys as equals in order to maintain the hope that their fame and their power were possible for all to attain. Those who held such an outlook were sympathetic to the sufferings that the Kennedys faced. They were also encouraged by the way that each tragedy seemed to help strengthen the Kennedy character and replenish the Kennedy drive. On the other side of the paradox, the public eagerly and enthusiastically embraced the Kennedy glamour and style. What personal dynamism they did in fact possess was exaggerated to take on regal proportions. The Kennedys were given room to exhibit conceit and arrogance, for it was believed that they deserved the special status they were enjoying. There was a sense of awe over the fact that the Kennedys did not have to work for a living. They were envied not only because they were able "to start at the top," but also because they possessed "the courage to begin there." 39 (emphasis added)
One author succinctly captured this paradox. He credits the Kennedy legend as arising from their ability to be able to appeal to the diverse levels of human needs: "[The Kennedys] are not quite American, yet they are very American. They symbolize two opposing, but fundamental, American ideals, Aristocracy and equality." 40
LITERATURE REVIEW AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

What began as the legacy of one family soon took on the proportions of a legend. This was due in part to the perceptions and conflicting emotions with which the public greeted the Kennedy males. The legend was not restricted to any one particular aspect of the Kennedys' lives. Instead, with the rise in prominence of each brother, and the tragedies and gossip which followed close behind, the legend was constantly being expanded and perpetuated.

A number of authors have focused their studies on the powerful and expansive legend, with varying degrees of sincerity and success. One weakness emerges from a study of some of these works. The notion of the Kennedy legacy, the political dream and the challenge which one father passed along to his sons, becomes a misnomer for the Kennedy legend, the public's idealization and immortalization of the Kennedy brothers. This author maintains that they are not in fact the same.

Author Max Lerner reaches the same conclusion as he argues for a distinction between the legend and the legacy. While Lerner refers to the legend as Camelot, he recognizes that Camelot was fashioned by the interrelationships of several factors: a legacy, "the dream of what might have been and can still be," ; a hierarchy, which regulated whose "turn it was to command the family and aim to command the nation" ; and, a destiny, which required that each brother maneuver to take his predecessor's place. Such a
differentiation among the components present in the Kennedy legend can be useful to a scholar who may wish to expand upon those components (hierarchy and destiny) which served to propel the Kennedy males onward to fulfill their father's plan (legacy). From this substantial base, one would then proceed to question how these components were utilized by the American public to become a part of the Kennedy legend, or the mythic air which was eventually fashioned around the Kennedys. Lerner's study, while a solid contradiction, falls short of this goal.

Another author, Theodore Sorensen, also makes a careful attempt to distinguish the Kennedy legend from the Kennedy legacy. Although Sorensen opens his book, The Kennedy Legacy, by stating that the Kennedy legacy consisted in part of "...fading memories, monuments, myths, and a sense of martyrdom," he broadens his conception of the Kennedy legacy by adding that it was most correctly identified with a "unique set of concepts that the Kennedys stood for." Hence, the perspective that this work takes is one that is dominated by the belief that the Kennedy legacy was in fact a political heritage that was passed from father to son and from brother to brother. But even Sorensen does not go beyond this point to try to determine the substance of the "fading memories, monuments, and myths."
It seems to this author that in order to achieve a full understanding of the substance of the Kennedy legend or myth, one would have to move beyond a concentration on historical and biographical data. Granted, the Kennedy brothers' rapid ascension into political office, and their attitude toward the attainment of their "just" political desserts were in part responsible for presenting a certain image of the Kennedy males to the American public. However, the elements of the Kennedy lifestyle and persona which became exaggerated and legendized arose from the needs, desires, and expectations of the American people. The legend which was advanced by the media and refined and concretized in the minds of the public is very much the design of the society in which the Kennedys emerged. In order to get a thorough interpretation of the legend which shrouded the Kennedys, it is important to take into account the sociocultural factors against which they lived.

This approach has not been taken by any of the Kennedy scholars to date. Rather, there has been a tendency to rely heavily on ancestral and biographical data or to assume an isolated stance when purporting to study the substance of the Kennedy legend. Such works all seem to be grounded in an assumption that since the Kennedy males all possess the same heritage, and since they had parallel political aspirations, the mythic images surrounding any one of the brothers could be carried over to any of the others simply by virtue of their association with one another. This is most readily
evidenced in several works which center around the last Kennedy brother, Edward. One might preassume from the title of Murray Levin and T. A. Repak's book, Edward Kennedy: The Myth of Leadership, 45 that the work would be an attempt to directly confront the crux of the Kennedy myth. Such was not the case, for here, once again, the focus was on the Kennedy family style and tradition. The authors argue that Edward was simply following the path laid out by his brothers before him, that he simply inherited all of the myth that surrounded them. Levin and Repak claim that, "It cannot be easy for [Edward], let alone the public to separate his mythic past from his present reality...," for he "...invokes the Camelot legend... ." 46

Similarly, Henry Fairlie, in his work "Camelot Lost," seems to attribute Edward's failure in the quest for the Democratic Party's nomination for presidential candidate in 1980 to the fact that he no longer fits the Camelot legend. 47 Fairlie asserts that although Edward began his campaign "as a bearer of the legend," his failures and blunders along the campaign trail were responsible for the subsequent "exorcism of the legend." 48 It seems apparent that there was an assumption that Edward's personal impact and campaign style would reflect his older brothers simply because he was a member of the same family.
A further area of difficulty lies in the fact that many who make use of resemblance by association intermix the Kennedy legacy with the legend that sprang from it. The title that George MacGregor Burns uses for his work, *Edward Kennedy and the Camelot Legacy*, leaves one with the belief that the images and the mystery and charm of Camelot were an actual part of the legacy which was passed along from brother to brother. Another author emphasizes this outlook by his assertion that "everything that the late John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy had bought or connived or earned or ballyhooed or put a franchise on were [Edward's]." Finally, L. Patrick Devlin, in his analysis of the role that the Kennedy legacy played in Edward's 1980 campaign, defined the legacy of John as that which has been captured through portions of his Inaugural Address, his Cuban Missile Crisis speech, through his humor, and, his articulate and dynamic performance during the 1960 debates. In similar fashion, Devlin classifies the legacy of Robert Kennedy as that which is displayed "through television snippets of him being mobbed by adoring crowds," or "his moving statements on the night Martin Luther King was assassinated." Devlin concluded that the legacy is almost totally positive, "because we have preserved and replayed the most effective and moving instances." In Devlin's mind, as is the case in so many others as well, the legacy has become equated with isolated examples of style and performance.
This outlook represents a third area of emphasis that many Kennedy scholars have employed. There have been many isolated studies which focus on, and draw attention to, specific aspects of the Kennedy style. These studies use the rhetorical style and mannerisms of John Kennedy as a standard by which the other Kennedy males are measured and compared. An example of this approach is found in analyses of Robert's speeches following the murder of his presidential brother. Such analyses frequently highlight Robert's style and compare it to that of his older brother. One such study emphasizes that Robert "'started employing his brother's characteristic gestures - one hand thrust in his suit pocket, the other jabbing the air, crooked index finger extended... .'

54 Another account of Robert in the post-Dallas years identified similar mimicry of his older brother's style: he made use of the "same staccato phrasing, the mass of statistics, the self-deprecating humor ... the stabbing finger, and soaring idealism.

55 The desire to identify replication of John's rhetorical style has been extended to the last Kennedy brother as well. One author has characterized Edward's rhetoric in a statement descriptive of his earlier brothers; his rhetoric was similarly identified as being "staccato, pulsating in its beat."

56 Some see Edward Kennedy as being a "preprogrammed" speaker, drawing on a previously established repertoire of an "endless series of facts, ... formulaic rhetoric, and a linear presentation of relevant arguments."
Limited perspectives have led to isolated analyses of Kennedy speeches to try to assess their success or failure in attaining the Kennedy "ideal." In his analysis of Edward Kennedy's preliminary campaign for the 1980 presidency, Devlin recognizes the presence of the Kennedy ideal. He admits that the media critics who were assigned to cover Edward's campaign were biased in their belief that "The Kennedys have always been noted for their style." 58 Another treatment of the same campaign chastised Edward for his political idealism at the same time that it lauded John's ability to employ idealistic rhetoric. 59 A third critic chose to highlight the same idealistic techniques utilized by Edward in his speech before the 1980 Democratic Convention. He identified the immediate responses to the speech as being most favorable. It was praised as a " 'remarkable performance,' " Kennedy's " 'brilliant day in the sun,' " and an " 'eloquent valedictory' of liberal principles." 60 However, these earlier praises soon gave way to the admission that Kennedy's proposals seemed " 'impossible to accomplish in the real world.' " 61 Such a contradiction may be explained by the fact that the positive feedback was a reaction to expectations of the idealized Kennedy style. John Kennedy is often identified by his idealism and far-reaching goals. Therefore, initially, this style seemed appropriate and consistent for any Kennedy to employ.
The bulk of Kennedy research has followed one of the above described perspectives. Some authors have failed to recognize the distinction between the Kennedy legacy, the inherited political aspirations which were passed along from father to son and then advanced from one brother to the next, and the Kennedy legend, the public's reaction to, and redefinition of, the Kennedy brothers. Others, who have been more successful in keeping these two realms separate, have failed to question or consider the sociological and cultural factors which were responsible for the nature and the character of the Kennedy legend. They have operated on the assumptions that the Kennedy persona was solely responsible for the substance of the myth. Therefore, while such a perspective may purport to examine the myth, it is constrained by the fact that some essential factors have been ignored. Finally, still others have taken an alternative approach to the study of the Kennedy males. They choose to address the Kennedy legend through the identification of a predetermined repertoire of rhetorical strategies and techniques. Therefore, the scope of such studies has been centered around the Kennedy style or image. The flavor of such studies hints at the inheritance of such stylistic characteristics from one brother to the next.

The weaknesses in the foregoing approaches have led to this study. While others have tended to identify rhetorical strategies in terms of stylistic techniques, presentational mannerisms, and
attention to delivery, this study will assume a broader view of rhetorical strategies. Herein, rhetorical strategies will include the actual content or the substance of the rhetoric. In specific, this study will address the question of whether or not John Kennedy instituted a specific vision of America through the use of rhetorical strategies. Further, this study will seek to determine whether or not this vision was advanced and perpetuated by his youngest brother, Edward, through his employment of the same strategies.

While it is again emphasized that a thorough understanding of the Kennedy legend requires an analysis of the social milieu, it is beyond the scope of this work to attempt such a study. Instead, the meaning of "legend" will be expanded so that it not only applies to the mythic aura enveloping the Kennedy males, but also to the character of the rhetorical substance. In other words, although the Kennedys were surrounded by a social and cultural myth, one must also seek to determine whether or not the Kennedys, through their rhetoric, were presenting Americans with their own mythic representation of America.

In an attempt to address these questions, this study will limit itself to a comparison of the rhetoric of John Kennedy and his brother Edward in the area of civil rights.
FOCUS OF THIS STUDY

Although the author believes that both Robert and Edward employed the same rhetorical strategies introduced by their brother John, this study will be limited to only the rhetoric of John and Edward. There are several reasons for this focus. First, although Robert came much closer to following in John's footsteps as the Democratic Party's presidential candidate than Edward has, Robert's career was distinctly different. It included a dramatic ascent and is characterized by a somewhat confrontational style. This individuality was captured by one author who saw Robert as a "polarizer in a polarizing time." 62 Another author echoes this sentiment by stating of Robert Kennedy, "He did not lead; instead he inflamed." 63 Cesar Chavez similarly recognized that Bobby Kennedy stood apart from his brothers. Chavez described him as "daring" whereas he saw Ted as being "...more like John..." The general feeling is that he is more deliberate, more restrained but committed, 'identified with the underdog.'" 64

Robert Kennedy was an impatient man. He felt a burning sense of injustice and he shouldered the responsibility to challenge it in a rhetoric of immediacy. On the other hand, both John and his youngest brother Edward seemed to appreciate the need for diplomacy and a sense of protocol. Once again, Chavez recognized this difference when he hesitantly called both John and Edward "pragmatic." 65 John Kennedy's style of governing has repeatedly been classified as pragmatic; it has been labelled a "markedly
American form of antidogmatism." Edward Kennedy's senatorial influence and involvement have been identified in a similar manner, Edward believes in the "muscle tissue" of the State which requires that issues be built up "layer by layer with hard, prodding, infinitely careful inside work." A second, and perhaps stronger, reason to search for consistency in the rhetorical style between Edward and John is to permit critical examination of Edward's own continuous and rather insistent denials of any such similarity. Each time Edward prepares for a new political campaign or is groomed for consideration as a presidential contender, there is a good deal of public accusation that Edward is trying to revive memories of, and revel in the glories attained by, his older brother. Each time, Edward discounts such claims, stressing his own record.

The inability, or the unwillingness, of Edward Kennedy to disassociate himself from the image and the association with John was evidenced early on in his political career. When he was running against John McCormick for the Massachusetts Senate seat, his opponent asserted that Kennedy was simply riding along on the family name and notoriety. Although Edward vehemently denied such charges by insisting that he was running on his own, he nevertheless kept referring to his brother John in his speeches, radio spots, and campaign literature. An example of this inconsistency was succinctly captured by one author as he highlighted this event: "If he greeted someone he knew, he would invoke the White House saying:
'The President was asking about you the last time I saw him". 69 Similarly, his campaign slogan in this, his first race, "He can do more for Massachusetts," was criticized as maintaining a strong implication "that somebody up there will help deliver political patronage," and it was thus viewed by his opponents as "carrot-dangling." 70

While it is evident that Edward's entry into politics was subsidized by associations with his older brother, even today the pattern persists. This was seen by one critic through his observations of Edward's preliminary attempts to capture the Democratic nomination in the 1980 presidential election. He states that "Although [Edward] has fitfully sought to detach himself from the legend, the fact remains that he still reaches for it as a prop." 71 An example of how Edward continues to rely on the earlier images of his presidential brother was seen in the television spot for Kennedy which contained a replay of the Apollo rocket lift-off for its journey to the moon. The ad finished with the declaration that "[Ted Kennedy] knows the American spirit," with the implication being that he knows the American spirit because he is the "inheritor of his brother's powers." 72 In this ad, the accomplishments and aspirations of Kennedy's reign in the White House became intermingled with the reality of the last Kennedy male to survive that era.
Perhaps the one area that the Kennedys are most readily identified with is Civil Rights. There is a clear rationale for studying John Kennedy's civil rights rhetoric and that advanced later by his brother Edward. First, John Kennedy reached the White House in 1960 at a time when demands for increased (and assured) civil rights were mounting. This was based in part on the Supreme Court ruling six years earlier that separate but equal educational facilities were indeed inherently unequal. 73 Despite this seemingly encouraging legislative decision, societal changes did not necessarily follow suit. In fact, according to historian William Manchester, "Negroes still did not exist as people for mainstream America." 74 Kennedy was credited with being sensitive to the times; "he had a genius for sensing when a social problem had become a national concern, when it had entered the national consciousness." 75 Recognizing the mounting social discord, he sought a way to calm the frustration caused by the hope that the Supreme Court's decision had "stirred ... in Negro hearts." 76 At the same time, he sought to restore order shaken by the "sustained and profound assault on native beliefs" 77 that the social reordering caused.

In many respects, Edward's political career took root in the civil rights arena as well. As a newly elected Senator, he painstakingly followed protocol by delaying his first major speech to the Senate: "No one coming to the Senate, fresh and young, had ever been more 'correct' in gauging what was expected of him and
what limits he had to set for himself." 78 When the point finally came, Edward Kennedy addressed several civil rights concerns. He spoke in support of the still pending Civil Rights Bill of 1963 and also took up the cause against the poll tax. He mirrored the concerns of John by stating that the poll tax was "so entwined with racial discrimination that it can never and will never be [separate]... ." 79

Since both John and Edward maintained a similar perspective and approach to the civil rights issue, it is believed that this would be a critical area to examine in order to determine whether they both employed similar rhetorical strategies when addressing the issue. In order to accomplish this aim, rhetoric was drawn from two main sources. The Congressional Record served as the primary source for it was believed that it would provide a comprehensive and consistent record of the Kennedys' Senatorial rhetoric. It revealed their approach to legislative concerns at the same time that it provided access to remarks and addresses which were upheld by their colleagues as being "noteworthy." Both avenues provided a clear indication of their civil rights attitudes.

During the years that John Kennedy served as President, a more thorough source of his rhetoric was available, Public Papers of the Presidents. It revealed a more complete assessment of his attitudes through the ceremonial addresses, correspondence and individualized concerns he addressed.
Since the U.S. Senate was, and remains, Edward Kennedy's main rhetorical outlet, other sources were consulted only on a limited basis. In particular, his book, Decision for the Decade, was used to further clarify and delineate his civil rights ideas.

A two-stage process was employed to select rhetoric from these sources which was relevant to this particular study. The Key Word search was utilized using the indices of both the Congressional Record and Public Papers of the Presidents for the years they were in elected office. For John Kennedy, the years examined were 1952-1963; for Ted Kennedy, the years were 1962-1980. This Key Word search sought the mention of those terms, persons, events and places believed to be most characteristically associated with civil rights. Specifically, the Key Word list included: civil rights, discrimination, desegregation, inequality, minority, equal rights, blacks, Montgomery Bus Boycott, poll tax, University of Mississippi, Birmingham, George Wallace and Martin Luther King, Jr. Once the text was taken from the source, it was again examined for content of these specific Key Words. When such words were identified, the discourse became a part of this study. A complete list of the actual discourse can be founded herein in Appendices A and B.

The thesis will be presented in five chapters. Chapter Two will explain and develop the methodology used to conduct the study, including analysis of Bormann's fantasy theme analysis as well as Bitzer's rhetorical situation. Chapter Three will deal with the
civil rights rhetoric of John F. Kennedy exploring the exigences which impelled the rhetoric and the themes which Kennedy employed to develop America's commitment to equality. Chapter Four turns to the civil rights rhetoric of Senator Edward Kennedy, developing the argument that the younger Kennedy used many themes which John Kennedy had first developed. Chapter Five will summarize the results of the study, and offer some analytical conclusions.
Chapter One Endnotes


4 Ibid., p. 7.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., p. 8.

7 Ibid., p. 13.


10 Lerner, p. 19.

11 Ibid., p. 16.


13 Sherrill, p. 17.

14 Burns, p. 27.

15 Ibid., p. 28.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., p. 29.


19 Lerner, p. 24.

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid., p. 28.
22 Davis, p. 91.
23 Lerner, p. 187.
24 Ibid., p. 55.
27 Levin and Repak, p. 138.
28 Fairlie, p. 15.
29 Lerner, p. 58.
30 Sorensen, p. 21.
31 Burns, p. 12.
32 Ibid., p. 92.
33 Ibid., p. 12.
34 Levin and Repak, p. 138.
35 Davis, p. 104.
36 Lerner, p. 25.
37 Sherrill, p. 15.
38 Levin and Repak, p. 142.
39 Ibid., p. 138.
40 Manchester, p. 772.
41 Ibid., p. 773.
42 Ibid.
43 Lerner, p. 187.
44 Sorensen, p. 13.
45 Levin and Repak, p. 1.
46 Ibid.
49 Burns.
50 Sherrill, p. 15.

52 Ibid., p. 2.
53 Ibid.
54 Sherrill, p. 32.
55 Sorensen, p. 124.
57 Ibid., p. 16.
58 Devlin, p. 399.
59 Fairlie, p. 18.

61 Ibid.
62 Lerner, p. 90.
63 Fairlie, p. 17.
64 Burns, p. 208.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., p. 278.
67 Davis, p. 161.
68 Sherrill, p. 41.
69 Davis, p. 101.
70 Ibid., p. 112.
72 Ibid., p. 15.
73 Manchester, p. 734.
74 Ibid.
75 Fairlie, p. 18.
76 Ibid., p. 738.
77 Davis, p. 421.
78 Lerner, p. 70.
79 Burns, p. 128.
Chapter Two:
Methodology

In order to study communication patterns, it is necessary to determine how the collective perceptual behaviors of a group or community affect communication styles and usage. Two of the most significant of these behaviors are myth-making and myth-using. Although myths are widely diffused in any given culture, this does not dissipate their strength or power of influence for the authority of the myth lies in the fact that it is a cultural symbol fashioned by the "collective imagination" of a given group. ¹

Myths are able to capture and represent the essence of a community for they are rooted in needs, emotions and experiences which are common to all. A myth is a cultural representation of an idea, an idea which "so effectively embodies men's values that it profoundly influences their way of perceiving reality and hence their behavior." ² The shared experiences of community members are captured by the myth which readily becomes an "oversimplification of events, persons, and relationships." ³ This coalescence of individual experience into an oversimplified whole provides myth with the ability to both shape and order reality.
Since myths are uniquely able to "embody the essence of our existence," they mold a picture of reality by assigning "philosophical meaning to the facts of ordinary life." Once the essence of daily experiences and needs is concretized in a myth, the myth itself becomes the basis of reality by which new stimuli are judged and weighed. Myth becomes the standard used to define and characterize existence at the same time that it directs the cognitive attention of those caught up in the myth.

Myths can function to influence behavior. But, their power does not lie in their reproduction of the truth. Rather, while every myth must contain an "essential truth value," this value may be difficult to isolate or recognize hidden as it is by interpretation and refinement. A myth draws upon the memory and the imagination of a group or individual. Therefore, it is difficult to separate the "truth from the error," the "fact from the fable," or the "report from the fantasy" because the structure of the myth places all of these elements on "the same plane of credibility." The substance of a myth is "more emotional than logical" and this serves to further cloud the distinction between fact and fiction. As a result, myth becomes an outlet for the "spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions." This makes it a mesmerizing force of social influence and control.
The social power of myth is assured through its reliance on concrete and distinct symbols recognized by all within the group of its influence. By utilizing these familiar symbols, the myth becomes an overt representation of abstract internal emotions or needs. A myth relies on certain agreed-upon symbols and uses the associations that those symbols call to mind as well as introducing new associations and representations. In order for persons to be able to participate in a myth, they must first be able to identify the symbols themselves, and then they must be able to identify with the symbols. Hereafter, the symbol becomes a "prelude to action" for it obsfucates the individual's goals and needs by merging them with those of the collective.
PRIMARY METHODOLOGY: FANTASY THEME ANALYSIS

Many contemporary rhetorical theorists have recognized the social defining and ordering power of myth. The major concern of these scholars has been the "generation of knowledge or social reality." Rather than being primarily concerned with the stylistic elements of rhetoric, the rhetoricians who define rhetoric as epistemic seek to understand rhetorical choices in terms of how such choices determine, alter, or aid in a person's perceptions of social reality. One such scholar, Ernest Bormann, introduced his theory of fantasy theme analysis to the rhetorical community in 1972. Since its inception, fantasy theme analysis has served as the nucleus of numerous rhetorical studies. It will serve as the primary methodology of this study.

Bormann used the work of Robert Bales as the groundwork for his theory. Bales' studies in the interaction of small groups revealed that due to the cohesive nature of small groups, the participants were able to fashion a collective group fiction and tended to behave as actors within the fantasy they constructed. Bales argues that the dramatization within such groups does in fact transport the members to "a world which seems somehow even more real than the everyday world."

Interested in how group interaction involving both verbal and nonverbal communication could alter perceptions, Bormann turned to the task of addressing how rhetoricians could utilize group
myth-making or manipulate the collective imagination of a group to aid in the structuring or defining of reality. Bormann holds that certain ideas or characteristics will emerge during a social event or grouping to which persons will attach a particular relevance. Meanings are given to certain events through the process of dramatization. Group members may act out an event or call forth a representation of a situation where the particular concept holds some special significance. If other group members are able to feel that the event has some salience, they will share in the process of fantasizing the concept and its meaning within the group. From there, the drama is embraced and advanced to others through the "chaining-out" of this fantasy. Everything dramatized within the group will not chain-out; such a dynamic process requires that the members be able to find a common bond or source of identification within the fantasy. Thus, as the drama or fantasy theme is communicated within the group, it provides for group cohesion and "creates a social reality for groups." As the themes are advanced, they become enlarged and even begin to set the emotional tone and determine the motivations of the group's members. The fantasy therefore creates elements of the group's ideology. If, at this stage, the dramatizations are able to "catch up large groups of people in symbolic reality," they will have achieved the status of a "rhetorical vision."
The above treatment represents the categorical distinctions introduced by Bormann in his initial article in 1972. In a later work, Bormann recognized that the overarching rhetorical visions may have recognizable patterns which are "common to a given culture's rhetoric." Because of common cultural heritage, while different fantasy themes may give rise to unique and self-contained rhetorical visions, there may nevertheless be certain "stock scenarios" which appear within the different visions.

The distinctive approach of fantasy theme analysis can be particularly useful to a critic interested in identifying certain rhetorical motifs in the discourse in a particular socio-political situation. A look at the key fantasy themes will provide insight into how such messages mirror "culture, motivation, emotional style, and cohesion."

Some Theoretical Concerns

While Bormann's approach has been embraced by many rhetorical critics, it has not escaped criticism. One claim is that Bormann's descriptive approach is too limited in its application and lacks the generalizability necessary to constitute "theory." Such criticism is grounded in the notion that a true theory of communication is one which has the scientific basis necessary to extend its application to "broad classes of events." Bormann addresses this concern in a later article in which he asserts that the generalizability
characteristic applies only to one type of theory, a "general theory." A general theory is one which has the ability to "cut across the conventional usages and recurring forms" in order to gain insight into the "tendencies in human communication events which cannot be ignored or rescinded by the participants." 23 On the other hand, there is another type of theory, the "special theory," which concerns itself with the "conventional agreements among the practitioners as to how the communication should be formed and practiced." 24

Bormann argues that fantasy theme analysis is unique for it is able to combine the "special humanistic studies of rhetoric" with a general theory of communication. Rhetoricians employing the methodology can both analyze the sharing of group fantasies and also address how such fantasies emerged from a more general communication paradigm. Bormann identifies the general communication theory that fantasy theme analysis embraces as "symbolic convergence". He advances the claim that the "dynamic chaining of group fantasies brings about symbolic convergence for the participants." 25 In other words, when group members initiate a fantasy and engage in the process of internalizing it and chaining it out to others, they undertake the selection, ordering, and interpretation of the stimuli which will be represented in the fantasy. They base these processes on some shared understanding of human actions, motivation, and
needs. This provides the group members with the ability to "assign responsibility, to praise or blame, to arouse and propitiate guilt, to hate, and to love" 26 which then become the "rhetorical means" to "account for and explain the same experiences or the same events in different ways." 27 It is through symbolic convergence that group members come to share "some symbolic common ground" and are able to "talk with one another about that shared interpretation with code words or brief allusions..." 28 The sharing of the symbols becomes a vehicle through which persons are able to transform individual experiences into a unified, shared expression of a convergence.

Bormann's distinction between general and special theories strengthens his contention that fantasy theme analysis can be a vehicle for rhetorical criticism. Fantasy theme analysis provides a rhetorical critic with the tools needed first to magnify the nature of the group fantasy, and then to analyze how this fantasy dictates the shared social reality of the rhetorical group or community.

Bormann's theory has been criticized on other grounds. The most extensive critique has been advanced by Gerald Mohrmann. 29 Mohrmann asserts that the fundamental philosophical base upon which fantasy theme analysis is built is incapable of supporting Bormann's central assumptions. Mohrmann recognizes that Bales' treatment of the interrelationship between small groups and their fantasies was valid because Bales recognized that in order for fantasy to serve as
a catharsis for the group, "an escape from the other and harsher reality of the real world," 30 it had to mature within the group itself and be restricted to the participants of that group.

Mohrmann interprets the restrictive nature of Bales' assumptions as of primary importance in the function of fantasy themes: "the fantasy chains created constitute an idiosyncratic reality, a reality for the individuals and the group which is a substitute for and a protection from the realities of existence." 31 Therefore, he takes issue with what he sees as a gross overextension of Bales' original findings. To be more specific, fantasy theme analysis is built upon the assumption that although group fantasies do indeed take shape from the interaction among individuals or a small group, and although they are generated by the psychological needs of those individuals, these same fantasy themes can be disseminated to the public-at-large. According to Bormann, this process serves to account for large scale dramatizations which can be identified in mass media, viewed in effective "speaker-audience transactions," and is the fuel for "successful persuasive campaigns." 32 Mohrmann rejects such an interpretation by stating that there is "no basis for suggesting a dramatistic linking between chains in small groups and in any 'corresponding phenomenon' appearing 'in society at large.'" 33 Further, Mohrmann argues that although Bales recognized that there are similarities between small group fantasies and social phenomena such as that displayed by fashion and found in
social movements, such similarities must only be viewed as "parallel developments" without any suggestion that they represent any "configurational determinism." 34

Other scholars have questioned why Mohrman finds it impossible to accept Bormann's contention that group fantasies can indeed offer meaning and provide a beneficial interpretive framework for others outside the group. Bormann does take care to limit the range of influence by cautioning that since group fantasy chains are a means for testing and legitimizing "values and attitudes of many kinds," 35 they must not only be in tune with the "common-sense and everyday experience of a community," 36 but they may require refinement "into suitable form for a different public." 37 Therefore, although Mohrman may be correct in his interpretation that fantasy theme analysis assumes linkages between small group fantasies and more publically based visions, Bormann does not assume the transference to be without modification or adjustment.

For the purpose of this thesis, Bormann's advancement of the notion of the chaining-out of group fantasies seems justified in light of the fact that the actual substance of fantasies consists of common experiences and values. Fantasies are a way for group members to "publically proclaim some commitment to an attitude," 38 or make a statement about or gain some insight into the "group's here-and-now situation and its relationship to the external environment." 39 Thus, it seems highly plausible that
while some individuals may be outside of the original fantasy group, they may nevertheless find themselves surrounded by a climate similar to that which inspired initiation of the group's fantasy. For example, would a woman need to be a participant in a consciousness-raising group in order to accept and internalize a group fantasy which identifies males as the oppressors of females? Does a black have to be part of a group which directly experiences prejudice in order to share in the fantasy where whites are the enemies of blacks? In either example, would individuals need to be members of the specific groups in order to be susceptible to the fantasies since such fantasies may be said to be grounded in a shared human existence? The dynamics may not be identical, but the constructed reality may be equally compelling.

While Mohrman does not take issue with what Bormann sees as the social ordering properties of fantasy themes, rhetorical visions, and fantasy types, a discussion of these components will introduce a second area of criticism which is of primary concern to this study. In their treatment of how fantasies aid in the construction of reality, both Bales and Bormann stress the inoculative quality of fantasies. Bales states that "The fantasy world, though it has its origins in some original facts, is mentally formed..." and therefore, it achieves its "compelling power from elements which have unconscious meanings" and becomes the means for the
individual to develop a "psychological defense of himself," 42 by
taking refuge in the "culture of the group." 43 Bormann similarly
recognizes that a fantasy is fashioned around "the same common
ground symbolically," 44 which then serves as an individual's
"coping mechanism" to provide "a sense of meaning and significance
for the individual" to enable him/her to cope with the "seemingly
unchangeable forces of society at large." 45

In either case, one can see that both Bales and Bormann
recognize that fantasies arise from the psychological needs of an
individual in contending with the realities of existence. These
same properties constitute myth. On the individual level, myth
serves a person by enabling him/her to orient him/herself to the
outside world: "like an immigrant, we make a version of the world,
an interpretation of it, and then we live in that." 46 These
interpretations constitute a "corpus of images and identities and
models that provide the pattern to which growth may aspire." 47
Myth has the ability to "assist a community of people in ordering
and structuring their understanding of human existence," 48 at the
same time that it provides an ideal toward which people can
structure their daily lives.

If the above treatment of myth seems to echo the structuring of
social reality relegated to the constituents of fantasy theme
analysis, it is because the substance and nature of those categories
is myth. One wonders therefore how beneficial it is to attempt to
isolate certain characteristics of myth by slapping fantasy theme labels on them. Mohrmann addresses such a concern. He recognizes that it is difficult and perhaps false to try to differentiate between a fantasy theme, a rhetorical vision, and a fantasy type: "Theme, type vision - each is a drama in its own right, and the result is a critical maze." Part of the difficulty can be attributed to the fact that "basic definitions lack precision." Bormann fails to develop any precise definitions which should serve to clarify and characterize the unique elements of the fantasy theme world. All of the components are dramas and since one is built upon the other and feeds into the next, their "concise interlocking" nature makes it all the more difficult to be able to isolate one from the other or monitor their progressive development. In summation, Mohrmann posits, "a critic cannot possibly address interrelationships when the critical apparatus does not contain precise and discrete definitions of the concepts that are supposed to be interrelated."

It appears to this writer that the overdependency on fantasy theme labels and their interrelated nature requires the critic to divert extra attention to the stages of fantasy development. Rather, the rhetorical critic should concentrate on the fantasy or drama itself and be concerned with how the content of the particular fantasy is utilized by individuals and the group alike. Using such an approach, one would assess the psychological outlet that the
fantasy provides and analyze the constructed reality that such a rhetorical stance would foster. It may be contrived to attempt to follow the chaining-out of a group fantasy for one might logically question whether the fantasy was actually conceived within the group or whether the group simply adopted a parallel fantasy from another source. In this regard, one might successfully argue that the media are not in fact the culmination of the chaining-out of a fantasy, but rather that they are responsible for the germination of the fantasy within the small group. Quite simply, the flow of information could represent the direction that the fantasy takes.

Since it is both unproductive and unnecessary to this thesis to differentiate between fantasy themes, rhetorical visions, and fantasy types in terms of their successive development and regenerative ability, no attempt at such categorization will be made. Rather, the often narrowly construed term, "fantasy," will be abandoned for the more widely recognized and substantive term, "myth."

It must be underscored that abandonment of fantasy theme labels does not constitute disregard for the theory. Ideally, fantasy theme analysis provides a critic with the means to take a humanistic look at rhetorical artifacts so as to gain insight into how such artifacts affect perceptions and aid in the construction of reality. In particular, Bormann introduces some questions which are especially pertinent in this regard, questions which encourage the
critic to look for "patterns of characterizations ... of dramatic situations and actions ... and of setting." By seeking to uncover such details as where the dramas are set, what the typical mythic scenario entails, and, what inherent meaning seems to underlie the myth, one becomes more attuned to the socializing function of the myth.

Myth as a Rhetorical Response

It is in the final area, critical application of fantasy theme analysis, that Mohrmann makes some of his most telling arguments. If not calling into question the critical utility of Bormann's theory, Mohrmann at least argues that it is difficult to identify any study where the critical inquiry was bolstered by fantasy theme analysis. Indeed, he asserts, studies using the fantasy theme approach have been hindered by its descriptive nature and have failed to go beyond mere description of the fantasy theme components. Fantasy theme studies have proven not to be discriminatory, for they are grounded in "circular arguments," and confined by a narrow taxonomy. The resultant works, according to Mohrmann, perpetuate the assumption that "to describe a drama is tantamount to discovering a compelling segment of social reality." Unquestionably, mere descriptive studies do not constitute rhetorical criticism. To be compelling as a critic, a scholar must use the study to gain insight into why a particular rhetorical artifact was well-received or impotent in its specific
environment. A critic must engage in some form of speculation about the individual quality of a given rhetorical response in light of the dynamics of the persons and environment surrounding the rhetoric.

When identifying myth as a rhetorical response, the critic is aided by borrowing ideas from another rhetorical theorist, Lloyd Bitzer. Bitzer reintroduces the rhetorical field to the importance of attending to situational factors surrounding any given sample of rhetoric, but he does so by adopting a new slant. Bitzer defines the rhetorical situation as that "which calls the discourse into existence," that which gives the discourse its "character-as-rhetorical." The peculiarity of a given rhetorical response is based upon the character of the situation to which it arose: "a particular discourse comes into existence because ... some specific condition or situation ... invites utterance."

Examining the situational factors which invite discursive response demands attending to the three constituents which Bitzer identifies as being present in every true rhetorical situation. The first, the exigence, is an urgent demand which could be altered or modified through rhetoric. If the exigence is incapable of being modified, or if the modification requires means which are beyond the scope of rhetoric, the exigence is not a rhetorical one and would not constitute a rhetorical situation. Secondly, since the rhetoric is being directed toward a particular group of persons, in
order to be a rhetorical situation, this audience must consist "only of those persons who are capable of being influenced by discourse and of being mediators of change." 61 Finally, Bitzer contends that every rhetorical situation will "contain a set of constraints made up of persons, events, objects and relations ... which have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence." 62

Although every rhetorical situation entails the presence of these three components, they differ in terms of their composition and character. Recognizing the distinctiveness of the rhetorical situation and the latitude of response which a particular situation seems to allow enables the rhetorical critic to make judgments about the responsiveness of the rhetoric. Consideration of the rhetorical situation encourages that critic to go beyond mere description.

In the present thesis, the use of rhetorical situation as an analytical tool is limited. Rather than a comprehensive analysis of the entire rhetorical situation, which conditions the speaker's action, the present study uses the rhetorical situation only as a framework for understanding the three key variables (audience, exigence, and constraints) as they must have imposed themselves on the rhetorical decisions of the two speakers studied. Thus, rhetorical situation is applied herein as a descriptive tool, while fantasy theme analysis remains the critical methodology.
SUMMARY

This chapter has attempted to provide insight into the theoretical assumptions which will direct this study. The framework provided by fantasy theme analysis is necessary for it heightens the critic's awareness of the presence of myth in rhetoric and guides speculation about how myth serves individuals as a psychological insulator by providing them with an interpretive structure which modifies the harshness of daily existence. The structure, in turn, becomes a perceptual lens which the person uses to direct attention to, and interpret, new stimuli. Since the fantasy theme categories are a replication of the characteristics of myth, they will be abandoned in this study. Rather, attention will be directed to the mythic substance of the rhetoric.

While fantasy theme analysis aids in the identification and recognition of a specific constructed reality, it does not provide a means to examine the rhetoric in a larger context. In order to do this, Bitzer's conceptualization of the rhetorical situation will be used. When a critic attempts to understand the peculiarities of a rhetorical response, he/she is better able to view that response as one instance which arose out of several possibilities. This fosters a sense of the unique power and responsiveness of the rhetoric.

The rationale of using this dual approach can be seen in the guiding philosophical assumption of this study: a particular situation requires a unique response and this response may take the form of a myth.
Chapter Two Endnotes


2 Ibid., p. 117.

3 Ibid., p. 116.


7 Braden, p. 116.


9 Braden, p. 116.

10 Cuthbertson, p. 5.


13 Ibid.


16 Ibid., p. 397.
17 Ibid., p. 396.
18 Ibid., p. 398.


20 Ibid., p. 130.


22 Bormann, "Rhetoric As a Way of Knowing," p. 436.

23 Ibid., p. 436.

24 Ibid., p. 437.

25 Ibid., p. 438.

26 Ibid., p. 441.

27 Ibid., p. 442.

28 Ibid.


30 Bales, p. 152.

31 Mohrmann, p. 114.


33 Mohrmann, p. 115.

34 Ibid.


36 Ibid., p. 400.

37 Ibid., p. 399.

38 Ibid., p. 397.

39 Ibid.
40 Bales, p. 152.
41 Ibid., p. 138.
42 Ibid., p. 152.
43 Ibid.
46 Loury, p. 10.
49 Mohrman, p. 119.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., p. 125.
52 Ibid., p. 127.
54 Mohrman, p. 121.
55 Ibid., p. 120.
57 Ibid., p. 1.
58 Ibid., p. 4.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., p. 7.
61 Ibid., p. 9.
62 Ibid.
Chapter Three:
John Kennedy and the National Commitment to Equality

Although both John Kennedy and his brother Edward were groomed for public service by a family with a rigorous need for recognition and fame, they attained political influence at different times. The fact that John began his political ascent in the late 1950's while Ted only began to branch out on his own in the mid 1960's should have been a factor influencing the political arguments of each man. Such a view is supported by Bitzer's primary assertion that the multiplicity of situational contexts and conditions are responsible for both stimulating a particular response or argument and assigning a unique and recognizable character to that piece of argument. ¹

Therefore, since the contexts and the conditions which each of the Kennedys sought to address were related to his particular period, it should follow that their responses should have been different. By understanding the situations which called forth the Kennedys' arguments, and then analyzing these arguments, it should be possible to determine whether or not their rhetoric was truly responsive to their rhetorical situations.
THE RHETORICAL SITUATION FOR JOHN KENNEDY

One of the essential elements of all rhetorical situations is an exigence. It is this "imperfection marked by urgency" that serves as an "organizing principle," for it is responsible for determining "the audience to be addressed and the changes to be effected." 2 John Kennedy emerged as an influential political figure during an era remembered for its exigences marked by demands for remediation. This is especially true in the civil rights area.

Background

Racial separateness had long been the social norm when Plessy vs Ferguson was decided in 1896. This court ruling, which upheld a system of separate public facilities for the races as constitutional as long as the facilities were "equal," protected national separatist practices and provided legal sanction for racial isolation in society. Plessy both reinforced the racial attitudes of its day and set in place a system which remained tenaciously intact until after the Great Depression. It wasn't until that time that, "the colored voter [was first seen as] an essential ingredient in the new political machine ... ." 3 Leadership in the change in social attitudes was initially seen in the provisions of the New Deal, where Black Americans were marginally recognized, and, during World War II, in which Blacks assumed an active role in the fight for democratic ideals. 4
Although Black Americans were patiently expected to contribute to the renewed hope for America, it became increasingly clear that they were restricted from participating fully in the benefits and legal guarantees that that same society provided. Americans were forced to confront this inconsistency due to the heightened internationalism which followed World War II. During the war, the egalitarian myths of our propaganda denouncing Nazi racism stood in glaring contrast to our domestic racist practices. Following the war, American idealism was tested by each new political alliance that was formed. Further, other countries were able to experience first-hand our national racial practices when they came to the United States as delegates to the newly-formed United Nations. All of these factors contributed to an increased awareness of the racial injustice that existed in the United States at this time. In fact, in the period following the War, it had become increasingly clear that "racial inequality was becoming an objective of our national policy."

Such a realization fueled debates on racial inequality by U.N. delegates in their various committees, and became substance for the constant testing and challenging of Plessy. Such actions were representative of the social rumblings which foreshadowed the 1954 Brown vs Board of Education decision. Brown, which concluded that separate educational facilities were inherently unequal, had a far-reaching impact. It was the first major positive step in civil rights since 1875.
Two Situational Factors -- Exigence and Audience

The ruling in Brown overturned in part the long-standing Plessy case, and became precedent for a whole series of new cases. This line of decisions became the foundation for a whole range of social demands and expectations. Brown became the standard against which both social change and stagnation were measured. Although the actual decision was limited to desegregation in education, as indicated, social expectations went beyond that area. Civil rights optimists saw Brown as the beginning of the end for the whole structure of separate but equal public facilities. Brown heralded an era in which America would have to consider the reordering of its entire social structure. Particularly in the South, Americans would have to dismantle a whole set of parallel institutions in place at least since Plessy.

It was this social reordering which constituted the core of the exigences of the late 1950's and early 1960's. What each person saw as the actual exigence was determined by how the social reordering affected her/his life and position in society. In turn, the identification of the exigence conditioned each person's social response. For example, some felt that the judiciary had grossly exceeded its authority and was interfering in an area previously reserved to the legislature and the executive branch. Several members of Congress who held such a view banded together in an overt denunciation of the Court's action. Nineteen Senators and eighty-two members of the House signed a "Southern Manifesto" in
1956 which "decried the court's decision while pledging to use all lawful means to reverse it ...." \(^{12}\) Many others advocated handling civil rights in the manner in which it had always been handled -- through channels of litigation and "appeals to the country's conscience." \(^{13}\) Those with such an outlook may have defined the exigence as the need to retain the old order and overturn the Court's "flagrant abuse of power." \(^{14}\)

Oddly enough, some of those in positions of authority -- and thus presumably committed to upholding the law -- shared a similar view. One observer captured the paradox: "Though the federal court's policy was consistently to forbid segregation wherever it was found in the public schools, neither the President nor Congress spoke out in favor of this policy." \(^{15}\) President Dwight Eisenhower found himself forced to uphold the Brown decision in 1957 by using federal troops to enforce the desegregation of schools in Little Rock, Arkansas. Yet, at the same time he tried to temper the decision by cautioning, "'if you try to go too far too fast ... you are making a mistake.'" \(^{16}\) Eisenhower's belief that the "final battle against intolerance is to be fought - not in the chambers of any legislature - but in the hearts of men," \(^{17}\) permitted him to adopt a non-interventionist approach toward states which were resisting desegregation. \(^{18}\) He maintained a hands-off approach until conditions escalated enough in an individual case to warrant federal intervention. A nonintervention stance at the top was consistent with a loose system of implementation at the local
level. While Eisenhower acted to enforce desegregation in instances where there was overt and blatant local opposition, in reality local school officials could operate at their own speed, and with virtually unlimited authority to develop their own desegregation plans. The lack of federal oversight invited excessive delay; those who opposed Brown were successful in miring it in a morass of litigation and petty legal obstacles.

Not all segments of society objected to the new civil rights decision. An equally strong and committed faction supported Brown. Those who believed that Brown contained the promise of racial progress became increasingly dismayed at the outright disregard for the law and the dilatory progress in desegregating the schools. For them, the lack of progress and positive direction in civil rights became the exigence which channeled their energies into several new directions — including civil disobedience. The harbinger of this tactic was the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. What began as the willful refusal of one woman, Rosa Parks, to "move to the back of the bus" escalated into a well-organized, city-wide protest which strangled the city's mass transportation for an entire year. The attitude which precipitated this mass display of discontent was that civil rights issues could no longer be kept on the back burner or left to the whims of local courts or the hostile attitudes of petty officials. Those who held such beliefs wanted to witness the end of racial discrimination in all of society.
The Third Situational Factor -- Constraints

The social climate within which John Kennedy began his Presidency lends insight into the situational factors which served to determine or influence the arguments which he put forth. It is important to understand this "natural complex of persons, events, objects, relations, ... [and] exigences ..." 22 for it is this complex which is responsible for dictating the utterances or controlling the responses of any given speaker. By the time that John Kennedy assumed office there had been much social discord and discontent which demanded that the civil rights concerns be addressed. Bitzer argued that "exigences in the same situation may be incompatible," 23 and his point seems especially descriptive of John Kennedy's time; there were cries for continuity in segregation of the races at the same time that there were equally strong demands for radical change in these practices.

When John Kennedy spoke to these demands they were a part of, and further exacerbated by, a third situational constituent which Bitzer identified, the constraints. Constraints are best described as those persons, events, and objects which have the ability to retard or hinder the satisfaction of the exigence. 24 President Kennedy faced several constraints and had to address (and in most cases appease) a complex of different attitudes and beliefs held by a diverse populace. President Kennedy was further constrained by
tradition. Social segregation had long been the accepted practice and national norm and to disrupt such deep-seated practices threatened social continuity and cohesion.

The other side of the civil rights issue also posed constraints for Kennedy and his rhetoric. The Brown decision had been handed down by America's highest court and therefore it warranted backing from all levels of public officials. Any delays in desegregation of sporadic attention to the issues involved could undermine the authority and the ethos of the nation's highest office. The situation required a balance which was at best a tenuous one; if President Kennedy stressed strong civil rights legislation he would alienate large groups of people and cause his own "political death", but to ignore the concerns would have made him appear insensitive and apathetic. It was well known that the President "had no difficulty in subscribing to the Brown decision," yet he was cautious to avoid any actions which would earn him the label of "Reconstruction Democrat." Since the Democrats had lost twenty-two seats in the House and two in the Senate in the 1960 election, Kennedy was aware that such a "precarious Democratic margin" could be jeopardized if he "threw his weight behind civil rights legislation." Therefore, the scope of Kennedy's policies and the strength of his political influence was restricted by a narrow party margin in Congress and a national attitude toward
civil rights which could be described as "moderate" at best. These were all factors constraining Kennedy's rhetoric and the possible modification of the exigences.
THE KENNEDY RHETORIC: A MYTHIC RESPONSE

The rhetorical situation which Kennedy confronted as President demanded a response; the exigences demanded modification. The nature of Kennedy's response was determined by the complex interrelationships of audiences, exigences, and constraints. This unique combination could only be satisfied by an equally unique rhetorical response, or, as Bitzer states, the situation "invites a fitting response, a response that fits it." President Kennedy chose to respond to his particular rhetorical situation by focusing on a myth which would be common to most Americans regardless of race or stand on civil rights. In order to accomplish such a task, Kennedy had to rely on arguments which could stimulate a sense of pride in the citizenry and encourage a nationalistic spirit as well. The chasm caused by the disagreement over the civil rights issue could only be bridged by universal acceptance of, and adherence to, a myth. It was with this knowledge that President Kennedy developed a myth which can best be identified as the National Commitment to Equality. Perhaps Kennedy was aware of the underriding belief in a national commitment to equality and therefore chose to expand it, and its influence, at that time of national trial.
THE AMERICAN HERITAGE THEME

Equality was served as the ideological dictum of America since the country's conception. The idea that "all men are created equal" was solidified in the various rhetorical documents adopted by the nation. Kennedy recognized how ingrained this ideal was and used it to substantiate his myth. It represents the first, and the central constituent of Kennedy's myth -- the American Heritage Theme.

John Kennedy developed the American Heritage Theme through two interrelated and interdependent arguments. His arguments are based on those areas which were essential in the establishment and perpetuation of the American ideal of equality. The arguments may be labeled as Constitutional Rights, Guarantees and Opportunities, and the Legal System. Drawing from each of these areas, Kennedy was able to build a sense of the heritage of equality. This is most evident in a June, 1963 televised address in which Kennedy stressed equality as a long-standing national tradition. He declared that this nation was "founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened." 30

In maintaining identification with the nation's heritage, President Kennedy referred to moments in the nation's past when equality had been upheld as the national ideal. His references sustained an image of continuity: "One hundred years ago the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by a President who believed in the equal worth and opportunity of every human being." 31 In
another reference, Kennedy equates the "great inheritance" of equality with the "four freedoms which Franklin Roosevelt so eloquently described in another time of peril... ." References to the nation's past enabled Kennedy to bridge the gap between our nation's native ideals and those which were a part of his particular rhetorical situation.

References to the nation's past were found in each of his fully developed arguments. In order to establish a sense of the deep-seated nature of equality, Kennedy sought to present different aspects of this heritage. Indeed, Kennedy drew his listener's attention to the nation's very beginnings, to America's Founders. These were the persons seen as being responsible for establishing the standard of equality, "the standard which was raised in the earliest days by our Founding Fathers... ," those men "who first shaped the democratic legacy filled with a sense of commitment and wonder at the importance of the events in which they were participating." Kennedy upheld these men and their decisions as far-reaching, moral examples.
The First Argument -- Constitutional Rights, Guarantees, and Opportunities

The nation's founders were the men responsible for reifying the abstract ideals which persons came to this land to preserve. References to these men and their contributions aided Kennedy in refamiliarizing his audience with familiar elements of America's heritage. The founders served as a vital link to the past through the rhetorical documents which they produced. These constitutional rights, guarantees and opportunities are a part of our heritage yet remain steadfast today. This transcendent quality enabled President Kennedy to develop this as his key area of argument, emphasizing both the heritage and the vitality of the Constitution.

Repeatedly, John Kennedy advanced his primary belief, and the nation's founding principle, that all Americans are guaranteed fundamental, basic rights solely by virtue of their citizenship. Kennedy defined these rights as "those which most Americans take for granted," such as "every American's rights to vote, to go to school, to get a job, and to be served in a public place without arbitrary discrimination."35 The Constitution, according to Kennedy, extended these rights to all citizens regardless of race. Since racial inequality interfered with the acceptance of these rights, it had to be destroyed.

Kennedy believed so enthusiastically in the fundamental rights of all Americans that he was able to respond to civil strife and outright disobedience by characterizing such deviances as
understandable, if not justifiable, reactions of certain Americans to having long been denied basic Constitutional rights. Kennedy told of the frustration of those who were prohibited from fully realizing the promises of their citizenship by citing a pattern of abuse which had become the norm for them: Blacks "were denied equal opportunity in education and employment. In many places [they] could not vote. For a long time [they were] exposed to violence and terror." 36 Kennedy denounced such practices as "contrary to the spirit of our democracy and Constitution," 37 and challenged his audiences to recognize that "no American who believes in the basic truth that 'all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights', can fully excuse, explain, or defend [such practices] ... ." 38

In fundamental rights, John Kennedy focused on the common citizenship and heritage shared by the diverse persons whom he addressed. Kennedy's mention of Black Americans was usually done in a manner which accentuated national unity. He introduced the demands of Blacks as those of "our Negro fellow citizens," 39 and claimed "a structure of segregation divided the Negro from his fellow American citizens." 40 Using this approach, Kennedy was better able to temper fears and resentment over Black demands by asserting that Black Americans were propelled to action by a simple "drive for justice," 41 and a steadfast determination to "secure for themselves the equality of opportunity and treatment to which
they are rightfully entitled." Their demands were presented as the reasonable longings of citizens to attain fully that to which they were entitled.

Although President Kennedy was able to recognize that this country has sometimes failed to live up to its promises, "the practices of the country do not always conform to the principles of the Constitution," he never failed to extol the great opportunities which he believed that the nation held for all of its citizens. These opportunities were intricately partnered with the Constitutional rights and guarantees, yet, more precisely, they represented additional privileges which complemented and fortified these basic rights. Such privileges enabled all Americans "to realize their talents, to make something of themselves, to [have] a fair chance... ." This fair chance was best identified as those opportunities that the nation was capable of extending to its citizens.

In order to develop fully the argument of equal opportunity and to keep it in accord with the American Heritage Theme, Kennedy recounted the image of America as a "melting pot"; this is a country, "proud of its heritage -- the heritage of the melting pot of equal rights, of one nation and one people." Kennedy proposed that although Americans have different backgrounds and diverse beliefs, there had been a universal commitment to a national goal, the goal of "men and women of different creeds, different backgrounds living together harmoniously... ." Such
cooperation hinged on the ability of each individual to pursue opportunities which would provide the chance to build a new life and thereby contribute to building a nation. This idea was extended by President Kennedy:

We are the descendents of 40 million people, who left other countries, other familiar scenes to come here to the United States to build a new life, to make a new opportunity for themselves and their children. 47

John Kennedy believed that without equal opportunities, the potential of the nation was severely restricted and he therefore saw as justified the demands of Black Americans to be granted an equal opportunity for themselves and their children. Such demands were labeled truly American in character. The 1963 March on Washington to secure jobs was defended by Kennedy as neither "novel nor difficult to understand," for he believed the act to be grounded in national objectives "which were older than this nation." 48 These objectives were defined by Kennedy as "the fundamental right of all citizens to be accorded equal treatment and opportunity," 49 and, the "democratic principle [contending] that no man should be denied employment commensurate with his abilities ...." 50 Equal treatment and consideration in securing employment were an essential component of America's rights and privileges for unless people were able to build new lives for themselves and their families, Kennedy asserted that there could be little progress toward building America.

Much of the rhetoric used by President Kennedy to advance his Constitutional Rights Argument underscored his strong belief in, and
commitment to, a national goal—a goal of a politically strong and economically viable nation. This is best illustrated by the way in which Kennedy defined racial discrimination as an impediment to the realization of this goal. Kennedy's civil rights messages presented occupational and educational discrimination as costly to the nation. This is especially evident in his June, 1963 Message to Congress in which he argued that although educational discrimination is "one basic cause of other inequalities and hardships inflicted upon our Negro citizens," such discriminatory practices further "impose a heavy burden on the national effort." 51 Such a burden was the inevitable result of a pattern of characteristic abuse identified by Kennedy: Blacks are restricted from the means to obtain a useful education and this "lack of educational opportunity deprives the individual of equal employment opportunity, restricts his contribution as a citizen and community leader [and] encourages him to drop out of school ... ." 52 As a result, society must pay. According to Kennedy: "the loss of 1 year's income due to unemployment is more than total the cost of 12 years of education through high school and [then] welfare and other social costs [must be considered]... ." 53

Such abuses manifested themselves in social costs which extended beyond economic considerations. Kennedy realized that educational and occupational discrimination further burdened society through
civil disruption and unrest. The pattern of abuse cited above
carried over into other behaviors and responses as well:

In many of our larger cities, both North and
South, the number of jobless Negro youth — often
20 percent or more — creates an atmosphere of
frustration, resentment and unrest which does not
bode well for the future. Delinquency,
vandalism, gang warfare, disease, slums and the
high cost of public welfare and crime are all
directly related to unemployment... . 54

Kennedy used the threat of social discrimination and the
outright economic waste resulting from racial discrimination to
foster a sense of commonality; since, as Americans, we are all hurt
by racial discrimination in education and business, we must also
share in the responsibility to ensure that all persons do indeed
have an equal opportunity. It was upon this rationale that John
Kennedy equated the demands of Black Americans with the rights
guaranteed to all Americans. This approach enabled Kennedy to
promote their demands as reasonable and justifiable longings of
citizens who had been abused. Despite their inability to exercise
the basic freedoms guaranteed to all, Black Americans remained
faithful to the nation and retained belief in its precepts:
"despite humiliation and deprivation, the Negro retained his loyalty
to the United States and to democratic institutions." 55

Blacks had maintained a struggle to secure "long-denied" rights for
themselves and their children while remaining determined to work
"within the framework of the American Constitution" in order to
"actively seek better education for themselves and their children, build better schools and better housing [and] carve out their own economic opportunity." 56 Such efforts were lauded for the noble purpose which had generated them. This approach is captured in Kennedy's declaration, "American Negroes have never succumbed to defeatism but have worked bravely and unceasingly to secure the rights to which as Americans they are entitled." 57

Kennedy presented the struggle of Black Americans as a righteous fight of worthy citizens to realize fully the total benefits of America's Constitution. This sentiment was the best means for Kennedy to employ for it stressed the unity underlying the diverse populace. By defining the Civil Rights struggle as one entailing the fundamental rights and principles of the nation, Kennedy, as President, was better able to challenge all segments of society to accept the commitment to uphold the nation's heritage. Kennedy was able to advance the image of the civil rights struggle as a noble reflection of the true spirit of American freedom. One message in particular advanced this attitude:

...it is the Negroes themselves, by their courage and steadfastness, who have done (sic) most to throw off their legal, economic, and social bonds - bonds which, in holding back part of our Nation, have compromised the conscience and haltered the power of the Nation. In freeing themselves, the negroes have enlarged the freedoms of all Americans. 58

Another way in which President Kennedy attempted to unite all Americans was to challenge them, as individuals, to accept the
responsibility for preserving the American ideal. The challenge is extended to all citizens "to make equal rights a reality for all our people ... [and] to fulfill finally the promises of the Declaration of Independence." 59 He assured the nation that acceptance of such a challenge would entail minimal individual effort yet would yield maximum benefits for the nation as a whole: "In giving rights to others which belong to them, we give rights to ourselves and to our country." 60

**Kennedy's Second Argument - The American System of Law**

President Kennedy advocated unity among Americans of all colors and races as the means for "every American to enjoy the privileges of being American," 61 for he saw such oneness as the way to strengthen and preserve a great nation. Kennedy's dictum that "This is one country," 62 captures the philosophy cultivated within his American Heritage Theme. It is represented by the central arguments which have been identified; this is one nation, proud of its democratic ideal, which was fashioned by the wisdom of its founders and concretized in the Constitutional rights, guarantees and opportunities.

As was shown, Kennedy reacquaints his audience with the Constitutional basis of the democratic ideal. Yet, while he presents arguments to expand this ideal, he buttresses it by adding that the only way to insure realization of the ideal is to accept and obey the national system of law. Kennedy realized that the legal system was a representation of the American Heritage ideal for
it too had been fashioned by the nation's founders and solidified in
the earliest rhetorical documents, yet, he saw compliance with the
law as an essential requisite for dealing with the problems of his
day. He declared that respect for the law was "fundamental in the
maintenance of our rights as free men and women." 63 For these
reasons, the American System of Law and Legal Remedies is seen as
the component of Kennedy's American Heritage Theme.

Kennedy extolled respect for American law before diverse
audiences and at different times. Overall, he admonished all
citizens to exhibit trust and display confidence in the system of
law, a system which he promoted as being designed by persons of
great integrity and far-reaching wisdom. Accordingly, the President
boasted that the American system of law "planted the standard of
freedom ... and provided the means to test the capacities of men for
self government." 64 This standard of freedom established the
principles that "the law will be fair" and that the Constitution
will be "color-blind," 65 along with the inherent promise extended
to all citizens that "the venerable code of equity law commands 'for
every wrong a remedy.' " 66 For Kennedy, the principles of the
American legal system were essential to the attainment of democratic
freedom. In this vein, he saw the system of law as the "testing
ground for political liberty [and] a model for democratic
government ... ." 67
Since reliance on laws and legal remedies had long been the nationally accepted standard, rejuvenating belief in this system enabled Kennedy to build upon feelings of continuity and permanence. This was especially useful when he had to address the feelings and emotions aroused by civil disobedience and disruption. Kennedy's main focus was to urge the citizens to have "full confidence in the integrity of American law." The nation could best feel confident when all of its citizens were abiding by established laws and procedures. Kennedy succinctly captured the sentiment in an address to the nation following the disruption caused by the integration of the University of Mississippi:

for our nation is founded on the principle that observance of the law is the eternal safeguard of liberty and defiance of the law is the surest road to tyranny...
Even among law-abiding men few laws are universally loved, but they are uniformly respected and not resisted...
For in a government of laws and not of men, no man, however prominent or powerful, and no mob, however unruly or boisterous, is entitled to defy a court of law. 

Other instances of racial tension resulted in similar arguments from President Kennedy. In one message, he cautioned that if Blacks were consistently denied legal remedies or the "rights to which these citizens are fairly entitled," it would only contribute to "decreased respect for the law and increased violations of the law." Later, within the same speech, Kennedy cites the failure to allow all citizens to realize equally their rights as being responsible for the "vindication of ... rights through organized
direct action, with all its potentially explosive
consequences..." 71 He concludes in this message, and others as
well, that legislation (or reliance on our governmental system) is
needed to "help move this potentially dangerous problem from the
streets to the courts." 72 It was through court action and
decisions that Kennedy attempted to settle civil rights discord. In
his rhetoric, he argued that these means were consistent with basic
American values.

The rhetorical situation in which President Kennedy spoke was
one best described as disrupted. There were cries for continuity at
the same time that there were demands for more rapid change. But
whatever position one maintained, the change in social mores,
expectancies and norms caused people to react out of hostility, fear
and confusion. An analysis of Kennedy's rhetorical response
indicates that he was keenly aware of the national division over
civil rights issues. As President, he had to utilize such awareness
to preserve national solidarity and strength. In an effort to do
just that, Kennedy was cautious not to isolate large segments of the
populace by addressing primarily "Black concerns," but rather, he
identified the civil rights issue as "national concerns" or problems
which faced "our fellow citizens."

To underscore the image of a common citizenship, President
Kennedy developed an American Heritage Theme. Within this theme, he
enumerated on the idealistic conception of the nation and the
noteworthy principles upon which it was built. Since the same
principles remained virtually constant in Kennedy's time, they were conceptions with which Americans could relate and easily identify. The basis of the American Heritage Theme was to reintroduce and revive the same concepts and ideals which had helped to instill solidarity among the large diverse group of persons who became the first "Americans." Therefore, Kennedy emphasized the wisdom of the founders as seen in the system of constitutional rights, guarantees, and opportunities which they drafted, and, the laws designed to preserve and protect this system.

Each of these areas was developed by Kennedy as a main area of argument. To accomplish this development, he employed two strategies. First, Kennedy stressed the foundational roots or the deep-seated nature of each area of argument. By stressing the heritage of each area, he was then able to encourage national unity and cohesion by identifying all Americans as the rightful heirs to this heritage. As a result, a sense of oneness was seen as the most viable means to counter the discord over civil rights issues.
THE UNIFICATION THEME

The oneness of all Americans was a main thread which ran through the American Heritage Theme. Kennedy promoted a philosophy of a single nation, its citizens sharing a common heritage, guided by elemental principles. The belief in a common purpose and a national ideal was responsible for positive progress of the nation.

President Kennedy attempted to stimulate renewed pride in America's heritage and its ideological background by stressing unification. This concept of unity was further strengthened and developed into a second theme used to support the overarching myth of the National Commitment to Equality. The Unification Theme was inspired by the belief that Americans can solve any problem as long as they stand united.

One of the primary problems which Kennedy, as President had to address was the regional division within the nation over civil rights. North and South were split philosophically over the issues as well as engaged in noticeably different practices, procedures and actions. John Kennedy was concerned that the division within the nation threatened the power, prestige, and strength of the country and he therefore sought to end sectional factionalism and accompanying behaviors such as name-calling and assertions of regional superiority. If the nation-wide consequences of discrimination were highlights, perhaps feelings of national unity could be generated. With such hope, Kennedy argued that "The cruel
disease of discrimination knows no sectional or state boundaries." 73 Further, although he recognized that efforts at desegregation imposed a greater burden on certain parts of the country, he nonetheless insisted that all share equally in the blame and the responsibility to eliminate the problem:

I recognize that the present period of transition and adjustment in our Nation's Southland is a hard one for many people. Neither Mississippi nor any other southern State deserves to be charged with all the accumulated wrongs of the last 100 years of race relations. To the extent that there has been failure, the responsibility for that failure must be shared by us all, by every State, by every citizen. 74

On the broadest level, Kennedy presented the civil rights issue as a national concern, one which threatened the nation as a whole and one which required concerted action. He therefore advocated far-reaching legislative solutions. To him, legislation was an essential measure necessitated by the scope of the problem: "The events in Birmingham and elsewhere have so increased the cries for equality that no ... legislative body can prudently choose to ignore them." 75 The enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1963 was deemed "imperative" for Kennedy believed "It will go far toward providing reasonable men with the reasonable means of meeting these problems... ." 76 In his appeal to reasonable persons, Kennedy warned that new legislative measures must be supported without regard for political party of belief. In support of his proposed legislation, he argued, "Nor is that a partisan issue. In a time of domestic crisis, men of goodwill and generosity should be able to
unite regardless of party or politics." 77 In a related message he repeated the same sentiment: "This is not a sectional problem -- it is nationwide. It is not a partisan problem. The proposals set forth ... are based on a careful consideration of the views of leaders of both parties in both Houses of Congress." 78 Thus, in the legislative efforts designed to protect Constitutional rights and freedoms, Kennedy endorsed the hope that "there is a fundamental unity among us that will survive partisan debate over particular issues.", 79 and thereby enable America to "preserve both the law and the peace." 80

While President Kennedy maintained a posture which advocated legal solutions, "It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level," 81 he recognized personal commitment was necessary in order to combat racial discrimination. He hoped that his national proposals would lead the way and lend "encouragement to those State and local governments -- and to private organizations, corporations, individuals who share my concern over the gap between our precepts and our practices." 82 Kennedy stressed that to be effective, legislation must be reinforced by "enlightened private citizens, private businesses and private labor and civic organizations, by responsible educators and editors, and certainly by religious leaders who recognize the conflict between racial bigotry and the Holy Word." 83 The calls to various groups, organizations and
persons enlarged the scope of responsibility which effective legislation required. It was a means to stimulate a feeling of working together to achieve a supreme goal.

While supporting legislative solutions to the civil rights question, Kennedy was quick to admit, "This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone." 84 He deemed it the responsibility of every American citizen to display a proper attitude and spirit. In order for "legislation to operate more smoothly and effectively," a spirit of "conciliation and cooperation" was necessary. 85 Kennedy acknowledged that cooperation could only be achieved through courage and a deep national conviction to accept those changes which were the most difficult to understand. When the nation witnessed the spread of violence at the University of Mississippi, Kennedy called upon those involved to "display patriotism and integrity" and summon up the courage needed to "accept those laws with which you disagree as well as those with which you agree." 86 He brought the level of responsibility down to each individual as he informed the students, "The eyes of the nation are upon you and upon all of us, and the honor of your university and State are in the balance." 87

The assignment of personal obligation and responsibility was not restricted to those who took part in social displays of discontent. Instead, President Kennedy issued a similar dictum to all Americans as he stated: "It is a time to act ... above all, in all of our daily lives." 88 The obligation was one for all Americans and the
responsibility for the civil rights question involved moral justice. It was devotion to this moral issue, a national spirit of justice, that President Kennedy urged when he attempted to get the nation to admit to the unjust treatment in the land. When he first addressed Congress in 1963 to promote the passage of his Civil Rights Bill, he did so with a moralistic tone:

I ask you to look into your hearts - not in search of charity, for the Negro neither wants nor needs condescension - but for the one plain, proud and priceless quality that united us all as Americans; a sense of justice. 89

More succinctly, Kennedy later declared, "law alone can not make men see right," rather, we are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the Scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution." 90 To Kennedy, moral justice involved the fundamental principles and beliefs which comprised the tenets of the Constitution and which assured equal treatment for all. The fact that this situation was not being realized, that racial inequality and injustice continued to grow, constituted an immoral disposition to John Kennedy. This is evidenced in the following passage where he attempted to convince Congress of the issue:

[racial discrimination] increases the costs of public welfare, crime, delinquency, and disorder. Above all, it is wrong. Therefore, let it be clear in our own hearts and minds, that it is not merely because of the cold war, and not merely because of the economic waste of discrimination, that we are committed to achieving true equality of opportunity. The basic reason is because it is right. 91
In his Inaugural Address, John Kennedy had challenged Americans to participate actively in the struggle to keep America great. He posed a similar challenge in the civil rights area as he called upon Americans to participate in a fight to end discriminatory practices. "This," he stated, "is an effort in which every individual who asks what he can do for his country should be able and willing to take part." 92 When persons accepted the challenge and met their moral responsibility, Kennedy called their actions to light as was the case with certain citizens "North and South, who've been working in their communities to make life better for all." He applauded their efforts for, "They are acting not out of a sense of legal duty, but out of a sense of human decency." 93 Persons who were actively involved in integration efforts were similarly praised for they had met the moral challenge with "tolerance, good will and exemplary conduct," qualities which aided them in "moving their communities and America forward." 94 The civil rights issue was being promoted as an issue involving moral justice, and those who upheld the standards of the nation were endorsed as exemplary citizens.

Statements defining racial discrimination as a "national domestic crisis" and "an explosive national problem," 95 helped to foster a sense of urgency about civil rights concerns and the need for a far-reaching unified solution. Kennedy built a rhetorical theme stressing unification in an attempt to establish a singleness
of purpose and broad acceptance of national ideals. By emphasizing the moral responsibilities involved and the legal obligations to abide by the law, Kennedy hoped to close the sectional and racial gaps which were present. By promoting a national goal and a national commitment, President Kennedy could best divert attention away from individual passions and prejudices. Once inflamed egos were cooled and personal fears calmed, the country could once again become unified: "... then healing those wounds that are within we can turn to the greater crises that are without and stand united as one people in our pledge to man's freedom." 96
THE AMERICAN IMAGE THEME

The two themes previously identified as American Heritage and Unification both substantiated the myth of a national commitment to equality. As was illustrated, the idea of an American Heritage was fashioned around the principles and ideals held by the nation's founders and concretized within the system of law. Its central doctrine equated democracy with freedom and equality. This underlying doctrine was broadened to include the dimension of moral justice within the Unification theme. Both of these themes and their supporting arguments were fundamental to the development of the third theme advanced by President Kennedy. This final area can be identified as the American Image Theme.

The concepts used to formulate the American Image are seated in the principles and ideals advanced in the other themes. Since America was to be the manifestation of a true democracy, it had to maintain standards and promote behaviors which were consistent with the democratic ideal. America was an archetype of a democratic government; it had to serve as the example which other countries could emulate. It was in this spirit that America was designed the "Great Experiment," a credo to which President Kennedy subscribed:

America was to be the great experiment, a testing ground for political liberty, a model for democratic government, and although the first task was to mold a nation on these principles here on this continent, we would also lead the fight against tyranny on all continents.
Since America was the first nation to institutionalize democratic ideals, it therefore had to serve as the leader for other nations. Since all eyes looked to America for direction and guidance, it must maintain a posture worthy of emulation. President Kennedy, as the symbolic leader of the country, was deeply concerned about America's unique position in the world. He believed that if America's leadership were to be threatened or questioned, the democratic principles and ideals might never be realized: "This country of ours occupies a position of unique leadership throughout the world. Without the United States, the cause of freedom would long ago have been washed away." 98

It was because of this position of leadership that America had to be conscious of its image, its posture on the international front. Its image could not run counter to, or in any way be seen as being inconsistent with its underlying democratic philosophy. The destructive climate brought about by disagreement over civil rights generated behaviors and actions which stood in glaring contrast to the nation's espoused principles. Kennedy realized the destructive potential of racial incongruencies and he consistently reinforced "the importance of our establishing our image in accordance with our Constitutional promise." 99 International eyes were fixed upon America and its racial policies and many foreign visitors were able to provide first-hand testimony to the discrepancies which existed between America's promises and practices. Recognizing that many foreign visitors had been discriminated against while visiting this
country, Kennedy urgently insisted that such practices could not go on: "It is important ... to end discriminatory treatment suffered by too many foreign diplomats, students, and visitors to this country," for they, along with American citizens as well, deserved to be treated with "equality and dignity." 100 This sentiment was presented to the Congress as Kennedy reminded the members that discrimination was injurious to the international standing of the United States by "contradicting at home the message we preach abroad." 101

The intricate relationship between America's image and its position of leadership was captured quite succinctly by President Kennedy as he addressed a Conference on Schools in Transition:

If we are able to give the leadership the world requires of us, we must be true to the great principles of our Constitution - the very principles which distinguish us from our adversaries in the world. 102

The delicate nature of America's assumed leadership role was a constant concern for Kennedy and he expressed this concern on several occasions. In addressing the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Kennedy once again voiced his concern:

We seek to lead the free world against an alien system but we cannot do so unless we ourselves match our actions to our words. We look for support and brotherhood to millions, hundreds of millions, of Americans of different creeds, different colors, who share our aspirations but sometimes are not convinced that we believe strongly in the doctrine that we preach. 103
Kennedy encouraged behavior which could serve to reinforce the espoused national ideal and contribute to a positive image of America.

An equally large part of the American Image was determined by the feelings about America aroused within citizens of other countries. Positive feelings were essential for they would contribute to a positive American image and aid the perceived effectiveness of our leadership in the world. Concern about the national image was most appropriate when dealing with civil rights issues for the way that the nation responded to these issues could affect the way others felt about the nation. Kennedy called for an appearance of pride and unity, for anything less could be wrongly interpreted by those looking on. Therefore, he cautioned that "Rancor, violence, disunity and national shame can only hamper our national standing and security," and more directly warned that increased racial strife would have the effect of "endangering domestic tranquility, retarding our Nation's economic and social progress and weakening the respect with which the rest of the world regards us." Further, President Kennedy attacked apathy as being equally as destructive to the national image for he claimed that "Those who do nothing" to make the "revolution peaceful and constructive are inviting shame as well as violence."

In the few instances where President Kennedy cited particular behaviors and responses of Americans in regard to desegregation efforts, he wanted to show how the actions of a few would affect the
image and the reputation of the nation as a whole. Recall that when
the President urged peaceful integration at the University of
Mississippi, he told the students involved that the "eyes of all the
world are upon you and upon us all," and he emphasized that "honor"
was at stake. In those cases where integration had been peacefully
carried out, Kennedy saluted such efforts for their positive
contribution in influencing how other people might feel about
America:

This nation is proud of the many instances in
which Governors, educators, and everyday citizens
from the South have shown to the world the gains
that can be made by persuasion and good will ... 107

Persuasion and good will were characteristics which Kennedy hoped
all Americans would emulate for such qualities could be regarded
highly by those of other nations.
SUMMARY

John Kennedy was President of the United States at a time of great social upheaval and unrest. This is especially characteristic in the civil rights area. In 1954, the Supreme Court's decision in the Brown vs Board of Education case initiated changes which generated hope in some Americans and fear and resentment in others. The social reordering and confusion which followed the Brown decision disrupted social norms, expectations and roles. As the President, Kennedy had to uphold Brown, regulate the resultant social changes, and also maintain a sense of national order and unity. Due to the sensitivity of the civil rights question and the diverse persons effected by the changes, it was necessary for Kennedy to make use of a myth which would foster a sense of unity and security. The myth he chose was one advancing the dictum of America's Commitment to Equality.

The three main themes which constitute the myth all contribute a separate, yet interrelated component to the myth. The first and primary theme, American Heritage, emphasizes the foundational roots of America's commitment to equality. The arguments contained therein give credence to the primary elements of the heritage. Kennedy makes references to the nation's founders, the system of laws, Constitutional guarantees and promises, and privileges or opportunities to show that equality was a common thread running through each of these areas. The second theme, Unification, stresses using the laws, rights, and opportunities to build a strong
America. National unity and oneness are required to combat the
disruption caused by disagreement over civil rights. Finally, the
way that the nation responds to the civil rights issue will indeed
affect the Nation's standing and image in the world. This is the
focus of Kennedy's third theme, the American Image. Since America
was fashioned around democratic ideals, and stands as the sole
element for other countries to follow, Kennedy was particularly
concerned that America's behavior remain consistent with the
country's espoused ideals.

These themes and their supporting arguments were advanced by
John Kennedy in response to the rhetorical situation he addressed.
The period following his presidency brought new social changes and
demands and these constituted a new and unique rhetorical situation
which had to be addressed. It was to the new rhetorical situation
that Edward Kennedy spoke. The following chapter will analyze civil
rights messages of Edward Kennedy to determine whether he made use
of the same themes and arguments as did his brother John. The
question is whether Edward Kennedy was mimetic of themes from the
Kennedy presidency, or whether he appropriately altered his
rhetorical responses to correspond to the different situation.
Chapter Three Endnotes


2 Ibid., p. 43.


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. xiv.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.


11 Ibid.


16 Manchester, p. 737.

17 Ibid.
18 Brauer, p. 3.
19 Dye, p. 36.
20 Ibid.

22 Bitzer, p. 5.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., p. 13.


27 Leuchtenburg, p. 127.
28 Brauer, p. 11.
29 Bitzer, p. 11.


38 Ibid., p. 3245.


40 Ibid.


42 Ibid.


49 Ibid., p. 397.


52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., p. 11160.

54 Ibid., p. 11159.

56 Ibid.


58 Ibid.


60 Ibid.


62 Ibid.


68 Public Papers, John F. Kennedy, 1962, p. 726.

69 Ibid.


71 Ibid., p. 11158.

72 Ibid.


74 Public Papers, John F. Kennedy, 1962, p. 727.


80 Public Papers, John F. Kennedy, 1962, p. 728.


87 Ibid.


89 Ibid., p. 11161.


92 Ibid., p. 3249.


96 Public Papers, John F. Kennedy, 1962, p. 728.


101 Ibid., p. 3246.


105 Ibid., p. 11158.


Chapter Four:
Edward Kennedy and the National Commitment to Equality

As we have seen in Chapter Three, President Kennedy made use of certain key rhetorical themes which helped him construct for the American people a myth of a National Commitment to Equality. These rhetorical themes and the myth they built constitute what may be identified as a part of the Civil Rights "legend" of John Kennedy. At the same time, we noticed that the Kennedy persona emerged as its own rhetorical force. John Kennedy and the image of Camelot became part of the national consciousness. Stories of the family and their drives and ambitions became the stuff of national popular interest. In his own time, through the confluence of events and circumstances which surrounded his life, meteoric rise to power, and death, a more recognizable part of the Kennedy legend grew up. They both played a significant role in subsequent civil rights rhetoric.

In shifting rhetorical and political circumstances, over a long public career, Edward M. Kennedy has been able to use both the legacy and the legend to forge his own rhetorical stance on the civil rights issue. As the present chapter will show, Edward Kennedy has done so selectively and, at times, cautiously. For example, there is rare overt reference to John Kennedy in Edward's speeches. The younger Kennedy does little to directly promote the
"legacy" of his martyred brother. Even John Kennedy's themes are used only selectively by Edward; for example, the "American Image" Theme discussed above is seldom used.

Surely this difference in rhetoric and rhetorical style can partly be explained by the radically different events which have been part of the national scene during Edward Kennedy's public life. Thus the exigences of his career reflect such momentous events as the death of John and Robert Kennedy and of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. They have included widespread urban unrest and rioting, and diversion of the national attention to Vietnam. Edward Kennedy has been in public life from the Cuban Missile Crisis through Watergate to Ronald Reagan.

But even these dramatically different events do not fully explain Edward Kennedy's rhetoric. This chapter will demonstrate that the younger Kennedy has constructed a rhetoric which finds the Kennedy legend useful and significant, but which has played only infrequently on the Kennedy legacy. Specifically, it is argued that Edward Kennedy used the rhetorical themes of the Kennedy legend -- American Heritage, Unification, and American Image -- to re-construct a rhetorical vision (a fantasy) of America's National Commitment to Equality. He did so by adapting the themes to the new political, social, and legal circumstances he faced. He did so by changing the way some of the themes are expressed; we will find different thematic categories in Kennedy the Younger. But he did so
in part too by keeping alive the rhetorical vision, the fantasy, of American commitment to equal rights which his brother had announced and defended.

It seems likely that Edward Kennedy's entry into national politics was facilitated by the influence of his Presidential brother. However, once Edward gained the Massachusetts Senate seat in November 1962, he found it necessary to set his own political course. His initial approach was cautious. He tried to touch all political bases, broaden his contacts and learn about how power was exercised in the U.S. Senate, rather than engaging in behavior which would keep him in the political limelight. Edward Kennedy was seen as being most 'correct' in gauging what was expected of him and what limits he had to set for himself.  

Kennedy finally broke with his deferential pattern in an early speech, on the Poll Tax, in April 1964. While the speech was an extension of an earlier campaign promise, "to protect the right to vote from literacy tests and poll tax," certainly other factors influenced the timing and the content of this first major Senatorial speech. The poll tax issue was but one part of the Civil Rights Bill being debated in the Congress. Kennedy recognized that to ignore the magnitude of these debates would be construed as insensitivity to a national concern. He began his speech with an explanation of the appropriateness of his remarks: "to limit myself to local issues in the face of this great national question would be to demean the seat in which I sit..." Further, while passage
of the Civil Rights Bill was a national concern, John F. Kennedy's death had made its passage seem almost a part of the personal legacy of the late President.

Perhaps it may be said that John Kennedy as President had little choice but to respond to the nation's civil rights concerns. As Chapter Three has shown, the years which preceded JFK's election, were filled with changes at all levels of society. New directions in legal perspective, starting with Brown, stimulated changes in societal and individual perceptions as well. The times seemed to be ripe for a wide-ranging social reordering. Those who favored it felt that the change could not occur rapidly enough; those who feared it clamored for the stability and predictability of earlier days. Promoters of both points of view looked to the President to provide leadership.

Still, while President Kennedy may have felt compelled to address the civil rights issue, his rhetorical approach was a personal strategy. His rhetoric, as we have seen, advanced three themes: first, Kennedy reinforced the sanctity of America's conception and its founders in his American Heritage Theme. Secondly, he argued that the only way to recapture some of those sacred feelings was through national Unification. Finally, he warned that the nation's response and reaction to the civil rights dilemma would affect America's Image in the world. Kennedy's three themes were interrelated and seemed to have a unidirectional focus.
They were used to support an overarching myth, one which identified national equality for all citizens as the lifeblood of America's democracy. This myth was identified as the National Commitment to Equality.

The effectiveness of the three themes in advancing the myth of our national commitment to equality was enhanced by the status, power, and prestige of the presidential office. John Kennedy, the man, had similar attributes simply as the inheritor of his family's political tradition. Further, the tradition was enhanced by glamour, a Kennedy image composed of "...Jacqueline Kennedy's camellia beauty, three-year old Caroline's Kate Greenaway charm, the elegant rhetoric of the President's speeches ... and the new idealism." 6 President Kennedy symbolized a rebirth, a turn away from the slipping national prestige and social stagnation of the 1950's. He came to represent a vision of all that was possible in America.

The circumstances created a "rhetorical situation," demanding what Bitzer has characterized as a "fitting" response from JFK. The political legacy and mythic qualities of Kennedy's life helped fashion his response; they provided the distinctive flavor which gave coloring to his "fitting" discourse.

Edward Kennedy became a participant in the Kennedy legend and legacy as early as 1952, when he campaigned for John as the latter sought the Massachusetts Senate seat. Ten years and two campaigns later, Edward announced his own candidacy for the U.S. Senate. 7
Although acknowledging the influence of his family's emphasis on politics and public service, Edward nonetheless insisted that he was not "the Kennedy candidate." Still, critics noted the closeness of the family in all campaigns, Edward's reliance on the Kennedy name, his use of family political alliances, and tested campaign tactics. Despite such objections, Edward's campaign was successful. He won the Democratic Party's nomination over veteran politician Edward McCormick and in the general election overwhelmingly defeated Henry Cabot Lodge. 8

In the Senate, as seen, Kennedy's progress was gradual, marked by a "wait-and-see" attitude. Once he did begin to speak, the issue of civil rights occupied his rhetoric. To examine his strategy in discussing this key topic, we must once again turn to his major themes and the rhetorical conception of myth and its function in discourse.
THE AMERICAN HERITAGE THEME

It is essential to ground a rhetorical vision in some collective definition of reality in order for it to be picked up and chained out by members of the group. The difficulty of this task is exacerbated when the vision is directed at a large, diverse audience, such as the whole voting population of a nation. Whether consciously or not, the Kennedys were aware of this difficulty and sought to ground their ideas in common threads of understanding shared by the American people. The most basic thread they found was the very fact of American citizenship and the long heritage of its derivation. In advancing the myth reiterating the country's national commitment to equality, Edward Kennedy relied on references to the nation's heritage to revive belief in America's tradition and its long-standing promises.

Since, for the most part, Edward Kennedy was not addressing a national audience at any one time, he was able to customize references within the American Heritage theme so that they would be most relevant for a particular audience. This can best be seen in his address to the United Farm Workers Union at their first constitutional convention in 1973. Kennedy used the occasion to suggest similarities to what had transpired at America's own First Continental Congress:
For this convention reminds us of the gathering in Philadelphia where the legal precepts that guide this nation were debated and decided. It reminds us that we are part of an experiment in human freedom. 10

Within this framework, Kennedy extended the analogy to equate the noble purpose of the Constitutional Convention with the aims of the Farm Workers and the spirit of its members with the dedication of the later audience:

And it reminds us that the revolutionary experiment begun so long ago will not be completed until this movement has attained its goals ... until every farm worker is treated as a free man. 11

The Farm Workers who struggled for this purpose shared "courage," "commitment," and a "cause" with those whose "struggle for human dignity and freedom ... fired the imagination of the men who founded this nation..." 12 When Kennedy declared in closing "You stand for the best of America," 13 he was not only extending praise to the farm workers, but also reviving the lofty image of America's heritage. This image would be recognized by most American citizens as a part of the nation's birth, its proud tradition and consequently, their heritage. It supplemented the larger myth by providing an image of a long-standing national commitment to equality.

Years later, in addressing the E.R.A. issue before his Senate colleagues, Senator Kennedy again directly relied on the American Heritage theme. In the speech, he identified freedom and equality as the "most basic and cherished principles of this country since
its founding," principles which remain forever "etched on the arches and cornerstones of our monuments and engraved in the metal of our society." Comprising much of the nation's standard of justice, these principles had persevered in spite of revolution, social tension, and institutional change. Equality and justice stood fast as guiding principles, providing "substance for progress," uniting the country in times of war, and motivating it in times of peace.

In arguing for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, Kennedy presented the issue as a new challenge, a new chapter in the unfolding process of democratic freedom and equality. The struggle for passage of the E.R.A. was the latest effort "to align reality with philosophy;" it was a part of the "valiant struggle to correct the injustice [which stood in the way of making] equality for all something more than a maxim, something more than rhetoric... ."

By likening contemporary battles for equality to efforts of the past, Kennedy was better able to represent the underlying demands as progressive steps in the dynamic unfolding of the nation's founding maxims. The essence of the democratic ideals which spurred the country remained a constant reminder of the past, a standard for the present and a course for the future. In an attempt to bridge the time gulf, Senator Kennedy made use of myth and developed the myth by selecting rhetorical supports which would be most acceptable to his particular audience. Kennedy employed this style throughout his senatorial career.
One of the best illustrations of the technique discussed here were the remarks he made at the Democratic National Convention in 1980:

But there is a guiding star in the American firmament. It is as old as the revolutionary belief that all people are created equal -- and as clear as the contemporary condition of Liberty City and the South Bronx. (Emphasis added). 18

Such an approach had the potential to inspire the feeling that despite the passage of time and the innumerable trials of the national spirit, the country's principles remained vibrant and an essential part of contemporary life. Kennedy avoided the appearance of dredging up outmoded values and long-forgotten promises by presenting equality and freedom as a living part of America's heritage. The common memories sparked by Kennedy's rhetorical images centered around the progression of timeless founding principles of the nation. This emphasis helped to substantiate the myth identifying America's commitment to equality as long-standing and firmly entrenched.

Constitutional Rights, Guarantees, and Opportunities Argument

To broaden awareness of the preponderance of idealistic notions as part of America's heritage, Edward, like John Kennedy, did not restrict his remarks to the ideals of the past. Rather, he supplied rhetorical arguments which were rooted in past ideals, but which went on to introduce new areas of continuity. These arguments supplemented the American Heritage theme at the same time that they further advanced the myth of America's commitment to equality.
In the first such area of argument, that of constitutional rights, guarantees, and opportunities, Edward Kennedy identified the struggle for equal rights as the most fundamental and consistent struggle undertaken by Americans to fully realize their constitutional ideals. Such an approach enabled him to capture an image of a forward-progressing nation. Kennedy made use of this dynamic image in several of his senatorial speeches. In 1963, Senator Kennedy defended the Civil Rights Bill as the best means to extend to all Americans those rights which were guaranteed them. Its goals were those "rights which the Constitution already requires ... [not] ... new rights, but remedies of existing systems." 19

Thus the means of enforcement in the legislation were "not force" but rather "moderate"; the bill abounded with "reasonableness" and "conciliation." 20

In presenting such rights as part of America's heritage, Kennedy was better able to assure Americans that Blacks were not demanding any rights other than those to which they had long been entitled. Any necessary changes in public policy could be seen as adjustments to what had always been the nation's promise. It was only necessary now for Americans to accept the original intentions and adjust "to the fact that Negroes are going to be members of the community of American citizens with the same rights and the same responsibilities as every one of us." 21 America had only to adjust to a new way of thinking, not a new set of rights.
One of the most basic of all American rights, and that which Edward Kennedy most clearly advocated during his early years in the Senate, is the right to vote. The very source of American democracy, a government of the people, is grounded in each individual's ability to participate in free and fair elections. Kennedy saw the right to vote as the fundamental means to establish policy and express societal concerns. Therefore, in his 1963 speech, he argued for the protection of the "precious right to vote," and asserted that settling differences "peacefully at the ballot box was the way they should be in a democracy." If a democracy deprived citizens, because of their race, of the right to express their opinions through voting, it would be responsible for causing those individuals "humiliation" and would be burdening them with "impediments" to their freedom.

Kennedy saw the poll tax as a barrier in the path to the ballot box. To him, the tax itself was so "entwined with racial discrimination" that its sole purpose was clearly to "keep Negroes from the franchise." Kennedy therefore demanded its abolition and argued that he and his Congressional peers did indeed have the right, indeed the responsibility, to seek an end to this unjust tax. He asserted that the tax was clearly "not a revenue-producing device [but rather] an attempt to deny a constitutional right." Thus any provisions made to abolish the tax should be wholeheartedly supported, for they were "clothed with the strength of Congressional policy," and grounded in fundamental rights.
Kennedy wanted his Congressional colleagues to assume the struggle to "make voting rights a reality for all," but he also needed the support of citizens to accept any forthcoming changes. To accomplish these aims, Kennedy once again invoked the myth presenting equality as a long-standing national tradition. In this vein, he spoke of the historic traditions of suffrage:

The history of suffrage in this country is the history of extensions of democracy by gradual removal of economic qualifications for voting. Poll tax abolition is but another chapter in this history.

The image of a far-reaching, ever-expanding democracy was one which could aid legislators in promoting new measures to help citizens to adjust to new social conditions. It was a means to root present challenges into the heritage and promises of the past. Senator Kennedy used the same approach in arguing for passage of the E.R.A. His rhetoric stresses the dynamic process of the struggle for equal rights:

The demand for equal rights for women is not a new cause. It began in earnest almost 50 years ago, when the first equal rights amendment was submitted to Congress. (emphasis added)

Kennedy urged the passage of the E.R.A. and claimed that it would signal the end of the "era of glacial progress toward equal rights," for not only would it provide women with the rights they had been denied, but it would also "reaffirm equal rights for all."
Time and again in arguing for civil rights legislation or for individual and community acceptance and compliance, Senator Kennedy maintained the perspective that equal rights for all citizens were not "special privileges or special advantages." This is stated most succinctly in his Opening Remarks to the session of the Constitutional Rights Subcommittee in 1967:

We are being asked to set minimum standards for justice and fairness.... We are being asked to vindicate rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

While using the American Heritage theme to substantiate the myth of America's Commitment to Equality, Senator Kennedy found it necessary to include arguments which encompassed the broad spectrum of Constitutional rights and guarantees. Racial discrimination was wrong because it violated national ideals and denied inherent rights, but further, because it stood in the way of Blacks participating fully in American society. This denial encroached upon other promises which were part of America's noble heritage. Kennedy best captured this notion by stating:

To us -- as to our revolutionary ancestors -- freedom is more than Constitutional protections. It is also the 'pursuit of happiness.'

The 1963 March for Jobs and Equality on Washington, D.C. was a massive testimonial to the many avenues and opportunities which had been blocked for black Americans. While Kennedy recognized that the
March demonstrated that "the Negroes in America were asking for protection of their right to vote ..." he went on to assert that still more was needed for them to be fully American:

They were asking for more jobs, higher wages, better education for their children, and most of all for the chance to enjoy on an equal plane with white people, the accommodations of restaurants, motion picture houses and hotels. 34

Kennedy believed that to be fully American meant to be guaranteed access to the privileges and opportunities which could be found here. It was a belief he grounded in the "great principles" of the Democracy, of which one was "equality of opportunity and treatment." 35 Kennedy called forth the mythical quality of these principles:

This was to be a land whose blessings would be open equally to all — where no man would be stripped of the fruits of his labor to benefit another... 36

The opportunity to work for a fair wage and the potential to better oneself and life for one's heirs was not only essential for each individual, it was also necessary to preserve the "dynamic, job-creating economy" which the nation boasted. 37 Without equal opportunity for all, the progress and the potential of the nation would be halted.

Senator Kennedy resisted rhetoric which would have admitted of a stagnant or down-trodden American work force. Instead he sought to promote the image of a forward-thrusting democracy in labor as he did in other segments of American life.
Kennedy broadened his argument by asserting that "The American people have solved problems of discrimination before," 38 to the benefit of the entire nation. Such progress came from extending rights to "groups of immigrants from Europe, all of whom faced hostility when they arrived." 39 He regarded the instances of discrimination faced by "the Italians, the Jews, the Poles, the Greeks, the Portuguese," 40 as similar to those confronting Blacks. In fact, he claimed that the discrimination faced by the Irish was so strong that:

Neither I nor the President of the United States would hold the positions we do if America had not taken down the sign that read 'No Irish Need Apply.' 41

The fact that immigrants from other nations were eventually able to overcome the barriers caused by discrimination stood as a tribute to America's noble heritage and served to strengthen and preserve a great nation. Providing equal opportunity for employment not only alleviated the "family tragedy" caused by depriving the breadwinner of a chance to make a decent income, 42 but it also helped to stop the life-long cycle of poverty which "saps the economic strength of the Nation." 43 Whites did not have to fear losing out on jobs to Blacks, Kennedy argued, because in the past jobs opened to immigrants had actually helped to bolster the overall economy. The nation as a whole prospered from "the new income spent by job holders" and this in time created "more demand and more jobs"
culminating in a "great upward movement of growth and prosperity." 44 The nation could best move ahead when all of its citizens had the opportunity to grow and be challenged.

Senator Kennedy saw the "American promise" as the opportunity for all Americans to "reach the limits of their ability." 45 This was best accomplished through employment, for a family that lacked "the income necessary to bring up children" would find it virtually impossible to "cast off their poverty, break out of their slums and ... measure up to the standards of social behavior set by the community." 46 While employment opportunities were the means by which Americans could keep up with social standards, the ability to pursue gainful employment was clearly allied with access to other opportunities as well. Kennedy saw such a correlation existing between employment and higher education which he also deemed "a necessity for full participation in the economic life of America." 47

Kennedy fought for "equal access to education and jobs [for] opportunities of our society," for such things were a part of the "birthright" of all Americans. 48 To deny individuals the opportunity to pursue higher education was to deny them full access to all the means available to help them shape their own destiny in their own ways. Kennedy illustrated his point by noting the disservice that had been done to women by the discriminatory practices of colleges and universities in "setting a quota for certain areas of study," and discouraging women from entering "the
professional and semiprofessional fields." 49 Such control fostered discrimination against women in "all areas of employment, including even the least skilled jobs." 50 The final consequence came when such practices resulted in "forcing women into roles below their intellectual and physical capabilities." 51

Kennedy believed that the effects of discriminatory practices in higher education superseded the loss of personal development and realization of potential. He recognized that the consequences of any single discriminatory act could not be contained or restricted to any one segment of society. Rather, the practices employed in any one field soon became patently accepted in others. This idea was offered through the example that "colleges and universities help to set the tone for the wider society," 52 and, as a result, the quotas and the channeling which they were promoting soon came to be the "general rule in most states." 53 The effect of discriminatory practices would soon be experienced by all, for as the potential of each individual was restricted, so would be the potential of the nation as well:

For every generation of Negro children denied a college education is a generation whose skill, talent, and ability has been lost to our nation... . 54

Discrimination was an unnecessary and avoidable waste which denied the nation its full reserve of talents and skills.

Addressing discrimination as a costly practice enabled Edward Kennedy to appeal to Americans in all segments of society, since all
were bound together by a shared heritage and common future. To
discount the spirit and potential of all citizens was to be
unfaithful to America's noble past and to cheapen the vision of what
the country could become. As testimony to the benefits which were
accrued by allowing all to participate fully in society, Kennedy
upheld the past assimilation of migrant groups. When such groups
were finally able to overcome the barriers of discrimination they
faced when entering this land, their contributions benefitted
America as a whole:

Our economy, our social structure, the level of
our culture are higher than ever before, in a
large part because of the contributions
minorities have made. 55

References to the past thus helped Kennedy to perpetuate the myth of
American Commitment to Equality. By placing it in a context of
being firmly entrenched in our national heritage, he gave it
historical meaning. By linking it to America's dreams for the
future, he stressed its dynamism and vitality.

American System of Law Argument

In advancing the myth of America's National Commitment to
Equality, Senator Edward Kennedy employed rhetorical images of
America's past through the American Heritage theme. This enabled
him to speak of Constitutional rights, guarantees, and opportunities
as bequests from the past which were endowed to all Americans by
virtue of their citizenship. But there was more to America's
heritage than simply drafting rights which were to be available to
all. Constitutional rights had little force if not protected and implemented by a system of laws. References to the American system of law were therefore an effective means to substantiate the American Heritage theme and give credence to the overarching myth. It is identified here as Kennedy's second area of argument.

Edward Kennedy's rhetoric focused on the substance and the sanctity of America's legal system at two distinct points in time; first, in 1964, as he urged passage of the Civil Rights Bill, and later, in 1967, as he addressed the issues raised by the urban riots of that summer. In each of these instances he was guided by the same myth, but found it necessary to highlight the specific area which would be the most responsive to the particular situation.

In 1964, Kennedy's main concern was backing a significant piece of legislation, the Civil Rights bill. To this end, he chose to underscore that the bill itself represented a simple extension of the fundamental rights already guaranteed to all Americans. Although the rights themselves constituted a "moral issue," Kennedy felt that the only way to ensure their enforcement (since social pleas and sermonizing had failed) was through "political means." 56 Social conditions necessitated that such means be undertaken immediately:

But there comes a point when persuasion must be backed up by law to be effective. In the field of civil rights, that point has been reached. 57
Social conditions demanded a far-reaching and comprehensive solution to the civil rights dilemma. Efforts which had been initiated in the past had not yet produced willing -- or even grudging -- compliance with even so fundamental a mandate as that of the 1954 Brown decision. This was painfully evident. Despite the fact that the Court had imposed a requirement of "all deliberate speed" and a "prompt and reasonable start toward full compliance," ten years later "wide areas of the South still had no school integration, years after the principle of integration was established." 58

Non-compliance on the part of officials and willful rejection of the legally established policy by citizens were deemed inexcusable by Kennedy for they were glaring contrasts to the guidelines of democracy. Just as he had employed rhetorical images from the founding principles of the nation, and from the Constitution, so Kennedy used the American legal system for further images to advance the myth he used. In this way, Kennedy urged his Congressional colleagues to uphold the leadership positions entrusted to them by taking the initiative in passage of the Civil Rights bill. If Congress failed in its responsibility to take "steps to aid in the implementation of the integration decree," that failure would constitute virtual approval of those discriminatory practices which were continuing in the South and which amounted "to a virtual reversal of the Supreme Court's decision." 59
Kennedy further advanced the American Heritage theme by reiterating the intended supremacy of the federal government. He identified certain behaviors in the name of states' rights as "arbitrary and illegally imposed" obstructions of integration. Hence, they invited the imposition of federal authority. Senator Kennedy grounded his reasoning in the very doctrine of separation of powers:

I respect the doctrine of states' rights ... But I respectfully submit that one cannot oppose having the Federal Government telling the States what to do, and at the same time, condone States telling cities what to do.

Our democracy had been fashioned around a system of safeguards, and that system must not be ignored or invoked only when convenient.

The second major point in Kennedy's senatorial career when he relied upon arguments stressing the heritage of America's system of law occurred while he was advocating the passage of a bill designed to impose penalties on persons involved in acts of racial civil disobedience. Hence he stressed the vitality of the Constitution and responsibility of the entire legal process to uphold and protect fundamental American rights. He called the proposed bill "'must' legislation," which although "far from the best" Congress could do, was "nevertheless surely the least." In supporting the bill, Congress could make a "visible
demonstration" of its determination to uphold the principles of the nation. 64 This would reaffirm its power and demonstrate the persistence of America's founding principles:

...this Congress is determined to fill the gaps in the protection we offer all our citizens... [and to reassure] that America's dedication to justice and to liberty for all has not waned and will not be permitted to wane. 65

Kennedy was arguing that the time was right for the Congress to take the measures necessary to safeguard democratic principles. It must strive to maintain its strength and leadership capacity. This rhetorical appeal was responsive to the time and to the concerns to which Kennedy spoke. Urban riots during the summer of 1967 caused some to doubt the usefulness of civil rights legislation. Kennedy was sensitive to these concerns:

Some people have suggested that this is an inappropriate time to consider civil rights legislation, that the public and the Congress will not be receptive to the bills before us.... 66

Yet he emphasized that to put off legislative efforts would be "cruel and tragic and irresponsible." 67 The Congress, and the public as well, must persevere, for their efforts were only one part of the ongoing attempts to deal with the far nobler goals of "eradicating injustice, inequality, and despair throughout American life." 68 To these ends Congress must dedicate itself and its work. In doing so, it would be fulfilling its vital function in American democracy.
THE UNIFICATION THEME

Senator Edward Kennedy sought to revive the myth of America's commitment to equality by tailoring specific themes and arguments to particular audiences. Using the American Heritage theme, he was able to call forth images of the longevity and tradition of civil rights commitment:

We are talking about rights which should have been guaranteed by the Constitution long ago ... [rights which were part of] ... the commitment to Constitutional equality for all citizens. 69

References to the nation's founding principles were effective for all audiences. Their application was not restricted to the past; rather, Kennedy used these same principles as the motivation for present policy and future direction.

Edward Kennedy did not limit his rhetorical support to founding principles. In the Constitutional Rights, Guarantees, and Opportunities argument, he offered the image of "America's promise" as including all of the rights and possibilities needed to permit each individual to set and achieve his/her own goals. The opportunities that the nation held could only be attained through equality of treatment. Social conditions had to be changed to make possible the dreams and talents of all citizens.

One way to encourage the necessary social changes was by establishing public policy through law. Rhetoric emphasizing the need for legal precedents comprised Senator Kennedy's rhetorical support in the second area of argument, the American System of Law.
It was through such supports that he was able to insist that although it wasn't the "right of government to tell the people how to live," it was most certainly the "duty" of government "to liberate them for their own pursuit of fulfillment and happiness." 70 It was to this end, and using these arguments, that Kennedy sought the passage of several bills designed to help make equal rights a reality for all.

While Edward Kennedy argued that laws were needed to set the tone which society should follow, he was careful not to assert that social policies alone would dissolve prejudice and end inequality. That ultimate responsibility lay with each citizen. The nation's maxims were the foundation for the Constitution and our system of rights and opportunities under law, but they required a unified effort to be preserved and safeguarded. Each citizen had an active role to assume in this effort. Senator Kennedy appealed to this sense of responsibility through his Unification theme.

The principles of justice and equality which were the birthright of all Americans were but a manifestation of the ultimate value which had inspired them, moral goodness. By presenting racial discrimination as morally wrong, Kennedy hoped to appeal to the underlying value which he believed guided all Americans. This value was a substantial part of, and an inspiration for, the myth advancing America's commitment to equality. Careful examination of Kennedy's rhetoric reveals this mythic component.
Edward Kennedy most succinctly expressed his belief in the moral
goodness of Americans when he addressed the Senate urging passage of
the Civil Rights Bill of 1963. It was then that he optimistically
declared:

 But I firmly believe a sense of fairness and good
will also exists in the minds and hearts of men
... a sense of fairness and good will which shows
itself so often in acts of charity and kindness
toward others. This noble characteristic wants
to come out. 71

By asserting that all men have a noble character, Senator Kennedy
was better able to capture the sentiment of unification in urging
all Americans to eliminate the contradiction of racial inequality.
In this regard, Kennedy first urged whites, as the "relatively
comfortable and affluent majority," to admit that a "grave wrong has
been done to a minority... ." 72 This fundamental wrong had
"haunted the Negro's life in the United States," 73 and warranted
an expression of conscience by white America. The first step toward
alleviating the "fundamental injustice" was for the "affluent
majority [to regain] faith in [their] own sense of justice." 74

Whites were challenged by Edward Kennedy to display a sense of
morality in accepting and adhering to proposed social programs and
policies. In assessing the effectiveness of affirmative action
programs, Kennedy urged whites to look at the progress of the nation
and ask themselves, " 'Is it fair?' " 75 He then offered a series
of challenging questions:
Is it fair that a child growing up black in the ghettos of our cities is more likely to drop out of high school than to graduate from college?

Is it fair that any young child should know no home except the next migrant camp?

Is it fair that a child born on an Indian reservation may not see a doctor for the first six years of his life? 76

Such questions were designed to arouse America's conscience and stimulate feelings of moral responsibility. The same tactic was employed by Kennedy when arguing for an extension for the deadline for ratification of the E.R.A. Again he set up a dichotomy of justice and injustice by describing existing social conditions in a series of rhetorical questions:

Is it fair that women college professors with the same qualifications as their male colleagues earn, on the average, $3,000 per year less?

Is it fair that the housewife has no coverage for disabilities which might prevent her from doing her job?

Is it fair that over 50 percent of our Nation's citizens are denied constitutional equality. 77

Injustice of the kind Kennedy identified could only be eliminated by abandoning social policies which had established and perpetuated it. Kennedy called for action: to destroy the slums, to give every American with the desire and the capacity the chance to go to college, and to create jobs. Such actions were morally sound and defensible; they should be carried out "because they are
right and decent and the moral things to do. "78 The argument enabled Kennedy to align the strength of public policy with the need for public responsibility.

Kennedy employed this rhetorical strategy as early as 1964, in his speech on the Civil Rights bill. Kennedy recognized that passage of the bill would not ensure an end to discrimination. Rather true change lay in the hands of the American people. Kennedy stated:

... it can truly be said that even in passing this bill, we are still relying primarily on the decency and the tolerance and the conscience of the American people to secure these things for Negro citizens. 79

The values of morality and fairness were rhetorical support for Senator Kennedy's Unification Theme. They were utilized because their influence was not restricted to any single component of the myth. Instead, morality and fairness were values which formed the moral fiber of the overarching myth, while they also were moral abstractions upheld as motivation and inspiration. The duality enabled Kennedy to appeal to persons of all races. His Unification Theme promoted these values as part of the common heritage and the future shared by Americans of any color. Kennedy made use of this rhetorical strategy in his commendation of Christian leaders involved in the civil rights struggle. He applauded the example which was found in their "simple message of non-violence." 80 The nobility of their actions had the power to inspire goodness in both Blacks and Whites alike: "Negro men and women had been given a new
sense of dignity and self-respect," while these same acts of courage
"rekindled the conscience of the white people of this
country." 81 The courageous struggle to end segregation was
morally sound and true to the nation's great heritage. To do
nothing, to allow racial separatism to continue, was wrong because
"It saps our strength. It offends our deepest traditions." 82

In a testimonial speech for Philip Hart delivered ten years
later, Kennedy once again promoted the struggle for equal rights as
a struggle propelled by long-standing values. Herein he identified
segregation as a "distortion of our nation's ideals." 83
Therefore, those who fought to see it end were worthy of admiration
and emulation. They had promoted and defended the nation's highest
ideals:

Those who rode the buses into the South, those
who were being arrested marching into Birmingham,
those who walked hand-in-hand before armed
troopers in Selma -- they were the true
descendants of Jefferson, the bearers of our
heritage and our future. 84

Kennedy hoped to inspire increased awareness of, and dedication
to the struggle for equal rights by promoting the mythic values of
morality and fairness. To this end, he claimed that commitment to
these values was essential for instilling a renewed sense of hope in
the nation and its people. Only after this optimism was reinstated
could the true benefits of the democracy be appreciated. Americans
had to make known their dedication and commitment to justice and
fairness in order for national benefits to follow. This rhetorical
argument was especially relevant when Kennedy, like many, tried to assess the effect of the upheaval represented by the urban riots of 1967, and the subsequent white backlash. Kennedy pointed out that America must not focus on the "sins of the worst members of the community," for to do so would result in consigning "the ghetto and all its people to a life of hopelessness... ." 85 Instead, it was necessary "to act against the conditions that breed violence." 86 This could be done by establishing and enforcing the social policies necessary "to lend immediate hope ... instant proof of our dedication to the promise of equality and fairness." 87 Failure to take action and protect America's commitment to equality would be tantamount to broadcasting "a silent yet potent message, a message of idle hopes and empty promises... ." 88

Within the Unification Theme, Senator Kennedy asserted that unity and justice were only possible if the nation maintained a sense of hope and promise. This required that citizens of all races work together. Kennedy admonished that while whites had to make concessions, Black Americans must not ignore the potential collaboration with whites to end racial discrimination. In this regard, Senator Kennedy deemed integration "not a white cause or a Negro cause, but an American cause." 89 His rhetoric proclaiming the benefits of racial unification was direct:
...the greatest gains in civil rights have come when black and white have worked together. The very basis of integration is working together with white people. If you cast them off -- if you isolate yourself -- you will be strengthening the bonds of the whole system of segregation. 90

The message was clear for members of both races. If blacks chose the path of racial solidarity and acts of violence, they would be pursuing a "self-defeating" and "dangerous" path. If whites wanted blacks to "go slow in obtaining what should have been a part of their birthright," they held false expectations. 91 In either case, a lack of moral conscience and fairness when dealing with the civil rights issue only served to fuel the hatred of the "enemies of reason and justice." 92 Neither approach would benefit the nation.

By utilizing the values of morality and fairness as rhetorical supports, Senator Kennedy was able to perpetuate the myth of America's Commitment to Equality. He encouraged blacks and whites to embrace in a unified struggle to uphold the American dream of "justice and opportunity for all of us." 93 Not only was the dream spawned by moral principles, but belief in the dream could serve as motivation for present action. Therefore, Kennedy presented racial unity as the only means for the dream to come true:

Let us work together to make that dream a reality, realizing that the greatness of our country depends on our success. 94
American Image Theme

Senator Edward Kennedy rhetorically promoted the value of moral goodness to bolster the myth of America's Commitment to Equality. If commitment to fairness and justice were seen as a noble part of the nation's heritage, then anything which contradicted these values could be viewed as running counter to the spirit of the nation. Racial separatism was presented as one such contradiction.

Identification of the long-standing moral principles not only served to perpetuate Kennedy's myth, it also became a means to bridge the gap between past ideals and present action. Moral goodness became the rationale behind proposed bills and policies as well as the inspiration for individual responsibility and action. These two realms were brought together by the Unification Theme. Belief in the nation's moral values and dedication to them could best be carried out through a unified effort. This would in turn assure hope for the future:

> For none of us shall enjoy those precious fruits of our heritage in the future - unless all of us enjoy them together. 95

A unified America was promoted as a morally strong America, one where the attainment of rights and fulfillment of opportunities were possible. This image had meaning for American citizens who were heirs to the myth. But it also had meaning for those in other countries who had formed an image of America; an image of an ideal democracy, based in part on the claim of equal rights for all. If the nation desired to maintain this ideal image, it had to keep the
myth alive and vital in the eyes of the world as well. Attempts to
do just that are found in Senator Kennedy's third and final theme,
the American Image Theme.

In an effort to safeguard the ideal image of America fostered by
the myth, Senator Kennedy spoke of discrimination in broad, almost
universal terms. If references to discrimination were not confined
to the plight of American Blacks, then it would still be possible
for the myth to have credence. This strategy is best seen in
Kennedy's remarks to the Interparliamentary Union in 1963, one of
Kennedy's first speeches as a Senator. In that address, he
identified a broad spectrum of individuals who were victims of
discrimination. He spoke of:

...the gypsies of central Europe, the 'colored'
in South Africa, the negroes in England ... and
the minority racial groups in many European
nations... .

These persons had no common heritage or common land of origin, yet
they all shared the plight of discrimination. Showing how pervasive
the problem was helped to put America's discrimination problem into
broader perspective.

Edward Kennedy chose to stress the international dimension of
discrimination so as to be able to preserve the myth. America was
not alone in its racial problem; as a nation, it was one of many
which had succumbed to fear and mistrust. Thus, beyond simply
preserving the myth, Kennenedy was able to expand it by emphasizing
that America was indeed unique in the way it had responded to this
common problem. Our nation was different for its response. Kennedy was able to marshall a large number of rhetorical supports for this argument. He recalled past instances when discrimination had been a threat to the national conscience. As early as 1963, Kennedy employed this strategy:

In 1780, a Catholic in Massachusetts was not allowed to vote or hold public office. In 1840, an Irishman could not get a job above that of common laborer. In 1910, a Jew could not stay in places of public accommodation in the Berkshire Mountains. 97

Years later, Kennedy's rhetoric followed a similar pattern as he once again detailed past instances of discrimination:

Every immigrant group...have [sic] been greeted with something less than warmth by those who were here before.... My own grandfather, searching for employment in Boston, found signs reading NO IRISH NEED APPLY. 98

Kennedy chose to highlight such discriminatory conditions to underscore the strength and commitment America had shown by overcoming such practices. America's image could hence remain consistent with its founding principles.

Past victories in the struggle for civil rights testified to the dynamic nature of the nation's commitment to equality. The notion of moving ahead would help mitigate the moral contradiction which racial inequality had caused. Such a contradiction was potentially damaging to America's image. Kennedy therefore found it
rhetorically sound to caution Americans about this peril. Kennedy most directly spoke to this point at a testimonial for a dedicated civil rights advocate:

Historians of the future will wonder about the years we have just passed through. They will ask how it could be, a century after the Civil War, that Black and White had not yet learned to live together in the promise of this land. 99

Kennedy did not want to give other nations cause to wonder "what sort of country was it that drove a ... black American ... to think that he could find greater freedom in the Soviet Union than in the nation of his birth." 100 A contradiction such as this one would do little to help America maintain a strong image and a position of respect in the world.

Edward Kennedy was aware, as he hoped all Americans would be, that a national focus on discrimination could undermine America's world position. The United States had accepted the call to leadership and therefore it had to also accept the responsibility for manifesting a posture worthy of emulation. America had believed so strongly in its principles that it had in effect opened itself to close scrutiny:

In a sense, my Nation has asked to be judged in this area [discrimination] because of the leadership we have taken in the cause of freedom and democracy around the world. 101
The strength of America's image was dependent on allegiance to its democratic principles.

Although Kennedy acknowledged that racial discrimination in America was by far the most publicized and sensationalized in the world, he was able to use some incidents to his rhetorical advantage. The 1963 March on Washington became an expression of belief in the American style and its principles. Rather than expressing shame at the conditions which generated it, he boasted that it was "impressive both in its numbers and its dignity." Such a demonstration was upheld as a positive reinforcement for America's image. Indeed, Kennedy proclaimed that it made "a lasting mark upon the conscience of the people of the world." Kennedy was able to present a potentially damaging act in a favorable light. Doing so, he was able to conclude in an optimistic vein:

We have come to grips with our problem. We realize our social responsibilities. We are determined to clean our hands of racial prejudice so we can go before the world with deeds to match our words.  

Senator Kennedy's American Image Theme was a rhetorical attempt to match the nation's deeds to its words.
SUMMARY

Senator Edward Kennedy's three rhetorical themes completed the rhetorical vision which he shared with his brother John Kennedy. They both addressed racial inequality in terms which were most familiar and relevant to the complex of persons to whom they spoke. The first theme, American Heritage, focused on the common history shared by all Americans. It was a heritage fashioned around the maxims that all should have an equal share in the rights, guarantees, and opportunities which had been extended through law. This was the core of the democracy. Adherence to such principles required effort, acceptance, and dedication from all citizens. Shared responsibility was the substance of the second theme, that of Unification, which sought a collaborative effort between Americans of all races. Apathetic concession to anything less would be morally indefensible. American standards had to remain high so as to permit it to remain faithful to its founding principles and to safeguard its position in the world. The third and final theme, American Image, addressed this concern. Because of its superior position in the world, America could not succumb to actions which could threaten its moral quality. Racial discrimination had the potential to do just that.

As a cumulative effort the three rhetorical themes were inclusive and familiar enough to be able to further the myth of National Commitment to Equality, for they each advanced and
developed a component part of the myth. The assertion that America had always been committed to equality was grounded in founding principles, proven in the way Americans had overcome discrimination in the past, and reflected in the image that other nations held of our country. The themes were a rhetorical means to revive, reinforce, and perpetuate the overarching myth. Their influence was certainly controlled by their rhetorical relevance. However, the impact of the rhetoric must not be dismissed. Edward Kennedy was the inheritor of the Kennedy legend and the benefactor of the political legacy. Both of these assets helped him to shape his response and conditioned its fittingness for its audiences.
Chapter Four Endnotes


3 Ibid.

4 Burns, p. 127.


7 Burns, p. 72.

8 Ibid.


11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 32951.

13 Ibid.


15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.


20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. 7375.

22 Ibid., p. 7379.

23 Ibid.


25 Ibid., p. 7887.

26 Ibid., p. 7883.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., p. 7885.


30 Ibid.


32 Ibid.


36 Ibid.


39 Ibid.


43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., p. 7380.


47 Kennedy, p. 123.


50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., p. 9371.

52 Ibid., p. 9372.

53 Ibid., p. 9371.

54 Kennedy, p. 123.


56 Ibid., p. 7379.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 H.R. 2516, Formerly Title V of the 1967 Civil Rights Bill.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., p. 335.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
72 Kennedy, p. 127.
73 Ibid., p. 101.
74 Ibid.
76 Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 18957.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Kennedy, p. 105.

100Ibid.


102Ibid.

103Ibid.

104Ibid.
Conclusion

Both Edward and John Kennedy addressed civil rights issues and dilemmas. Yet, they employed notably similar rhetorical approaches. John found himself responding to a time which was characterized by uneasiness, uncertainty and discontent. As the President, he had to meet the needs underlying this complex spectrum of emotion at the same time that he had to make concessions to alleviate such concerns for the future. His rhetorical impact was impelled by a compressed period of time and urgent, dramatic social demands. ¹ The time during which Edward Kennedy spoke saw social disorder equally as dramatic and severe. The riots of 1967 had an impact on the outlook of both blacks and whites alike. Both sides realized that American society could not long continue to elude such strain. However, Edward’s period of influence was much larger in its scope and range of concerns. He had occupied the same Senate seat for over 18 years. Therefore, the exigences he faced were only somewhat similar to those during John’s time. First, there was an interest in accelerating civil rights demands due in part to earlier promises but these same interests had been exacerbated by John Kennedy’s martyred death. ² Secondly, there were those persons who felt that more than enough progress had been made in civil rights. Some in this group were angered by the cries for Black Power and solidarity ³ and still others viewed the riots in the
summer of 1967 as direct disregard for all allowances which had been made up to that time. The rationale behind the exigences was certainly different in nature than the somewhat naive tone found in John Kennedy's time.

Such differences can be further found in the constraints surrounding each Kennedy's rhetoric. President Kennedy's response was constrained by long-standing social practices and the disruption to social order which civil rights legislation threatened. In Edward's Senatorial career, the threat to social order came from other societal concerns and involvements. The escalation of the United States' Vietnam involvement and its resultant unrest was responsible for channeling energies and interest away from civil rights. Further, the long career of promises and disappointments caused civil rights to be viewed as an open sore rather than a fresh wound demanding attention.
KENNEDY LEGEND AND THE LEGACY

Despite the various differences in the speaking situations of each of the Kennedys, both John and Edward shared a rhetorical vision which they sought to advance through their rhetoric. This shared vision, or myth, can be considered a part of the Kennedy legend.

In the popular press, as was noted in Chapter One, the legend is most often seen in the charismatic charm of the Kennedys. The public persona of John Kennedy took on a fairy-tale like appeal which was readily applied to anyone who shared the Kennedy name. But, it has been the contention of this thesis, the consideration of the Kennedy legend should not be limited to the mythic aura surrounding their lives. Instead, the mythic character of the rhetoric they employed must not be overlooked. Reiteration of recognizable themes and arguments had the potential to arouse similar responses in different audiences. When Edward advanced the vision developed by his brother John, he was able to get caught up in the legend as well as perpetuate the mythical vision.

The vision extended by the Kennedys was one espousing a national commitment to equality. The myth was rooted in the beliefs which had been instituted in the nation's conception and preserved with the passage of time. These beliefs can be seen in the various themes and arguments employed by the Kennedys to advance the myth. They both upheld the idealistic maxims of the country in the American Heritage Theme. These principles were the basis of the
rights, guarantees, and opportunities extended to all citizens through law. This extension was detailed in the two arguments substantiating this first theme: Constitutional Rights, Guarantees, and Opportunities and the American System of Law. Their rhetoric served to reinforce the tradition and the justification of the overarching myth.

However, to speak of the past did not necessarily ensure desired actions in the present. For this aim, the Kennedy rhetoric advanced the notion of responsibility in their second theme. Every citizen was urged to assume the responsibility to make America whole. A unified America was a strong America; one which could be proud of its past and look with hope toward its future. This sentiment was developed in the Unification Theme.

Finally, the third theme advancing the myth concerned itself with America's image. It was foolhardy if we as a nation expected that our own belief in our principles would be equally as convincing to other nations as well. Discord over civil rights clouded our perceived dedication. Rhetorical attempts to realign the nation's deeds to its ideals were made in the American Image Theme.

Certainly the strategy of employing a mythic response can not be disputed. One of the characteristics of any myth is its capacity to "construct a social reality capable of selectively interpreting the immediate political and historical events." This was essential for the times during which both Kennedys spoke on civil rights issues. The myth of America's commitment to equality was an attempt
to revive a sense of pride in the nation and encourage nationalistic unity in order to end the division caused by the competing factions in the civil rights arena. The best means to do this was to divert energy and emotion away from the motivators of prejudice and fear. This was possible through a myth, for it has the ability to define and construct reality. Hence, the motivation comes from this "psychological insulation" which provides the distancing necessary to arouse "shared feelings of nationalism" leading to "cultural solidarity." The Kennedys' three main themes were the means to achieve this end. They were even more potent due to their association with the Kennedy legend.

It must be emphasized that although Edward shared a vision with John, and although the vision became a part of the legend, Senator Kennedy did not simply mimic all that his brother had said before him. The similarities are too striking to dismiss, but there were some noticeable differences nonetheless. The first was found in the American Heritage Theme. Although both brothers focused on the founding principles and standards of the nation, John Kennedy's rhetoric contained more overt references to the nation's founders. He spoke of the men who had shaped the nation's democratic heritage while Edward most often confined his remarks to the undergirding standards and ideals which had inspired the birth of the nation. The difference does not work a substantive change in the myth, however. It is believed that the slightly changed focus can be attributed to the difference in status and position that the
Kennedys held. As President, John was in a position of supreme authority, similar to that held by the nation's founders. His job was one of protecting and maintaining the system which the founders had instituted. Conversely, Edward did not share a position of equal authority and perhaps therefore the power of association and imitation was not as directly accessible to him.

The difference in status and power is believed to have contributed to another variation found in Edward Kennedy's American Image Theme. Although the thematic substance offered by both Kennedys in this area was essentially the same, concern about America's international image took on more primary importance for President Kennedy. The President's actions and decisions were viewed as a direct reflection of the concerns of the American people. Hence, he had a vested interest in promoting an image of the country which was worthy of emulation and admiration. Edward was not in a position to directly control or affect the image other nations held of us. His primary concern had to be his constituents and the image they held of him and his politics.

As a Senator, it was necessary for Edward Kennedy to establish and maintain an individual area of identification. This need may have been responsible for the final variation found in Edward's rhetoric. Within the Unification Theme, he made mention of his Irish heritage, his immigrant grandfather and the discrimination and prejudice which his own family had once faced in America. Such a personal heritage made Senator Kennedy appear more sincere and
committed in his remarks; there was a sense of poignancy and an air of self-assurance at having overcome such barriers. This balance was a necessary political strategy for one who had hopes of one day occupying the White House. Kennedy was able to exude confidence at the same time that he was empathetic; "I understand for I am one of you." John Kennedy may have made less direct mention of family lineage due to the religious concerns which surfaced during his presidential campaign. His rhetorical task was, in fact, to dissociate himself to some degree, from traditional Catholicism. Edward, speaking to a more openly pluralistic constituency, faced no such problem.

While the rhetoric employed by both Kennedys was influenced by the Kennedy legend, Edward's replication of his brother's myth certainly introduced a new emphasis in the legend, a rhetorical dimension. If the mythic associations of the Kennedy lifestyle had the ability to be transferred from one Kennedy to the next, then perhaps duplication of rhetorical themes and arguments would have the same ability.

The Kennedy Legacy

As was illustrated in Chapter One, the Kennedy legacy is the inherited motive and means which accelerated the brothers into political power. There seemed to be an unspoken obligation for each Kennedy to carry out what a predecessor had begun. Each Kennedy assumed office with the mantle of the Kennedy name and influence.
Although it was previously noted that Ted Kennedy insistently rejected the notion that he was riding along on the family name, his rhetoric belies such a claim. When arguing in support of the passage of the Civil Rights Bill of 1963, a bill most clearly identified with John F. Kennedy, Edward directly called forth the Kennedy legacy. He clearly associated himself with his presidential brother in his effort to stress the moral imperative of equal rights:

My brother was the first president of the United States to state publicly (sic) that segregation was morally wrong. His heart and soul are in this bill. If his life and death had a meaning, it was that we should not hate but love one another; we should use our powers not to create conditions of oppression that lead to violence, but conditions of freedom that lead to peace. 8

In a speech delivered two years later to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the exact quotation was again used. Here, however, John Kennedy's death was equated with those persons martyred for civil rights:

...If his life and death had a meaning, if the life and death of Reverend Reeb and Medgar Evers and Jimmy Lee Jackson had a meaning, it was that we should not hate... . 9

The rhetorical transformation of the myth was now complete; John Kennedy had now become identified with the civil rights struggle. Edward was his successor. The inferential leap was made clear.
Allusions to the Kennedy legacy were found throughout Edward's rhetoric and not confined to any one point in time. When addressing law students at the Harvard Law School Forum in 1971, he again evoked memories of his presidential brother:

You are the heirs of a legacy left to you by your older brothers and sisters who asked themselves what they could do for their country in the 60's. Edward could identify with the audience; he too was an heir of legacy left to him by his older brother.

Two years later, a similar pattern of identification was offered to the United Farm Workers. Senator Kennedy first spoke of the committed few who had supported the movement based upon their respect for human dignity. The names of the Kennedys were added to the list: "They will keep coming just as I have come, and as my brother came before me... They will come to say: I stand with the cause of justice in America.'

Thus, Edward made reference to his brother John when addressing diverse audiences over a considerable period of time. This mention evoked and solidified the Kennedy legacy. More importantly, they contributed to the myth of National Commitment to Equality by placing the martyred John Kennedy squarely within the myth. Rhetoric had served to strengthen the civil rights movement and now the theme of the movement was strengthening the rhetoric anew. A group fantasy - a myth - was played out. And America still had a winner to love.
Chapter Five Endnotes

1 Although John Kennedy held a position of political influence for 11 years, his years as Senator revealed no attention to civil rights issues.


3 Ibid., p. 598.


5 Blaustein, p. 559.


7 Ibid., p. 157.


Appendix A

**RHETORIC OF JOHN F. KENNEDY**
**USED IN ANALYSIS**

1961

February 23, 1961  Recorded Speech for the Award Dinner of the National Brotherhood.

February 25, 1961  Message for the Commission on Civil Rights' Third Annual Conference on Schools in Transition.

April 11, 1961   Remarks at the First Meeting of the Presidential Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity.

September 6, 1961  Statement on the Peaceful Integration of Schools in the South and the Southwest.

1962

February 12, 1962  Remarks at the First Meeting of the President's Commission on the Status of Women.

September 22, 1962  Recorded Remarks at the Emancipation Day Observance.

September 30, 1962  Report to the Nation on the University of Mississippi Incident.

1963


October 3, 1963  Speech Delivered at the Arkansas State Fairground in Little Rock, Arkansas.
Appendix B

**RHETORIC OF EDWARD M. KENNEDY**
**USED IN ANALYSIS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 17, 1963</td>
<td>Speech to the Interparlimentary Union to Support the Resolution on Racial Discrimination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 9, 1964</td>
<td>Remarks on the Civil Rights Bill of 1963 (Bill H. R. 7152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 8, 1966</td>
<td>Address to the Annual Convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference - Jackson, Mississippi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1, 1967</td>
<td>Opening Statement Before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13, 1970</td>
<td>Address at Boston University on Responsibility and Renewed Hope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27, 1971</td>
<td>Speech on Young Voters Delivered to the Harvard Law School Forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21, 1972</td>
<td>Remarks in Support of the Equal Rights Amendment (House Joint Resolution 208)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 4, 1973</td>
<td>Speech at the Spirit of America Festival - Decatur, Alabama.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4, 1973</td>
<td>Address at the First Constitutional Convention of the United Farm Workers Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26, 1980</td>
<td>Address at Georgetown University &quot;The Voyage That is America&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 12, 1980</td>
<td>Address at the Democratic National Convention - New York, New York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

CIVIL RIGHTS PRIMER

1941
Call for a march on Washington by A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters led to an executive order urging fair employment practices in governmental work.

1948
President Harry Truman desegregated the Armed Forces.

Sept. 9, 1954
The first Civil Rights legislation since Reconstruction was passed by the 85th Congress.

Under it, the Civil Rights Commission was established to investigate voting violations.

1957
President Eisenhower sent federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas to assure implementation of the order.

May 6, 1960
The Civil Rights Act was signed. It was designed to both impede interracial violence and protect the authority of state and local officials.

Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 1962
James Meredith gains admission to the University of Mississippi under the protection of federalized marshals and a federalized Mississippi National Guard.

April 3, 1963
Martin Luther King and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference protest and demonstrate against segregationist practices in Birmingham, Alabama.
June 11, 1963  Governor George Wallace stands in the doorway of Alabama schools to prevent desegregation.


1963  The Civil Rights Commission (created under the 1957 Act) issues its first report which distinguishes between segregationist practices in the North and the South.

1964  The Supreme Court continued to be tested on the constitutionality of sit-ins -- question of trespass v. equal treatment under the law.

1964  NAACP v. ALABAMA, ex rel FLOWERS  Supreme Court ruled that states could not require the NAACP to surrender its membership lists.

February 5, 1964  The Anti-Poll Tax Amendment passed which outlawed the tax in federal elections. (Two years later, the tax was also outlawed in state elections).

July 2, 1964  The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed. It included provisions on voting, public accommodations, public facilities, education, and fair employment practices.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Community Relations Service were established under this act.
March, 1965

Demonstration march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama was marred by violence and deaths.

August 6, 1965

President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. It provided federal examiners to be available to register voters and monitor voting practices in areas where discrimination was felt.

1966


September, 1966

Governor George Wallace declared the federal guidelines unconstitutional and declared that Alabama would refuse to comply.

December, 1966

The U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the federal guidelines.

National attention was focused on the cries for "Black Power".

The most vehement spokespersons were Stokely Carmichael of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Floyd McKissick of the Congress on Racial Equality.

1967

Riots in several major cities. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders was formed to investigate the disorders.

1967

The Justice Department filed its first Northern desegregation lawsuit against a Chicago suburban school district.

1968

Berkeley, California became the first city to achieve full scale desegregation by using two-way, cross-town busing.
April 4, 1968
Dr. Martin Luther King shot. The country participated in a national day of mourning for the slain civil rights leader.

April 11, 1969
The Civil Rights Act of 1968 passed by Congress.

October 30, 1969
The Supreme Court declared that all segregation must end at once.
Bibliography


