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A Rhetorical Analysis Of The Poem And Peroration In Selected Addresses Of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, 1957-1963

Margaret O'Malley
Carroll College

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A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROEM AND PERORATION IN SELECTED ADDRESSES OF JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY, 1957-1963

A Thesis
Presented To
the Department of Communication Arts
Carroll College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Arts in
Communication Arts

by
Margaret Mary O'Malley
May 1974
This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of COMMUNICATION ARTS.

Director

Reader

Reader

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M.M.O.
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CHAPTER 1

"And, finally, no other President in our time did so much to bring hope in the world -- hope for a life of decency, hope for a world of peace, hope for the American destiny."

Theodore C. Sorenson
Foreword, A Tribute to John F. Kennedy

THE MAN AND HIS ERA

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1910 a colorful Irishman ran for the mayor of Boston with the slogan, "The people, not the bosses, must rule. Bigger, Better, Busier Boston!"¹ Fifty years later that man's grandson would be elected the first Catholic President of the United States. Although he had fought to discard some of his grandfather's more questionable campaign tactics, this candidate too spoke of a better world for all of the people. This man called the people to their responsibility to serve their country. This man reminded the world that it was time to take action to insure world peace. The man was John F. Kennedy.

Kennedy lived in a time of great political change as his nation moved from isolationism to New Dealism and through the Second World War. Shortly after that war Kennedy was first elected to Congress from Boston's Eleventh District. His first term and each subsequent one was marked by Kennedy's eagerness to speak for the common people of Boston.

During his first term as a Senator, Kennedy organized a coalition of northeastern states that would pass legislation for the benefit of all the people of New England.\(^2\) As a junior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Kennedy turned some of his interest toward international problems. The Senator toured Europe, Africa, Asia and the Orient in order to gain a first hand evaluation of American foreign policy. If Kennedy disagreed with the policy he was never afraid to speak out. Once during his years in the Senate he even made a speech aimed at re-directing France's foreign policy.\(^3\)

As a Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy often used the theme that he was not satisfied with the progress that America was making . . . that America and Americans must move forward.\(^4\) As President, Kennedy first addressed the American people stressing their responsibilities: "... ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."\(^5\)


\(^{4}\)"The kind of country we have here, the kind of society we have, the kind of strength we build in the United States will be the defense of freedom. If we do well here, if we meet our obligations, if we're moving ahead, then I think freedom will be secure around the world. . . . I should make it very clear that I do not think we are doing enough, that I am not satisfied as an American with the progress that we're making." Sidney Kraus (ed.), \textit{The Great Debates} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 348-49.

It would be foolish to believe that the world or even the majority of the American people embraced Kennedy's political stance. In fact, he won the Presidency in an extremely close, contested election. Yet, few could escape the power of his oratory. Few were left unmoved as he spoke because of the feeling he seemed to evoke despite his strained Boston accent and his too chopping gestures. Perhaps Kennedy captured his audiences because his message was always filled with hope for a better world. Four days after his assassination one man described the world's loss in this way:

... We weep for the millions of people who are weeping for him. ... people in every corner of the globe who saw in him a hope for the future and a chance for mankind.

If Kennedy was a spokesman that brought hope to the world was it because he constructed his public addresses upon lifelong political convictions? Did each of Kennedy's addresses follow one particular style or did his choice of rhetorical devices shift and change as he grew in political stature? Many writers have suggested that change and continuity in the ideas of John F. Kennedy would make an interesting study. This study deals with the changes and continuity that exist in Kennedy's speeches. It concentrates on the proem and peroration of these addresses. The be-

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6 "The popular vote was the biggest in our history: 68,800,000. Kennedy had received 34,200,000 votes -- 49.7 percent. Nixon had received 34,100,000 votes -- 49.6 percent. The rest had gone to the candidates of minor parties. Kennedy's winning margin had been little more than 100,000 votes. ... Except for his booming triumphs in New York and Massachusetts, Kennedy was not really far in front in any big state. ... Some of the states remained on the undecided list for days after the election while their votes were checked and rechecked." Lloyd Robinson, The Hopefuls (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1966), p. 161-2.

ginning and the conclusion of an address are the units of the speech on which the orator concentrates his most important ideas. Kennedy's important ideas came to be the hopes of the people in his era. This study will attempt to find why his methods of expression were so effective.

II. KENNEDY'S PERSONAL HISTORY

It is a widespread contention of friend and foe alike that John Kennedy, a man that history will most certainly record as one of the strongest political figures ever to live in the United States, never really wanted to be a politician at all. To understand this contention, it is necessary to understand John Kennedy's family background.

Born the second son of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy on May 29, 1917, John Kennedy was thrown immediately into the shadow of his older brother Joseph, Jr. Joe would prove to be throughout their childhood stronger, more easy-going and more athletic than quiet, sickly, often withdrawn John.\(^8\)

It was not until his senior year at Harvard that John Kennedy made any real mark of his own on the competitive family log: it was then that he wrote a senior honor thesis titled, "Why England Slept." The thesis was rewritten and published and became a widely acclaimed work, especially for a man of only twenty-three. John Kennedy dreamt in those days of becoming a newspaper reporter -- after the war.

The tragedies that John Kennedy would suffer during the Second World War would mold his political career. At last he would proceed his

\(^8\)Burns, op. cit., pp. 39-44.
older brother in gaining the limelight. On August 2, 1943, the PT-109 under Kennedy's command was cut in two by a Japanese destroyer, Amagiri. Kennedy and his crew spent fifteen hours in the waters of the Blackett Strait. They spend four more days and nights on a tiny island in enemy held territory before a message, scratched on a coconut shell by the Skipper, brought a rescue party. This incident would be the subject of pamphlets, magazine articles, campaign posters and billboards, even a movie, as John Kennedy would fight and win ever-increasingly important political offices. Yet, if it had not been for the next tragedy in the Kennedy family history, John Kennedy might never have run for a single political seat.

Joe Kennedy, Jr. died a war hero in a plane explosion in July of 1944 over the English Channel. Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr. was years later to describe the effect of young Joe's death on John's life:

I got Jack into politics, I was the one. I told him Joe was dead and that it was therefore his responsibility to run for Congress. He didn't want to. He felt he didn't have the ability and he still feels that way. But I told him he had to.

Thus, with the prodding of his father and with the backing of the rest of the family, John Kennedy came to Boston to enter his first political race. During his first campaign he was tense and often strained his voice; but, from the beginning, when a crowd gathered for a Kennedy speech hardly a listener was left untouched by this young man's intensity. If John Kennedy

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9Whalen, op.cit., p. 368.


11Whalen, op. cit., p. 3921
was unsure of his motives in entering politics, his insecurity never reached his speeches.

Many stories were told of the boyish looking Congressman from Boston who was supposedly mistaken for an elevator attendant and a page. Kennedy's identity was difficult to pin down for many of the House members and the Washington press as well. He wasn't a die-hard conservative following predictably in his father's footsteps. Nor was the Congressman from Boston a liberal although he followed certain liberal lines. Kennedy was, in fact, a rare oddity in the House chamber: he was a representative of his constituents. Kennedy voted for a bill if he believed it could in some way benefit New England. He sponsored a bill if he believed it was important to the welfare of Boston's Eleventh District.

This loyalty to his constituents helped Kennedy win three terms as a Congressman from Boston and two terms as a United States Senator from Massachusetts. Throughout these years John Kennedy was fast becoming a familiar name throughout America. On September 12, 1953, Senator John F. Kennedy married Jacquelin Lee Bouvier. Over twelve hundred people attended the reception; three thousand lined the streets of Newport to catch a glimpse of the couple; major magazines and news services covered the event. 12 John F. Kennedy had become a national personality.

The back injury that Kennedy had sustained during the PT-109 incident had placed the Senator on crutches several times. In the Fall of 1954 John Kennedy underwent two separate delicate operations on his spinal column. 13 During his long ordeal and convalescence, Kennedy was at the point

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13 Ibid., pp. 55-56.
of death several times. Part of the time he spent in a hospital bed was
devoted to the writing of the Noble Prize winning book Profiles in Courage. The book, dedicated to courageous acts of political figures of
the past, underlined Kennedy's own courage during those long months away
from his work and his family.

While he was absent from the Senate, Kennedy missed the crucial vote on the censorship of Senator Joseph McCarthy. Kennedy sympathizers claimed that the Senator had every right to be excused from voting at a critical time in his own personal life. Critics would remember this blank spot on Kennedy's record, coupled with brother Robert's membership on McCarthy's committee and the senior Kennedy's longstanding friendship with McCarthy. They would claim to have a strong case proving Senator Kennedy was soft on Communism. This charge was never to be resolved. It would follow Kennedy through his White House years.

The Democratic National Convention in 1956 was the proving ground for the growing political strength of Senator Kennedy. When Stevenson threw the Vice-Presidential selection onto the delegate floor, Kennedy amassed nearly enough votes to beat Kefauver. The tense battle captured the attention of America and again the name Kennedy was stamped into the people's memories. Luckily because Kennedy lost the nomination his name was not attached to the staggering Democratic defeat of 1956.

15Burns, op. cit., p. 163.
16"Stevenson was buried under an avalanche of Republican votes. Eisenhower drew the biggest popular-vote total in history: 35,500,000 votes to Stevenson's 26,000,000. His winning margin of 9,500,000 votes was second only to Roosevelt's 1936 landslide record of 11,000,000." Robinson, op,cit., p. 140.
The next four years of Kennedy's life were marked by a whirlwind speaking schedule. If Kennedy had learned anything about running in hard races it was that it was always to the candidate's advantage to begin early. This early campaigning resulted in some of Kennedy's finest public addresses. The Kennedy staff had by this time enlarged to an impressive assortment of politicians, educators and intellectuals. All of them had an influence on the Senator's thought and speech; but, his way of doing things remained uniquely his own. Eager supporters from every side chided Kennedy for failing to fall neatly into any political definition. Some called him uncommitted; others charged that he rode the fence jumping off to either side only when such a move was politically expedient.

The Senator remained undaunted by their charges and continued to support legislation in the Senate according to what he believed to be its merit. Organizations from both the left and the right, from civil rights groups to Southern Governors, continued to fall into his ranks. As he won in state after state primary it became evident that this fledgling from Massachusetts really thought he was ready to run for the Presidency -- and so did most Democrats.

Kennedy was nominated on the first ballot. His most bitter opponent, Lyndon Johnson, agreed to accept the Vice-Presidency within twenty-four hours of the nomination. America was faced with the first Catholic candidate for President since Al Smith.

Kennedy seemed undaunted by the religious issue -- in fact, he had faced it openly on so many occasions that he grew annoyed at questions

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17 Lincoln, op. cit., pp. 95-96.
18 Ibid., p. 97.
about it toward the end of the campaign.20

This was the beginning of the second phase of his public address. These speeches always came from an aggressor who accused the present administration of inactivity, of dangerous tendencies to fall behind in defense and of being generally unresponsive to the needs of the people.

Critics said that he was too young, too inexperienced, too politically undefined to be the leader of a nation; but, in November of 1960, he was elected the thirty-sixth President of the United States.

President Kennedy's Inaugural marks the beginning of the final period of his speechmaking. This time was a time of crisis and uncertainty in the world. Kennedy's Inaugural Address was a promise of a better future -- with the cooperation and dedication of the people.

Even in death the world could not escape this man's rhetoric. Kennedy would be eulogized by writers and poets alike often in quotations of his own creation. Theodore Sorensen wrote of Kennedy:

For John Fitzgerald Kennedy was not an ordinary man, in either life or death. . . . He was the first . . . to care so deeply about the quality of American life and its meaning in the world. . . . That special Kennedy quality that some called by the superficial name of "style" was in reality his insistence on excellence -- excellence for his country and for himself. . . . He was elegant but never pompous, tough but always gentle, an idealist but still a realist. . . . He did not try to force solutions but to find them. . . . John Kennedy died as he would have wanted to die -- on his feet, in action being applauded by his friends and assaulted by his foes as he carried the word of reason to those who would hear and heed him.21

III. WORLD HISTORY

One author described the impact of world history on Kennedy before American involvement in World War Two saying:

The Depression was something he had asked his father about in a letter from prep school, the New Deal had gone by almost unnoticed; the war in Europe was the subject of an academic exercise. . . . Indeed, the Kennedy's because of their wealth and mutual affection, were unusually protected against personal crisis.22

World War Two brought about terrible personal tragedy for the Kennedy's that would change young John's life forever.

In 1946 the United Nations held the first General Assembly meeting. Kennedy would often praise the concept of the organization. As President he would deliver one of his best speeches on world peace to its assembly.23

In 1947 Congress enacted the Taft-Hartley Act which Kennedy would later work to revise.24 The President announced the Truman Doctrine which requested Congress give aid to war-torn nations, especially those threatened by aggressors. Kennedy often joined the opposition ranks against Truman. As President his own world affairs doctrine would emphasize peace.

In 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed. Kennedy would support this alliance.25 One of his chief campaign charges against

22Whalen, op. cit., p. 367.
25Ibid., pp. 559-561.
the Republican administration was that it had fallen behind in defense. At this point in American history, Kennedy was already moving to the forefront of American politics. He had begun his drive to shape history rather than be shaped by it.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

Chapter II. The second chapter is concerned with defining good public address with particular reference to the proem and peroration.

Chapter III. The third chapter focuses on Kennedy's use of the proem and peroration in light of accepted and recommended style.

Chapter IV. Chapter four analyzes the changes and/or consistencies apparent in the selected speeches. It summarizes the public address style of JFK with reference to accepted rhetorical criteria. In addition, the chapter will recommend areas for further investigation.
CHAPTER II

"The entire democratic system which depends on its success upon majority rule, and therefore for majority understanding, depends in a very real sense on information and communication -- for our judgment is no better than our information.

President John F. Kennedy
Public Papers of the President

PROEM AND PERORATION

I. DEFINITION OF PROEM AND PERORATION

Proem. Funk & Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary defines proem as "An introductory statement; preamble; preface; prelude."1 Webster's New International Dictionary gives the two root meanings of the word proem: pro which means before and oimē which is a song or poem.2

Peroration. The New Standard Dictionary defines the peroration as:

The conclusion of an oration; especially the concluding part in which the speaker makes practical application of the subject to the audience. It may be explanatory, confirmatory, excitatory or persuasive. It may take the general form of recapitulation.3

Webster's New International Dictionary gives the Latin root of peroration: peroratum, which means to speak from beginning to end. It further defines peroration as:

The concluding part of a discourse especially of an oration; specifically a final summing up and enforcement of an agreement; also any formal conclusion to a speech.4

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROEM.

Cicero once listed the purposes of good public address:

The supports of my whole eloquence, and that power of speaking which Crassus just now extolled to the skies, are, as I observed before, three processes; the first that of conciliating my hearer; the second that of instructing them and the third, that of moving them.5

Cicero said of the introduction of a speech that it should: "... render the hearers well-disposed toward the speaker, attentive to the speech, and open to conviction."6 Hugh Blair writes:

I begin, of course, with the exordium or introduction. ... It is not a rhetorical invention. It is founded upon nature, and suggested by common sense. When one is going to counsel another, when he takes upon himself to instruct, or to reprove, prudence will generally direct him not to do it abruptly but to use some preparations; to begin with something that may incline the persons to whom he addresses himself to judge favourably of what he is about to say and may dispose them to such a train of thought as will forward and assist the purpose he has in view.7

Demosthenes said that there were two types of introductions:

Principium is, where the orator plainly and directly professes his aim in speaking. Insinuatio is, where

presuming the disposition of the audience to be much against the orator, he must gradually reconcile them to hearing him, before he plainly discloses the point which he has in view.\(^8\)

Giles W. Grey wrote of the formation of the introduction:

The best introductions are developed out of the speaking situation: they involve the speaker or his experience, the audience and its interests, implications of time and place of the speech, the nature of the subject. In other words, the speaker should in some way make reference to himself, the audience, and occasion, or the subject.\(^9\)

III. CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTIONS

Intent. Quintilian wrote introductions should match the intent of the rest of the speech:

Of the old precepts this still remains in force, that no unusual expression, no highly audacious metaphor, nothing borrowed from what is obsolete and antiquated, or from poetic license, should appear in the exordium. For we are not as yet admitted to full freedom of speech, and the attention of the audience, being still fresh, keeps us under restraint, but when their minds are propitiated and warmed, greater liberty will be tolerated.\(^10\)

Hugh Blair agreed:

... The introduction is not the place in which warm emotions are usually to be attempted, yet, I must take notice that it ought to prepare the way for such as are designed to be raised in subsequent parts of the discourse. The orator should, in the beginning, turn the minds of his hearers towards those sentiments and feelings which he seeks to awaken in the course of his speech. ... Much of the orator's art and ability is shown in thus striking properly at the key, if we may so express it, of the rest of his oration.\(^11\)

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 108.


\(^10\)Thonssen, op. cit., p. 112.

\(^11\)Golden, op. cit., p. 111.
Andrew Weaver warns finally:

Using an introduction filled with false leads is a common error; the speaker, instead of going directly into the proper work of the occasion, wanders around, refers to all sorts of irrelevant matters, and arouses the interest of the audience in a number of subjects that have nothing to do with his purpose. This procedure simply throws up barriers that he later has to break down.\(^\text{12}\)

The Vital. Socrates placed emphasis on the speaker's need to understand the needs of his listeners:

When he is sufficiently competent to say, what kind of person is persuaded by what kind of speeches and is able, when he sees him before him to point out to himself that this is the person and this the nature for which those speeches were formerly made now actually present before me, and to which these particular speeches are to be addressed, in order to persuade him to these particular things; -- . . . then his art will be beautifully and perfectly accomplished, but not before.\(^\text{13}\)

Alan H. Monroe also makes reference to the importance of referring to the needs of the audience:

People always pay attention to those things which effect their life or health, their reputation, their property or their employment. If you can show a man that what you say concerns him or his family, he will consider your discussion vital and will listen intently. . . . If the other factors of attention are important, this one is indispensable.\(^\text{14}\)

J. Jeffrey Auer wrote that referral to the vital is necessary in the introduction:

From these and other investigations of effective speech-making, distinctions can be made between well and poorly


\[^{13}\text{Thonssen, op. cit., p. 32-33.}\]

organized speeches. The overall criteria are suggested by these questions: Does the introduction orient the listener toward the subject both in terms of its general nature and its relationship to the listener’s needs and desires?15

Common Bond. Quintilian wrote that an orator should secure the good will of the audience:

The favor of the judge we shall conciliate, not merely by offering him praise, (which ought indeed to be given with moderation), but by turning his praises to the advantage of our cause, appealing, in behalf of the noble to his dignified station, in behalf of the humble to his justice, in behalf of the unfortunate to his pity, in behalf of the injured to severity; and using similar appeals in other cases.16

Andrew T. Weaver said of the common bond:

The common bond type of introduction, which seeks to establish a basis of agreement between the speaker and his audience, is very effective. The speaker tries to make the audience feel that he and they are alike is some important respect; he dwells upon common beliefs or attitudes. If he is going to talk to a group of citizens of the United States on a political issue he may begin by referring to the fact that the people on both sides of the issue are Americans, that they are all interested in the welfare of their country.17

Ordan G. Ness explained how the common bond is achieved:

Comparison is another common type of introduction. the speaker draws an interesting comparison between one of the elements of the particular speech situation and an element in some other situation with which the audience is familiar.18

Alan H. Monroe expanded:

The earliest words a child learns are the names of

16Thonsen, op. cit., p. 112.
17Weaver, op. cit., p. 331.
18Ibid., p. 320.
objects and of tangible acts related to them. This interest in reality persists throughout life. Instead of talking abstract theory, talk in terms of people, events, places, tangible circumstances.

. . . Instead of saying, "A certain friend of mine," call him by name. Instead of "house," say what house or what kind of house.19

Respect. Cicero explained the first steps in securing the audience's respect:

". . . the first steps are achieved by extolling our own merits or worth or virtue of some kind, particularly generosity, sense of duty, justice and good faith.20

Quintillian warned:

We must also take care not to appear insolent, malignant, overbearing, or reproachful towards any man or body of men, especially such as cannot be wounded without exciting an unfavorable feeling.21

President Abraham Lincoln once advised:

If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend. Therein is a crop of honey that catches his heart, which, say what he will is the great highroad to his respect, and which may when once gained, you will find but little trouble convincing his judgement of the justice of your cause if indeed that cause really be a just one.22

Simplicity. George Campbell wrote this cannon on word selection:

A regard to simplicity (in which I include etymology when manifest) ought to determine our choice. . . . When etymology plainly points to a signification different from that which the word commonly bears, propriety and simplicity both require its dismissal.23

Hugh Blair stated:

. . . in an introduction, correctness should be carefully studied in expression. . . . Something must be

23Thonssen, op. cit., p. 244
done, therefore, to prepossess them in his favour; though for the same reasons, too much art must be avoided; for it will be more easily detected at that time than afterwards and will derogate from persuasion in all that follows. . . . The first rule is that the introduction should be easy and natural. The subject must always suggest it.  

Cicero expressed the need for simplicity: "effioruisse penitus ex re de quo tum agitur." (To have sprung up, of its own accord, from the matter which is under consideration.)

Historical references and quotations. Blair wrote:

A historical introduction has generally, a happy effect to rouse attention, when one can lay hold upon some noted act that is connected with the text or the discourse, and by proper illustration of it opens the way to the subject that is to be treated of.

Andrew Weaver said that a quotation must:

. . . furnish a third form of introduction. When the text of quotation is familiar to the audience and well liked by them it serves as an excellent point of departure.

J. Jeffrey Auer cited a study done in 1951:

In speaking primarily to inform, he (Grasham) found, quotations or assertions are more effective means of support than specific instances. In speaking to persuade, a supporting quotation is most effective, assertions less so, and analogies relatively ineffective.

E. F. Elson stated in The Art of Speaking:

What someone else says is nearly always of interest to people; particularly if the person quoted is well known and respected, and the quotation has either immediate importance or a universal truth. Quotations that are famous and easily recognized establish a feeling of familiarity with the subject and create in

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25Golden, loc. cit.  
26Golden, op. cit., p. 112.  
27Weaver, op. cit., p. 330.  
28Auer, op. cit., p. 266.
the audience a mood of acceptance toward the idea you intend to present.29

Humor. Cicero saw an advantage to wit:

... it certainly becomes the orator to excite laughter; either because mirth itself attracts favour to him by whom it is raised; or because all admire wit, which is often comprised in a single word, especially to him who replies, and sometimes in him who attacks; or because it overthrows the adversary, or hampers him or makes light of him, or because it proves the orator himself to be a man of taste or learning or polish but chiefly because it mitigates and relaxes gravity and severity and often, by a joke or laugh, breaks the force of offensive remarks, which cannot easily be overthrown by arguments.30

Alan Monroe concurred:

Laughter indicates enjoyment, and people pay attention to that which they enjoy. Few things will hold the attention of an audience as well as judicious use of humor. It serves as a relaxation from the tension which other factors of attention often create. ... For the present let us be content with two requirements of its effective use: Relevancy, beware of getting off the point being discussed; and, good taste, avoid humor at occasions where it would be out of place.31

Andrew Weaver warned:

There is a widespread and wholly mistaken notion that the only proper way to start a speech is with a funny story. Sometimes the purpose of the introduction can be served by a good story well told. If there is actually something in the subject, the speaker, the occasion, the environment, or the audience that can be turned to advantage by a humorous story in the introduction then telling the story is justified.32

E. F. Elson cautioned:

Humor is difficult to handle. Be cautious in using it as the chief ingredient of your opening. Its effectiveness lies in your ability to put your point across and

29Elson, op. cit., pp. 197-98. 30Thonssen, op. cit., p. 78.
31Monroe, op. cit., p. 230. 32Weaver, op. cit., p. 329.
to tie in what follows. If your effort fails, you're off to a bad start because your audience is no longer neutral; it is now a little bit against you.33

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PERORATION

Aristotle wrote of the peroration:

There are four elements of objects of the peroration, to inspire the audience with a favourable one of your adversary, to amplify or depreciate the subject, to excite the emotions of the audience and to recall the facts to their memory.34

Hugh Blair placed much importance on the conclusion:

Sometimes the whole pathetic part comes in most properly at the peroration. Sometimes when the discourse has been entirely argumentative, it is fit to conclude with summing up the arguments placing them full and strong, on the mind of the audience. For the great rule of conclusion and what nature obviously suggests, is to place that last, on which we choose that the strength of our cause should rest.35

V. CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE CONCLUSIONS

Andrew Weaver wrote that the function of the conclusion was to connect the most important elements in the speech as effectively as possible with the interests and desires of the audience."36 This study will follow the outline that Brigance offered in studying conclusion. He listed seven types of conclusions: challenge, quotation, summary, appeal, illustration, visualizing the future, and rounding out the thought.37

Challenge. William Brigance describes the challenge type conclusion:

35Goden, op. cit., p. 127. 36Weaver, op. cit., p. 325.
37Brigance, op. cit., p. 240.
This is the most frequently used method. In some ingenious way the speaker presents a short compelling challenge for the audience to take a positive attitude, position or action -- in short, to do something.  

Alan Monroe wrote:

This method is a definite and more or less emphatic appeal to take a specific course of action or to feel or believe in some particular way. Such an appeal should be short and compelling and should contain within it a suggestion of the principal reason presented in the speech for doing as you propose.  

E. F. Elson suggests:

If you want people to do something, you must ask and ask. In a persuasive talk you must not fail to conclude with a request for action, no matter where or how you made your previous requests.

Quotation. William Brigance writes:

A speaker reinforces his theme with an apt quotation. This is perhaps the second most widely used method today. On most occasions the best quotations are short and pointed. ... But a quotation may be longer if the occasion permits and if it suits your particular talents.

Paul Soper in Basic Public Speaking places the quotation high on the list of good methods:

An apt quotation is one of the best means of concluding a speech. The speaker's words in directing attention to the statement to be quoted, the quoted person's prestige, and the impressiveness of the statement all contribute to the special impact of this method of concluding.

E. C. Buehler and Wil Linkugel wrote: "Any quotation used in the conclusion of a speech should be short, when possible, one sentence is

\[\text{38} \text{Ibid., p. 242.} \quad \text{39} \text{Monroe, op. cit., p. 269.} \]
\[\text{40} \text{Elson, op. cit., p. 207.} \quad \text{41} \text{Brigance, op. cit., p. 243.} \]
Summary. William Brigance noted that the summary form of conclusion can offer the speaker valuable assistance:

If the speech is complex, or if the speaker's purpose is to present information, then you had best draw together the important points in condensed and unified form. . . . If you can sum up your information so the listeners can carry it away in a condensed and unified form, they likely will remember it.44

Arthur Kruger stated: "For longer speeches, particularly those involving complete analysis, a longer conclusion containing a summary is appropriate."45 E. F. Ellson also saw the effectiveness of the summary:

Your closing sentences should be centered upon the main idea of your talk, removing any possible doubt about what you're saying. This commonly used method of summary fixes attention on the theme of the speech rather than on any individual part, and it reinforces a general truth rather than supports a particular act.46

Paul Sopher reminds the speaker:

Who among us, without the aid of a summary, will trust ourselves to remember the main points of a speech we have heard? As listeners most of us are lazy. Our memories are short. There may be distracting influences. At best, which of us could summarize as succinctly and impressively as the speaker? We are therefore grateful for a brief reiteration of some kind.47

Alan Monroe wrote of the summary:

The summary is a short recaptulation of the main points in your speech together with whatever important conclu-

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44Brigance, op. cit., p. 244.


sion you have drawn from them. It brings together the important points you have presented and impresses them upon the memory of your audience.\footnote{Monroe, op. cit., p. 240.}

**Appeal.** William Brigance writes of the appeal:

This is a classic form of conclusion, heavily used by the ancients. When well done it is effective, but when it lacks substance it is trite or mawkish. Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural address closes with an appeal that is an enduring part of American Heritage: 'With malice toward none; with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan -- to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and last-\footnote{Brigance, op. cit., p. 244.}ing peace among ourselves and with all nations.\footnote{Elson, op. cit., p. 207-08.}

E. F. Ellson explained why appeal is effective:

However logical we like to think of ourselves, we most often are moved by an appeal to our feelings when an appeal to our cold logic will not sway us. An appeal to the heart may be long remembered, while an appeal to the head may be soon forgotten. Among the best appeals to human feelings that have been made in public addresses are those by Lincoln in his second Inaugural Address and by Patrick Henry in his famous and now familiar speech before the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1975.\footnote{Brigance, op. cit., p. 244-45}

**Illustration.** William Brigance recognized the simplicity of the illustration:

An illustration is one of the easiest conclusions in that it is simple in structure and requires no skill beyond that of storytelling. But you need a story that carries the core of the proposition or the action you want listeners to take.\footnote{Monroe, op. cit., p. 270.}

Alan Monroe suggested the illustration as a method of conclusion: "You may close with a telling incident or story which contains the kernal of your idea or suggests the action you wish the audience to accept."\footnote{Monroe, op. cit., p. 240.}
E. F. Ellson concurs:

Illustration can make your main idea more vivid and can reinforce your logical appeal by capturing it in a funny or interesting nutshell. Just be sure the illustration doesn't overshadow the point you wish to make. 53

Roy McCall and Herman Cohen relate the specific effectiveness of illustrations:

The illustration gives a complete picture, so that the mind fully understands, the instance names a similar circumstance as an indication that the illustration given was not an isolated case. The specific illustration, whether long or short, real or imagined, sets the incident in time and place, names or characterizes the people who are part of it. 54

Visualizing the future. William Brigance explains the use of visualizing the future in the conclusion:

The speaker ends on the high note of looking forward into the future. He may, if his prestige is high, say, "I shall in the future do these things and I ask men of courage and wisdom to join with me." Or he may merely express personal faith and hope. 55

Arthur Kruger offers an example:

A look into the future offers two choices. The speaker embraces the future that his solutions offer and he warns of the future consequences should his ideas be ignored. 56

E. F. Ellson adds:

Project your audience into what may lie ahead, trying to make a responsible generalization about the future. We are both frightened and intrigued by the unknown, and its

53Elson, op. cit., p. 208.


55Brigance, op. cit., p. 245.

56Kruger, op. cit., p. 335.
being anticipated in a realistic manner can greatly influence our present behavior. This method makes a good conclusion for talks to convince or impress.57

Rounding Out the Thought. William Brigance illustrated the type of conclusion that makes use of 'rounding out a thought' with this quotation from Adlai Stevenson:

When Sparta was frightening the Athenians, Pericles said, "I am more worried about our own faults than about the plans of our enemies." And so am I.58

Paul Sopher described 'the rounding out' method as:

... a succinct, axiomatic expression of the meaning or importance of your speech. It should, as you use it, compel respectful attention and lend an appropriate sense of finality.59

E. C. Buehler and Wil Linkugel wrote that effectiveness of the conclusion is often enhanced if the speaker concludes his speech in his own words:

A speaker usually will do well to conclude his own ideas and his own words. The speaker thus may be able to point out things that would have been different for the person or persons in the story if his solution had been in effect.60

Conciseness. Quintillian warned:

In this part of our speech, what we repeat ought to be repeated as briefly as possible, and we must as is intimated by the Greek term, run over only the principal heads; for, if we dwell upon them, the result will be, not a recapitulation, but a sort of second speech.61

E. C. Buehler and Wil Linkugel wrote:

In discussing speech introductions, we placed considerable stress upon the first sentence of the speech. The last sentence is even more important. It is your final

statement to the audience and should therefore, carry considerable impact. Almost always try to make your final sentence terse and simple: it should place a period at the end of your speech. In a persuasive speech this is most important.62

Andrew Weaver emphasized conciseness:

The conclusion, like the introduction, should be as brief as it can be, consistent with its function. Too often the speaker is reluctant to stop; he goes over and over again what he already has said with the result that his long, rambling conclusion damages rather than helps the speech. An overly repetitious conclusion irritates and alienates an audience.63

Giles Grey agreed that conciseness is essential:

The conclusion must pull the speech together into a unified whole. The entire development must be blended into a single impelling impression designed to accomplish your specific purpose. The audience must feel the impact of the speech in its entirety, must appreciate its significance, and must respond to your suggestions. An effective conclusion demands careful and thoughtful preparation. The inspiration of the moment can not be trusted.64

62 Buehler, op. cit., p. 228.
63 Weaver, op. cit., p. 335.
64 Grey, op. cit., p. 278.
CHAPTER III

"The ambition of the Irish is to say a thing as everybody says it, only louder."

Gerard Manley Hopkins
The Founding Father

TECHNIQUES USED IN THE PROEM AND PERORATION OF SELECTED KENNEDY ADDRESSES

Introduction.

John F. Kennedy was a politician. It is the business of the politician to speak to the people and to gain their favor. It would be difficult to even approximate the number of times Kennedy spoke as a candidate for congressional office. As a Congressman, John Kennedy made over 300 speeches. During his Presidential campaign Kennedy continued to address the Senate for at that time he was sponsoring a labor-reform bill. The Senator often set aside his legislative duties during that campaign and traveled across the country for speaking engagements. In addition to personal appearances, John Kennedy appeared on national television on ten separate occasions with addresses to the nation. As President, Kennedy delivered 150 addresses in 1961 alone.

This study deals with nine selected speeches delivered between June 25, 1952 to November 22, 1963. To aid in the selection of the addresses and to make possible the study of variation, the time span was divided into three periods: 1) the Congressional Period, 2) the Presidential Campaign Period, and 3) the Presidential Period. Two speeches were selected from the Congressional period, three from the Presidential Campaign Period and four addresses were selected from the Presidential Period.
I. THE CONGRESSIONAL PERIOD

Speech of June 25, 1952.

The Congressman from Massachusetts was again dealing with the problems of New England on June 25, 1952 when he addressed the House of Representatives with a speech entitled, "Should An Old Massachusetts Industry Be Penalized?" Congressman Kennedy had long been a spokesman for his region. Once more he was asking Congress to come to the aid of his state.

Analysis of Content. John Kennedy asked that Congress grant the Massachusetts fishing industry "emergency relief". The address contains much statistical data aimed at establishing the condition of that industry. Kennedy contends that foreign products can easily undersell the domestic fish products. The Congressman also refers to the increase in domestic inventories. He believes that this increase forces dealers in domestic fish products to lower their prices below the profit line in order to sell their goods. Congress is also reminded that United States foreign aid had helped establish competitive fishing industries in other countries, while assistance for the development of new domestic methods had been denied.

Analysis of the Proem. Congressman Kennedy began his address:

Mr. Speaker, I want to express my alarm over the strangulation of the fishing industry of Massachusetts by vastly increased imports of groundfish fillets from other nations. If the trend continues, as it shows every sign of doing, the investment of many millions of American capital will be wiped out and thousands of men who have made fishing a life long career will be out of work. The ports of Boston, New Bedford and Gousester are particularly affected.1

The necessity for the orator to state the major concern of his speech during the introduction was established as a criteria called intent.

In order to achieve this criteria the speaker must not only mention the major idea he wishes to relate to his audience; but, he must also relate his feelings about that idea. Kennedy's introduction refers to only one topic: the condition of the Massachusetts fishing industry. The speaker is concerned with this topic throughout the speech. Thus, the introduction fulfills a portion of the intent criteria.

Kennedy also relates his feelings about his topic. The statement, "I wish to express my alarm," directs the audience to sense the urgency that the speaker feels in dealing with this subject. The speaker has established his topic as well as his personal involvement with that topic and has therefore successfully used the intent criteria.

Reference to consequences that will effect the audience's own lives was called the vital criteria. The Congressman makes good use of this criteria as he informs Congress of the money and of the jobs that will be lost if they fail to act.

Finally, the speaker's introduction is marked with simplicity. Kennedy makes no attempt to soften his listeners with praise or to elevate his own position. He speaks only of his major concern and he states his position directly. The language is marked with a clearness and conciseness. The simplicity criteria demands that the introduction does not overshadow the main concern of the speech. It should be easy and natural. Kennedy's introduction then is simplistic.

Analysis of the Peroration. The Congressman concludes his speech:

Recognition of the problem was given by the Committee on the New England Economy in the July 1951 report to the President of the United States, when it said that one of the major problems, "facing the New England fishing industry is the increased competition of foreign sources. Imports provided only 4 percent of U. S. con-
sumption of fresh and frozen fish in 1931; they accounted for 23 percent in 1945."
As a Member of Congress from Massachusetts, I believe it is my grave duty to call attention to what seems a classic case of inequity and injustice to an industry which for many generations has been interwoven with the honorable and gallant tradition of my state.  

John Kennedy uses a quotation as part of his conclusion. The criterion for the quotation type conclusion was that the quotation be short and clearly related to the main idea presented in the speech. It was also mentioned that the source of the quotation, if prestigious or trusted or well-liked, can add all of these attributes to the message. This particular quotation comes from a recent study done by a committee appointed by the President. It was an aid to Kennedy's message because it repeated and lent credence to Kennedy's own statistically backed findings with its own data.

In the final paragraph of his address the Congressman summarizes his message. The summary style conclusion was said to be useful if it was important that the speaker leave the main point or points of his speech with the audience. Because this address is made as a plea for action, it seems very necessary that Kennedy chose to summarize the major ideas of his speech. In one sentence the Congressman tells why he is speaking, what it is he is speaking of and why his message must be heeded. This is good use of the summary type conclusion.

Speech of February 19, 1957.

Senator John F. Kennedy was speaking to the American Association of School Administrators and the National School Board Association on February 19, 1957. He titled his address, "The Education of An American Politician."

\[2\text{ Ibid., p. 120.} \]
Analysis of the Content. The Senator offers a five point program for the education of the American politician; but, he first reasons with his audience that, "each and every American citizen," must be a politician in a world filled with problems, specifically, race relations, uneasy truces and outspoken hostility. Kennedy's program for the education of Americans includes: 1) a development of a broad range of interests and talents rather than a concentration on civic and political areas; 2) training of minds for practical action rather than just discussion; 3) teaching that political idealism must not become political fantasy and rigidity -- that compromise can and must be possible; 4) teaching students to discern the difference between national patriotism and national myths; 5) emphasizing quality in this education rather than quantity. 3

The speech is full of historical references and quotations. The Senator illustrates each of his five points with examples that clarify their meanings. The speech makes a progression that takes a twist both at the beginning and at the end. In the beginning Kennedy recognizes that few Americans admire and respect the progression of politics. He then states that all Americans should become politicians for the benefit of their country. In the conclusion he recognizes that politicians must be concerned with helping education and then he reminds his listeners that education can also provide assistance to the politician. The Senator has made an interesting appeal for he applauds the present American system; but suggests certain changes so that it might better prepare people to deal with politics.

Analysis of Proem. "The Education of the American Politician" begins:

It is a great if somewhat awesome honor to be here this evening with what is probably the greatest collection of brainpower any politician has ever addressed. More importantly, you are undoubtedly one of the most powerful audiences in the world -- powerful not in terms of the national and international policies you control or manipulate, but powerful because in your hands the future leaders of this Nation, the most powerful nation in the world, are being shaped. Your responsibilities consequently are in many ways far greater than those of us who serve in national policy-making functions.4

In this particular introduction the speaker does not fulfill completely the intent criteria. If this introduction did follow the intent criteria the speech to follow would be basically concerned with extolling the merits of the American education system. The Senator's position, moreover, would remain that of awe. Kennedy's actual intention is to suggest reforms for the present system to make it better suited to open the minds of all citizens to political matters. He will not maintain a position of awe; but, instead he will note the importance of his own profession and will ask his audience to realize that importance.

If the speaker's intent seemed clouded, it might be that he is making use of another device for gaining the attention and favor of his audience. In this speech it seems John F. Kennedy is working for the respect of his listeners. The criterion for respect includes a modest introduction that gains the favor of the listeners. This introduction fits that format. The speaker compliments his audience on their intellectual attainments. He tells them that they hold a power far greater than his own. He seems to be placing himself below them in order to gain their favor. Because his praise seems sincere for he later turns his praise to the advantage of his arguments, this is a good introduction.

4Ibid., p. 1039.
Analysis of the Peroration. Senator Kennedy concludes the speech:

There is considerable talk these days of the educational world's needs for assistance from the political world. I am confident that assistance will be forthcoming. But I have stressed to you tonight the assistance which the world of politics needs from the world of education; and to that end I ask your thoughtful attention to the task of uniting our two worlds still further.

"Don't teach my boy poetry," an English mother recently wrote the Provost of Harrow. "Don't teach my boy poetry, he is going to stand for Parliament." Well, perhaps she was right, but if more politicians knew poetry, and more poets knew politics, I am convinced the world would be a little better place to live on this the 19th of February 1957.5

Senator Kennedy has used a short quotation in his conclusion to once again show the typical attitude people take toward a politician's education. The key to this conclusion comes as the speaker makes commentary on the quotation. This method was described in the criteria as "rounding out the thought." In order to achieve this type of effective conclusion the orator must draw from the quotation a final statement that shows how the quotation pertains to the main idea or ideas given in the address. Kennedy chooses to differ with the sentiments of the mother he quotes. He rounds out the thoughts of his speech by stating that he believes a politician should know more of poetry and the poet more of politics. The speaker was successful then, in using the quotation at the conclusion of his address because he rounded out the implication of the quotation to fit the basic suggestion given in his address.

II. THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD

Speech of September 26, 1960.

On September 26, 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy addressed the nation

5Ibid., pp. 1041-42.
at the first four nationally televised debates with Vice-President Richard Nixon.

Analysis of Content. According to the rules established for the debates between Senator Kennedy and Vice-President Nixon, each speaker was to give an eight minute opening statement. The topic for the first round was domestic affairs. Kennedy recognizes this topic but says that he believes that the United States can view its domestic situation only in terms of its position in the world. Kennedy believes that America's progress is the key to the progress of the free world. He states:

If we do well here, if we meet our obligations, if we are moving ahead, then I think freedom will be secure around the world. If we fail, then freedom fails.®

The Senator then goes on to outline what he believes to be the weak points in American development. He often compares his country's development with that of the Soviet Union's. He often comments that he thinks the United States could do better. Kennedy then challenges those who fear federal intervention. He gives examples of government programs that he contends could never have been accomplished without federal assistance. The Senator has made an attack upon the present conditions within his country; but, he cushions that attack with the reassurance that the country has the potential of becoming the most powerful of nations.

Analysis of Proem. John F. Kennedy begins the debates with:

In the election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln said the question was whether this nation could exist half slave or half free.

In this election of 1960, and with the world around us, the question is whether the world will exist half slave or half free, whether it will move in the direction of the road that we are taking or whether it will move in the direction of slavery. I think it will depend in great measure upon what we do here in the United States, on the kind of society we build, on the kind of strength that we maintain.\textsuperscript{7}

The speaker, in this introduction, has made good use of a quotation. The criterion for this type of introduction was that the quotation came from a respected source; Abraham Lincoln is an excellent choice. The criterion also requires that the content of the quotation is useful to the speaker's purpose. Senator Kennedy uses this quotation to show how the responsibilities of his nation had grown in one hundred years to include the entire world. In the second paragraph of the introduction he changes only slightly Lincoln's words to spell out his own evaluation of America's position in the world. Thus, Kennedy has applied the wisdom of Lincoln to his own ideas and made them to appear synonymous. The Senator also made an attempt to create a common bond between the American people and himself. He maintained that the outcome of the struggle for freedom will depend, "upon what we do here in the United States."\textsuperscript{8} The common bond is weak in the introduction because the speaker does not show why the people are bound to this duty as Kennedy says they are. The real basis of that bond is developed in the body of the speech.

\textbf{Analysis of the Peroration.} Kennedy concludes:

In 1933 Franklin Roosevelt said in his inaugural that this generation of Americans has a "rendezvous with destiny." I think our generation has the same "rendezvous." The question now is: Can freedom be maintained under the most severe attack it has ever known? I think it

\textsuperscript{7}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid.
can be, and I think in the final analysis it depends upon what we do here. I think it's time America started moving again.\(^9\)

The speaker is challenging the American people. His conclusion fills every aspect of the challenge criteria. It is short and compelling; he says that he believes that America can rise to the challenge. It is direct and it leads the audience to the action he wishes them to take. He tells them that the only way freedom can survive is if America starts moving again. Most importantly, this conclusion skillfully reminds the audience for one final time what the speaker feels to be at stake. This speaker has referred to America throughout his speech as the main defender of freedom. Kennedy includes this idea in his conclusion while making his challenge. His summation is brief and direct. He has made a successful challenge.

Speech of August 20, 1960.

Farmers and political leaders from 12 Midwestern States gathered at Des Moines, Iowa for a two day conference on the problems confronting American agriculture. Senator Kennedy, the newly nominated Democratic candidate for the Presidency, was the keynote speaker.

Analysis of Content. Kennedy, the candidate, has made an attack upon the present administration's agricultural programs. He reviews their past record and pronounces it disastrous. He condemns the Republican party labeling it, "empty slogans and wishful thinking."\(^{10}\) Kennedy proposes a fourpoint plan: 1) a policy of supply management to raise farm incomes and prices to parity levels; 2) improved food and nutrition for


\(^{10}\)Ibid., p. 1131.
all American citizens; 3) compiling a "peace reserve" of food for nations in distress; 4) a long-range program for credit, and research for low-income farms and new rural industry. This address is a campaign speech with two objectives. The candidate praises the farming profession and tells how he will come to its aid while at the same time showing how his opponent has hindered that industry.

Analysis of Proem. The junior Senator from Massachusetts begins:

No conference in this campaign is more important than this one. No domestic issue in this election is more important -- or in more trouble than the family farm. Kennedy has made an appeal for his audience's respect in this introduction. The respect criterion requires that the speaker work through his own prestige and through friendly remarks to win the attention of his listeners. The speaker first makes a subtle reference to his own prestige. Any person might tell this conference of farmers that their conference is important in the Presidential campaign but when a Presidential candidate says it is important, then its importance is confirmed. Senator Kennedy is also attempting to win the respect of his audience by showing a concern for their problems. The speaker does not attempt to form an artificial common bond. He does not pretend to have the same problems as the farmer; but, he says he recognizes their difficulties as important ones. This type of introduction is well suited to the rest of the oration which offers programs to aid the farmer. Without first establishing some type understanding of the agricultural situation the solutions might have appeared contrived. If the speaker had not attempted to establish his con-

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11 Ibid., p. 1129.
12 Ibid., p. 1132.
cern for the farming industry then his speech would have been pointless.

Analysis of Peroration. Senator Kennedy concluded his address to the Democratic Farm Conference:

Both parties describe one phase of their policy as "food for peace." But I would give that name to our entire program. For peace is man's greatest aspiration -- a just peace, a secure peace, without appeasement. We will not accept the peace of foreign domination -- we do not seek the peace of the grave. We want more than this so-called peace that is merely an interval between wars. There will be no farm program -- there will be no farm boys or farms -- if we cannot get off this deadly collision course on which we are now headed. It's time for real leadership again in foreign affairs -- fresh, firm leadership for peace, and in that might effort, we shall again -- as we have in all our history -- depend on our food, our farms and our loyal tireless farm families.13

Kennedy's conclusion follows the criteria of an appeal. He has argued the merits of his party's farm plank -- now he attempts to reach the emotions of his audience. He says that peace is the human race's greatest aspiration. Then he ties the success a long-range peace would bring to the strength of our nation and to the success and stability of our agricultural industry. The candidate has offered what he contends is the only solution to agricultural problems. He then makes an appeal to save the industry in order to maintain world peace. The appeal is good because it fulfills all of the criteria of appeal: Kennedy has made an excellent attempt to capture the feelings of his listeners and to turn them in his favor. The use of appeal was established as the strongest method of persuasion.

Speech of November 2, 1960.

Senator Kennedy appeared in a series of televised programs sponsored

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13Ibid.
by the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union Campaign Committee. During other broadcasts sponsored by this committee celebrities and political figures had appeared and made speeches in support of Senator Kennedy. Some of these figures included: Adlai Stevenson, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and George Meany. The Senator appeared on the fifth broadcast.

Analysis of Content. The Democratic candidate for President defines the objectives of his campaign and of his party in an interesting way: he compares the 20th century Presidential slogans of the Republican Party to those of the Democratic Party. He calls the Republican slogans, "the weakest and least constructive slogans in the history of American political action." He suggests that the Democratic offerings are a contrast to the Republican lot. Finally Kennedy explains what his own slogan the "New Frontier" promises for America. The basic function of this campaign speech is to summarize why Kennedy believes the American people should support his candidacy and his party.

Analysis of Proem. John F. Kennedy begins:

I come here to ask you to join me in the great task which lies before the American people. And that is the task of responsibility, of rebuilding the strength, vitality and energy of the great Republic of the United States. The effort to which I summon you will not be easy, but I believe with your help, and the help of all Americans, we will find that our real greatness and our finest years lie ahead in the 1960's.

John F. Kennedy makes the intent of his speech quite clear: he is asking the help of the American people in gaining the office of President of the United States. He contends that America can and will be better if

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14 Ibid., p. 345.
15 Ibid., p. 346.
he is elected. This introduction follows the criteria for an intent introduction: it is direct and it introduces the same tone the speaker will use throughout his speech.

The tone is one of hope, a hope for a better world through a Democratic victory in the 1960 election. This tone runs through the rest of the speech.

**Analysis of the Peroration.** The Senator concludes:

I think with the help of the American people, we can move the country forward. We can provide jobs for our people, education for our children, medical care for our aged tied to social security, a fair opportunity for all Americans to develop their talents. This is our function -- this is our responsibility: to build here in the United States a society which is a shining ornament to freedom: to hold out our helping hand to all those who wish to be free around the world; to stand for peace; to stand firm; to stand for action -- to move again. These are the things for which we stand. I ask your support in this campaign. I ask you to join me in moving America forward.\(^{16}\)

Kennedy is making an appeal for votes in this conclusion.

**III. THE PRESIDENTIAL PERIOD.**

**Speech of January 20, 1961.**

The newly elected President defined the role he believes his country must play in his inaugural address on January 20, 1961. He told his countrymen of their obligations to their country. He addresses his country to the responsibilities it has as a world leader.

**Analysis of Content.** The President pledges the preservation of the nation's heritage. He states that the basis of this heritage is human rights. He offers assistance to needy peoples and needy nations around the world, but, he warns that America will remain strong in its

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p. 345.
defenses. JFK speaks of peace and of the means by which it might be
achieved by saying:

So let us begin anew -- remembering on both sides
that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincer-
ity is always subject to proof. Let us never negoti-
ate out of fear. But let us never fear to negoti-
ate.17

This address proposes a better world for all mankind providing each per-
son is willing to make it their responsibility to work for their country;
that each country work to preserve peace and that God lend a hand to make
peace and prosperity possible.

Analysis of Proem. The President pledges:

We observe today not a victory of party but a celebra-
tion of freedom -- symbolizing an end as well as a be-
ginning -- signifying renewal as well as change. For
I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn
oath our forebearers prescribed nearly a century ago.18

JFK first makes an attempt at forming a common bond in his introduction.
He tells the citizens of the United States to forget that he is a winning
Democrat in a close election -- for his election he says, is not merely
an election victory. He says that this time is the beginning of a re-
awakening of pride in our heritage. Kennedy links his new administration
with the traditions of the past. This is the strongest point in his at-
ttempt to form a bond because the people can agree that the heritage of
their nation should indeed be protected and preserved.

The President recognizes that he has taken a solemn oath that is
the same oath written nearly 175 years before. This statement introduces

17 The Joint Appearances of Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice-Presi-
dent Richard M. Nixon and Other 1960 Campaign Presentations, United States

18 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F.
p. 2.
Kennedy's intent. The rest of his inaugural will be devoted to announcing his plans to fulfill his oath. These promises are taken in the same solemn manner that the responsibility was spoken of.

Kennedy has made an excellent introduction. He has formed a bond between himself and his nation and he has pointed them toward a pledge. Finally, he has made clear that these promises will be serious responsibilities.

Analysis of Peroration. President Kennedy concludes:

And so my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you -- ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world, ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man. Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here in the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.19

The criterion for an appeal type conclusion warned that the appeal must be done very skillfully. This conclusion is perhaps one of Kennedy's most skillful.

He appeals to mankind to set aside selfish motivation and to take up the causes of freedom and country. He promises two rewards: good conscience and perhaps a good mark in the annals of history.

Kennedy's appeal is excellent because of its careful construction. He has chosen noble phrases to call his people to a noble cause. The President calls it God's work and he asks His help and blessing; but, he does not let this recognition of a high force weaken his belief in the power of

19Ibid., p. 1.
man. He pushes his listeners one step further telling them that the preservation of peace and human rights is God's work accomplished by man. Kennedy's appeal is effective because it demands action. It has force because it denies weakness or dependance and it is strong because it seems based upon a faith in mankind.

Speech of September 25, 1961.

The speech of September 25, 1961 was President Kennedy's first major policy speech before the United Nations. The death of Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold had re-opened the debate over the Soviet proposal to form a tripartite division of authority in the assembly. The President came to challenge the proposal and to outline a disarmament plan. The plan would eventually remove weapons capable of annihilation from all nations. Saturday Review wrote of the President's address: "There are moments in history when words can make a vital difference."

Analysis of Content. Kennedy contends from the beginning that a change in the structure of the United Nation's organization such as proposed by the Soviets will be the death of the organization. He then turns to his disarmament plan. JFK stated:

So let us here resolve that Dag Hammarskjold did not live -- or die -- in vain. Let us call a truce to terror. Let us invoke the blessings of peace. And, as we build an international capacity to keep peace, let us join in dismantling the national capacity to wage war.\(^{21}\)

A complete document explaining the President's disarmament plan was introduced to the assembly by the head of the United States delegation after the President finished his address; however, the address itself outlined a five

\(^{20}\)Ibid., p. 3.

point plan: 1) signing of a test-ban treaty by all nations; 2) stopping
the production of fissional materials for use in weapons; 3) prohibiting
the transfer of control of nuclear weapons to states that do not already
own them; 4) keeping nuclear weapons out of outer space; 5) gradually
destroying nuclear weapons already manufactured and converting their ma-
terials into peaceful uses.22

This address, one of the longest ever delivered by JFK during his
Presidency, is, in essence, a program for peace.

Analysis of Proem. The President begins his message:

We meet in an hour of grief and challenge. Dag Hammar-
skjold is dead. But the United Nations lives. His
tragedy is deep in our hearts, but the task for which
he died is at the top of our agenda. A noble servant
of peace is gone. But the quest of peace is before us.23

Kennedy uses a contrast of two methods of introduction in this proem. He
speaks of a moment of grief over a great leader and from this standpoint
he is attempting to gain the respect of his listeners. In order to gain
respect the speaker must show that he is concerned over the affairs of an-
other; that he is their friend. Kennedy successfully eulogies their leaders
in his opening remarks. He has established his respect for the United Na-
tions and thus should have won an attentive hearing.

The President is also concerned with making a direct reference to
the main topic of his address. This is the basic criteria for an intent
type introduction. Kennedy makes it evident that he is deeply concerned
over the fate of the United Nations. He states that the fate of this assem-
ibly will determine the possibility of lasting peace in the world. This

22 Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F.

23 Ibid., p. 622.
evident concern for peace is the predominant tone to be developed throughout the speech. Thus, the introduction also follows the intent criterion.

**Analysis of Peroration.** JFK ends his address:

> Ladies and gentlemen of this Assembly, the decision is ours. Never have the nations of the world had so much to lose, or so much to gain. Together we shall save our planet, or together we shall perish in its flames. Save it we can -- and save it we must -- and then shall we earn the eternal thanks of mankind and as peacemakers, the eternal blessing of God.24

The criterion of a challenge type conclusion included that a certain stance be demanded of the audience. This conclusion, then, is most definitely a challenge. Kennedy asks that the assembly work for peace. He pushes his challenge to them with a warning of what the future might hold. He allows them two alternatives: if they accept his proposals they may save their planet, if they do not act they will be responsible for its annihilation. This view of the future is intended to show the consequences of failure to accept his challenge. It is done very effectively. The speaker concentrates on the more positive aspects of the future almost as though he were certain that the assembly was accepting his ideas.

**Speech of October 22, 1962.**

At seven p. m. Eastern Standard Time on October 22, 1962, President John F. Kennedy delivered, "An Address to the Nation," The speech was concerned with informing the American people of the details of the Cuban missile crisis. This address was not an inspirational call for support; it was an announcement of a decision already made and ready for execution.

**Analysis of Content.** The President begins with a direct description of the situation in Cuba and around its shores. He describes the

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potential danger of the missiles. He then outlines a seven point proposal that he has already directed to begin. Kennedy speaks briefly of the struggle for freedom by the Cuban people. Then he concludes his address with a strong warning that he intends to hold his nation in a firm stand against Soviet missile transport to Cuba, regardless of the consequences.

Analysis of the Proem. The President begins:

This Government, as promised, has maintained the closest surveillance of the Soviet military build-up on the island of Cuba. Within the past week, unmistakable evidence has established the fact that a series of offensive missile sites is now in preparation on the imprisoned island. The purpose of these bases can be none other than to provide a nuclear capability against the Western Hemisphere. Upon receiving the first preliminary hard information of this nature last Thursday morning (October 16) at 9:00 a.m., I directed that our surveillance be stepped up. And having now confirmed and completed our evaluation of the evidence and our decision on the course of action, this Government feels obliged to report this new crisis to you in the fullest detail.  

The circumstances of this address confine the speaker to one type of introduction in order to be most effective. The audience had been informed of the crisis hourly by radio and television. It was not necessary that he develop their belief that his information was vital. It is only important that they realize that he intends to inform them of his intended course of action. Kennedy makes that intent very clear. The tone of his speech will be direct and brief. This tone dominates his introduction. The President has used the intent introduction well in this introduction.

Analysis of Peroration. JFK concludes his message:

The path we have chosen for the present is full of hazards, as all paths are -- but it is the one most con-

25Ibid., p. 226.
stant with our character and courage as a nation and our commitments around the world. The cost of freedom is always high -- but we Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose is the path of surrender and submission. Our goal is not the victory of might but the vindication of right -- not peace at the expense of freedom, but both peace and freedom, here in this hemisphere, and, we hope, around the world. God willing, that goal will be achieved. Thank you and good night.

President Kennedy is challenging the American people to accept the path that he has chosen. He adds an important ingredient of faith to his challenge and speaks as though the people had already voiced acceptance of his Cuban policy. The speaker contrasts his position with the opposite alternative: submission and surrender. He contends that that position would be foreign to American heritage.

The President's challenge is unique in that it does not ask for support -- it takes it for granted. Then the speaker goes on to commend his citizenry for their noble position. This method strengthens the conclusion because the speaker is not compelled to plead rather to praise.

Speech of July 26, 1963.

On July 26, 1963, President John F. Kennedy spoke of a test-ban agreement that had been signed that day by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union. The treaty agreed not "to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosions . . . in the atmosphere beyond its limits, including outer space, or under water, including territorial waters and under high seas."27

Analysis of Content. The President refers to the treaty as:


27 Thonnsen, op. cit., p. 42.
"... a shaft of light out into the darkness." The President tells the American people four things about the new treaty: 1) that it can be a step toward reducing world tension; 2) that it can be a step towards freeing the world from the fear and the danger of radioactive fallout; 3) that it can be the beginning of the prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons to nations that did not have them then; 4) that the treaty can limit the nuclear arms race that will strengthen America's security far more than restricted testing. JFK warns his people that the treaty is only a beginning. He admits that the treaty may be ignored or broken; but, he reminds them that this beginning should give them reason to at least hope for world peace.

Analysis of Proem. Kennedy begins:

I speak to you tonight in a spirit of hope. Eighteen years ago the advent of nuclear weapons changed the course of the world as well as the war. Since that time, all mankind has been struggling to escape from the darkening prospect of mass destruction on earth. In an age when both sides have come to possess enough nuclear power to destroy the human race several times over, the world of communication and the world of free choice have been caught up in a vicious circle of conflicting ideology and interests. Each increase of tension has produced an increase of arms; each increase of arms has produced an increase of tension.

JFK concentrates the strength of his introduction in an appeal to man's most powerful instinct, his will to survive. This introduction has made good use of referring to a vital concern. Kennedy also makes his intent clear. He says that he speaks with hope. His address will be centered on what the results of the treaty may hopefully be. He speaks of the increas-

28 Public Papers of the President of the United States: John F. Kennedy 1962, op. cit., p. 806.

ing world tension over the arms race; his speech will be concerned with new hopes for lessening that tension. The President has made good use of the intent method of introduction because he introduces his topic directly. He has further filled the criteria for the intent method by stating clearly the position he will take in dealing with that topic.

Analysis of Peroration. President Kennedy concludes:

According to an ancient Chinese proverb, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." My fellow Americans, let us take that first step. Let us, if we can, step back from the shadows of war and seek out the way of peace. And if that journey is a thousand miles or even more, let history record that we, in this land, at this time, took the first step.31

The President makes excellent use of a quotation in this conclusion. The quotation is an old Chinese proverb that is familiar to most Americans. Part of the suggested criteria for a quotation was that it be familiar. Kennedy uses the quotation and makes it bear directly upon his message. He uses the idea of a single step and the distance of a thousand miles to make an appeal to his audience. The appeal is skillful; it promises the audience that if they back his treaty they will be remembered historically as peacemakers. The criteria of the quotation method requires that it demand the action from the audience that the speaker has been building up to. This appeal asks only that Americans hope that the treaty can be a beginning. Kennedy has built his entire speech around this hope. This conclusion then follows the criterion for an excellent appeal.

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31Ibid., p. 601.
CHAPTER IV

. . . There was in the lives of each of these men something that is difficult for the printed page to capture—and yet something reached the homes and enriched the heritage of every citizen in every part of the land.

John F. Kennedy
Profiles in Courage

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

I. CONCLUSIONS

Methods of Introduction.

Intent. This was the most recurring method used in the introduction of the nine selected addresses. The intent method requires that the speaker establish the main focus of his speech clear in the introduction. It also requires that the tone of the introduction must match the tone of the entire speech. Kennedy's address often demanded action from his audience. The intent method prepares an audience for some type of appeal to action. Kennedy made excellent use of this method each time he used it.

John Kennedy's writings are marked with directness; when speaking Kennedy usually got directly to the point. The intent method offers one of the most direct methods of introduction. Thus, the speaker made excellent use of the method most suited to his purposes and to his own style.

The Vital. A vital introduction utilizes reference to a vital concern of the audience to capture the interest and concern of that audience. John F. Kennedy made use of this technique only in the addresses selected from the Congressional Period. In this early period it was necessary that Kennedy note the importance of the topic of the speech to his audience.
As his political influence grew and his interests expanded to outside his own region, this method was no longer useful. The Congressman carefully documented his concerns in the early period to indeed make them seem of vital concern to audience. It is to his credit, as rhetorican, that Kennedy could sense that his topics no longer had to be defined as being vital. The speaker abandons this method after his Congressional Period because he realized that it is no longer required.

Common Bond. The common bond method of introduction was recognized as a very effective method of introduction because it required that the speaker be concerned with aligning his desires and aspirations with those of his audience. Kennedy uses this method of introduction often. The common bond method appears in each of the three periods. As an elected representative in each situation, Kennedy recognized the need to present his beliefs in such a way that they would be accepted by his audience. He has made a wise choice in continuing to utilize this method because its good effects remained applicable to John F. Kennedy throughout his career. As a man, who often spoke of the people, Kennedy made his concern for the people pronounced in choosing this method of introduction.

Simplicity. An introduction that appeals to the audience because of its simplicity is a method recommended for a beginning speaker and for a speaker that is more concerned with content than with effect. Kennedy made use of this method in only the earliest period studied. The speech that was introduced in this manner contained only one very direct appeal. As Kennedy's political influence grew he spoke of ever increasingly important subjects; he dealt with complex problems and their solutions. An introduction marked with simplicity in the later periods would have been
ill-fitted to his purposes.

**Respect.** In each of the selected speeches Kennedy was inclined to introduce his speech by utilizing either the intent method of introduction or the respect method. The respect method focuses upon the good points of the audience and of the speaker in order to gain a favorable hearing. Kennedy utilized the respect method of introduction in every period. In each of the three speeches in which he relied upon the respect method of introduction, Kennedy was making an appeal to action to an assembly. Kennedy used this technique because the good will of his audience was necessary in order to put his proposal in effect. If a speaker is asking his audience to make a commitment to action he should utilize every method available to him to win their favor. Kennedy is aware that an appeal to the respect of his listeners is an excellent method. He utilizes that method whenever he makes proposals in which he calls the particular assembly to take an action.

**Methods of Conclusion.**

**Challenge.** The challenge form of conclusion is the method most often used by all speakers. A challenge is made to an audience when the speaker wishes them to respond to the material he has presented in a certain way. Kennedy made use of this technique in both the Presidential Campaign Period and the Presidential Period as he demanded action from the people. This form of conclusion seems well suited to Kennedy speeches because his address was so often filled with reasons for change, with calls to action.

**Appeal.** The appeal styled conclusion was the method Kennedy used most frequently in the nine selected addresses. The appeal method is styled after the conclusion used by the ancient orators. It requires a highly
stylized form and if it is not done skillfully it can easily sound overdone. Kennedy's ability to make appeals ranks with examples like those given by authorities of public address, one of which was President Lincoln's conclusion in the second Inaugural Address. All of the addresses from the Presidential Campaign Period were concluded with an appeal type conclusion, as though the Senator had consciously improved his oratory.

The Presidential Period contained two excellent appeals. In both cases Kennedy skillfully asked the help of the American people. The President has made a good choice in selecting the appeal method in these particular speeches because the basic intention of these addresses is to win the audience over to the speaker's solution. It seemed Kennedy abandoned the simple methods of conclusion when he left Congress to campaign for the Presidency, and that he dressed up his oratory with more stylized speaking. One obvious instance of this is his shift to the most stylized of all conclusion, the appeal method.

Summary. The summary conclusion is suggested by authorities for a speech in which the main points may need to be re-emphasized. Kennedy used this method of conclusion in the speeches selected from the Congressional Period. Although the summary conclusion can be helpful in leaving the audience with the main points of the speech, it can also be very restrictive to the speaker who is interested in leaving a strong impression. If the conclusion is restricted to summary, very little persuasion can be accomplished when it will be most effective. Kennedy seems to recognize that the summary conclusion is not best suited for persuasion. He relies on a summary as a beginning speaker, as he becomes more experienced John F. Kennedy selects more powerful methods of conclusion.
Visualizing the Future. Kennedy uses the technique of visualizing the future in the last two selected addresses. At this point in his career Kennedy was in a position in which his decisions could determine the future of the nation and of the world. He used this type of conclusion to show the consequences of his decisions by referring to the future as it might be. This type of conclusion powerfully underlines the importance of the speech to the audience. When Kennedy chose this method he was speaking of subjects that he believed to be of paramount importance. He demonstrated the importance of his topic to his audience by showing them how his decisions could effect their future. It is not remarkable that Kennedy used this method most often in speeches given in the Presidential Period: as President Kennedy could easily defend his predictions for he was then a world leader.

Rounding Out the Thought. Kennedy never relies solely upon a quotation to conclude his speech; but, he does utilize a method called 'rounding out a thought' in which he makes use of a quotation. In using this method the speaker draws conclusions from a quotation that strengthens the stance he has taken in his speech. In the only address in which Kennedy uses this method, from the Congressional Period, he chooses to differ with the thought presented in the quotation. He declares that the excerpt from the letter that he has quoted exemplifies the attitude that he has contended must change. The authorities concluded that a speaker adds new power to his conclusion if he rounds out the thought of the conclusion in his own words. Use of this method illustrates that even in the earliest period, Kennedy was seeking a stronger method of conclusion. It also demonstrates that his technique for conclusion varied even in the early period, as though he were seeking to
improve his speech techniques.

Conciseness. The final criteria for effective conclusions demanded that the speaker make some type of clear direct appeal. The proem and the peroration of each of Kennedy's addresses was easily classified as to the methods utilized to compose it. Kennedy seemed, even from the beginning of his political career, able to sense the type of introduction and conclusion that was necessary and to construct such an introduction or conclusion.

The Three Periods As Indicators of Change and Consistency.

The Congressional Period. The Congressional Period included all of Kennedy's public addresses from January of 1957 to July of 1960. The addresses of this period were marked by the simpler of methods for introduction and conclusion. John F. Kennedy was a man of little public exposure at the beginning of this period. His oratory was simple and direct. It was the oratory of a man of restricted concerns and influence.

The Presidential Campaign Period. The addresses selected from the second period which was from July 1960 to November of that same year, mark a drastic change in Kennedy's methods of introduction and conclusion. A change of the same dimension was made in Kennedy's political position: suddenly a junior Senator from Massachusetts is placed in the national limelight. That man responds by stylizing his speaking techniques. His public address now relies more heavily upon more formal methods of introduction and conclusion. As Kennedy became notably more concerned with winning the support of his audience, his speeches became ever increasingly concerned with selling his ideas to a whole nation rather than to just a region.

The Presidential Period. The final division of the study of Kennedy's address included speeches given from January 1961 until October 1963.
The responsibilities of the Presidency weigh heavily upon Kennedy's selection of methods of introduction and conclusion. As a leader, he now became very aware of the need to appeal for support from his listeners. He often relies upon appeals and challenges that redirect the responsibilities of the nation to the people; but, Kennedy does not restrict himself to any particular form of introduction or conclusion. In one instance when he addressed the United Nations he displayed a great deal of awareness toward his position by reverting back to an appeal for their respect at the beginning. President Kennedy shows a great deal of careful analysis of each particular situation in his selection of methods to introduce and conclude his speeches. The selection is evident in that, in this period, each of the methods selected are easily defined as the best that could possibly have been utilized in that particular situation.

From the above observations the author concludes that there was a definite shift in Kennedy's method of introducing and concluding his speeches. The observations also pointed out certain methods that were used throughout his career. In the final analysis the author concludes that any shift in Kennedy's method of introduction and conclusion was justified by advances in his political career.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY.

The purpose of this study was to discover the change and/or consistencies that occurred in Kennedy's method of introduction and conclusion in his speeches during his political career. The first speech was delivered ten years after Kennedy was first elected to the House of Representatives. His speaking prior to that time was not considered.
This study made no attempt to determine the effectiveness of Kennedy's rhetoric. For example, no consideration is given to whether or not any legislative body acted upon any of his suggestions.

The study did not deal with the reasons for the changes or the consistencies.

Another study might not be limited to just the introduction and conclusion of the addresses. It might also contain other criteria for effective exposition and proof.

There are still many areas which remain for further study.


B. Government Publications


