"THE POLITICS OF RESTORATION:" THE RHETORICAL VISION OF CAMELOT AND ROBERT F. KENNEDY'S 1968 CAMPAIGN

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

BY

Marilyn Ann Martin, B.A.
Denton, Texas
December, 1989
Martin, Marilyn Ann, "The Politics of Restoration:"

This study critically analyzed four selected campaign speeches by Robert Kennedy from his 1968 campaign to determine his use of the Camelot myth and his success in portraying himself as the heir apparent to the Kennedy legend. Using procedures adapted from fantasy theme analysis, the rhetorical vision of Camelot was outlined, and the fantasy themes and fantasy types within it were determined. The public persona of Robert Kennedy was also evaluated.

Throughout the speeches analyzed, Robert Kennedy invoked themes identified within the rhetorical vision of Camelot. In addition to his own themes of social justice and reconciliation, Kennedy promoted his brother's legend. Chaining evidence provided proof of the public's participation in the rhetorical vision demonstrating Kennedy's success with these themes.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of the Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan of Reporting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE RHETORICAL VISION OF CAMELOT AND THE PERSONA OF ROBERT KENNEDY.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. CRITICAL ANALYSIS.</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Announcement Address&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Elements for a New Foreign Policy&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Program for the Economy&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Victory Statement&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE CHAINING OF CAMELOT.</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persona</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside Jokes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENDTNOTES.</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY.</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE LEGACY OF CAMELOT AND THE
1968 CAMPAIGN OF ROBERT KENNEDY

Introduction

It has been 25 years since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and more than 20 years since the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy. The twenty-year anniversaries of these assassinations were marked by numerous tributes and reviews of the historical impact of these brothers on American politics. Although nearly a quarter of a century has passed since these men were directly influencing American politics, scholars, historians, and journalists have continued to reflect on the Kennedy legend and its historical relevance.

The historical impact of John F. Kennedy has been described by Golden (1986) who identified several "principal legacies directly traceable to John F. Kennedy's personality thrust and actions as seen in the period of his short term as president" (p. 70). Golden discussed the persona of President Kennedy and identified components of it that were rhetorically promulgated during his brief term in office. These components included an image of being a man of power, a friend of the people, and a practitioner of the art of
humor. Most importantly, the president saw himself as an "exemplar of the cardinal virtues," which consisted of courage, temperance, wisdom, and justice (p. 70-78).

From this public persona presented by President Kennedy, Golden identified four legacies that are linked together symbolically. These are (1) a rhetorical style viewed as a model of eloquence "worthy to be emulated by aspiring writers and speakers" (p. 78); (2) the generation of the legacy of "Camelot"; (3) a revisionist movement which seeks to discredit the Kennedy legacy and persona; and (4) a neoliberalism movement consisting of those who say their own political careers can be traced to the inspiration they received from President Kennedy.

According to Golden, the theme of "Camelot" was begun on Kennedy's Inauguration Day and was fueled by the Kennedy persona. It involved the image of youth as Kennedy became the youngest elected American president and the first to be born in the twentieth century. His marriage to a still younger wife Jacqueline and the selection of a Cabinet whose members average age was in the mid-forties helped to depict an image of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table (p. 81).

Golden further noted this theme through quotes by poet Robert Frost and historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Frost wrote a poem for Kennedy's inauguration in which he described "courage in the air," "a young ambition to be
tried," and "a new Augustan age." Similarly, in an article written by Schlesinger shortly after Kennedy's inaugural, Golden notes the historian's description of the new Kennedy Administration as "an injection of new men and new ideas" (p. 81).

The tragic assassination of President Kennedy, according to Golden, solidified the myth through media coverage of the funeral and through strategic rhetorical acts undertaken by Jacqueline Kennedy to "immortalize the memory of the president" (p. 83). As he explained:

The overall impact of the electronic media was to depict with galvanic effect a charismatic young leader who was tragically cut down in the prime of his life, leaving behind a mourning nation that had come to appreciate his courtly kingdom (p. 82). Golden concluded his explanation of the Camelot legend by noting:

The Camelot legacy, it would appear, has followed a course filled with peaks and valleys. Gaining strength prior to and shortly after the assassination, it played no small part in rendering the president a folk hero and in launching and sustaining the political careers of his two brothers, Robert and Edward (p. 85). Robert Kennedy was described as the heir apparent to the Camelot legend almost immediately following the assassination of his brother. The resurrection of this
legend seemed near at hand in the spring of 1968 when Robert Kennedy entered the presidential race. Although the political life of Robert Kennedy was cut short by the fatal shots of Sirhan Sirhan, his political impact in 1968 is without question. The 1968 primaries were marked by the candidacies of Senator Robert Kennedy and Senator Eugene McCarthy against the incumbent President Lyndon B. Johnson. The late entry of Robert Kennedy was received coolly by most of the media and Kennedy's fellow Democrats. However, after only 85 days of campaigning, and upon his victory in the California primary, Senator Robert Kennedy of New York indeed appeared to be the heir apparent to the Kennedy legacy and his late brother's office.

While many Americans viewed Robert Kennedy as ruthless and as a man motivated only by power, others were drawn to this charismatic figure in much the same way as they had found themselves fascinated by President Kennedy. This study is an analysis of Robert Kennedy's 1968 primary campaign to determine the importance of the Kennedy legend, and, specifically, the myth of Camelot to the success of his campaign.

Statement of the Problem

This investigation is a rhetorical study of the public speeches of Robert F. Kennedy during his 1968 primary campaign in order to find answers to the following questions:
1. Did Robert Kennedy invoke the "myth of Camelot" in his campaign speeches?

2. If so, to what extent did the invocation of this myth contribute to the success of his campaign?

"Success" in a political campaign is usually measured by percentage of votes and election to office. However, this study is limited to the analysis of Robert Kennedy's speeches and the message he imparted. Therefore, the definition of "success" for this study will mean the creation of a rhetorical vision of the "heir apparent" to the legacy of John F. Kennedy.

Survey of the Literature

Much has been written on the Kennedy family. While most of that written concerns Joseph P. Kennedy as the patriarch of this American dynasty and John F. Kennedy as the 35th President of the United States, Robert F. Kennedy has also been the subject of biographers, critics, historians, and academicians alike. Works on the life of Robert Kennedy generally fall within the realm of the following categories: biographical accounts, analysis of his term as attorney general, portrayal of Kennedy as the "heir apparent", and his campaign of 1968.

Dissertations

Doctoral dissertations focusing on Robert F. Kennedy include studies by historians, political scientists, and communication scholars. These analyses include political
science studies of the civil rights programs of the Kennedy Administration (Sullivan, 1965), and the "Citizens for Kennedy in '68" political campaign (Silbiger, 1971).

Doctoral communication research includes studies of the argumentation patterns of Robert F. Kennedy and other family members (Lenrow, 1971); Robert Kennedy's adaptation to his audience (Broadhurst, 1963); and an analysis of the Kennedy-Keating debate during their campaigns for the U.S. Senate (Greene, 1965). In addition, communication studies have focused on Robert Kennedy's historic visit to South Africa in 1966 (Rudolph, 1973), his dissent on the Vietnam War (Cutbirth, 1976; Weintraub, 1975), and portrayal of him in the American press (Bickers, 1984).

Dissertations in communication relating to the 1968 campaign include a study of the rhetorical strategies employed by Senator Kennedy and Senator McCarthy (Sanders, 1973) which focused on the major issues of the campaign, the personality profiles of the two candidates, and how the speakers rhetorically responded to the demands of the primaries. The rhetorical strategies employed by Kennedy as a result of the "new politics" was the focus of a study by Lee (1981), who first outlined the constraints imposed by the "new politics" movement that was heralded by the Kennedys and other candidates in the sixties and identified the rhetorical strategies employed by Robert Kennedy to deal with these constraints.
Journal Articles

Scholarly work published in academic journals focusing on Robert F. Kennedy includes a critical analysis of Kennedy's campaign appearance in Indiana on the night of Martin Luther King's assassination (Anatol and Bittner, 1968). In addition, Rudolph (1982, 1983) continued her research of Kennedy's South African visit in 1966 and his speeches at South African universities.

Books

Books on Robert Kennedy illustrate his historical impact and provide useful information for this study as well. The books are categorized according to their focus and include authors from various fields.

Biographical Accounts

The most official and complete biography of Robert Kennedy is that written by Schlesinger (1978). As a Kennedy intimate, this author provided documentation and insight into key players and events. Although sentimental in nature, the work is useful to any Kennedy study. Another useful biographical account is that written by Newfield (1969). This author provided a detailed account of philosophical and political changes in Robert Kennedy as a person and important documentation on key characters and events in the life of Kennedy. Biographical accounts which are not as useful to this study are those written by Laing (1968) who, as a family intimate, wrote a sentimental
account of Robert Kennedy prior to and immediately after the assassination.

Also included as biographical works are the oral histories by Stein (1970), and Guthman and Shulman (1987). The work by Stein focuses on the Senator's funeral train and the recollections of those present at the time. More useful to this study is the work by Guthman and Shulman which is taken from the oral history collection at the Kennedy Library which was conducted following the death of President Kennedy at the request of Robert Kennedy.

Attorney General

As attorney general during the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations, Robert Kennedy drew much criticism and attention. Several works reflect this, including those by deToledano (1967), Thompson and Myers (1962), and Shannon (1967). These works are not particularly useful to this study except that they document specific episodes in the life of Robert Kennedy and attempt to make a case for or against the younger Kennedy following in his brother's presidential footsteps.

The Heir Apparent

The Kennedy legacy is best documented in these works which focus on Robert Kennedy as the proper successor to President Kennedy and include titles such as The Torch Is Passed: The Kennedy Brothers and American Liberalism, (Burner, 1984); The Kennedy Promise: The Politics of
Expectation, (Fairlie, 1973); The Heir Apparent: Robert Kennedy and the Struggle for Power, (Shannon, 1967); and Robert F. Kennedy, the Last Knight, (Swinburne, 1969).

These works, as their titles suggest, note the tragic death of President Kennedy and the changes in Robert Kennedy as he prepared himself for a presidential campaign. Most importantly, these works reflect the Kennedy legacy as a theme in American politics.

1968 Campaign

Finally, books on Robert Kennedy focus on his presidential primary campaign of 1968. Authors in this category include historians and journalists such as White (1969), Witcover (1988), and Halberstam (1969). Each of these authors covered the primary campaign and wrote his book immediately following the assassination of Kennedy in June, 1968. These works are important to this study as they note the progression of the campaign and the key players and events that shaped that politically historic year.

This review indicates the abundance of material available for this study. It also illustrates that the Kennedy legacy has been established as a theme in American politics, that the myth of Camelot was promoted by President Kennedy, and that the myth impacted the political future of Robert Kennedy. However, while these authors have noted the importance of this theme to the political career of Robert Kennedy, no one has analyzed the speeches of the 1968
campaign to determine whether Robert Kennedy employed the myth rhetorically for political purposes.

Methods and Procedures

The primary method selected for this investigation is critical with procedures adapted from fantasy theme analysis. Fantasy theme analysis focuses on the speaker's presentation of a rhetorical vision to an audience. This rhetorical vision is much like a drama consisting of characters, scenes, and action. Through fantasy themes, the speaker depicts the characteristics and motives of the actors and explains what is happening in the rhetorical world. These fantasy themes tend to fall into specific categories or genres called fantasy types that, according to Bormann (1972), represent common historical experiences of many people and are easily identifiable as such.

The speaker seeks to involve the audience in this rhetorical drama and thus provide an interpretation of reality for the audience. When an audience responds to the rhetorical vision offered by the speaker, "chaining" occurs whereby the audience begins to participate in and share the drama that is usually motivating them to some form of action. The mass media play an important role in the chaining process as they enable a large population to participate in the rhetorical vision. Fantasy theme analysis, unlike some other critical methods, does not require the critic to evaluate the validity of the speaker's
message nor to include balance from historical perspective. Instead, the critic is instructed to focus on the speaker's presentation of a rhetorical vision and the audience's acceptance of the interpretation of reality offered.

While fantasy theme analysis is an inductive method as the critic is instructed to analyze the message for fantasy themes, classify these themes into fantasy types, and then determine the rhetorical vision, this study will begin with the analysis of the rhetorical vision of Camelot and then determine the fantasy themes and the fantasy types within it.

Bormann (1972, p. 401-406; 1983, 446-447) offered guidelines for the critic using fantasy them analysis that were adapted by O'Donnell (1987, p. 10-12) for public speaking. Because of the inverted nature of the immediate study, these guidelines have been further adapted:

1. Describe the rhetorical vision of Camelot, explain the fantasy themes and the fantasy types which comprise it. How does the rhetorical vision of Camelot motivate the audience to action?
   a. Identify the characters in the rhetorical vision. Who are the heroes and the villains?
   b. How does the persona of the speaker relate to the fantasy themes and the rhetorical vision?
   c. What are the scenarios of the fantasy themes?
d. Are the fantasy types in the rhetorical vision of Camelot likely to be shared by the 1968 American culture?

e. Identify the code words in the rhetorical vision of Camelot.

The following guidelines are taken directly from O'Donnell for the analysis of public speeches:

2. Identify the rhetorical choices the speaker makes in order to dramatize the rhetorical vision. Describe and evaluate the speaker's style and tone in communicating the rhetorical vision.

a. Did the speaker generate a self-image that was strong, confident, and resilient?

b. Are the fantasy themes reminiscent of common fantasies in the audience?

c. What values and motives are inherent in the heroes and their actions?

d. What values and motives are attributed to the villains?

e. How are the members of the audience and the community characterized?

3. Discover and describe the fantasy themes, fantasy types, and the rhetorical vision that have chained out to the audience, the mass media, and the public at-large.
a. What evidence is there that the speech contributed to a sense of community within the audience?
b. Was there an emotional response on the part of the audience?
c. How did the audience interpret the rhetorical vision of the speaker? What new meanings or broader view of things did people acquire? [Did the audience and/or media interpret the speaker's image as pertaining to the myth of "Camelot"?]
d. Were inside jokes in evidence?
e. What impact did the speaker and [his] message seem to have on the community?
f. How did the media dramatize the speaker's message? How does such dramatization move on through the media to other publics?
g. How was the community's social reality altered by the communication?

The speeches that have been analyzed and criticized in this investigation have been selected in the following manner. Both the first and last speech of the campaign have been selected as a logical beginning and ending for the study. In addition, two other speeches have been representatively selected in the following manner. Three speeches from each of the months of April and May, 1968 were
randomly chosen and then reviewed for length, topic, and availability from a listing provided by the John F. Kennedy Library. A single speech for April and a single speech for May were then chosen to assure varied topic, appropriate length, and availability. No consideration was given in this selection process to identify speeches that were most likely to answer the research questions for this study.

The campaign speeches to be analyzed and criticized are:

March 16, 1968
Press Conference:
"Announcement of Candidacy for President"
Washington, D.C.

April 17, 1968
Sigma Delta Chi Journalism Fraternity
"Elements for a New Foreign Policy"
Portland, Oregon

May 28, 1968
Businessmen's Breakfast
"Program for the Economy"
Los Angeles, California
June 4, 1968

Campaign Supporters
"Victory Statement"
Ambassador Hotel
Los Angeles, California

These speeches represent varied audiences and varied topics and will offer an opportunity for a comprehensive view of the 1968 campaign.

Plan of Reporting

Chapter II evaluates the rhetorical vision of Camelot and discusses the persona of Robert F. Kennedy so that the myth of Camelot can be better understood as it pertains to Kennedy as a speaker. Chapter III includes the analysis of the selected speeches using fantasy theme analysis as outlined in this chapter. Chapter IV investigates the chaining process resulting from the fantasy themes and discusses the success that Kennedy did or did not have with this rhetorical vision. Finally, conclusions regarding the study and the method of analysis are discussed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER II

THE RHETORICAL VISION OF CAMELOT

AND

THE PERSONA OF ROBERT KENNEDY

Introduction

Fantasy theme analysis is founded on symbolic convergence theory which assumes that language creates reality for individuals and that people's meanings for symbols can "converge" to create a shared reality. As Bormann (1983) explains, convergence can occur in a number of instances when people "have jointly experienced the same emotions; they have developed the same attitudes and emotional responses to the personae of the drama; and they have interpreted some aspect of their experience in the same way. They have thus achieved symbolic convergence about their experiences" (p. 104). Bormann notes the important role the audience plays in the rhetorical process. As O'Donnell (1987) explains, "If a speaker is a skillful communicator, the message will involve the audience in the fantasy, causing them to participate in it, share it, and integrate it into the way they perceive social reality" (p. 8). While the speaker's message is important, the sharing of the message is more important. As Foss (1988), quoting Bormann, explains:
The basic unit of symbolic convergence theory and fantasy theme criticism is *fantasy* or *fantasy theme*. *Fantasy*, in the context of symbolic convergence theory, is not used in its popular sense—something imaginary and not grounded in reality. Instead, *fantasy* is "the creative and imaginative interpretation of events," and a fantasy theme is the means through which the interpretation is accomplished in communication. It is a word, phrase, or statement that interprets the events in the past, envisions events in the future, or depicts current events that are removed in time and/or space from actual activities of the group. Fantasy themes tell a story that accounts for the group's experience and that is the reality of the participants (p. 290).

When fantasy themes consisting of similar scenes, actions, or characters reoccur, they can be further categorized into fantasy types. As Foss explains,

A fantasy type is a stock scenario that appears repeatedly in the rhetoric of a group. Once a fantasy type has developed, rhetoricians do not need to provide the audience with details about the specific characters engaging in actions in particular settings. They simply state the general story line of the fantasy type, and the audience is able to call up the other details of the entire scenario. . . . Fantasy types
allow a group to fit new events or experiences into familiar patterns (p. 292).

The rhetorical vision of a group or speaker is the combination of the shared fantasy themes of the group. As Foss further explains: "Rhetorical visions often are integrated by the sharing of a dramatized message that contains a master analogy. This analogy pulls together the various elements of the vision into a more or less elegant and meaningful whole" (p. 293).

This chapter outlines the rhetorical vision of Camelot by identifying the fantasy themes and the fantasy types within it. In addition, the public persona of Robert Kennedy is evaluated in order to better understand the rhetorical vision of Camelot as it relates to him as a speaker.

A speaker seeks to portray him/herself in a certain manner to lend credibility and may promulgate certain characteristics through public acts. In addition, the media's reporting of the speaker's actions contribute to the audience's perception of the speaker. The development of a public persona is important to the speaker's credibility with the audience, and it is an essential element in fantasy them analysis.

The Rhetorical Vision of Camelot

The rhetorical vision of Camelot combines the legend of King Arthur with the administration of John F. Kennedy from
1961-1963. The Arthurian myth, like all tales and folklore, has many variations. Generally, the myth is comprised of characters whose virtues include youth, courage, wisdom, and justice. The main characters are led by King Arthur, a young ruler who was destined to become king when, as a youth, he pulled the famous sword Excalibur from a stone. Along his journey toward becoming king, Arthur enlisted the support of brave, gallant men who would become knights of his round table. Most notable of these men was Lancelot, the knight dearest to Arthur because of his courageous acts including saving Arthur's life. King Arthur's queen was Guenevere, a young, beautiful bride.

As Golden (1986) illustrated, the depiction of the Kennedy Administration as Camelot began during his inauguration and continued through his months in office. The portrayal was further generated by Jacqueline Kennedy after the president's assassination. The president's selection of young, Harvard-educated men for his Cabinet, his emphasis on culture and the arts, as well as his marriage to the young, beautiful Jacqueline Kennedy provided the elements for such a portrayal. In addition, the selection of his brother as attorney general illustrated the important role Robert Kennedy played in John F. Kennedy's political life.

Within the rhetorical vision of Camelot, I have identified five of the major fantasy themes. These themes
are: *The New Frontier*, *The Best and the Brightest*, *The Triumph of Right*, *The Round Table*, and *The Principle of Valor*. These themes are named in accordance with the Arthurian myth and the Kennedy legacy and are derived from biographies (Manchester, 1967; and Schlesinger, 1978), historical accounts (Sidey, 1963; Sorensen, 1963, 1965; Schlesinger, 1965; and Halberstam, 1972, 1978), public speeches and statements made by John F. Kennedy (Sorensen, 1988), and works describing the Kennedy legend (Fairlie, 1973; Golden, 1986; and Brown, 1988).

The first of the fantasy themes, *The New Frontier*, is named after and is based on Kennedy's inaugural theme introducing a new role for America in world affairs and in space. Kennedy proclaimed that America should be second to none and that space research would illustrate the nation's commitment to this role. This vision for the United States was in stark contrast to that provided by Kennedy's predecessor, President Dwight D. Eisenhower. As Halberstam (1972) noted: "There was a sense that the best men had been summoned forth from the country to harness this dream to a new, strong, dynamic spirit to our historic role in world affairs: (p. 39). Manchester (1974) explained this change in vision: "After the tranquil, healing years under Eisenhower, the capital was witnessing the commencement of an innovative administration, the first since Franklin Roosevelt's. Now, as then, the accent was on youth" (p.
And as Halberstam concluded: "We seemed about to enter an Olympian age in the country, brains and intellect harnessed to great force, the better to define a common good" (p. 39). The New Frontier is an action fantasy theme because it outlines a course of action for the country.

This new role for America was to be charted by The Best and the Brightest, the second main fantasy in the rhetorical vision of Camelot. This phrase was coined by David Halberstam in his book documenting the Kennedy Administration's policies on Vietnam, and is used to name the fantasy theme which depicted well-educated men from all disciplines being called upon by the president to serve their government. As Manchester explained:

Among his advisers were fifteen Rhodes scholars, led by the Secretary of State, and four professional historians. The Secretary of Defense, the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, the chairman of the Civil Service Commission, and the Ambassadors to India, Japan, and Yugoslavia were former college teachers. The President's expert on gold was a professor. Even the President's military adviser, General Maxwell D. Taylor, came to him from the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and for the first time in history the White House had a cultural coordinator (p. 1094).

These men were asked to leave their careers and come to Washington to be leaders in The New Frontier. They were
expected to share the president's vision and to match his enthusiasm for moving the nation in this new direction. The Kennedy Administration became notorious for the demands it placed upon its members. The Best and the Brightest is a persona fantasy theme as it characterizes the heroes of the rhetorical vision.

The third fantasy theme in the rhetorical vision of Camelot was most evident in the Kennedy Administration's policies on civil rights and poverty programs. I have named this fantasy theme The Triumph of Right as it was based on human rights and equality. As attorney general, Robert Kennedy became a centerpiece for this theme. The president's emphasis in this area is explained by Manchester:

Noticing that there were no blacks among the Coast Guard cadets in the inaugural parade, he started an official inquiry on the spot. The next morning he was in his bare office early . . . and firing off Executive Order No. 1, to double the food rations of four million needy Americans (p. 1091).

The Triumph of Right is an action fantasy theme as it outlines a course of public policy to be implemented. This public policy agenda is evident in a speech given by John F. Kennedy to the NAACP in 1960:

While we point with pride to the strides we have made in fulfilling our forefather's dream of the
equality of man, let us not overlook how far we still have to go. . . . Our job is to turn the American vision of a society in which no man has to suffer discrimination based on race into a living reality everywhere in our land. And that means we must secure for every American equal access to all parts of our public life . . . (Sorensen, 1988, P. 183)

The fourth main fantasy in this rhetorical vision is The Round Table, named after the legendary table in King Arthur's court. This theme refers to the noted decision-making process introduced by Kennedy and copied by later presidents (Sorensen, 1963). The process enabled all cabinet members to voice their opinions in the president's absence and then offer advice based on these forums. Kennedy was also remembered for his method of preparing himself for press conferences (Halberstam, 1978). Prior to such an event, he would meet with his advisers and field questions from them that they believed the press would ask. These processes allowed the president to appear as candid as possible and to assure that all sides of an issue had been taken into consideration.

The fifth fantasy theme identified in the rhetorical vision of Camelot refers to President Kennedy's emphasis on individual participation in the government process. I have named this theme The Principle of Valor in reference to knighthood and in keeping with Kennedy's inaugural address
in which he charged his audience: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." The Principle of Valor fantasy theme is one of action as it directs a particular involvement from the characters. This fantasy theme was most evident in programs such as the Peace Corps and in the neoliberalism movement suggested by Golden to be one of the legacies of John F. Kennedy. As Golden explains:

Of major interest in the analysis of this point was Kennedy's strongly held belief that educated citizens--particularly bright graduates of colleges and universities--should consider a career in public service. He enjoyed telling commencement audiences that they should follow the example of the founding fathers and many nineteenth-century intellectuals who decided to use their knowledge in the service of their country (p. 90).

The code words of these fantasy themes center on the cardinal virtues noted by Golden: "youth," "courage," "wisdom," and "justice," and include words such as "fairness" and "righteousness," "prestige" and "strength" which were used in the descriptions of the Kennedy Administration, its members and its policies. The scenarios of the themes are America as the epitome of democracy and America as the crusader for the free world.
From these fantasy themes I have identified an overall fantasy type of Manifest Destiny. This fantasy type is inherent in American history and is defined as "the belief or doctrine, held chiefly in the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century, that it was the destiny of the United States to expand its territory over the whole of North America and to extend and enhance its political, social, and economic influences." Each of the fantasy themes previously identified within the rhetorical vision of Camelot coincide with the themes within America's Manifest Destiny: The New Frontier as an action fantasy theme is in accordance with the Manifest Destiny fantasy type as it outlines a remarkably similar course of direction. The Best and the Brightest and The Round Table fantasy themes also belong in this fantasy type as they portray the leaders, heroes, and the decision-making process for directing the nation. As an action theme promoting social change, The Triumph of Right fantasy theme also coincides with America's Manifest Destiny. The Principle of Valor fantasy theme is also in harmony with this fantasy type as it demands individual participation in America's destiny.

The heroes in this rhetorical vision are clearly the members of the Kennedy Administration. The villains are most noted for disagreeing with the administration and its policies or for challenging the president. These villains include the Soviets and communism, racists and segregation,
and, in general, anyone or any group which did not believe in the optimistic philosophy.

In the rhetorical vision of Camelot, Robert Kennedy is best portrayed as Sir Lancelot. His noble effort that landed him this role was clearly his management of John Kennedy's 1960 presidential campaign. His key role in his brother's political career has been noted by various authors and it is easily understood why Joseph Kennedy insisted that Robert become attorney general in the new administration. However, Robert Kennedy accepted this position only reluctantly and after weeks of deliberation.

As Schlesinger (1978) explained, Joseph Kennedy foresaw the importance of Robert's role as confidant to the new president, but Robert believed he needed to develop his own political identity separate from his brother. The fantasy themes of *The Best and the Brightest* and *The Principle of Valor* are evident in Schlesinger's account of President Kennedy's conversation with his brother Robert concerning this issue:

"If I can ask Dean Rusk to give up a career; if I can ask Adlai Stevenson to make a sacrifice he does not want to make; if I can ask Bob McNamara to give up a job as head of that company--these men I don't even know . . . certainly I can expect my own brother to give me the same sort of contribution. And I need you in this government" (p. 242).
The fantasy role of Sir Lancelot is best illustrated by Schlesinger's account of the president and first lady's acknowledgement of Robert Kennedy's personal sacrifice:

He had tried for a moment to escape his brother and confirm an independent identity. But, if his brother wanted him, he would not say no—a sacrifice of himself to which John and Jacqueline Kennedy responded in their separate styles. For Christmas they gave him a copy of The Enemy Within [authored by Robert Kennedy] handsomely rebound in red leather by a London bookbinder, title and author inscribed in gold. Inside John Kennedy wrote in his en famille vein: "For Bobby—The Brother Within—who made the easy difficult. Jack, Christmas 1960." Above Jacqueline had written: "To Bobby—who made the impossible possible and changed all our lives" (p. 243).

The Public Persona of Robert Kennedy

Robert Kennedy's management of his brother's presidential campaign was perhaps the most important role in shaping his public persona. He was noted for being "ruthless" and for having a single goal—victory. As Newfield (1969) explained:

He directed his brother's 1960 Presidential drive with a single minded intensity. Delegates and rivals were threatened, and Kennedy seemed indifferent to substantive issues of policy. The tactics used to win
the West Virginia primary were ugly and foul. At one meeting of campaign workers Kennedy said, "It doesn't matter if I hurt your feelings. It doesn't matter if you hurt mine. The important thing is to get the job done."

This seems to have been Kennedy's primitive credo, even into the early days of the New Frontier, when employees and public officials could be demoted or exiled if Kennedy doubted their loyalty or energy. There are many legends of Kennedy's rudeness and bullying during this period, and most of them are probably true (p. 30).

Robert Kennedy gained such a reputation from assuming highly-visible, intensely political roles that created many enemies for him. These roles included work on the McClellan committee investigating labor racketeering and his work with Senator Joseph McCarthy. Kennedy's position as attorney general fared him no better. He was described as a "lightning rod" for his brother--often taking the political fallout from unpopular decisions or policies. This role was most evident in the administration's civil rights efforts. Schlesinger notes that Robert Kennedy realized and accepted his role:

Yet Robert Kennedy well understood the function he served. "The President," he said in an interview, "has to take so much responsibility that others should move
forward to take the blame. People want someone higher to appeal to. ... It is better for ire and anger to be directed somewhere else" (p. 622).

This public perception continued through the Kennedy Administration and began to change only after the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963. Although admittingly sentimental in his portrayal of Robert Kennedy, Newfield provides the most insightful account of the changes in Robert Kennedy's persona following the death of his brother. While some observers argue that there really was no change in Robert Kennedy, that he remained "ruthless" and opportunistic in his politics, many historical and biographical accounts suggest otherwise. Newfield begins his memoir of Kennedy by noting:

It would be simplistic and melodramatic to assert that all the changes in Robert Kennedy began with the murder of his brother: Grown men do not undergo total revolutions of politics and personality at the age of thirty-eight. Yet, if the assassination of John Kennedy was a traumatic experience for the entire nation, particularly for the idealistic and innocent young, who can measure its impact on his younger brother, who had no personal goal in his adult life that was not his older brother's goal first? (p. 31). It took months for Kennedy to recover from his brother's death. All biographical accounts note this time
period and Robert Kennedy's grieving. It is argued by many that only after the death of his older brother did Robert Kennedy have to find an identity for himself. The months after the assassination and through 1964 proved personally and politically difficult for him. His role at the Justice Department, once a cornerstone in the administration, was diminished as his relationships with President Johnson and FBI Director Hoover deteriorated. Although public opinion polls indicated that Robert Kennedy was politically popular as a vice presidential candidate with Lyndon Johnson, Johnson informed Kennedy that he would not offer him that position. Robert Kennedy then decided to take the first step toward establishing his own political identity by seeking a United States Senate seat in New York. This too created controversy for him as his family was well established from Massachusetts, and he lived in New York only as a child. Although a candidate for office in the state, Kennedy did not qualify to vote in his own election. The "carpetbagger" issue was more apparent than real, however, and Kennedy defeated Republican Kenneth Keating.

Newfield argues that Kennedy's years from 1965 to 1968 as a junior senator offered him the greatest opportunity for political growth. It was during this time period that Robert Kennedy's public persona evolved from that of a ruthless politician to an American folk hero. This is not
difficult to imagine as these years offered America its greatest opportunity for change.

Although President Johnson experienced success implementing the policies set forth during the Kennedy Administration, the Kennedy legacy plagued him. Johnson was most noted for his success in getting bills passed through Congress and his War of Poverty in particular. He enjoyed popular support as well. As Manchester notes:

At the end of Johnson's second year in office the public opinion surveys reported that no other President in their thirty years of polling had received such strong, consistent support throughout the country. His landslide triumph over Goldwater would have tempted another President to ride roughshod over Congress. Not Johnson . . . The final result was stunning. When the first session of the 89th Congress rose on October 23, it had approved 89 major administration bills and rejected just two . . . (p. 1278).

Yet, despite his triumphs, many did not like nor trust President Johnson. His manner was offensive to many Americans, and his style could not have differed more from that of his predecessor.

Three social and political issues dominated the United States at this time: civil rights, poverty, and the Vietnam War. The unprecedented role of young people underscored the political importance of these issues. Black Sunday in March
of 1965 set the stage for an historic year for the civil rights movement. On March 7, over 600 people, mostly black, marched from Brown's Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Selma, Alabama to the Edmund Pettus Bridge on their way to Montgomery during a voter registration drive. They were met at the bridge by law officers and a posse who, after a two-minute warning to disperse, "waded into them swinging billy clubs and wet bullwhips" (Manchester, p. 1295). The event was witnessed by the news media and television, making it a symbol for the civil rights movement.

One week later, on March 15, President Johnson addressed a joint session of Congress urging passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. In concluding his address, the president invoked the theme of the movement and its leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "We shall overcome."

This year also witnessed the organization of such groups as the Black Panthers and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). These groups fought for Black Power and black racism rather than follow the direction of Dr. King.

No less controversial during this time was the continuing war in Vietnam. As Manchester explains, by this time the war had lasted longer than World War II and the Korean War. Colleges and universities erupted in protest:
It was not all selfless idealism. College students were of the age most vulnerable to conscription, and as monthly draft calls in 1966 were boosted nearly tenfold over the 1965 average of five thousand, blanket deferments for students became rarer. Resistance to the draft was being expressed openly on posters, buttons, and bumper stickers. The theme of a 1967 hit tune, "Alice's Restaurant," was draft evasion, and virtually every undergraduate dormitory had a collection of leaflets providing tips on how to get rejected at Secret Service physical examinations (p. 1315).

The irony of the Johnson Administration's policies on Vietnam became all too evident in January of 1968 as the Viet Cong initiated a series of assaults on all major Vietnamese cities. The American public had been led to believe that success was at hand in Southeast Asia, but the Tet Offensive only proved otherwise. Manchester notes the public reaction:

As David Halberstam later pointed out, the real casualties of the Tet Offensive were "the credibility of the American strategy of attrition" and "the credibility of the man who was by now Johnson's most important political ally"--Westmoreland. If Westmoreland was no longer believable on the war,
neither was Johnson. His administration began to come unstuck (p. 1379).

Finally, Johnson's War on Poverty was losing momentum as more and more federal dollars were absorbed by the war. Urban rioting plagued the country throughout 1967. As Manchester explains: "Altogether rioters struck 114 cities in 32 states. The complete toll would never be known, but there were at the very least 88 deaths, more than 4,000 other casualties, and 12,000 arrests" (p. 1324). President Johnson responded by appointing a commission to study the unrest. It's conclusions were unfavorable to the administration:

At the end of February 1968 the Kerner Commission submitted a powerful report. It portrayed a nation "moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate but unequal" and proposed strong and specific action to reverse the "deepening racial division" . . . "The White House," as Daniel Patrick Moynihan wrote, "would not receive it" (Schlesinger, p. 883).

These social issues and Robert Kennedy's independence from the administration offered him an opportunity for political growth and the evolution of his public persona. During 1966 Kennedy worked toward redevelopment of a New York City slum--Bedford-Stuyvesant--which generated much acclaim. In addition, in February of that year he made his first break with the administration's policies in Southeast
Asia suggesting that the United States would have to negotiate with the North Vietnamese for something other than unconditional surrender. Although other senators and public officials had suggested the same course of action, Kennedy's remarks were taken as un-American by the administration and prompted the Chicago Tribune, and other publications to denounce Kennedy as someone usurping the role of the president. This year marked the most dramatic change in Robert Kennedy's public persona and the official beginning of his disenchantment with the Johnson Administration and its policies.

Polls showed Kennedy to be more popular than the incumbent president. Time, Life, and Newsweek ran cover stories on the senator. As Newfield explains: "Robert Kennedy reached the pinnacle of his popularity during the autumn of 1966. Never again would he hear such cheering--except perhaps for the fifteen days he was running directly against Lyndon Johnson in March of 1968" (p. 185).

White (1969) offers further explanation:

But a void in the public dialogue of America had come about and Robert F. Kennedy had been elected by the press and public to fill it. Whether he willed it or not, a political gravity was drawing him into Presidential consideration--and his problem all through 1967 was to decide his own role, to measure himself (p. 182-183).
His popularity was matched by hatred for him as well. Many believed that Kennedy was too influential in national affairs because of his last name. They saw him as a direct threat to the administration. Every news story about Kennedy seemed to focus on his disagreement with the Johnson Administration. The press played upon the two men's animosity for one another making each story an anecdote in a personal vendetta. Kennedy realized the potential for danger in challenging an incumbent president from one's own party.

It was the potential destruction of the Democratic Party that prevented Kennedy from making the decision to run in 1968 earlier. While Kennedy realized that he represented change from the status quo for the young, the promise of The New Frontier for many others, as well as the hope for the poor and for blacks, Kennedy knew the damage his candidacy could do to the party his family had so long been a part of. These hopes and fears were addressed in his first campaign speech.

Summary

The rhetorical vision of Camelot has been outlined here as including fantasy themes that center on the cardinal virtues of "youth," "courage," "wisdom," and "justice." These fantasy themes include The New Frontier, in response to President Kennedy's new vision of excellence for America; The Best and the Brightest, which notes President Kennedy's
enlistment of the country's brightest minds to lead the nation in his new direction; The Triumph of Right fantasy theme notes the emphasis President Kennedy placed on civil rights and programs for the poor; the fantasy theme of The Round Table notes the now-repeated decision-making process and preparation for news conferences that President Kennedy instituted during his administration; finally, The Principle of Valor fantasy theme notes the emphasis President Kennedy placed on individual participation in government and on volunteerism. Each of these themes are part of the fantasy type Manifest Destiny, a theme inherent in our American history referring to America's destiny of geographic, political, social, and economic expansion.

Robert Kennedy played a key role in the development of John F. Kennedy's political career and, following the president's assassination, became the heir to the myth of Camelot and the Kennedy legacy. Although Robert Kennedy's public persona during the Kennedy Administration was dramatically different from that of President Kennedy's, Robert Kennedy was transformed publicly during the years following the tragedy of November, 1963.

After the disappointing remaining years of the Kennedy-Johnson Administration, Robert Kennedy chose to establish himself politically through his election as the junior senator from New York. It was from this political vantage point, his freedom from the Johnson Administration, and
partly because of the turbulent political times of 1966 to 1968, that Robert Kennedy's public persona was transformed from that of a "ruthless political opportunist" to that of an American folk hero. Robert Kennedy realized the role he and the Kennedy legacy played in American politics and cautiously chose to challenge President Johnson for the presidential nomination in 1968.
CHAPTER III

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter analyzes four selected speeches by Robert F. Kennedy in the 1968 campaign in order to determine his use of the rhetorical vision of Camelot. While the previous chapter identified the fantasy themes and the fantasy type within the rhetorical vision, this chapter critically evaluates campaign messages of Robert Kennedy during the 1968 primary contests to determine whether or not he invoked the rhetorical vision of Camelot and what fantasy themes he developed for his audience. The speeches are analyzed in chronological order of occurrence and are critically evaluated according to the research questions listed on pages 11-13 in Chapter One. Each analysis includes an introduction to the setting for the speech with explanations concerning the prominent characters and their actions.

"Announcement Address"

March 16, 1968

Introduction to the Setting

On Saturday, March 16, 1968, Robert F. Kennedy announced his candidacy for the presidency of the United
States in the caucus room of the Old Senate Office Building, the same room in which John Kennedy announced his candidacy eight years earlier. The setting chosen by Robert Kennedy was symbolic of his late brother's legend.

The timing of this announcement was also important. On March 12, Senator Eugene McCarthy won the New Hampshire primary receiving 42.2 per cent of the vote thus defeating President Lyndon B. Johnson. Following this election, Senator Robert Kennedy noted to the media that he was reconsidering his decision to stay out of the race. Newfield (1969), White (1969), Schlesinger (1978), and Witcover (1988) each assert that Kennedy had made the decision to enter the race prior to the New Hampshire contest and that his candidacy was not based on McCarthy's victory. Nonetheless, it was an important political and personal issue that Kennedy was forced to confront and to offer an explanation for in his announcement address.

Rhetorical Choices

Robert Kennedy portrayed himself as the "keeper of the flame" for the Kennedy legacy and President Lyndon B. Johnson as a threat to Camelot. He repeatedly addressed the controversial nature of his public persona during the speech by developing a scenario in which he characterized himself as a candidate pulled into a race from which he would have otherwise deferred. He explained that the public policies being pursued by the Johnson Administration were the reason
for his candidacy, but he had no personal animosity toward the president.

Robert Kennedy chose to accentuate action rather than persona in this speech so that he might divert criticism for his entry into the race opposing an incumbent president:

"I do not run for the Presidency merely to oppose any man but to propose new policies. I run because I am convinced that this country is on a perilous course. . . . I run to seek new policies--policies to end the bloodshed in Vietnam and in our cities, policies to close the gap that now exists between black and white, between rich and poor, between young and old in this country and around the rest of the world. . . .

I run because it is now unmistakably clear that we can change these disastrous, divisive policies only by changing the men who are now making them."

**Self-Image**

Robert Kennedy portrayed himself as a candidate being pulled into a race that he did not really want to enter. He depicted his candidacy as an action to help his country: "I run because I am convinced that this country is on a perilous course and because I have such strong feelings about what must be done, and I feel that I am obliged to do all I can." He presented himself as strong, confident, and resilient by noting his experience with the office of president: "No one who knows what I know about the
extraordinary demands of the Presidency can be certain that any mortal can fill that position."

Kennedy noted his experience during the Kennedy Administration and as a Senator and then explained to his audience: "I cannot stand aside from the contest that will decide our nation's future and our children's future. . . . The fight is just beginning and I believe that I can win."

Robert Kennedy did not portray himself as a formidable candidate or one to be reckoned with. Instead he chose to downplay his persona and tried to focus on his actions and experience instead.

**Fantasy Themes**

Many of the fantasy themes that Kennedy developed for his audience pertained to the rhetorical vision of Camelot. Most notably, he used *The Triumph of Right, The New Frontier,* and *The Principle of Valor* fantasy themes. While *The New Frontier* outlined a course of direction for the country, *The Triumph of Right* fantasy theme concerned the importance of civil rights and poverty programs and the *Principle of Valor* fantasy theme promoted individual participation in government.

Evidence of these themes can be found in Kennedy's explanation for his candidacy: "I run for the Presidency because I want the Democratic party and the United States of America to stand for hope instead of despair, for reconciliation of men instead of the growing threat of world
war." What America should stand for is a reference to The New Frontier, while his previous explanation of entering the race to save the country from this "perilous course" being pursued by the Johnson Administration is a reference to The Principle of Valor fantasy theme.

Further evidence of the invocation of the rhetorical vision of Camelot is found in Kennedy's conclusion:

"I do not lightly dismiss the dangers and the difficulties of challenging an incumbent President. But these are not ordinary times and this is not an ordinary election.

At stake is not simply the leadership of our party and even of our country. It is our right to the moral leadership of this planet."

Camelot is referred to through Kennedy's use of the words "moral leadership" and "standard bearer" during his speech. Other fantasy themes consistent with the Camelot theme are also developed in the speech.

Kennedy explained that he notified President Johnson and Senator Eugene McCarthy of his decision to enter the race. In addition, he explained that his entrance into each of the remaining primaries was an opportunity for the maximum number of people to vote on his candidacy. By noting this to his audience he wanted to appear to be "playing by the rules." This represents the fantasy theme of Fair Play and is important in a political contest.
Kennedy also used the fantasy theme of *May the Best Man Win* in his explanation of his candidacy as an extension of choice for voters rather than as opposition to other candidates. He explained that by entering the race and joining Senator McCarthy and President Johnson as alternatives for the American voters, he was allowing the voters more choice in determining the future of the country. He noted his support of Senator McCarthy but suggested himself as the better candidate: "Both of us are campaigning to give our forces and our party an opportunity to select the strongest possible standard bearer for the November elections."

**Heroes Motives and Actions**

Robert Kennedy portrayed himself as selfless and as a person not driven by personal motives. He is clearly the hero in this scenario--entering the race against his own best interests and placing the future of the country before himself. In addition, he portrayed himself as a compassionate hero who had listened to the people of the country and understood their needs. Furthermore, he portrayed himself as someone who had tried other methods of changing the course of the country to no avail:

"I have traveled and I have listened to the young people of our nation and felt their anger about the war they are about to inherit."
In private talks and in public I have tried in vain to alter our course in Vietnam before it further saps our spirit and our manpower, further raises the risk of wider war and further destroys the country and the people it was meant to save."

Senator McCarthy is also portrayed as a hero in this speech because of his victory over President Johnson in the New Hampshire primary. He is not, however, the true hero, for he has served to open the race for Kennedy:

"The remarkable New Hampshire campaign of Senator Eugene McCarthy has proven how deep are the present divisions within our party and within our country. Until that was publicly clear my presence in the race would have been seen as a clash of personalities rather than issues.

But now that that fight is won and over policies which I have long been challenging, I must enter that race. The fight is just beginning and I believe that I can win."

Villains Motives and Actions

The villain within this scenario is clearly President Lyndon B. Johnson. Even so, Kennedy was careful not to attack President Johnson by name. Instead, Kennedy attacked the policies being followed by Johnson and the president's lack of action on various social issues:
"I run because it is now unmistakably clear that we can change these disastrous, divisive policies only by changing the men who are now making them. For the reality of recent events in Vietnam has been glossed over with illusions.

The report of the riot commission has largely been ignored.

The crisis in gold, the crisis in our cities, the crisis in our farms and in our ghettos have all been met with too little and too late."

Thus, President Johnson is portrayed as ineffective and a leader who has lost touch with the realities of the times. However, Kennedy was more than careful of offending his audience (which included the press) by noting the President's triumphs as well:

"Finally, my decision reflects no personal animosity or disrespect toward President Johnson. He served President Kennedy with the utmost loyalty and was extremely kind to me and my family in the difficult months which followed the events of November of 1963.

I have often commended his efforts in health, in education, and in many areas, and I have the deepest sympathy for the burden that he carries today."

Characterizations of the Audience and the Community

Robert Kennedy portrayed the community as desperate, divided and searching for leadership. He explained that the
victory of McCarthy in New Hampshire underscored the public's desire for a change in leadership. He noted the despair and isolation felt by members of the community:

"As a member of the Cabinet and a member of the Senate I have seen the inexcusable and ugly deprivations which cause children to starve in Mississippi, black citizens to riot in Watts, young Indians to commit suicide on their reservations because they lacked all hope and they feel they have no future, and proud and able-bodied families to wait out their lives in empty idleness in eastern Kentucky."

As noted in earlier quotations from this address, Kennedy depicted the youth as discouraged by the future and the Vietnam War and the society as a whole as one divided along racial, social, and economic lines. He suggested that he is the unifying force that can pull the country out of Vietnam and reunite the nation.

**Summation**

Robert Kennedy portrayed himself, through the use of the term "standard bearer" and, in his listing of qualifications, as the strongest candidate and as the rightful heir to the Camelot legacy. By invoking his brother's memory and in his explanation of what America should stand for, he reminded his audience of the *Manifest Destiny* fantasy type and fantasy themes such as *The Triumph of Right*. 
Kennedy portrayed his audience as a nation divided along economic and racial lines and one searching for "moral leadership." By describing people as desperate and lacking hope Kennedy underscored the need for new leadership. This need and the plight of the country drew him into a race for the presidency he would have otherwise deferred from. He explained that McCarthy's victory over Johnson illustrated the urgent need for new leadership but suggested that McCarthy was not the strongest candidate or the one best suited to return America to Camelot.

Accordingly, Robert Kennedy portrayed President Johnson as a man who had lost sight of Camelot and what it stood for. Johnson was a villain only as one who refused to accept the realities of Vietnam and the current social condition.

"Elements for a New Foreign Policy"
April 17, 1968

Introduction to the Setting

Before Kennedy could test the validity of his candidacy against President Johnson, Johnson withdrew from the race. In a nationally televised speech on March 31, 1968 President Johnson explained:

"I have concluded that I should not permit the Presidency to become involved in the partisan divisions that are developing in this political year. With
American sons in the fields far away, with America's future under challenge right here at home, with our hopes and the world's hopes for peace in the balance every day, I do not believe that I should devote an hour or a day of my time to any personal partisan causes or to any duties other than the awesome duties of this office--the Presidency of your country. Accordingly, I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your President" (Witcover, p. 128).

Johnson's withdrawal left Robert Kennedy without a villain. Goodwin (1988) notes the impact of Johnson's decision reminiscent of Camelot: "Things would be different now. The knights were still in the field, but the dragon had slain himself" (p. 524). Each of the authors covering the "Kennedy in '68" campaign notes the awkward days following President Johnson's announcement. Robert Kennedy was forced to change his theme and to abandon his pledge not to directly challenge Senator Eugene McCarthy. As Schlesinger explains:

With Johnson's withdrawal, Kennedy and McCarthy had lost their most conspicuous issues: the unpopular President and, to some degree, the increasingly unpopular war, for Johnson had also on March 31 abandoned major escalation and gestured toward negotiation. McCarthy affected to take it calmly and,
for all I know, did. "Bobby has to shoot straight pool now," he told reporters, thereby deflecting attention to his rival. "When he was banking shots off Lyndon it was a different game." McCarthy's jabs often hit home. One felt a certain letdown in Kennedy . . . He had enjoyed the quest. Now, in two weeks, the dragon was slain. There was, for a moment, a loss of steam and theme (p. 910-911).

This dilemma did not have a chance to play out long for the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns, however, as a more dramatic and tragic event shook the nation. Martin Luther King, Jr. had been campaigning for striking garbage workers in Memphis the first week of April and was shot as he stood on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel on April 4th. Word of his death prompted many to violence, as Manchester (1973) notes:

Martin Luther King had been the greatest prophet of nonviolence since Gandhi, and it was the final irony of his life that the end of it should touch off the worst outburst of arson, looting, and criminal activity in the nation's history. In all, 168 cities and towns were stricken. Washington was the worst hit. An incredible 711 fires were set there. "Get your gun," Stokely Carmichael told blacks, and many did (p. 1382). Robert Kennedy was campaigning in Indiana when he heard the news of King's death. He was scheduled to speak to a
rally in a black ghetto in Indianapolis that evening and his advisers questioned whether he should proceed with his plans. Kennedy insisted on going ahead and delivered what many believe to be his most eloquent speech of the campaign.

This speech proved to be a turning point in Kennedy's campaign. He explained to his audience that violence was no longer acceptable and that neither was injustice:

"What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence or lawlessness, but love and wisdom and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country whether they be white or they be black."

Kennedy traveled to Cleveland the following day where he reiterated this theme to the City Club. Kennedy charged that the violence and lawlessness plaguing the nation could no longer be tolerated. More importantly, he charged that the injustice of institutions must be eradicated as well:

"For there is another kind of violence, slower but just as deadly, destructive as the shot or the bomb in the night. This is the violence of institutions; indifference and inaction and slow decay. This is the violence that afflicts the poor, that poisons relations between men because their skin has different colors. This is a slow destruction of a child by hunger, and
schools without books and homes without heat in the winter."

Witcover notes the importance of these speeches to the direction of the Kennedy campaign:

The speech was, in a very real sense, a turning point in the Presidential campaign of Robert Kennedy. The views he expressed he had held for years and had been the motivating force of his domestic position. Yet here and now he identified the violence that comes from a government and a people grown apathetic to the needs and burdens of its poor and its socially shunned . . . From this point forward, Kennedy's campaign took on the theme of racial justice and reconciliation to a degree that made Vietnam almost a subordinate issue. With Johnson out and the peace talks soon to start, it is undeniably true that Kennedy, for political reasons, needed a new emphasis. But he was a professional politician who also listened to his heart, and the death of Dr. King, his ally and friend, drove him inexorably in this direction. From here on, the private Robert Kennedy that his closest friends professed him to be--not strident, not bombastic, but low-keyed and sensitive--increasingly emerged in his public life as a campaigner (p. 145).
Rhetorical Choices

Robert Kennedy echoed these themes of social justice and reconciliation in his address to the group of student and professional journalists of the Sigma Delta Chi Fraternity. He began his speech by telling a story about the Kennedy Administration. The story concerned the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 and the Soviet's request to refuel planes in New Guinea.

Kennedy began the invocation of his brother's legend and the fantasy themes of Camelot immediately in this speech as he developed a scenario for his audience of the past and present America. He explained to his audience that although New Guinea was not allied to the United States, this country still refused permission to the Soviet Union to refuel it's planes while transporting military cargo:

"On the personal appeal of President Kennedy, Toure [the President of New Guinea] nevertheless refused the Soviets permission . . . He did not do this because of anti-Communism. Nor did he do it because he had received great sums of American aid; he had not, and the Soviet Union itself had given assistance to Guinea. Nor was there any alliance or treaty between the United States and the Republic of Guinea. What had helped persuade Guinea of our deep sincerity was our understanding of her deep need for development and progress, recognized in our modest
assistance program. It was our effort to understand Africa's desire to be heard in the councils of the world community. It was our effort to bring justice to black Africans at home—to affirm that African history was no bar to full American citizenship. It was all of these things—and it was much more." By beginning his speech in this manner, Kennedy was able to deflect the true nature of this campaign address. The speech resembled a classroom lecture and Kennedy included the conclusions from a national report to substantiate the scenario he developed for his audience. He never mentioned his villains or heroes by name and represented them only through fantasy themes.

Self Image

Robert Kennedy portrayed himself as a member of the Camelot court. In his depiction of the Kennedy Administration he used third person pronouns such as "we" and "our" to incorporate himself into the fantasy.

He did not portray himself as a candidate running for office or as a challenger of any kind. Only in the last line of his speech did he mention himself: "I come to you today to ask your help in building 'that newer world.' With your support, with your commitment, with your confidence, we will do it."
Fantasy Themes

Most of the fantasy themes developed by Robert Kennedy in this address are from the rhetorical vision of Camelot. All of the fantasy themes coincide with the Manifest Destiny fantasy type which is inherent in American history. Kennedy began invoking the legend of Camelot and developed fantasy themes at the very beginning of his speech with his story concerning the Cuban Missile Crisis. After explaining why New Guinea was so cooperative with the United States, Kennedy invoked The New Frontier fantasy theme:

"In the last analysis, what led Guinea to help us avert war in 1962 was a shared sense of what was right in relations between nations, a sense that an America which contributed its fair share to the quest for peace in the world deserved sympathy and support in a time of threat and danger to our own national security.

In short, America in 1962 did not go to war, because in this and other ways we had practiced the art of peace."

Kennedy developed a scenario for his audience from this story about what America once was (Camelot) and what America had become (Camelot Lost):

"In this experience is a great lesson for the world and for America in 1968. American foreign policy has become identified with power, and in that obsession we had forgotten our purposes. In truth, we are
confronted by an extraordinary paradox. Our military strength and national wealth have multiplied beyond the wildest dreams of our fathers; yet the authority with which we speak, the respect in which we are held diminishes."

Kennedy quoted a commission report to substantiate this scenario and developed a fantasy theme of the Bully on the Block to describe America in 1968:

"By the unilateral exercise of our overwhelming power, we isolated ourselves. To many of our traditional allies and neutral friends, we behaved as a Superpower ignoring our own historical commitment to a 'decent respect for the opinions of Mankind.' The toughest guy in town can now appoint himself sheriff and if he has enough ammunition he may keep the office for a long time, but his control will depend upon fear— and fear is not acceptable to us or the world as the basis of law and order."

Kennedy's use of Camelot fantasy themes is apparent in these passages as he denounces America as the "self-appointed sheriff." Most notably, Kennedy describes the leadership of America as callous and indifferent. It is certainly not the "moral leadership" that Kennedy referred to in the Camelot scenario. The New Frontier fantasy theme and The Triumph of Right fantasy theme are most used in this
analysis of what is proper in the behavior of a world leader and superpower such as the United States.

Throughout Kennedy's plan for a new foreign policy, he invoked the themes from Camelot as well. The fantasy theme of *The New Frontier* is evident in his step-by-step plan in phrases such as: "first is the need to accommodate difference and diversity both at home and abroad;" "let East and West build the bridges of communication, of trade, of culture, of friendship;" and "there are few efforts that could be more effective in restoring the balanced harmony of nations . . ." Kennedy also used this fantasy theme and *The Triumph of Right* fantasy theme to dramatize his message of social justice and reconciliation by suggesting that the "New Frontier" starts at home:

"Finally, and most important, we must recognize that peace in the world means little to us unless we can preserve it at home. We cannot continue to deny and postpone the demands of our own people, while spending millions in the name of freedom for others.

No nation can exert greater influence or power in the world than it can exercise over the streets of its own capital. No government can sustain international law and order unless it can do so at home.

No country can lead the fight for social justice unless its commitment to its own people is credible and determined--unless it seeks jobs and not the dole for
its men, unless it feels anguish as long as many of its children are hungry, unless it believes in opportunity for all its citizens. Our future may lie beyond our vision, but it is not beyond our control."

Other fantasy themes that are apparent in this passage are Leadership by Example and The Buck Stops Here. Finally, Kennedy introduced his own version of The New Frontier to his audience:

"Alfred Lord Tennyson wrote: 'The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks: The long day wanes: the low moon climbs: the deep moans round with many voices. Come, my friends, 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world'."

Heroes Motives and Actions

The hero that Kennedy depicted in this speech is clearly the Kennedy Administration and President John F. Kennedy. His statements regarding why America did not go to war in 1962 are the most striking depiction of President Kennedy's "moral leadership." Phrases such as "quest for peace," and the "art of peace" are referred to as if they were cardinal virtues. These statements depict President Kennedy as a moral leader capable of influencing nations.

Robert Kennedy did not portray himself as a hero outright. Instead, he becomes a hero through his association with the Kennedy Administration.
Villains' Motives and Actions

There are two villains in the scenario Kennedy created in this speech. President Johnson is depicted as one of these villains in Kennedy's portrayal of him as the man who "appointed himself sheriff," and who is running the country and the world only through fear. The second villain in this speech is the Vietnam War:

"Only yesterday, a significant study was released which tells the depth of our problem. The annual survey of the Institute for Strategic Studies—an independent, highly respected research organization—concluded that while American power is growing steadily, American authority and influence in the world is declining. . . . The world's respect for the liberal values of American society has dimmed, and with that loss we have suffered a dimension of our strength which is far beyond the measure of megatons.

There are two inescapable reasons why American influence and prestige have seriously undermined our international position—our overcommitment in Vietnam and our undercommitment at home."

It is important to note that Johnson is never named in this speech and is only referred to by his policies which lost America its prestige and respect at home and abroad. Kennedy suggested his villain through passages like: "American foreign policy has become associated with power;"
"the respect in which we are held diminishes;" "by the unilateral exercise of our overwhelming power, we isolated ourselves;" and "our purposes should command the world respect."

Characterization of the Audience and the Community

Kennedy depicted both the world and the country as searching for leadership. He noted that under President Kennedy the world experienced moral leadership but that it has since lost that direction. By portraying President Johnson and the Vietnam War as the villains, Kennedy also noted the nation as fragmented over the war issue:

"There is no task more important for this country, for this administration and for the next President of the United States than to end the war in Vietnam—to end it honorably, without surrender of our limited interests. And in securing peace, we must give equal priority to reconciling our fragmented nation. In reasserting our commitment to justice and equality at home, we can regain the unity of spirit that is the basic strength of America."

Summation

Robert Kennedy did not address his audience as a candidate or challenger. Offering the conclusions from a national report as evidence, he created a scenario for his audience of America past and present. Kennedy portrayed "America past" as Camelot, noting himself as a hero only in
that he was a part of the Camelot court. "America present" is depicted as a nation lacking moral leadership, ruling the world as a "self-appointed sheriff" and basing its leadership on fear.

The villains are President Johnson and the Vietnam War. Johnson is never mentioned by name but is suggested as the enemy through a fantasy theme portraying him as the Bully on the Block. His policies and leadership are depicted as callous and indifferent. The Vietnam War is mentioned as an enemy as it causes division within the country.

Kennedy portrayed his audience as seeking the moral leadership of the past and the world community as disillusioned with the policies and direction adopted by the present America. He concluded for his audience that the return to Camelot and the moral leadership of the world begins at home. He then invited the audience to join him in "seeking that newer world."

"Program for the Economy"

May 28, 1968

Introduction to the Setting

On April 27, 1968, Vice President Hubert Humphrey announced his candidacy for the Democratic Party nomination. Neither Senator Eugene McCarthy or Senator Robert Kennedy were surprised by the announcement as it was expected after President Johnson's decision to step out of the race.
The first primary to test the candidacy of Robert Kennedy was the Indiana primary held on May 7th. For Kennedy, the primary represented the most important contest as it was the first chance for him to be judged by the electorate. Robert Kennedy understood the importance of the voting public and the crowds he would draw. He had to illustrate his public popularity in a time when nominations rested on the voting of delegates at party conventions. As Schlesinger notes:

Harwood [a writer for the Washington Post] suggested that the crowds were deliberately fomented as a part of "a strategy of revolution, of a popular uprising of such intensity and scale" that the convention would not dare turn Kennedy down. There was something to that. A candidate without organization or delegates had no choice but to demonstrate irresistible popular appeal. "Our strategy," Walinsky said, "is to change the rules of nominating a President. We're going to do it a new way. In the streets." "I have to win through the people," Kennedy told Helen Dudar of the New York Post. "Otherwise I'm not going to win" (p. 902).

Kennedy won the first of these contests with 42 percent of the vote. Senator McCarthy fell to third place behind Indiana Governor Brannigan, a write-in candidate. Robert Kennedy also won the Nebraska primary that followed. The
Kennedy campaign adopted an "ignore McCarthy" campaign in an effort to make the Johnson/Humphrey Administration a more direct enemy. The Kennedy campaign also hoped to enlist the support of McCarthy followers once the Senator dropped out of the race. This proved to be wishful thinking, however, as Senator McCarthy came back to win the Oregon primary that followed using a campaign of personal attacks on Kennedy. As Schlesinger explains, the Kennedy campaign refused to return the strategy:

Kennedy did not strike back. The restraint signified no affection for McCarthy, rather a desire not to antagonize McCarthy's supporters, especially the kids. He hoped to have them with him later. When he challenged anybody, it was Humphrey and his politics of joy. For the rest, he talked about the poor; he talked about jobs; he tried persiflage. None of it worked in Oregon (p. 946).

While people in Oregon were going to the polls to give Senator Kennedy his first defeat in his primary campaign, he flew to Los Angeles to address a group of businessmen. Because of Kennedy's domestic policy stands, business was not his strongest ally. Robert Kennedy saw himself as a voice for the young and for the underprivileged and he expected business to contribute to the rebuilding of urban areas.
Rhetorical Choices

Robert Kennedy chose to appeal to his audience by incorporating business principles and fantasy themes from the business community into his speech. Recognizing his lack of support from an audience such as this, he attempted to characterize the nation and incorporate his proposed policies using business language.

Kennedy did not invoke the rhetorical vision of Camelot or its themes as clearly as he did in the previous speeches. His themes of social justice and reconciliation are not absent, however, as he continued to portray the Johnson Administration and the Vietnam War as villains.

Self Image

Robert Kennedy appeared to be more of a politician in this address:

"... I am pleased to be here today because I believe in American business--I know the potential of business resources and business expertise. And I want to bring those resources and that expertise to bear on this nation's most serious problems. I believe we share a common purpose and we pursue common goals. Our purpose is to build a more prosperous America--for all Americans. Our goal is an economy with the capacity to solve a broad range of our problems."  

He portrayed himself as a practical politician with a heart. While understanding the strengths and importance of
American business, he wanted to utilize those strengths to the betterment of "all Americans." He was clearly asking for their support and their cooperation.

Fantasy Themes

Once again, the fantasy themes within Kennedy's address coincide with the Manifest Destiny fantasy type of America leading the world socially, politically, and economically. He invoked The New Frontier and The Triumph of Right fantasy themes and depicted them in business language:

"The creativity and imagination of American enterprise have produced the highest standard of living in the world--the gross national product soars above $800 billion a year, and corporate profits are headed for record highs. The economic potential is there--and the signs of affluence are all about us: in new products, new machines, new technologies to ease our lives.

... efforts to eliminate poverty must focus far more sharply on measures that put men to work; thus not only assisting them as individuals, but increasing productivity of the economy as a whole. We need intensive new training programs to match the 2.5 million unemployed with the 2 million vacant jobs that now exist. And we need a system of tax incentives to private industry to create new jobs in areas of high unemployment. . . ."
The realization of Camelot and the return to economic vitality are also depicted in the language of business:

"Here, there is much the government can learn from private enterprise. For whatever your diverse approaches to business, you have one thing in common with all successful businessmen—you have set priorities and made certain commitments to your customers, your employees, your stockholders and you have met your commitments. You have divided your possible future plans into those which are necessary and those which are merely desirable, and then carried through as you attained the capacity to do so. Similarly, one great challenge for a nation—and for a President—is to establish an order of priorities, to explain that choice to the people, and to encourage the nation to make necessary commitments."

The business community's fantasy themes of Free Enterprise and Running Government Like a Business are utilized by Kennedy here as he incorporated them into his own fantasy themes from Camelot:

This type of planning and action is familiar to a successful businessman. And it should guide a man in public office as well. For if we are to find working productive jobs for all who seek them; if we are to restore to the American people the sense of destiny and control they have lost—if we are to do these things,
we must marshal our resources carefully, with the deepest sense of purpose and priority. That is a fundamental principle of a sound economy.

And, in fulfilling that principle, we must commit ourselves to spend adequate sums of money on domestic programs of benefit to all of our people. But we cannot fulfill that commitment while massive resources—in money and energy—are diverted to the war. We will not find that capacity unless the men and the resources are brought back home—to be put to work in the business of peace and in the regaining of our economic vitality."

Heroes Motives and Actions

There is no clear hero depicted in the scenario developed by Kennedy. The only suggestion of a hero is someone who can accomplish the goals for the American economy that he outlines. His clearest indication of a hero is in his conclusion where he outlines his goals should he become president:

"This, in the last analysis, is what I seek to do as President of the United States:

To achieve a lasting peace in Vietnam;

To so conduct ourselves abroad that we will not engage in Vietnams again;

To marshal our resources at home so that our growth continues toward a better life for all
Americans, so that those employed are not threatened by the loss of purchasing power and economic vitality, and so those now outside the mainstream of American life find participation and productive labor in this nation.

That is the kind of America we can achieve. With your help, that is the kind of America we shall achieve."

Villains' Motives and Actions

The villains of this scenario are much more evident than the hero. Once again the enemies are President Johnson and his administration's policies, and the Vietnam War. Kennedy portrayed them as enemies to American business:

"But America is faced with serious economic problems. The cost of living rose in March at a 5 percent annual rate across the nation, the highest since 1951, and the increase in California was even greater.

Rising interest rates have made money more costly than it has been since the 1920's and declining bank reserves threaten to make home loans unavailable at any price. Here in California the cost of money for home loans is 15 to 20 percent higher than it was a year ago. The balance of payment deficit is of serious proportions and the dollar is in difficulty."
In outlining his course of action for putting "our economic house in order" Kennedy first listed Vietnam as a major enemy to a successful economy:

"First, it is essential that we bring the war in Vietnam to an end--for this costly war is the underlying problem in our economic crisis. It has twisted the economy out of shape not only by draining $50 billion of our resources, but also by taking 500,000 of our young men who might otherwise be engaged in productive activity instead of the terrible destruction of war. . . So our first task is to resolve this conflict."

He concluded that these failures of the Johnson Administration reveal the administration's basic character flaw: "These steps must be taken. But the present fiscal crisis has also revealed a more fundamental failure--to manage our affairs in a decisive businesslike fashion."

Characterization of the Audience and the Community

The country and the world community are once again portrayed as full of doubt regarding the present administration's policies:

"But even more serious than these particular problems is the result they bring to the nation--for around the nation, and the world as well, there are signs of doubt about our economic policies from the
average citizen to leaders of international finance, there are questions concerning the United States government's response to the serious economic problems America faces."

Kennedy's speech characterized his immediate audience as practical, intelligent people who can serve as examples for government leaders. By characterizing them in a flattering manner, Kennedy sought to incorporate them into his rhetorical vision, gain their support, and have them vote for him.

Summation

This speech did not develop the rhetorical vision of Camelot as clearly as did the announcement address and the speech before college students and professional journalists belonging to the Sigma Delta Chi Fraternity. This is understandable partly because the previous speeches were given to more favorable audiences.

Even so, the business speech did develop the fantasy theme of The Triumph of Right and continued to characterize Americans as searching for leadership. His portrayal of the nation as "lost" is evident in such statements as "for around the nation, and the world as well, there are signs of doubt," and in his appeal for reforms: "For if we are to restore to the American people the sense of destiny and control they have lost . . . "
The Triumph of Right fantasy theme is evident in his language as well. Although addressing an audience that is probably opposed to many of his domestic policy stands, Kennedy noted the importance of these policies anyway. Through the use of statements such as "a better life for all Americans," and "a more prosperous America for all Americans," he notes the importance of helping the underprivileged. In addition, he argued that "efforts to eliminate poverty must focus more on measures that put men to work," and his conclusion stresses this fantasy theme as well.

Robert Kennedy sought to appeal to his audience by stressing the importance of applying business principles to government practices, but he did not abandon his campaign themes because of the nature of his audience. He tried to incorporate them instead. The villain that can be identified in this speech is less clear than the previous speeches. Kennedy illustrated the war in Vietnam and the Johnson Administration's lack of vision for the nation as the villains. He did not offer a clear hero in this address either. It is suggested, however, that someone who can turn the nation onto the new course outlined in the speech is the hero. And as he explains in his conclusion, he is that man: "That is the kind of America we can achieve. With your help, that is the kind of America we shall achieve."
"Victory Statement"
June 4, 1968

Introduction to the Setting

Following his defeat in Oregon, Kennedy headed back to California, where on June 4th, the last of the primaries would be held. Victory in California and South Dakota (also voting on June 4) was crucial, as Witcover explains:

Although the Oregon defeat was a crushing blow, an impressive Kennedy victory in California, enabling him to pick up 172 of the state's 174 delegate votes, would not be dismissed out of hand by the party brokers in the other major states. And a powerful demonstration of Kennedy power in California's cities, rooted in his have-not coalition, would all but assure the party a similar base in key northern industrial areas in November. It had become a political cliché that California was a microcosm of the country, with its industrial, agricultural, racial, ethnic, and cultural mix... He who established political strength there in a test at the polls brought a persuasive argument to the party convention. Coupled with his own New York, largest of the delegations with 190 votes, Kennedy would have 28 percent of the 1,323 votes needed for the nomination from these two states alone (p. 227). Kennedy made the importance of the California primary clear through interviews in which he suggested that the June
4th election would determine the Democratic Party's nominee. His emphasis was made more dramatic when he suggested that should he not win in California, he would drop out of the race. This proved unnecessary, however, as Kennedy gathered 46.3 percent of the vote on election day.

Rhetorical Choices

Although Robert Kennedy's statement to his supporter's was brief, he nonetheless developed a scenario of the political process as belonging to the people, complete with fantasy themes, heroes, and villains. He characterized his victory as a representation of the success of the political process and challenged Vice President Hubert Humphrey as a villain who had not adequately participated in the democratic process. Like many victory speeches do, this victory statement also noted the importance of unity in overcoming the obstacles of the general election.

Self-Image

Robert Kennedy portrayed himself as strong, confident, and resilient characterizing himself as the victor and the chosen standard bearer:

"In the primaries up to now he [Senator McCarthy] and I have sought the popular judgement as to which of us should lead the forces of change. That decision has now been made. For it is clear tonight, as it has been for some time, that only the victor in the California primary could hope to win the Democratic nomination."
Fantasy Themes

Robert Kennedy did not invoke the major themes from the rhetorical vision of Camelot. Instead, the fantasy themes he invoked were representative of the democratic political process. Most notably, Kennedy invoked the fantasy themes of *Power to the People*, *Fair Play*, *United We Stand*, and *David and Goliath*. The *Power to the People* fantasy theme is utilized by Kennedy in his depiction of the successful McCarthy campaign and his own candidacy:

"If there is one clear lesson of this political year it is that the people of this country wish to move away from the policies which have led to an endless war abroad and to increasing unrest in our own country. Senator McCarthy demonstrated this in New Hampshire and Wisconsin. He and his supporters deserve the gratitude of this nation for the courageous fight which helped break the political logjam and demonstrated the desire for change and helped make citizen participation into a new and meaningful force of our political life. . . ."

"To those who have supported Senator McCarthy I have only this to say: You have fought well for the principle in which you believed. In my judgement, I now remain the only candidate who can be nominated who is in substantial agreement with those principles. . . ."
This fantasy theme and the fantasy theme of *Fair Play* are used by Kennedy in his condemnation of Vice President Humphrey:

"Vice President Humphrey now appears to be leading the contest for the nomination. Yet I do not think he will be successful. In every primary—in Wisconsin and Indiana, Nebraska and Oregon, California and South Dakota—the people have rejected by more than four to one those slates of delegates committed to the Johnson-Humphrey Administration. More than eighty percent of the vote has gone to Senator McCarthy or myself, although we both reject those policies which the Vice President so fervently advocates.

I cannot believe that the Democratic Party will nominate a man whose ideas and programs have been so decisively rejected. Yet the Vice President apparently believes he can win the nomination without once submitting his case to the people. I do not believe the Presidential nomination can be a private affair. Yet the Vice President refused to enter his name in primaries, while helping delegates opposed to my candidacy. He has refused to participate in any direct confrontation on the issues. Certainly the Vice President cannot hope to be nominated without once discussing the important problems of this country with
his opponents without subjecting himself, if not by popular vote, to a popular judgement."

And, finally, in speaking to McCarthy supporters, Kennedy portrayed his candidacy against Humphrey as that characterized in the fantasy themes *David and Goliath* and *United We Stand* asking for their support:

"Yet the forces arrayed against this position are so powerful, I do not believe I can be successful without your help and support. I ask this, not for myself, but for the cause and the ideas which moved you to begin this great popular movement. If we are divided then those who will benefit are those who wish to keep the policies of the past five years. The Vice President has said he will step aside. For unlike the Vice President, I do not believe that course is best for the country nor is it the course the people want to pursue. With you I know we can keep faith with the American need and the American desire for peace and justice and for a government dedicated to giving the people mastery over their own affairs and future."

**Heroes Motives and Actions**

Robert Kennedy clearly depicts himself as the hero in this address. He characterized himself as the only candidate capable of leading the "popular movement" for change. In addition, Senator Eugene McCarthy is depicted as a hero for his efforts in starting the movement for change.
Villains' Motives and Actions

The villain in this speech is as clearly identified as the heroes. Vice President Hubert Humphrey and the Johnson-Humphrey Administration are the enemies according to Kennedy. Humphrey is characterized as a villain because he supports the policies of the Johnson Administration and has not participated in the democratic process by running in the primaries. Not only is he a villain for not "playing by the rules," his policies and actions are at fault as well.

Characterizations of the Audience and the Community

Kennedy portrayed his immediate audience as victors and as heroes for the popular movement they successfully created. The country is characterized as divided and disenchanted as it has been throughout his campaign: "With you I know we can keep faith with the American need and the American desire for justice and for a government dedicated to giving people mastery over their own affairs and future."

Summation

This address did not invoke the major themes identified in the rhetorical vision of Camelot. Fantasy themes consistent with Camelot were apparent, however, and included themes representative of the American democratic process. These themes included Fair Play, Power to the People, United We Stand, and David and Goliath. Robert Kennedy portrayed himself as strong and confident and suggested that he was
the only person who could lead the popular movement first started by the McCarthy campaign.

He characterized himself as a hero and Senator McCarthy and McCarthy supporters as heroes because of their actions. These actions were the successful student movement and victories over the Johnson Administration's policies as represented by the primary vote. President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey are the villains. Johnson is a villain because of his policies. Humphrey is a villain for supporting those actions and for his failure to face opposition through debating or running in a primary. He is depicted as a political candidate who does not "play by the rules."

The immediate audience was characterized as heroes for the Kennedy and McCarthy successes that they made possible. However, as in previous speeches, Kennedy portrayed the community as divided and seeking new leadership.

Summary

Robert Kennedy did indeed invoke the rhetorical vision of Camelot during his campaign speeches of 1968. From this analysis, it appears that this invocation of fantasy themes representative of Camelot was more apparent in his first campaign speeches than in his last ones. This may be because of confidence gained by Kennedy through his victories and the public support demonstrated for him. In
addition, favorable audiences to Kennedy were more likely to hear these fantasy themes.

Kennedy portrayed himself as strong, confident, and resilient throughout his campaign by noting his ability to win and his political experience. He also characterized himself as compassionate through his overriding themes of social justice and reconciliation. He continually focused on his actions rather than on his persona. Yet, his persona became an important dimension of the campaign because of the Kennedy-Camelot myth.

Throughout the speeches analyzed here, the villain remained President Johnson and his administration's policies. Vice President Humphrey took on the role of villain in Kennedy's rhetorical vision upon his entrance into the race. In Kennedy's victory speech he characterizes Humphrey as a villain not only for supporting the Johnson Administration's policies, but for not "playing by the rules" because he did not participate in any primary contests.

The nation and the world community are described by Kennedy as divided along racial and economic lines. The world community is depicted as disillusioned with American foreign policy and the national community is characterized as disenchanted with the political leadership of President Johnson. Robert Kennedy offers himself as the candidate who
can unify the country, restore prestige both at home and abroad, and return America to Camelot.
CHAPTER IV

THE CHAINING OF CAMELOT

Introduction

Because fantasy theme analysis is based on symbolic convergence theory which assumes that language creates reality for individuals, the success of a speech or a speaker can be determined by the audience's adoption of the rhetorical vision presented by the speaker. Adoption or acceptance of the rhetorical vision is discovered through evidence of "chaining" of the speaker's message by the audience, the media, and the public-at-large. As O'Donnell (1987) explains:

The rhetorical critic can learn much about an audience through fantasy theme analysis. . . . If the audience responds with enthusiasm, the critic recognizes that the people may share the fantasy themes and the rhetorical vision. . . . In order for the audience to agree with the speaker's arguments, there also has to be agreement with a common set of assumptions about the nature of social reality and an acceptance that the rhetorical vision has a chance of being implemented. In other words, the audience needs
to interpret the vision as related to success in achieving its goals (p. 9).

This chapter focuses on the analysis of chaining by the public and by the media of the rhetorical vision of Camelot offered by Robert Kennedy as illustrated in the previous chapter. Evidence of the chaining process throughout the three-month primary campaign is presented with audience response to the speeches analyzed in Chapter Three included wherever possible. In addition, the motive of the campaign is discussed and the importance of Robert Kennedy's persona to the overall campaign strategy is interpreted as well.

Motive

The prime motive of any political campaign is to win an election. In order to do so, the campaign adopts a guiding theme that incorporates the rhetoric of the campaign including speeches, advertisements, and campaign paraphernalia such as buttons and stickers. Using fantasy theme analysis, the critic can discover the prominent motive theme in the campaign rhetoric. As Foss (1989) explains, a speaker's motive can be discovered by categorizing the fantasy themes presented by the rhetorician into action, setting, or persona. Once categorized, the critic determines which category is most predominant in the speaker's rhetoric (p. 296).

Bormann (1973) suggests the importance of this in terms of political campaigns. In his analysis of the 1972
campaign of George McGovern, Bormann explains that campaigns choose whether to focus on a candidate's personality in their campaign (persona), on the candidate's record or proposed policies (action), or on the political climate within which the campaign is taking place (setting). As Bormann notes: "No political campaign begins with a blank slate. Each party in a campaign has a well-defined rhetorical vision which gives its members a sense of identity which provides the basic assumptions upon which the party campaigns" (p. 369).

He concludes in his analysis of the McGovern campaign that the campaign strategists chose to promote their candidate's persona. In their rhetoric, they portrayed the candidate as highly moral and above the "old politics" of the past as represented by other candidates who had run before, including Hubert Humphrey. Bormann cites the 1968 campaign of Eugene McCarthy as another campaign focusing on a candidate's persona with the "clean Gene" theme.

However, Bormann notes, the 1972 Nixon campaign staff had to choose a different emphasis in theme because of the controversial nature of their candidate. Because of the "tricky Dick" theme developed by his opponents during President Richard M. Nixon's first term in office, the Nixon campaign staff chose to downplay persona and instead chose to emphasize action in its rhetorical vision. Campaign
rhetoric was designed to illustrate the president in action, meeting world leaders, and "acting" as president.

Following these guidelines offered by Bormann, I have concluded that the "Kennedy in '68" campaign staff was forced to emphasize action rather than persona in the campaign rhetoric. Because Robert Kennedy was so controversial as a public figure, inspiring not only public adoration but public hatred as well, the campaign rhetoric could not focus on his persona. Instead, the Kennedy campaign staff chose to emphasize action in its themes. This is evident in The Triumph of Right and The Principle of Valor fantasy themes which were utilized most by Robert Kennedy from the rhetorical vision of Camelot.

The Triumph of Right fantasy theme referred to the importance of public policies and programs for society's underprivileged. During Robert Kennedy's 1968 campaign, these supporters were coined his "have-not" coalition. The Principle of Valor fantasy theme was a direct reference to President Kennedy's emphasis on individual participation in government and volunteerism. Robert Kennedy repeatedly confronted his audiences by suggesting to college students their hypocrisy in denunciation of the Vietnam War as they fled to school while many blacks and poor people who could not afford college were forced to serve in Vietnam. He also charged that medical school students should donate their time to working in clinics in poor areas.
It should be noted that most of the fantasy themes of Camelot and the fantasy type of Manifest Destiny focus on action rather than persona. Even Robert Kennedy's own theme of To Seek a Newer World is an action fantasy theme.

Persona

Although the rhetoric of the "Kennedy in '68" campaign was centered on action, the positive aspect of Kennedy's persona was also utilized by the campaign. Newfield (1969) notes that Fred Dutton, one of Robert Kennedy's campaign managers, believed the key to a Kennedy victory lay in their ability to get the candidate to the people. He notes the success of this strategy:

But, gradually, Fred Dutton's notion that Kennedy in the flesh was more appealing than Kennedy's image in type, or on television, was being confirmed. He began to go back again and again to places like Terre Haute, and each time the crowds were bigger and warmer (p. 284).

The Kennedy campaign staff also realized the importance of demonstrating their candidate's popularity to delegates and political powerbrokers who would control the Democratic convention. They planned the candidate's public appearances always keeping this in mind. Bormann, in his analysis of the McGovern campaign, emphasizes the importance of such planning to the success of a political campaign:
The contemporary strategist for mass audiences needs to be skilled at estimating the response of the mediating professionals and should draft messages, select time, scene, and persona with a view to getting the fantasy themes likely to chain dramas persuasive to his position on prime-time evening news (p. 377). And, as Witcover (1969) noted in his coverage of the "Kennedy in '68" campaign, the Kennedy advance people well understood their strategy and applied it like an art:

Advancing on a Kennedy trip was seldom poor, especially if Jerry Bruno was in charge. A veteran of the 1960 campaign of John Kennedy, Bruno's cardinal rule was to select a site for a speech or rally that for certain would be filled or--preferably--overfilled. A large stadium or auditorium usually was rejected... (p. 158).

David & David (1969) also note the effective planning of the Kennedy campaign staff:

In places where enthusiasm was not quite so wild, the fertile brain of Richard Tuck, one of Kennedy's traveling assistants, made it appear greater than it was by his invention of the "spaghetti barricade."

Prior to the arrival of the candidate, Tuck would have fences erected in areas where Kennedy would appear, strong enough to look like fences but so fragile that a crowd pushing forward could easily knock
them down and surge forward. The sight of masses of people breaking through barricades to get at Bobby made superb television and newspaper shots (p. 313).

Robert Kennedy in-and-of himself generated emotional response from his audience. After all, he was a member of the Kennedy family and did possess personal characteristics and mannerisms similar to those of John F. Kennedy. As one account of the campaign noted, Kennedy capitalized on this personal appeal:

The light touch was only one element in the Kennedy strategy. Far more than his sense of humor, he relied on the use of his body as a pop icon to be paraded through the streets on the rear deck of a convertible, up for grabs by the faithful. As Foss explains, nonverbal symbols and gestures as well as language can invoke emotional response from an audience and is therefore evidence of a shared fantasy:

When people have shared a fantasy theme, they have charged that theme with meanings and emotions that can be set off by an agreed-upon cryptic symbolic cue. This may be a code word, phrase, slogan, or nonverbal sign or gesture. These serve as allusions to a previously shared fantasy and arouse the emotions associated with that fantasy. . . . Frequent mention of a theme, a narrative, or an analogy in a variety of messages in different contexts by public officials, for
example, may signal the existence of a theme that has caught on among the public (p. 294).

Chaining

While public support of Robert Kennedy began after the assassination of John F. Kennedy, he did not automatically receive such support once he entered the 1968 presidential race. While I have concluded that Robert Kennedy invoked the theme of Camelot and the legacy of his late brother during his announcement address, reaction by the press to his announcement was rather cold. Following his speech in the Senate caucus room, the candidate fielded questions from reporters covering the press conference. Although Kennedy had emphasized his decision to run as one based on the policies being pursued by rather than a personal animosity toward President Lyndon B. Johnson, many in the press indicated that they were unconvinced by this reasoning. In addition, many of the press insinuated that his sudden announcement, following McCarthy's New Hampshire victory, was merely opportunistic. As Witcover, a reporter covering the campaign, noted:

It was a logic that did not go down well. . . .

It went on like that, [the press questioning Kennedy's motives] with Kennedy hard pressed to make his case, to the end. It was doubtful, when it was over, that he had made believers of many in the room who still
thought the timing and manner of his entry was "ruthless," no matter how he rationalized it (p. 89).

Schlesinger (1978) further notes the animosity surrounding Kennedy's entry into the race. He quotes an advertisement written by two American historians and placed in the New York Times on March 20, 1968 denouncing Robert Kennedy: "The movement that has made Senator McCarthy its symbol exemplifies rationality, courage, morality. The movement Senator Kennedy commands exemplifies irrationality, opportunism, amorality" (p. 898). Schlesinger confides that, "even those of us who anticipated an outburst were astonished by its virulence" (p. 899). This poor reaction to Kennedy's announcement is further evidenced by quotes such as this one from historian Barbara Tuchman:

Nothing could more disillusion the youth whose faith in the democratic process . . . McCarthy has rekindled than to see succeed the cynicism and opportunism of a man who had not the courage to make the attempt himself and enjoys his brother's name as his main support. 9

Witcover notes that the press' assessment of Kennedy's late entry into the race as merely opportunistic was further demonstrated by the questions posed to him the following day during his appearance on the NBC News Show "Meet the Press:"

Four prominent political reporters--David Broder of the Washington Post, columnist Robert Novak, Tom
Wicker of the *New York Times* and Sander Vanocur of NBC News—tore him apart on the very point he so wished to avoid—his "ruthless" entry into the race (p. 93). And, finally, a quote from *Time* magazine encapsulates these feelings and illustrates chaining of Camelot as well. Under a headline of "The Politics of Restoration," the article notes: "By this reckoning, Robert Kennedy is the spoiled dynasty, reclaiming the White House as a legacy from the man he regards as a usurper."

While these clippings would suggest that Robert Kennedy undertook his 1968 campaign for President under a cloud of resentment and pessimism, this was not entirely true. The press, overwhelmingly, responded to his announcement in a negative way. However, some press coverage was positive, and the public reaction was clearly positive.

Under the headline: "We Want Camelot Again," *Newsweek* ran a story of Kennedy's announcement that included these passages:

It was a rambling but affecting performance. Wearing a conservative regimental tie and a less-shaggy-than-usual hairdo, Kennedy groped for words—trying to rekindle the old New Frontier torch . . . That new direction, plainly, would be a Kennedy restoration.

Five thousand letters, telegrams and telephone calls flooded RFK's tiny (he is, after all, low on the
Senate seniority list) Capital Hill office, all but a fraction pledging support. (Sample, from a fan in Evanston, Ill.: "Please reconvene the round table. We want Camelot again."

Kennedy was at his best for his big moment—projecting fervor and determination in his statement of candidacy, then fielding questions in a rather harum-scarum press conference with wit and discretion.

And, although he never once mentioned JFK, he repeatedly evoked his brother's memory, as when, thrusting out his right forefinger, he intoned: "I think we can do better."

And so, the moment millions had been anticipating ever since the assassination of John F. Kennedy, four years, three months and twenty-three days before had finally come. Robert Kennedy was embarked on his quest for the Restoration.

The crowds Kennedy drew in 1966 during the height of his popularity as a public figure returned following his entry into the race in 1968. Although the media responded negatively to the manner in which Robert Kennedy began his campaign, his public support was not deterred by this
reaction. As Witcover, traveling with the newly-announced candidate explains, "The crush began at once—the crush that had been Kennedy's since the assassination of his brother.

At every turn, the hands were outstretched to shake his, or to touch him" (p. 90). This emotional response was most notable during one of Kennedy's first campaign trips to Kansas, where he would speak to students at two college campuses. Witcover provides a telling account of Kennedy's trip there:

The Kansas stop had not been scheduled as a rally, but as a transfer point. Kansas' Democratic Governor Robert Docking's private plane was waiting for the Senator and Ethel, who had met him there. But by happenstance or good surreptitious advance work, a turnout worthy of a general-election campaign for the Presidency was on hand. . . . At Topeka, it was more, considerably more of the same. . . . Stan Mitchell, a broad-chested farmer who shook the candidate's hand at the airport fence, was asked how he felt about the way Kennedy had entered the race, on McCarthy's heels and all that. "I don't care how he got in," Mitchell said. "Just so he got in." . . . In all the days yet to come in the campaign of Robert Kennedy, few were to exceed in emotionalism the next one—Monday, March 18—in the State of Kansas (p. 97-100).
The emotional response of the audience, the invocation of the shared fantasy themes, and further evidence of the chaining process was also evident during Robert Kennedy's California campaign appearances that first week of his primary campaign. As Witcover describes the events:

And the crowd, for its part, contributed to the spirit of the New Frontier resurrected. At the Sacramento Airport, a sign read: CALL THE ROLE AT THE ROUND TABLE. CAMELOT WILL COME AGAIN. . . . And at a shopping center in suburban Sacramento, another said: CONTINUE THE NEW FRONTIER (p. 112).

He also describes the physical characteristics and gestures of Robert Kennedy which contributed to the emotional response:

The familiar Kennedy profile and gestures, the rising New England voice, the heavy repetition of phrase, the unruly forelock and the hand absently brushing it back in midsentence—all these invoked memories of his late brother, and he did nothing to discourage that reaction with phrases such as "this is a time to begin again, and that is why I ask your help, and that is why I run for President" (p. 112).

Robert Kennedy's popularity proved his biggest asset during the campaign. However, following President Johnson's announcement on March 31, 1968 of his withdrawal from the race, Kennedy once again was the target of much hostility.
The media continued the themes of "ruthlessness" and "opportunism" and referred to Kennedy's staff and his noted supporters as the "old Kennedy mafia." A Louis Harris poll conducted in Indiana prior to that state's primary is indicative of this negative image of Robert Kennedy:

Like his brother John in the 1960 primaries, Bobby is also controversial. But the focus of the controversy is entirely different. Eight years ago, John Kennedy's campaign was plagued with doubts about his religion, his youth and his money. Today, criticism of Robert Kennedy centers on his personality. A majority of Hoosier Democrats, 60 per cent, called him an "opportunist." Over a third thought he was "too ambitious," and over a quarter said he was "too arrogant and ruthless." Another account of Kennedy's campaign appearances suggests Robert Kennedy's knowledge of his image and his attempt to dispel it:

His manner was invariably self-deprecating. Ruthless? He waited like a schoolboy to be introduced on the platforms and hinterland courthouse steps. And when he spoke, it was always tentatively, modestly and with deadpan jokes that turned on himself. An account of the campaign in Time magazine is illustrative of the chaining of the rhetorical vision of Camelot and Robert Kennedy's knowledge of how the media was
portraying him. Under the headline of "The Camelot Kids," the article stated:

And he had but to toot the trumpet to assemble such erstwhile Camelot trustees. . . .

He also ceased invoking Jack's memory. His very presence is enough to invoke the old mystique anyway, and the press, which had given Bobby a bad time for the way in which he entered the race, was quick to pick up on his obvious use of New Frontierisms. . . .

Despite the hostility that he arouses, Kennedy had intangible and invaluable advantages. Kennedy is still Kennedy. He has the capacity to make the past seem better than it ever was, the future better than it can possibly be.

Further evidence can be found even today in a current issue of Newsweek magazine. In an advertisement within the magazine for itself, the copy reads: "Reach out and touch a hero. Newsweek did." The ad shows a picture of Robert Kennedy campaigning during the 1968 election on the back of his convertible car with people reaching for him.

In discovering the chaining process during the Kennedy campaign, it is important to note the reaction of Robert Kennedy's opponent, Senator Eugene McCarthy, to the rhetorical vision of Camelot. The epitome of chaining evidence is found in an interview with Senator McCarthy
during the Oregon primary in which McCarthy conducted his campaign of personal attacks against Kennedy:

"Well, we use the same old rhetoric, at least in his campaign. No new language--'We're going to do better, We're going to get the country moving, We're going to do more'--but beyond that, no specification as to which way the country's going to move, or what we're going to do more of, or what or how we're going to do better."

And really he's brought no new politicians to the scene. We've brought back Pierre Salinger from retirement. It's rather amazing where all the Knights of the Round Table went in the interim, and what they did. Ted Sorensen's come back. He's not exactly a new politician. . . ." (Witcover, p. 216)

This theme is further evidenced by another news account of the Kennedy campaign following his Oregon defeat: "All Kennedy's horses and all Kennedy's men undoubtedly will be able to put his preprimary West Coast operations together again."16

Inside Jokes

Finally, evidence of inside jokes during the campaign is offered by Witcover. Reporters covering the Kennedy campaign during the Indiana primary contest were invited to join the candidate on an old-fashioned whistle-stop tour through the state. The Kennedy campaign staff leased a
train to follow the old route of the Wabash Cannonball in an effort to promote campaign coverage by the media. This proved to be one of the highlights of the campaign, according to Witcover, and served as a learning experience for the reporters as well:

At each stop, Kennedy would work his way into his serious message of a new and better America, and would close with a favorite quotation he had been using from the start of the campaign. It was a loose paraphrase from Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, that Jack Kennedy had invoked in addressing the Irish Parliament in the summer of 1963. In the Robert Kennedy version it went: 'Some men see things as they are and say, 'Why?' I dream things that never were and say, 'Why not?'' Whenever newsmen heard Kennedy tell his audience, "As George Bernard Shaw once said--" they knew he was winding up and it was time for them to get back aboard. But at one of the train stops, he omitted the cue ending and several members of the press corps were stranded. En route to the next stop, Warren Rogers of *Look* magazine was dispatched to make sure the omission didn't happen again (p. 161-162).

In addition, this trip provided inspiration for several musically-inclined press corps members:

While the Senator and Ethel relaxed in the last car and the Kennedy children roamed through the
train . . . several of the reporters who regularly covered Kennedy were busy in the club car composing their own version of "The Wabash Cannonball:"

O listen to the speeches that baffle, beef and bore
As he waffles through the woodlands, and slides along the shore.
He's the politician who's touched by one and all.
He's the demon driver of The Ruthless Cannonball.
He came down to Logansport one sunny April day.
As he pulled on through the depot you could hear those Hoosiers say,
He's the heir apparent, full of chutzpah, full of gall.
I'll bet he wants our helpin' hand on The Ruthless Cannonball.
His Eastern states are dandy, so all nice people say,
From Boston to Virginny, and New York by the way.
The Blacks in Gary love him, the Poles will fill his hall
There are no ethnic problems on The Ruthless Cannonball.
There goes Roger Branigin, [sic] the Hoosier's favorite son.
He doesn't want the office, he only wants to run.
His highballin' days are over, he's riding for a fall.
They're noted for long memories on The Ruthless Cannonball.
Now good clean Gene McCarthy came down the other track. A thousand Radcliffe dropouts all massed for the attack, But Bobby's bought the right-of-way from her back to St. Paul, 'Cause money is no object on The Ruthless Cannonball. Old Hubert's got Bug Business, Big Labor and Big Mouth, Aboard the Maddox Special, a'comin' from the South. Lyndon's got him preachin', so ecu-meni-call, But soon he'll be a'heavin' coal on The Ruthless Cannonball. So here's to Ruthless Robert, may his name forever stand, To be feared and genuflected at by pols across the land. Old Ho Chi Minh is cheering, and though it may appall, He's whizzing to the White House on The Ruthless Cannonball (p. 162-163). Witcover notes that the "Kennedy's took the saga in good spirits" and requested a copy of the song: "And when cries of 'Speech! Speech!' went up from the reporters, the candidate paused for quiet, fixed his much publicized 'cold blue eyes' on the authors, and intoned: 'As George Bernard Shaw once said--The same to you, sideways" (p. 163).
Summary

These passages from news accounts, reporters diaries, and personal notations by Kennedy intimates clearly illustrate the chaining process of the rhetorical vision of Camelot as presented during Robert Kennedy's 1968 campaign. Kennedy succeeded in portraying himself as the heir apparent to the legacy of Camelot, and, in creating a sense of community for those who shared the fantasy themes.

The emotional response generated during the "Kennedy in '68" campaign was the candidate's greatest asset. Recognizing this, Robert Kennedy refused tighter security measures for himself during the campaign that might prevent people from getting close to him and making personal contact. People would subsequently grab at him and often pull off his cuff links, and some even went so far as to remove his shoes in their enthusiasm.

Kennedy's supporters seemed to believe that he could resurrect Camelot and the lofty ideals it represented. The media interpreted the campaign rhetoric as such using phrases like "the politics of restoration" in its reporting of the Kennedy campaign. It appears from this analysis that those who shared the fantasy of Camelot hoped to return to more stable and less turbulent political times and to have as president someone who was capable of setting a national agenda and promoting it rhetorically as President John F. Kennedy was able to do. Many, disillusioned by the
political and social crises of the times, sought new leadership.

The dramatization by the media of Robert Kennedy's campaign rhetoric offering new direction for the country clearly chained out into the public. However, while the Kennedy campaign staff tried to down play the persona of their candidate with campaign themes based on action, it was clearly the persona of Kennedy which chained out to the public. The effect of this chaining process and evidence of its strength is illustrated by the incorporation of the rhetorical vision of Camelot into Senator Eugene McCarthy's campaign attacks against Kennedy. Evidence of the rhetorical vision of Camelot altering the social reality of the community is clear in statements by news sources such as that noted earlier: "He [Kennedy] has the capacity to make the past seem better than it ever was, the future better than it can possibly be."
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The legacy of Camelot is identified by Golden (1986) as one of the "principle legacies directly traceable to John F. Kennedy's personality thrust and actions as seen in the period of his short term as president" (p. 70). This theme is evident in American politics and has been a subject of interest for scholars from various disciplines. According to Golden, the theme of Camelot gained strength following the assassination of Kennedy and influenced the political careers of Robert and Edward Kennedy. Following the assassination of President Kennedy in November of 1963, Robert Kennedy was described as the heir apparent to the Camelot legend.

The resurrection of this legend seemed near at hand in the spring of 1968 when Robert Kennedy announced his candidacy for president. While many Americans viewed Robert Kennedy as ruthless and as a man motivated only by power, others were drawn to him in much the same way as they had found themselves fascinated by President Kennedy. Although authors have noted the importance of the political theme of Camelot in American politics and the impact it had on the political future of Robert Kennedy, no analysis had been
made as to whether Robert Kennedy employed the myth rhetorically for political purposes.

This study has critically analyzed four selected campaign speeches by Robert Kennedy from his 1968 campaign to determine his use of this myth and his success in portraying himself as the heir apparent to the Kennedy legend. Using procedures adapted from fantasy theme analysis, the rhetorical vision of Camelot was outlined, and the fantasy themes and fantasy types within it were determined.

Fantasy theme analysis is founded on symbolic convergence theory which assumes that language creates reality for individuals. Bormann (1972) introduced this theory and suggested that people's meanings for symbols can "converge" when they interpret some aspect of their experience in the same way. A speaker presents an interpretation of reality through fantasy themes and fantasy types familiar to the audience and motivates them to some form of action. Like a drama, the rhetorical vision includes the portrayal of characters as heros and villains.

The major fantasy themes discovered within the rhetorical vision of Camelot through this analysis were named in accordance with the Arthurian myth and the presidential administration of John F. Kennedy from 1961-1963. These themes include The New Frontier, named after President Kennedy's inaugural address theme which outlined a
vision of progress for the nation. The Best and the Brightest, a term coined by David Halberstam, is the name of the fantasy theme which depicted well-educated men from all disciplines being called upon by Kennedy to work in his administration. The Triumph of Right fantasy theme concerned the Kennedy Administration's emphasis on social programs and civil rights action, and The Principle of Valor fantasy theme is named after the Arthurian myth as well and refers to President Kennedy's challenge to citizens to take an active part in their government and his emphasis on volunteerism. In addition, the noted decision-making process introduced by Kennedy is the basis for The Round Table fantasy theme. Each of the fantasy themes identified here are determined to be part of the Manifest Destiny fantasy type. America's Manifest Destiny was a prominent theme in the nineteenth century as it outlined a vision for American progress including economic, political, and geographic expansion. John F. Kennedy offered a new version for progress which he titled The New Frontier, but in many ways it was merely the Manifest Destiny philosophy retitled.

The public persona of Robert Kennedy has also been evaluated as it evolved from the assassination of President Kennedy to Robert Kennedy's own presidential campaign of 1968. Although Robert Kennedy was perceived as ruthless and as a political opportunist during the Kennedy Administration, he became an American folk hero following
his brother's death. He reached the height of his popularity in 1966 and was the subject of several magazine cover stories. This evolution may be explained in part by the turbulent political times that existed during these years as America faced such social issues as civil rights, poverty, and the escalation of the Vietnam War.

His entrance into the presidential contest of 1968 was not euphoric, however, as the media and many political people condemned his candidacy as evidence of his ruthlessness. Robert Kennedy's campaign themes centered on action rather than on his persona in an effort to dispel this portrayal of him, and it is clear from this analysis that Kennedy did indeed invoke his brother's legend during his campaign.

Throughout the speeches analyzed here Kennedy invoked the fantasy themes within the rhetorical vision of Camelot. Most notably, Robert Kennedy emphasized *The New Frontier* and *The Triumph of Right* fantasy themes through his own theme of *To Seek a Newer World* and in his overall campaign themes of social justice and reconciliation. In addition, fantasy themes such as *Fair Play*, *May the Best Man Win*, and *United We Stand* were identified within his campaign speeches. These themes are common in political rhetoric and, although they do not represent major themes, they are in keeping with the rhetorical vision of Camelot.
These themes were also found to be adapted by Kennedy for his audience as in his address to businessmen in California. In this particular address, Kennedy sought to incorporate his audience into the rhetorical vision of Camelot by defining his themes in business language.

Robert Kennedy portrayed himself as strong, confident, and resilient throughout his campaign by noting his former experience with the executive office and his ability to win. He also depicted himself as compassionate by adopting the campaign themes of social justice and reconciliation.

Throughout the campaign speeches analyzed here, the villains remain the same. President Lyndon B. Johnson is depicted as a villain but never mentioned by name. Instead, Kennedy denounces the policies of the Johnson Administration, and the Vietnam War in particular. Vice President Hubert Humphrey becomes a villain following his announced candidacy, and is portrayed as a villain not only for supporting the Johnson Administration policies, but also for failing to participate in any primary contests.

The heroes in the rhetorical vision of Camelot are also consistently portrayed. These heroes include President John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and the Kennedy Administration. Lesser heroes include Senator Eugene McCarthy and his supporters for the popular movement they began.

The country and the world community are generally characterized by Kennedy as disenchanted with the leadership
of President Johnson, and divided along racial and economic
delines. Descriptions of Americans often included words such
as "desperate", "lacking hope", and "full of despair".

Robert Kennedy was indeed successful with his portrayal
of himself as the heir apparent and in his invocation of the
rhetorical vision of Camelot. Ample evidence of chaining is
presented in this study to illustrate Kennedy's success with
this rhetorical vision. Following his announcement address
in March of 1968, Kennedy's persona was the focus of
criticism as he entered the race challenging an incumbent
president and on the heel's of Senator McCarthy's New
Hampshire victory on the peace issue.

Although the Kennedy campaign strategists focused their
rhetoric on action rather than persona, it is clear that
Robert Kennedy's public persona remained the central focus
of the attention he received. Kennedy's campaign rhetoric
consistently accentuated action fantasy themes such as *The
Triumph of Right* and *The New Frontier, To Seek a Newer
World, United We Stand*, and *Fair Play*, yet the greatest
strength of the campaign continued to be Robert Kennedy's
personal appeal.

The Kennedy campaign strategists realized the key to
victory lay in their ability to demonstrate public support
of their candidate. Advance staff for the campaign were
noted for overfilling halls and auditoriums and for their
construction of "spaghetti barricades" that crumbled under
crowd force creating a terrific scene for the evening news of people rushing toward Kennedy. This demonstration of popular support was critical in the 1968 campaign as nomination by the Democratic party rested with delegate votes and political powerbrokering.

The chaining evidence presented here illustrates the public participation in the rhetorical vision of Camelot. Letters to Kennedy and signs raised during his public appearances referred to the Camelot myth and included phrases such as "we want Camelot again," "call the role at the round table," and "continue the New Frontier." In addition, reporting by the media of the Kennedy campaign included references to Camelot with headlines and phrases like "the Camelot kids," "the New Frontiersmen," and "the politics of restoration."

Like John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy offered a vision of America that included "moral leadership" and a leading role in world affairs that could "earn the respect of Mankind." As Bruce Galpin, a columnist for the Atlanta Constitution noted:

I don't know whether Bobby Kennedy would have any more success bringing the Vietnam War to an honorable conclusion than President Johnson. But watching the young senator announce his candidacy last week, I had an overwhelming desire to believe him. . . .
I don't know that Bobby could do any better in this and other tough issues. But it was stirring once again to see a vision of America, providing moral leadership of the world and finding its "soul" at home (1968, March 21, p. 4).

Conclusions and Recommendations for Further Study

While this study has demonstrated Robert Kennedy's use of and success with the rhetorical vision of Camelot, further research would be helpful. Specifically, further analysis of the chaining of the Camelot myth should be made. It is unclear from the present study how much of the chaining evidence found was a direct result of the campaign message of Robert Kennedy and that chaining which resulted merely from his being who he was.

The significance of this study has been the identification and evaluation of fantasy themes within the rhetorical vision of Camelot. This rhetorical vision is firmly in place in our American culture as a result of the short Kennedy presidency and the inspiration many received from the public speeches of the Kennedy brothers. As noted here, the themes evoked by Robert F. Kennedy and President John F. Kennedy were most often action-oriented, thus providing their audiences with a sense of destiny. There-in I believe, lies the strength of their words.
ENDNOTES


2 Schlesinger, p. 769-773.

3 This and all other subsequent references to the March 16, 1968 speech of Robert F. Kennedy are from the transcript provided by the John F. Kennedy Library, Columbia Point, MA 02125.

4 This and all subsequent references to the April 17, 1968 speech of Robert F. Kennedy are from the transcript provided by the John F. Kennedy Library, Columbia Point, MA 02125.

5 This and all subsequent references to the May 28, 1968 speech of Robert Kennedy are from the transcript provided by the John F. Kennedy Library, Columbia Point, MA 02125.

6 Witcover, 1988, p. 233.

7 This and all subsequent references to the June 4, 1968 speech of Robert Kennedy are from the transcript provided by the John F. Kennedy Library, Columbia Point, MA 02125.

8 Newsweek, May 20, 1968, p. 35.

9 Newsweek, March 25, 1968, p. 25.

10 Time, May 24, 1968, p. 22.


12 Newsweek, April 1, 1968, p. 29.

13 Newsweek, May 6, 1968, p. 28.

14 Ibid, p. 34.


REFERENCE WORKS


Bobby on the run. (1968, April 1). Newsweek, pp. 28-29.


It is much better to win. (1968, May 20). *Newsweek*, pp. 34-40.


This one counts. (1968, May 6). *Newsweek*, pp. 27-29A.


