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Senator Al Gore Jr. was elected Vice-President of the United States on Novemeber 3, 1992. During many of his public speeches, Gore utilized a speaking style that differed radically from the style he used in other political campaigns of his life. This style, which will be called the "rhetoric of self-disclosure," can be characterized as consisting of a particular language style that is associated with the self-help movement that became popular in the United States during the 1980's. This language consists of phrases and terms such as "co-dependency," "dysfunction," "dysfunctional families," "denial," and others.

In an attempt to understand the uses and effects of this rhetorical device, the theories of Edwin Black are used as a critical model. A combination of two theories, specifically the theories of secrecy and disclosure and the second persona, produced a unique critical methodology

that generated insight into Gore as a speaker, and the applications of this unique rhetorical style.

A literature survey provides information not only about Gore's political and personal history, but also about the growth and success of the self-help movement in the United States. Included in this review were a number of public addresses given by Gore in the 1992 campaign, his book Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit, and discussions of the self-help movement and therapy groups.

The critical evaluation of Gore's public address provides a number of conclusions. The rhetoric of self-disclosure is rhetorical strategy that has never been used in American Presidential politics and is a radical departure from other, more accepted forms of presidential rhetoric. Also, the use of this strategy gives insight into the character of Gore as a person, a speaker, and a national political leader.

Al Gore Jr. and the Rhetoric of Self-Disclosure

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"We must become the change we wish to see in the world."
-Mahatma Gandhi

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

In the October 12, 1992 edition of Time magazine, Susan Longley of Liberty, Maine described her reaction to a speech delivered by then Democratic vice-presidential candidate Al Gore. She states, "I thought, 'This white bread family admitted to counseling?' . . .I've developed a magnetic pull to Gore, because he speaks the language of people who tend their hearts."[1] It was not an unusual occurrence for the Senator to discuss his experiences in family counseling. In fact, the themes of counseling and of healing were among the most often recounted in Gore's public discourse. In any number of speeches Gore described the pain he and his family went through after a car accident nearly killed his son. Not only was this specific experience related to audiences, but it seemed that the vocabulary used by family counselors had found its way into the public discourse of the Senator. Explanations of foreign policy, environmental protection legislation, and the economy found expression using terms long relegated to the offices of therapists and alcohol rehabilitation programs. So often did this language find voice in Gore's speeches that Elizabeth Taylor, the Time magazine reporter covering Gore's campaign stated, "In that special transaction between candidate and voter, Gore's currency is the language of self-discovery."[2]

The purpose of this study is to investigate the rhetorical strategies used by Senator Al Gore in his 1992 bid for the vice-presidency of the United States. Specifically, this study will focus on the identification of instances of a particular strategy employed by the Senator that will be called a *rhetoric of*

self-disclosure. This rhetoric of self-disclosure is characterized by the use of a very specific vocabulary which is associated with the self-help movement popularized in the 1980's and 90's.

This rhetorical device has as its foundation the disclosure of personal information about the speaker's life and experiences that may seem somewhat inappropriate to the public setting in which the discourse occurs. As such, the term self-disclosure seems to be an appropriate characterization of the nature of the discourse, although it may be more strategic in nature than most other kinds of personal disclosure. The vocabulary itself relies heavily upon references to the self-help movement and includes words and phrases such as "dysfunctional", "alienation", "healing", "co-dependency", "denial", "community," and "reclaiming", (among others).

This vocabulary constitutes a form of discourse that can largely be found in ceremonial speeches given by Senator Gore, such as his nomination acceptance speech at the Democratic convention, but is also seen in a large number of his "stump" speeches, interviews, and other public addresses. The role that this discourse plays in Gore's overall rhetorical strategy can be characterized as a tool of identification and of ideological clarification between Gore and his audience. The theoretical discussions found in Edwin Black's studies of the second persona and the nature of secrecy and disclosure will provide the foundation for the critical examination of this rhetoric as it appears in Gore's public speeches.[3]

Historical Background

Born to a long time U.S. congressman and senator, Al Gore Jr. grew up both in Carthage, Tennessee and in Washington D.C.. Al Jr. received his early education at St. Albans School for Boys, a school that was ranked in the

top ten preparatory schools in the United States. Gore graduated from St. Albans in 1965 and in that same year met Mary Elizabeth "Tipper" Aitcheson, a junior at St. Agnes Episcopal School for Girls. In September of 1965, Gore enrolled in Harvard University and studied under two professors with connections to the field of rhetorical criticism: Martin Peretz, who is now editor of The New Republic magazine and Richard Nuestadt, scholar of presidential elections and rhetoric. Gore wrote his senior thesis under Nuestadt's supervision, a thesis entitled "The Impact of Television on the Conduct of the President, 1947-1969." Gore graduated from Harvard *cum laude* with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Government.[4]

Although a more detailed look at the life and history of Senator Al Gore Jr. would make an interesting study of political success, there are three specific episodes in the Senator's life that have direct bearing on his adoption of the rhetoric of self-disclosure. The first of these episodes is the young Gore's service during the Vietnam war. Not long after his graduation from Harvard, Gore was faced with a difficult situation. The fighting in Vietnam was increasing and Gore faced induction into the military just two months after his graduation if he did not choose to enlist. This situation was made even more difficult by the fact that his father, Senator Gore, was facing a tough re-election race in 1970 and many political insiders in the state were predicting his loss as a result of his very vocal opposition to the Vietnam war. Even though Al Jr. opposed the war on ethical and legal grounds, he decided to enlist in the Army in order to prevent any embarrassment for his father and to ensure that no other young men would be forced to serve and die in his place. After he enlisted, Gore was assigned duty as an Army journalist. It was only a few months later, on May 19, 1970, that Al Gore Jr. and Tipper Aitcheson were married. In

November of 1970, Al Gore Jr. left Tennessee to report to the 20th Engineer Brigade stationed at the Long Bihn military base near Saigon, South Vietnam.

The Vietnam war had a profound effect on Gore, and the many combat situations he faced left Gore deeply troubled. Hank Hillin, Gore's biographer, writes, "Gore was deeply affected by his Vietnam experiences. He could not accept the atrocities that accompanied almost any tour of duty in Vietnam . . . . During the conflict, Gore wrote friends in the States about his revulsion at seeing women and children cut in half by America's Huey helicopter gunships, and said that if he survived Vietnam, he was going to divinity school to 'atone for my sins'."[5] Gore ended his tour in Vietnam as the war came to a close, returning home to Tennessee in May of 1971.

The next important event in Gore's life began with the start of his political career six years after his return from the war. In 1976, after long time Tennessee Representative Joe Evins announced his retirement from the same office Gore's father had held many years before, Al Gore Jr. ran for the Fourth District Congressional seat from Tennessee, winning the election later that year. In 1984, after eight years in the House of Representatives, Al Gore Jr. was elected Senator.

Four years later, after a great deal of planning and consultation with his father, Al Gore Jr. placed his name in the Democratic ring of possible presidential nominees. After a long and difficult campaign which focused mostly on Super Tuesday states, Gore placed a modest third after the Reverend Jesse Jackson and Governor Michael Dukakis. Gore left the race amidst criticisms of having been too stiff and unreachable.[6] Indeed, Gore found that the one group with which he should have had the most impact (the baby boomers) was the one group he had made the least gains.[7] After the end of the race, Gore turned his attentions away from presidential politics and began to

focus on his career in the Senate. The criticisms of stiffness and cold distance were repeated throughout his failed campaign, and many political insiders felt that this weakness was so great that it effectively eliminated him from possible national office in the future.

Finally, in April of 1989, the Gore family experienced a tragic accident that nearly killed the youngest member of the Gore family, Al Gore III. In fact, Gore identifies this moment as the defining experience of his life. After a baseball game in Baltimore, a car struck the six year old boy and caused massive internal injuries such as a fractured thigh, a damaged kidney, a ruptured spleen, a concussion, and a bruised lung. Whether or not the child would survive was uncertain, but after a month of surgery and recuperation the young Gore was released from Johns Hopkins Medical Center. This experience, and the time that the accident took away from Senator Gore's duties in Congress, had almost insured that a 1992 race for the Presidency was out of the question, and those very sentiments were expressed by Al Gore in a number of press conferences and public speeches.

However, on July 9,1992, Bill Clinton announced that his choice for a vice-presidential running mate would be Al Gore. A few weeks later, Gore delivered his nomination acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in New York. In that speech, Gore identified his son's accident as the "defining moment of his life" and described the struggles of the entire Gore family as they fought to deal with young Al's condition.[8] Gore briefly mentions the role that family therapy played in the Gore family's recovery from the accident, and similar references about therapy appear quite frequently in other public addresses including the speech delivered in Little Rock after the successful completion of the election. These sentiments were also expressed in Gore's best selling book, Earth in the Balance; Ecology and the Human Spirit,

and in any number of interviews.[9] On November 3 of 1992, Bill Clinton and Al Gore defeated President George Bush and vice-president Dan Quayle in the presidential election.

Although it may be difficult to assign to these three episodes a magical quality that ensured Gore's political success, they certainly had a significant impact on both the man and his career. Some might say that Gore's entire life had been crafted for political success since the day of his birth. It is ironic, perhaps, that Gore's birth in 1948 comes just a few years after the birth of yet another American success story; the birth of the self-help movement.

In 1935, the founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill W , detailed the religious experience that changed his life forever. After seeing what he described as a white light and hearing the voice of God, Bill W turned away from drinking and founded the very first 12 step, self-help program in history. Alcoholics Anonymous, or "AA" as it is called by its members, grew in popularity during the 1940's and 1950's until during the seventies an explosion of interest created a number of spin off organizations. Alcoholics Anonymous shared the 12 step recovery format with Al Anon, Alateen, Adult Children of Alcoholics, and a number of other alcohol-dependent specific programs. Alcoholics Anonymous now claims more than 1.5 million people as members of its program world wide, with a large percentage of those people living in the United States.[10]

In the early 1970's a number of books were published that used the 12 step recovery format to address other types of addictive behavior. Organizations such as Narcotics Anonymous, Emotions Anonymous, Depressives Anonymous, Widows Anonymous, Parents of Murdered Children, Compassionate Friends, and any number of other groups that use similar tactics

for addressing personal problems found expression in the explosion of self-help programs.

It is estimated that more than 15 million American citizens belong to some 500,000 different self-help organizations and more than 100 million Americans are related to someone with an addictive behavior of some kind.[11] The sales of self-help books and tapes have been skyrocketing for the last five years, and many in the self-help publication industry say that this steady rise in sales is only the beginning. There are hundreds of best selling authors and some have even had their books at the top of the New York Times best-seller list. John Bradshaw, a self- styled family counselor and lecturer, has become one of the country's most popular lecturers, drawing crowds of more than 3,000 to convention centers across the nation.[12] Not only are self-help seminars growing rapidly in popularity, one only need watch any of a dozen local or national talk shows to see these same issues explored on television. And all of these programs, although they may differ in terms of the problems they address and the recovery theories the utilize, have one thing in common: a vocabulary. One analyst for the publishing industry magazine Publishers Weekly stated that, "Recovery jargon has become part of the American household lexicon: co-dependency, shame, dysfunctional families, denial, healing, serenity, adult child and inner child. . . . Recovery permeates the culture: there are tabloids, seminars, cable talk shows, [and] Hollywood movies whose heroes and heroines are in recovery."[13]

It is clear that the concepts expressed within the self-help movement found ingress into the life of Senator Gore as a result of his family's experiences with family therapy. The combination of this incident, the failed 1988 campaign, and the traumatic experiences of the Vietnam war which Gore felt needed to be given voice all find expression in the rhetoric of self-

disclosure. The strategic importance of such a rhetorical device seems clear. Not only did the vocabulary have significance in Gore's personal life but the public expression of this private experience created for Gore a vehicle through which he could eliminate the distance felt by the voters. In the creation of a recognized language of self-help, the success story of the self-help movement and the political success of Senator Al Gore finally intersect. What impact this intersection of political life and social culture has on the perception of Senator Gore as a speaker, the function of such a device to create identification and establish ideology, and the insight into American culture that such a successful device may provide will be the focus of the rest of this study.

Methodology

The analysis of Gore's rhetoric of self-disclosure will be based on the theoretical perspectives on public discourse developed by Edwin Black. The model will rely on the theories developed by Black in his discussions of secrecy, disclosure, and the second persona. From these works a model will be created which will provide the foundation for a textual analysis of Senator Gore's rhetoric of self-disclosure in a number of different situations.

In his essay entitled, "Secrecy and Disclosure as Rhetorical Forms," Edwin Black discusses the value of studying the antithesis that is apparent in many different kinds of public discourse.[14] Black argues that in every discourse there are oppositional tensions that imply value laden judgments. For example, the antithetical nature of inclusion and exclusion, acceptance and rejection, liberal and conservative or individual and communal, signifies the margins within which rhetorical activity is generated. Black says, ". . .such antonyms are the matrices of rhetorical activity."[15] These oppositional tensions have, inherent in their opposition, a judgment regarding the value of each extreme.

These tensions produce conclusions in an audience about the ethical and civic value of each extreme. In other words, the direct opposition of the value of secrecy and the value of disclosure generates, in public discourse, decisions and debates over the value of one over the other.

These issues of secrecy and disclosure are not only places in which public discourse focuses much of its attention, but they are also the progenitors of value laden discourse styles. Those people who value secrecy over disclosure speak about such issues in a very specific and identifiable way. The speaker, who plays an essential role in the entire process of creating a sense of value behind these opposites, can be seen as a kind of mystic, preacher or seer. The speaker is a character whose job is to illuminate that which is hidden or protect that which is secret from discovery. There is an almost monk or zealot-like character to the person who serves as medium between audience and that which is either disclosed or hidden. One of the specific styles of discourse that can give a clear indication about the preferences of the speaker is the historical expose'. Black identifies this style as being a familiar one to political speakers. Black argues that the histories people believe or tell about themselves can express the value they place on secrecy or disclosure. This style is not only effective in determining the values of the speaker but can also give an indication of the nature of the audience.

In "The Second Persona," Black argues that created discourse not only gives insight into the character of the speaker but also implies the nature of the chosen audience.[16] The choices that are made in the creation or delivery of public address can tell the critic what kind of audience was intended to hear that message. But perhaps even more significant than the identification of any audience is the fact that those same choices speak very clearly to the perceived ideology of that audience. A speaker, in essence, aims his message at an

intended audience who hopefully possesses an ideology conducive to persuasion.

This study will use the theories of Black to identify the function that the rhetoric of self-disclosure plays in the discourse of Senator Gore. In addition, the concepts of the second persona and of secrecy and disclosure will be the foundations of a critical model which will attempt to identify Gore's target audience and the ideology Gore believes that audience possesses. In other words, this model will enable us to ask what this rhetorical choice tells us about Gore's second persona and how the vocabulary works to generate an image of Gore as the character of seer, prophet or mystic.

The rhetoric of self-disclosure will be defined as any occurrence of a particular vocabulary or any disclosure of personal information delivered in the testimonial style established in the self-help movement. The exact vocabulary of self-disclosure will include specific terms and phrases that have clear ties to the self-help movement. This vocabulary, which includes words such as "denial," "dysfunction," "healing," "co-dependency," "inner child," and "addiction," will be detailed more clearly later. The procedure used to disclose personal information in the self-help movement is one of publicly declaring the event, the feelings the speaker has about that event, and how that event has created meaning for the speaker's life.

Literature Review: Primary Sources

There are a number of texts and research materials that help place Al Gore in his proper historical context. Although many of these help to establish the social context of the times, the text which places Gore most clearly in his historical context is the authorized biography of Al Gore written by one-time

FBI agent Hank Hillin. The book is titled Al Gore Jr.: His Life and Career. This text was originally published in 1988 during the Senator's campaign for the Democratic Presidential nomination, but a second edition was published in 1992 after Gore accepted Clinton's invitation to join the ticket. This second edition includes extra chapters which discuss Gore's failed 1988 campaign, his son's car accident, and the 1992 Democratic National Convention. This addition also includes an introduction written by then Governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton. The text is clearly intended for a very specific audience; however, it does give a detailed account of Gore's life and achievement in Congress.

The text begins with an examination of Gore's grandparents and an even more detailed account of his mother and father. These beginning chapters are useful in establishing Gore's decidedly political childhood and include many charming anecdotes of which biographies are made. Perhaps even more interesting is the discussion of Gore's experiences in college and in the Vietnam war. The book provides the entire text of a story Gore wrote as an army journalist about an enemy attack on his battalion in Vietnam. Also, a number of fascinating references are made to Gore's difficulty in dealing with the atrocities he saw in Vietnam and his desire to be healed and to atone for his sins. These references have clear implications for a rhetorical style that has, at its core, a need for healing and forgiveness.

The discussions of Gore's 1988 campaign are somewhat apologetic, and do not give any real insight into the reasons for the campaign's failure. Rather, they describe the victories Gore had on Super Tuesday in the South and all but ignore the resounding defeats he was dealt in the Northeast and in the Midwest. The section on his son's accident was essentially the description Gore himself

gives in his convention address, but it did include some temporal and geographical details not found in other texts.

Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit has alternately been called one of the most fallacious and doom-filled books ever written and one of the most comprehensive accounts of the environmental crisis ever written. Either way, the book not only provides some insight into Gore as legislator and scholar, but also into Gore the father and the importance of spirituality in Gore's life. The book is a technical examination of some of the most complex environmental issues of the past decade, dealing with subjects from the ozone hole to the destruction of the tropical rain forests, from global economic policies and the impact on world pollution to the implementation of taxes and local policy. In addition, Gore calls into question the most basic assumptions of Western culture, criticizing the political philosophy of Plato, the religious foundations of Judeo-Christianity, and the economic policies of Adam Smith. Also included is a discussion of spirituality and the importance of the individual human spirit in relation to our environment.

In the preface to the book, Gore describes the accident involving his son as the "single horrifying event [that] triggered a big change in the way I thought about my relationship to life itself".[17] This discussion of spiritual metamorphosis is a theme that appears repeatedly and indeed plays a significant role in the plan Gore proposes to confront the environmental crisis.

The language in this book is filled with examples of the rhetoric of self-disclosure and will provide fertile ground for textual analysis. Even though this text is not public address, the book was written by Gore as a public expression of his views and symbolizes a significant part of Gore's public character as champion of environmental issues.

In order to examine the legislative implications of a Gore Vice-Presidency, the text Putting People First also will be included in the critical examination. Co-written by Governor Bill Clinton, the book is essentially a statement of the Democratic party's 1992 platform. The introduction to the book is somewhat significant as it discusses Clinton and Gore's philosophical justification for many of their programs, but the text of the book provides little material for analysis. Although the book is significant in its discussions of policy, only small parts of the text provide any insight into Gore as a speaker or into the efficacy of his rhetorical strategies. Much of what is described involves legislative technicalities and position statements on issues of concern to the American people and is helpful only in establishing the significance of Gore as a speaker.

An interview published in April of 1992 by The Christian Century magazine is a direct inquiry into the nature of Gore's environmental and spiritual views. The interview is somewhat repetitive as a few issues given extensive analysis in Earth in the Balance are revisited briefly in order to give the reader some background into Gore's stance on the environment. What is unique about this interview, however, is the apparent interest of the interviewer in the religious or spiritual implications of Gore's positions. The interviewer crystallizes Gore's positions in relation to the spiritual or personal impacts of the environmental crisis. The answers that are provided by Gore are clear and provide a number of examples of the rhetoric of self-disclosure in a tight and pointed format.

Among the speeches that will be included in this study are the speech given on July 9th of 1992 after the initial announcement of Gore's candidacy for vice- president, the nomination acceptance speech delivered at the Democratic National Convention on July 16th of 1992, the victory address

given in Little Rock at the Clinton/Gore campaign headquarters on the evening of election day, a speech delivered in New Hampshire on October 30th of 1992, a speech given at Goddard Space Flight Center on October 19th of 1992, an address delivered at the Center for National Policy on September 29th of 1992, and a number of speeches delivered on the floor of the Senate dealing with a variety of issues. These speeches will be given more attention later in this work.

Literature Review: Secondary Sources

After researching the topics of this study, it is possible to separate secondary source information into three distinct categories: self-disclosure, the self-help movement, and critical examinations of Gore in the mass media.

In "Self Disclosing Communication," W. Barnett Pearce and Stewart Sharp run through the various perspectives on self-disclosure that have been published over the years. The authors identify a great deal of that research as being either meaningless or counter-productive to a communication perspective. In other words, the authors examine journal articles which deal with self-disclosure and then summarize those articles which could make some contributions to rhetorical or communication theory studies. The review of literature completed by these authors leads them to the conclusion that self-disclosure can be defined as "an invitation to share experience and communication as an interpersonal transaction."[18] A number of important conclusions can be drawn from this concept of self-disclosure, such as the rate of occurrence, the style of occurrence, and the intensity of occurrence. This article provides brief, concise definitions and discussions of issues surrounding self-disclosure that are of importance to communication scholars.

Many social science studies have been done to attempt to determine the effectiveness of self-disclosure in political discourse. One such experiment was detailed by Jerry Burger and Robert Vartabedian in "Public Self-Disclosure and Speaker Persuasiveness." The two researchers conducted a number of studies in order to determine whether or not public self-disclosure of personal experiences would be seen as inappropriate by an audience. A series of three tapes were made in which the speaker was described as a Congressional candidate, a Congressman, or a member of an oratory club. After showing a variety of speeches delivered by these speakers, the audience was questioned about the perceived appropriateness of the personal remarks. The conclusion was that personal self-disclosure was seen as inappropriate in those people perceived as being of greater prestige.

Although the authors try to justify interest in this kind of research for rhetorical scholars, these kinds of experiments do not take into account the numerous variables and situational constraints that need to be addressed in order to understand the success or failure of a rhetorical strategy. The audience, the social context, the political atmosphere, or even the audiences' understanding of the speaker's character can not be part of a controlled experiment. This article provided some entertaining information but it cannot be said to be of significant value to this study.

The second division that has been identified in the secondary sources consulted for this study is that of the self-help movement. The amount of information published about this topic is substantial, but a great deal of that information is organization specific. Regardless of this enormous bulk of information, there has been some research completed on the nature of the self-help movement and the incredible success it has enjoyed over the past twenty years.

In "Group Demographics in the Mental Patient Movement," Robert Emerick presents a detailed survey of more than 100 self-help groups across the United States. The study attempts to define the group structure, affiliation, and the role that psychiatry plays in those groups. Once these issues have been addressed, Dr. Emerick creates a picture of the self-help movement in the United States that may be somewhat different than one would expect. The study concludes that the membership of the self-help movement in the United States is comprised of a wide cross section of people. Although most of the movement is dominated by supportive and moderate groups, many of the people and organizations involved in the movement are radical separatist groups that promote active consciousness raising and political action as an effective form of social reform. In addition, a number of very conservative groups simply seek alternative treatment for individual problems.

This study is a significant work in that it helps to define the membership of the self-help movement and, in doing so, helps to define a potential target audience for Gore. The extremes in political affiliation and social status indicates an audience that has as its base a very different core than the stereotypical political power bases. The membership of the self-help movement consists of all kinds of people, all of whom traffic in a particular language style and in specific personal goals of healing and recovery. Although the study does not attempt to define the actual number of Americans currently involved in the self-help movement, the study does give a concise picture of the kinds of people who are involved in this movement all over the country. As such, this study provides essential insight into Gore's potential audience.

Marc Galanter completed a study of modern self-help groups and some cults that was reported in his research "Cults and Zealous Self-Help Movements; A Psychiatric Perspective." The study details the conclusions Dr.

Galanter has drawn as a result of his research findings, conclusions which indicate the possible impact of the group influence on member's mental health. The research also helps to create a model to describe the cohesive nature and ideology generation of these groups. The groups tap into certain psychological characteristics of their members and in doing so both can alleviate and aggravate psychopathology. This same model is then applied to those self-help programs that deal specifically with problems of substance abuse and the families of substance abusers. Similar conclusions are reached in these groups as well, although not to the extreme as in the cults and other overly zealous self-help movements.

Although this article includes such religious sects as the Unification Church and the Hare Krishna, this study provides some valuable insights into the mechanisms at work in self-help groups across the country. Of greatest interest is the discussion of influence and group cohesiveness. The author argues that a complex act of social reinforcement is at the core of the self-help group and its success. This reinforcement takes place when the release of emotional distress, in the process of self disclosing, is received by the other members of the group with sympathy and therefore creates a feeling of affiliation and belonging. These feelings are then reinforced in a process of affirming the feelings of other members of the group. This tightly knit, group affiliation has a profound power over the creation of group ideology and shared belief systems which itself has a profound effect on each individual group member.

The study details the systems involved inside the self-help group and the powerful influence such groups have on their individual members. If Gore, as a public speaker and politician, is tapping into those affiliations, then the implications for a rhetorical strategy are fairly clear. Such a tactic could

provide Gore with a vastly cohesive group of people, all of whom share deeply held convictions with each other and with Gore. This study indirectly impacts the seer/mystic character described by Edwin Black in his discussion of secrecy and disclosure as Gore may be using the vocabulary of the self-help movement to make himself appear to possess sacred information.

The success of the self-help movement and the soaring popularity of self-help books is the basis for an article written by Margaret Jones, staff writer for Publishers Weekly magazine. This article, published in 1990, describes the amazing success of the self-help book genre and gives specific information regarding the numbers of Americans involved in the movement. Although a great deal of the article focuses on the authors of books and the history of self-help book publications, a number of observations about the success of the movement are important to the rhetoric of self-disclosure. Not only does the article establish the significance of the self-help movement as a cultural construct, but it also identifies the vocabulary of the self-help movement as a social force in America. Indeed, the author postulates that the language of recovery has become a part of every household in America, influencing even young children with its recognizable vocabulary. Also included in this article is a brief but detailed history of the self-help movement, dating back to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1935.

An article entitled "How We Suffer Now" by Michael Vincent Miller provides similar insights into the power and influence of the self-help movement. The article, published in The New York Times Book Review magazine, makes some of the same claims seen in the previous article. One point of distinction, however, is the idea that self-help movements and their ideologies have become the new American gospel, and are an attempt at providing faith in a secular age. In addition, this author also identifies the

vocabulary of the self-help movement as a pervasive force in American culture. In fact, this author goes so far as to argue that this vocabulary constitutes an "indiscriminate use of terminology (that) creates jargon. Jargon is the language of pseudoknowledge."[19] Miller also says that this jargon is a substitution for reality, an elusive and curious phenomenon that is complex and disorderly.

Although it is clear that this author feels some points of contention with the self-help movement, some helpful thoughts appear in this article. First of all, the role of seer/mystic detailed by Black is meant to uncover that which is hidden, or to make clear that which is unclear. Gore may be using this rhetoric of self-disclosure to make clear that which is vague and unclear. This article also helps to justify the significance of the movement and the importance of the vocabulary.

The last division of literature which needs to be reviewed is those studies which provide a critical evaluation of Gore as a speaker and as a political leader. Considering the political atmosphere of the 1992 Presidential campaign, critical discussions of any candidate would not be difficult to find. Even so, there are a number of very specific articles, most of which were published in news magazines and other popular media, which have provided insight into Gore and his rhetorical strategies.

The Time magazine article entitled "Al's O.K., You're O.K." by Elizabeth Taylor comes as close to expressing the purpose of this thesis as any work of popular news could possible come. The article, which is a little shorter than an average page-length story, delves into the use of a unique kind of vocabulary that the author calls "therapyspeak."[20] Al Gore is identified as "an introspective spokesman" of a generation fascinated by self-help. "Gore's currency is the language of self discovery. The myth of the log cabin has been replaced by another image of adversity--the dysfunctional family."[21] The

article goes on to argue that few political figures represent that shift toward an awareness of this cultural phenomenon than Al Gore. The writer gives numerous examples of what she calls therapyspeak, including a list of terms and phrases that can be identified with the self-help movement.

At one point in the article, an audience member is quoted as saying that Gore's use of this language struck her with ". . . a magnetic pull . . ." in essence because ". . .he speaks the language of people who tend their hearts."[22] In addition, the writer makes the observation that Gore's environmental text is also deeply rooted in self-help language and concepts, relying upon them for many of its conclusions. These sentiments strike at the very core of this critical examination of Al Gore.

Another article from the English magazine The Spectator discusses Gore's self-disclosure style from a more critical perspective. The article titled "Stay Tuned, Folks! See Al Run! See Little Al Get Run Over!" examines the disclosure of personal experiences in a more general sense, mentioning Gore specifically but also touching on many of the other speakers at the Democratic National Convention, including Bill Clinton and Mario Cuomo. All of these speakers had one stylistic similarity: they all discuss their lives as "suffering servants of Democracy".[23] By "suffering," the article means painful life experiences that are then used by the speakers to insinuate some kind of beneficial metamorphosis of character. The article also implies that this kind of strategy is dangerous, not only in terms of false representation of character, but also in the sense that it is taking advantage of the tragedies of children and family members. The editorial writer asks when we will begin to see Chelsea Clinton suffer from a case of well timed bulimia, or what will happen when young Al Gore III comes to the conclusion that there was nothing better for his father's campaign than his nearly fatal accident? If the use of personal tragedy

is truly just another form of political opportunism for Gore and other members of the Democratic party, then it is clearly an abuse of power. On the other hand, if the assumptions are incorrect, then it may be possible to identify some kind of shift in the larger society.

In the July 27, 1992 edition of Newsweek, long time Republican speech writer Peggy Noonan authored an article titled "Behind Enemy Lines." Although this article touches on Gore's speech only briefly, some of the same concerns about the shift in the Democratic style that were expressed in the previous article were echoed. Noonan states that she is concerned with this party's sudden infatuation with death and painful suffering. "Why do modern Democrats have to declare to each other that they have suffered, that they are victims? In group therapy this is known as saying hello, but--this is government."[24] Even here, in the heart of the enemy camp, is the recognition of the important role the self-help movement and the rhetoric of self-disclosure is playing in the party as a whole, although it is in Gore's speech that the specific vocabulary is most clearly found. In fact, Noonan claims that the expression of this internal pain in a public setting is more deceptive than it is revealing.

Again, the connections to Black and his discussion of secrecy and disclosure are clear. There is an implication in Noonan's article that the Democrats value disclosure and the Republicans value secrecy. At the same time, as Black argues, there are implications about the nature of the speaker and about the intended audiences of such discourse. Although the amount of information in this article is fairly small, the different perspective offered by a member of the Republican party is valuable in itself.

ENDNOTES

[1] Taylor, Elizabeth. "Al's O.K., You're O.K.". Time Oct 12 1992: 60

[2] Taylor, Elizabeth. "Al's O.K., You're O.K.". Time Oct 12 1992: 60

[3] Black, Edwin. "Ideological Justifications". Quarterly Journal of Speech 70 (1984): 144-150 and Black, Edwin. "Secrecy and Disclosure as Rhetorical Forms". Quarterly Journal of Speech 74 (1988): 133-150

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[21] Taylor, Elizabeth. "Al's O.K., You're O.K.". Time Oct 12 1992: 60

[22] Taylor, Elizabeth. "Al's O.K., You're O.K.". Time Oct 12 1992: 60

[23] Wasp. "Stay Tuned, Folks!" The Spectator July 25 1992: 21

[24] Noonan, Peggy. "Behind Enemy Lines". Newsweek, July 27, 1992: 32 -33

CHAPTER TWO:
SECRECY, DISCLOSURE, AND THE SECOND PERSONA;
A METHODOLOGY

The persona of a political candidate is created through a variety of information sources. The media, the party to which the candidate belongs, and most importantly the candidate him/herself are all powerful forces which shape perceptions of a candidate. In his article, "Secrecy and Disclosure as Rhetorical Forms," Edwin Black argues that the perception a candidate has of him or herself is delivered to the world through the stories that candidate tells. Black states, "We make our collective past . . . through selection and interpretation, a phylogenisis in which some few events are brought to great prominence and many other events are suppressed. Thus, *the histories that people believe about themselves express secrecy and disclosure as rhetorical forms.*"[1] Edwin Black's discussion of secrecy and disclosure as rhetorical forms, combined with his theories on the second persona, will provide a foundation for a rhetorical model that can critique a speaker's use of secrecy and disclosure, as well as give insight into that speaker's perception of his or her audience.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the theories of Edwin Black in greater detail and use these theoretical discussions to create a practical mechanism for criticism of Al Gore's rhetoric of self-disclosure. Although much of what Black argues is tinted with an almost mystical feel, the theories themselves are a solid ground upon which a critical model can be created. Using a number of political examples to explain Black's theories will help to establish a critical context for these theories.

Secrecy and Disclosure as Rhetorical Forms

In the May 1988 issue of Quarterly Journal of Speech, Edwin Black argues that a speaker's attitude towards the competing values of secrecy and disclosure are not only evident in specific actions, but can also be seen in their manifestation as rhetorical strategies. Black begins his discussion by saying that the conflicting values that are the impetus for rhetorical activity can take many forms, including the conflict between public and private, liberal and conservative, radical and moderate, and individual and communal. These areas of competition are what Black calls "the matrices of rhetorical activity."[2] It is here, in these value laden antonyms, that a speaker's personal views on these values become apparent. In the case of the antonyms of secrecy and disclosure, there are two specific ways that value choices of the speaker are made manifest; in the speaker's role as translator and in commonplaces.

The character of a translator has been interpreted in many ways. One possible view is that a translator is a passive mechanism for the transference of information, a pane of glass that simply allows the light to pass through unchanged. On the other hand, a translator may also be more like a prism, making choices about what information to stress or play down and, in doing so, refracting and changing the information of which the translator is aware. Both of these characterizations have one thing in common; the role of translator is a powerful one that, because of its perceived authority, gives the speaker a prophetic character. In other words, the speaker possesses knowledge that is not accessible to his or her audience. An example of this can be found in the differences between the alleged extra-marital affairs of Bill Clinton and Gary Hart. In Clinton's case, the translator for the information acted more like a prism. Gennifer Flowers, possessed of intimate knowledge and personal

information, passed information to the public that was tainted by personal history and individual experiences. In the Hart case, the media acted as the plane of glass, simply reporting the events as they happened. Although some may argue that the press had a personal agenda in their reporting, the press acted more like a plane of glass than as a prism. In both cases, however, the information was seen as having authority because it came from sources that had unique and intimate knowledge of that which was being translated. The "text" Black refers to is not necessarily textual or written material. It can also be the text of a speech, a personal experience, or some other kind of personal insight of which only the speaker is aware.

The translation of religious or sacred texts has long been viewed as the duty of gifted people, people with intimate knowledge of the meaning and power behind the text. The preacher, for example, possesses a special knowledge of the sacred text, and his role is that of medium between the mystery and the audience. The priest's understanding of the sacred text is without question, and because of his position and credibility, he is granted sausory power. This prophetic character is based on the assumption that the speaker has access to the "arcane truths" that are hidden within the text.[3] One need only think of the position of authority given to a Catholic priest in the sacrament ritual in order to understand this concept.

The text itself is sacred because it holds the "key that will make experience coherent." [4] Black states that our experiences occur in time, are used as instruments and are purposeful. Because of this, a translation must have within it the completion of an end in order to be considered powerful. In other words, because we define our experiences as instruments that have an end, a translator must give an account of a text which also defines its purpose. A translator must give a translation that includes a vision of that translations

goal. If this prophetic nature is missing from a text, that text will lose its ability to inspire a listener and "would not awaken the piety essential to the apotheosis of the translator."[5] Black means by this that only a prophecy has the power to transform a speaker into a prophet in the mind of his or her audience. Any other kind of translation would not be sufficient to persuade the audience that the speaker had unique insight. Without this essential prophetic character inherent in the sacred text, the speaker would not be able to claim the special right of translator. In other words, if the text is not mysterious and prophetic, the speaker cannot claim to be possessed of the power to make those secrets known.

The translator serves a divine purpose by bringing a message, gleaned from the sacred text through his or her own powers, to the awaiting audience. In doing so the speaker not only takes on the character of a prophet or seer, but also allows the text to remain secret and sacred. The disclosure of the message does not damage the inherently mysterious nature of the text. The texts sacredness remains intact. But this is not the only way a translator may act. The translator is also able to destroy the sacredness of the text by revealing the mystery *in toto*. Black agues that this translator "is one who conducts an expose', one who seeks the disclosure of secrets in the belief that such exposure will work to the detriment of whatever is revealed--that the secret, which is simultaneously concealed because it is evil and evil because it is concealed, will shrivel in the light of revelation."[6] Black uses psychoanalysis as an example of a mindset that seeks to generate an expose'. He argues that psychoanalysis demands full exposure of a patient's secrets to the therapist in the belief that full disclosure has a "purgative power, that what suppurates and corrupts in darkness will heal in the light."[7] A political example of this can be found in the recent debate over gay rights in Oregon. Many proponents of

anti-gay rights legislation attempted to expose the "secret" sexual practices of homosexuals in the hope that such exposure would generate disgust in the minds of voters and in turn would gain votes. This disclosure was seen as a means to destroy that which it disclosed.

The disclosure of a secret can have one of two possible goals; it is either a mediate device used only for short-range goals, or it is long-range and seeks ultimate or conclusive ends. Black argues that this same distinction can be made for the keeping of secrets. For example, disclosure which is for an immediate goal may differ from the character of disclosure which is meant to dispel secrecy permanently. So too does the secret that is kept for some short-term goal differ from the character of that secret which is meant to be kept secret forever. Black views secrecy as instrumental, as having as its end something other than the continued concealment of the secret. In other words, we keep a secret because the dissipation of that secret will have some effect on us. Disclosure is different as it may have the disclosure itself as a possible end as well as some other possible goal. For example, a person may disclose a secret to relieve himself of guilt or anguish. In this case, the disclosure is the end. On the other hand, a person may disclose an extra-marital affair in hopes of damaging someone else's career. These differences in the character of secrets and disclosure is the basis for moral distinctions between them. The concealment of a secret has a different moral nature than the disclosure of a secret.

When thinking about the disclosure of secrets, it is not always true that they occur at a specific time. It is also the case that they can have a distinctive historical nature, especially in terms of an historical expose. The expose is classic political strategy which can both look to the secrets of the past as a directive for present actions or can expose the corruption of the past as a

warning for future actions. Black writes, "In the one case, history is a source of disenchantment; its exposure would find its immediate end in resentment. In the other case, history is a repository of precedent; its sanctification would find its immediate rhetorical end in piety."[8] An example of this kind of expose would be the recent use of the Vietnam war as an argument against the U.S. involvement in the war in the Balkans. Many politicians use descriptions of American history in Vietnam as a lesson that teaches that intervention can be devastating. On the other hand, some politicians use the historical example of the Holocaust as an argument for intervention. In this sense, history can serve as both a warning and as an effective motivator for action.

The political usefulness of disclosure and secrecy is evident in any number of instances. Black makes a link between the values of secrecy and disclosure and present day political values. Black writes, "those who value freedom preeminently also value disclosure, while those who value order preeminently are disposed to abide mystery."[9] Present day perceptions of the conflict between secrecy and disclosure have manifested themselves in political values in the general public. Black writes,

> A large number of people in our society -- a number that has, perhaps, been growing during the past twenty years -- would embrace the proposition that concealment is bad -- always and everywhere, bad -- and that ideas or acts, institutions or policies or persons that are recommended as open, honest, or by extension, natural or spontaneous, are praiseworthy. On the other hand, an even larger number of people would embrace the proposition not that concealment is good, but. . .that knowledge can be dangerous. . . One can inquire too far. One can reveal too much. Some things are better left unknown. Some mysteries are better left alone.[10]

This public division between the values of secrecy and disclosure can be seen in the division between political ideology. Black states, "The ideological contrast between secrecy and disclosure, then, is no less than the contrast

between individualism and communitarianism, between heterogeneity and homogeneity."[11] This distinction between ideology leads Black to conclude that the values of secrecy and disclosure generate two very distinct publics, each focused on its own value of secrecy or disclosure. Black writes,

> One public, convinced that concealment is bad, is disposed to embrace an associative plexus of values and to accede to arguments that are warranted by those values. The values include: disclosure, openness, sharing, being equal, being unacquisitive. And the other public, convinced that some knowledge can be dangerous, is disposed with equal commitment towards a plexus of values that includes: privacy, private property, hierarchy, capital accumulation, individuality. . . (t)hese publics are distinct from one another in the rhetorical forms to which they respond. [12]

Understanding these theories is of great importance to understanding the rhetoric of self-disclosure used by Gore. Given the two very different audiences, each attracted to the two different and competing values of secrecy and disclosure, it is clear that those people who are attracted to disclosure will be most impacted by Gore's rhetorical decisions. This theory helps to identify an audience, as well as give some insight into what kind of political ideology that audience might possess. In one sense, the identification of an audience for a speaker's disclosure is of paramount importance to Black's theory of secrecy and disclosure. Without an identified audience, the rhetorical forms that are manifestations of how a speaker values secrecy or disclosure would fall on deaf ears and would have no practical impact. The role of the audience here cannot be over-emphasized, and this emphasis on audience is not limited to this theory alone. Black's focus on the audience is not only essential to his article on secrecy and disclosure as rhetorical forms, but is also the essential focus of another article entitled "The Second Persona".

The Second Persona

The argument that a speaker's text has implications for a speaker's character is not a new one. In fact, what a discourse tells about the creator of that discourse is one of the most important areas of analysis for a rhetorical critic. Edwin Black takes these concepts about the character of the speaker and applies them to the character of the audience as well.[13]

A discourse implies an author just as an act implies an actor. But this is not quite as simple as it sounds. The fact that a discourse implies an author refers more to the unique linguistic qualities inherent in the discourse that give the critic insight into how the speaker views the world and less about the fact that someone wrote the speech. Black identifies this concept as having its classical formulation in the works of Aristotle, more specifically in the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*. Aristotle argues that in a speech or series of speeches one can identify two aspects of the speaker; the moral and the intellectual.[14] The moral character, or ethos, of the speaker is identifiable through the speaker's actions, specifically the speech.

Black argues that just as a speech implies the persona of the speaker, it also implies a second persona. In contemporary political discourse it would be naive to assume that a politician or candidate was speaking just to hear himself or herself talk. It is certain that the speaker of political discourse is seeking to influence a specific audience with his or her words. The speaker has, in essence, an audience in mind when he or she writes and delivers the speech. This target audience can be explored by the rhetorical critic in very much the same way as the ethos and character of the speaker.

The choices that a rhetor makes when crafting a speech or delivering an oration can tell us much about who that speaker has in mind as his or her audience. This concept, Black believes, was treated only briefly in antiquity,

with many classical rhetoricians saying only that this implied auditor sits in judgment of the speech and speaker, or that the speech implies a youthful or elderly audience. Black notes, "The commonest manifestation of the orientation is that we adopt it when we examine a discourse and say of it, for example, 'This was designed for a hostile audience'."[15] One interesting aspect of the second persona is that it really tells the critic nothing about who truly heard the speech. The second persona is focused in the mind of the speaker, not on the chairs of the assembly hall. The intended audience may be quite different from the audience that was in attendance at the delivery of the discourse. Black notes, "(W)e are able nonetheless to observe the sort of audience that would be appropriate to it. We would have derived from the discourse a hypothetical construct that is the implied auditor."[16]

To say that an audience is old, hostile, youthful, or friendly is saying very little. Black states, "(E)ven after one has noted of a discourse that it implies an auditor that is old, uncommitted, and sitting in judgment of the past, one has left to say -- well, everything."[17] It is not the physical or emotional characteristics of the implied auditor that is of import to the rhetorical critic. What is significant is the implied ideology of that second persona. The speaker is less concerned about the audience's age (although that can be important to the crafting of a message) than he or she is about the values and convictions present within the audience's ideological beliefs. It is tapping into this characteristic of the implied audience that is the goal of the rhetor, not an understanding of their ages and emotional states. Black believes that it is in the ideology of the second persona that a rhetorical critic should focus attention. He writes, "It seems a useful methodological assumption to hold that rhetorical discourses, either singly or cumulatively in a persuasive movement, will imply an auditor, and that in most cases the implication will be sufficiently suggestive

as to enable the critic to link this implied auditor to an ideology."[18] One way that a critic can attempt to identify the ideology of the implied audience is to look to "stylistic tokens." Stylistic tokens are, in essence, clues into the mindset of the speaker. For example, the speaker who attempts to portray a neutral character for his discourse, but also uses terms like "extremists" when referring to members of the Republican party has identified not only his own personal attitudes towards Republicans but has also given the audience a whole series of value judgments about his character. The use of stylistic tokens can give a critic insight into the speakers beliefs, values, attitudes and character.

These verbal clues as to the position of the speaker give the auditors insight into how the speaker thinks and views the world, but they also direct the audience to think about the world in a certain way as well. Black writes, "The expectation that a verbal token of ideology can be taken as implying an auditor who shares that ideology is something more than a hypothesis about a relationship. . . . Actual auditors look to the discourse they are attending for cues that tell them how they are to view the world. . . ."[19] In other words, the stylistic tokens used by a speaker not only indicate specific views about the subject being addressed in the discourse, but they also imply a whole world view that can influence the audience to see the world in a certain light. Black calls this the "pull of ideology".[20] This pull will move the audience member, unless he or she rejects it outright, to influence his or her beliefs on many subjects and issues other than the ones being addressed by the discourse. For example, the speaker that combines the token "extremist" with Republican positions on free trade also influences an audience to believe that Republicans are extremists in other cases as well.

The rhetorical critic can use these stylistic tokens not only to generate insight into the speaker and the implied audience, but they can also give the

critic insight into what the speaker wants the audience to become. The speaker uses these tokens for a reason, to generate identification between himself and his audience, but he also seeks to move that audience, to create a new audience as a result of his influence. Black writes, "The critic can see in the auditor implied by a discourse a model of what the rhetor would have his real audience become. What the critic can find projected by the discourse is the image of a man, and though that man may never find actual embodiment, it is still a man that the image is of. This condition makes moral judgment possible, and it is at this point in the process of criticism that it can illuminatingly be rendered."[21] In other words, the speaker creates an image of what he or she would like the audience to do or become, how the audience should act, and what values that audience should embrace. A critic can then examine this image and gain insight into the goals and values of the speaker.

The Critical Method

The synthesis of Black's theories of secrecy and disclosure and his theories of the second persona produces a critical model that is uniquely able to give insight into Senator Gore's rhetoric of self disclosure. Although either theory on its own would provide a solid ground for criticism, it is in the combination of the two models that a truly illuminating criticism can be generated.

At the end of his essay on secrecy an disclosure, Black identifies two very distinct groups of people; those who value disclosure and those who value secrecy. These two groups are distinct not because of their age, geographical location, or income. Rather, Black separates these two groups on the basis of their beliefs and political ideology. One group values openness, honesty, spontaneity, disclosure, and by implication the political values of freedom,

equality, and economic equality. The other group values privacy, hierarchy, order, and by implication capital accumulation, individual rights, and private property. Black also argues that these groups are different in the rhetorical forms to which they respond.

In his essay on the second persona, Black identifies stylistic tokens as being a clear indicator of both speaker ideology and the implied audience's ideology.

Combining these two concepts, as well as other issues discussed in depth earlier in this chapter, offers a critical perspective of Gore that will focus on his use of specific stylistic tokens that have their roots in the self-help movement. These tokens, termed the rhetoric of self-disclosure, will give insight not only into the character of Gore, but will also provide a clear picture of which audience, detailed by Black in his theories of secrecy and disclosure, Gore is seeking to influence. But as Black also indicates in his article on the second persona, the speaker not only wishes to influence an audience but also seeks to create a new audience. It is at this point that Black feels the most illuminating criticism can be rendered. Through an examination of stylistic tokens used by Gore, it may be possible to create an image of what Gore wants his audience to become and what that tells us about Gore's character. In addition, this model will provide a foundation for an examination of the speaker's role as translator, seer, or prophet and how this persona impacts the implied audience.

The two theories rely heavily on the identification of audience for much of their strength. Using the two theories simultaneously will achieve a greater understanding of how the speaker, the values of secrecy and disclosure, and the second persona all work together in a rhetorical situation. The application of this theory to Senator Al Gore's discourse in the 1992 Presidential campaign

will also generate insight into Gore as speaker, Gore's implied audience, and what Gore sought to achieve through his usage of the rhetoric of self-disclosure.

ENDNOTES

[1] Black, Edwin. "Secrecy and Disclosure as Rhetorical Forms", The Quarterly Journal of Speech 74 (1988): 133-150.

[2] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 133.

[3] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 134.

[4] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 134.

[5] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 135.

[6] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 137.

[7] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 137.

[8] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 139.

[9] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 146.

[10] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 148.

[11] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 148.

[12] Black, "Secrecy and Disclosure", 149.

[13] Black, Edwin, "The Second Persona", in James R. Andrews The Practice of Rhetorical Criticism, (Macmillian Publishing, New York) 1983: 131-141.

[14] Black, "The Second Persona", 131.

[15] Black, "The Second Persona", 134.

[16] Black, "The Second Persona", 134.

[17] Black, "The Second Persona", 133.

[18] Black, "The Second Persona", 134.

[19] Black, "The Second Persona", 134.

[20] Black, "The Second Persona", 135.

[21] Black, "The Second Persona", 135.

CHAPTER THREE:
HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND RHETORICAL CONSTRAINTS OF GORE'S 1992 CAMPAIGN

Al Gore Jr. was born into a decidedly political family, and some political analysts have gone so far as to say that the political history of the Gore family made Al Gore's political success inevitable.[1] The purpose of this chapter is to examine the history of Al Gore, focusing attention on his early life, his later political battles, and some of the social and cultural forces that play a role in the creation of Gore's rhetoric of self-disclosure. Among these social elements will be the political atmosphere of the 1988 Democratic Presidential primaries and the 1992 Presidential race, as well as the emergence of the self-help movement.

Gore's Life and Career

Al Gore Jr. was a part of the Washington D.C. establishment for most of his life. As the son of a prominent Senator from Tennessee, Gore was introduced to the political arena at a very early age, taking an important role in many of his father's political campaigns.

At the age of 21, Al Gore Jr. entered into the Army and spent the years between 1969 to 1971 in active duty in Vietnam. As his biographer Hank Hillin notes, Gore's decision to stay in the military was one of the most difficult decisions of his life. Hillin writes,

> One of the first great challenges of his life occurred after he completed his education at Harvard, when the military and Vietnam beckoned. His father, then a veteran U.S. senator, had been fighting for his political survival in Tennessee because of his opposition to the war. Though young Gore felt the war to be illegal and doomed, he joined the army so as not to embarrass his father and do what he believed his country demanded of him.[2]

Gore decided to enlist in the army and after basic training served as a field journalist.

During his time in the army, Gore saw much combat and reported on a number of important military battles in Vietnam. Besides this field reporting, Gore wrote a number of letters back to family and friends in the states. Of these letters Hillin writes, "The reactions he described were those of many other Vietnam War veterans: revulsion at the sight of atrocities, a lingering horror and disillusionment, yet a strange urge to return to that scene of the most intense experience of his life."[3] At one point after his return from Vietnam, Gore stated that he was planning on attending Divinity School so that he could "atone for his sins."[4] The impact of the Vietnam war on Gore cannot be overstated. As with so many young men of his generation, Al Gore was deeply affected by his experiences in Vietnam and the attitudes he found waiting for him upon his return. Gore described himself during those first few months home as being "at loose ends, unsure about himself, his future," and Hank Hillin describes Gore as "in need of healing."[5]

For the next few years, Gore worked as a reporter for *The Tennessean*. Then, in 1974, Gore took a leave of absence to attend the Vanderbilt school of law. Gore attended law school for two years, during which time he and his wife Tipper began raising their first child and purchased their first home. In February of 1976, Al Gore decided to run for U.S. Representative after Joe Evins decided not to seek re-election after thirty years in office. In an

interview with David Frost, Gore recalls the first few days of that campaign. He states,

> I started doing push-ups to start getting in shape for the contest, and I surprised myself with the extent to which I had come back to this feeling that I would try a career in public service. . . three days later I made my first speech -- I'd made other speeches before, but not a real political speech. I walked out on the courthouse steps and made my first real speech . . .and delivered the most awkward request for a vote you ever heard -- it was tortured.[6]

Gore utilized a campaign that had specific references back to his father's campaigns of earlier years. Gore emphasized more public jobs, higher taxes on the rich, and more stringent strip-mining laws. Gore became the early front runner, according to Hillin, because "of name recognition and because there were no real issues in the race except the relative attractiveness of the candidates, an area in which Gore excelled."[7] Gore defeated his opponent by a margin of more than 3,000 votes and thus began his career in national politics.

Gore held the position of representative from Tennessee until 1983 when he ran for and won the Senate seat held by his father some twenty years before. During the Senatorial campaign, Gore's younger sister Nancy died of lung cancer and that experience also had a powerful impact on Gore. Gore's mother stated in an interview on a Nashville television station that, "It [Nancy Gore's death] was very difficult for him. He thought Nancy was indestructible. . . It has contributed a dimension to him that will be reflected in the kind of person he is and the kind of feeling he has for the people he represents."[8]

After his election to the Senate, Gore was appointed to a number of highly visible committee positions. Gore served on the Governmental Affairs committee, the Commerce, Science and Transportation committee, and the Rules committee. It was at this time that Gore began to gain a reputation for his interest in science and technology. Richard Stengel, a reporter for Time,

notes on March 21 of 1988 that, "His [Gore's] passions are more intellectual than ideological; he is more comfortable dealing with the abstractions of arms control or the greenhouse effect than he is in leading ideological battles."[9]

On June 29 of 1987, Al Gore Jr. called a press conference in Carthage, Tennessee to announce he would run for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States. In the speech, Gore called for a new leader that could rival the success and strength of Mikhail Gorbachev and moreover indicated that the South would again be the battle ground for determining who would lead the nation. As with most of his previous political campaign speeches, Gore recalled his victories in the Senate and emphasized his own accomplishments in the areas of technology and arms control.[10] The New York Times of June 30, 1987 notes that "Mr. Gore has staked out his turf in Congress on a variety of such esoteric issues as the depletion of the ozone layer, the regulation of organ transplants and genetic engineering. He also made himself a specialist on arms control."[11] But even in these first few days of Gore's run for the Presidency a number of potential weaknesses were already being identified in the media. In the same article that praises Gore for his leadership on arms control, The New York Times writes, "Even Mr. Gore's own aides concede that he has not yet captured the imagination of the South. Mr. Gore himself noted that some in politics have suggested that given his age he might have waited a few elections before running for President."[12]

Similar comments were echoed in almost every major news magazine and newspaper in 1988, especially after Gore came in third after super-Tuesday elections. The political atmosphere of the time was difficult, and was in part responsible for Gore's failure. The field of Democratic candidates was huge, with no single candidate appearing to hold a monopoly on the American voters. The South alone had three candidates that seemed to be doing nothing but

dividing the Democratic voter base. Of all the candidates, Gore was the least known at a national level, and had very little influence over voters outside of his home state. Time of March 21, 1988 had this to say about the field of potential candidates for the Democratic nomination; "Just a month ago the confusing, arcane and jerry-built 1988 presidential selection process appeared to be producing only chaos. The Democratic field was crowded. To many, it was deficient in both distinction and definition."[13] In fact, after super-Tuesday the race for the Democratic Presidential nomination was limited to just three of the many possibilities. Michael Dukakis, Jesse Jackson, and Al Gore were easily the three front runners, but Gore was by far the weakest of the three candidates and he faced an image problem that many political analysts felt was the major reason for his failure.

Among the headlines written about Gore during the 1988 Presidential campaign were; "The Several Faces of Al Gore"[14], "Al Gore: In Danger of Becoming All Things to No People"[15], "Is America Ready for a Boy President?"[16], "The Nova that Stayed Nebulous"[17], "Return of the Living Dead"[18], "Al Gore's Generation Gap"[19], and "Senator Gore's Identity Crisis"[20]. Of all the criticisms of Gore's campaign, the one most often cited by the media was Gore's lack of identity. Richard Stengel writes that Gore's attempts to change his image from one of a "cerebral technocrat" to a "fiery champion of working men and women" was lacking credibility and believability.[21] stengel goes on to note that even though Gore was the first baby-boomer Presidential candidate, he could not generate any kind of generational excitement from his contemporaries. Stengel writes, "Gore seems to be outside his generation. He does not want to seem youthful, and at that he succeeds. He comes across as a young fogy."[22] These conflicting public images left voters confused about what Gore represented, and unwilling to give Gore their votes. Business Week of

April 14, 1988 notes that one member of an audience at a Gore campaign speech said, "I really don't know who he is."[23]

In addition to these criticisms, Gore also had problems with his public addresses. As with his image, there was nothing in his rhetoric that was necessarily offensive or divisive, but it lacked the power to excite or inspire his audiences. Erik Calonius of Newsweek writes, "Gore has failed to stir the political passions of his generation -- or for that matter, political passions in general. Listeners are respectful, but he tends to lose his audiences with earnest platitudes and wooden delivery."[24] That wooden style became something of a trademark for Gore, spawning jokes such as "How can you tell Gore apart from his secret service protection? Gore is the stiff one." Calonius goes on to say, "Asked about his speeches, members of Gore's staff roll their eyes and admit that Gore, a onetime journalist, fancies himself a wordsmith and insists on writing his own material. That material reveals Gore to be a candidate of prose, not poetry. But there are some problems even deeper that leaden rhetoric."[25]

There may indeed have been problems deeper than dispassionate speech making, but the combination of that issue with the lack of identity and clarity of his message destined Gore's campaign to failure. Perhaps the most direct criticism of Gore's 1988 campaign came from Steven Holms of Time magazine on May 2, 1988. Holms writes,

> He failed because he never developed a visceral connection with voters. On the stump, he tried to convey passion by shouting, but the volume seemed turned up in all the wrong places. Even in his commercials he had trouble conveying sincerity; focus groups rated as worst those that showed Gore speaking directly to the camera. Overshadowing everything was Gore's inability to develop a consistent message or convey a clear sense of who he is.[26]

This, then, was the end of Gore's 1988 attempt to become the Democratic nominee for President, but even with a relatively poor showing, many political insiders felt that Gore's successes in super-Tuesday made it increasingly likely that he would be a viable candidate for President sometime in the future.

In fact, Gore had always intended to run for that office in 1992, making some pleas for donations to his campaign as early as 1989, one year after his first failed attempt. According to Gore, an accident that nearly killed his son on April 3, 1989 was the defining moment of Gore's life and made a 1992 campaign impossible.[27] After Gore and his son Albert Gore III had finished watching a baseball game in Baltimore, they left the stadium and began to walk back to their car. Gore's son ran into the path of an oncoming vehicle and was knocked thirty feet into the air and was then dragged across the pavement for another twenty feet. Gore began CPR and mouth to mouth resuscitation to keep him alive long enough for emergency response teams to arrive. Albert III had third degree burns from being dragged across the pavement, and suffered serious multiple injuries, including a broken thigh, a damaged kidney, a ruptured spleen, broken ribs, a bruised lung, and a fairly serious concussion. During his nearly thirty days in the hospital, Albert III had a portion of his kidney removed, a pin placed in his left leg, and had more than half of his spleen removed.[28] Of this incident, Hank Hillin writes, "Until young Albert III, 6, was struck down, Gore thought he'd never have to endure anything so painful. The pain and uncertainty involving Albert rivaled his feelings in 1984, when he had observed his sister, Nancy, as she fought valiantly against lung cancer."[29]

After the accident, the Gore family underwent a series of family therapy experiences to deal with the uncertainty of Albert III's condition and the impact that such a great physical trauma can have on a family. Gore announced he

would be seeking re-election to his Senate seat, and told reporters that the accident with his son had made him decide to spend more time at home with his family rather than spend the huge amounts of time necessary to win the Democratic Primary.[30]

After the Democratic Primary had ended the clear winner was Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas, but the choice of a vice-presidential running mate was still up in the air. Rumors that Bob Kerrey of Nebraska, Paul Tsongas, or one of the other Democratic candidates would be chosen seemed to eliminate any outsider from taking the position. But then, in May of 1992, Clinton met with Gore and placed his name among the top six of a list of forty potential running mates. Within a week, after many meetings between Gore, Clinton, and Warren Christopher, Gore was chosen as the vice-presidential running mate and Gore accepted. In early July, Clinton made the announcement, and on July 10, 1992, at the Democratic National Convention, Al Gore formally accepted the nomination of the Democratic Party for vice-president. It was at this time that the campaigning began in earnest.

The selection of Gore as running mate was a somewhat unconventional choice for Clinton. The ticket had two young, Southern liberals and many analysts believed that this choice would limit the tickets attractiveness to Northern voters. But the choice did have some obvious advantages. While Clinton gained his political reputation at the state level, Gore was known for his work in Congress and in the realm of legislation. Also, Clinton's agenda was focused more on domestic issues while Gore had developed expertise in foreign affairs and arms control. Gore's environmental record, an issue at the heart of his career, was quite different from Clinton's somewhat questionable history in Arkansas. Also, the damaging stories about draft-dodging and alleged womanizing told about Clinton were in stark contrast to Gore's

Vietnam experience and the "family values" history of the Gore family symbolized by Tipper Gore's crusade against obscene rock music lyrics. Lastly, Gore's character had already undergone the scrutiny of the media in 1988 and had been found safe.

One of the foundations of Gore's 1992 campaign was his position as an expert on the environment. His book, Earth in the Balance, was a New York Times best seller, and many of the stump speeches Gore delivered were devoted to environmental issues. Issues ranging from the depletion of the ozone layer to global warming, from deforestation of tropical rain forests to the implementation of new energy regulations became the focus of Gore's campaign in 1992. He gave many speeches on environmental issues, and his legislative record on environmental policies was at the core of his campaign efforts. One of the most important responsibilities Gore undertook in 1992 was leading the Senate delegation to the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio. At that summit, Gore criticized the Bush administration for lax implementation of American environmental policy.[31] In addition, Gore devoted time to technological issues, such as his support of NASA, biotechnology research, and arms reduction policy. All of these issues were among the most often heard during his 1988 campaign, but in 1992 Gore began to take a different perspective on these issues.

Beginning with his nomination acceptance speech, members of the media noted a particular style of speech that had not been used in Gore's 1988 campaign. Elizabeth Taylor, a reporter for Time, notes that "Most Americans got their first glimpse of the new Al Gore during the Democratic National Convention last July, when the vice-presidential candidate recounted his six-year-old son's brush with death and his family's journey of emotional healing."[32] These new areas of discussion, topics never touched on by Gore in

1988, became commonplace in his political speeches in 1992. In fact, even in his most standard stump speeches, Gore began to use language that had never before found expression in his speechmaking. Taylor goes on to note that "His stump speeches are standard fare. . . . But the Tennessean can subtly slip into words like 'dysfunction' and 'inner child' as adroitly as his supporters buckle on their Birkenstocks."[33] Although Gore was indeed speaking on issues that were familiar to him, it was his treatment, his style of delivery, that was different. It was the vocabulary Gore employed that was new.

The vocabulary itself was not new to America, but the fact that a political figure was using this kind of language while at the same time discussing intimate details of personal tragedies was quite new. Taylor notes that, "This willingness to expose those inner lives from the podium is something new in U.S. politics. In 1972 Thomas Eagleton was shamed off the Democratic presidential ticket after revelations that he had undergone electric shock therapy."[34] Indeed, the successful use of personal tragedy in political campaigns was almost entirely unheard of, and those like Eagleton who attempted to use such experiences in political campaigns inevitably met with defeat. Although the strategy was new, the vehicle for that strategy was not new. In Gore's case that vehicle was the use of a language that is so familiar to members of our culture that it is instantly recognizable; it is a language that has its roots in the success of the self-help movement.

History of the Self-Help Movement

The self-help movement had its most dramatic surge in popularity during the early eighties, but the history of these programs most certainly began in the 1930's with the emergence of Alcoholics Anonymous. AA is by far the most successful organization designed to treat addictive or destructive behavior.

Created by Bill W., AA grew throughout the 1940's and 50's and finally reached its peak member numbers in the late 1980's when other self-help and 12 step programs began to draw old members in and create new devotees.[35] In fact it is estimated that there are more than 15 million Americans currently involved in some 500,000 recovery groups. In addition, there are more than 100 million Americans who are related to someone who suffers from an addiction or from destructive behavior.[36]

The demographics of self-help group membership are quite varied. Studies of specific kinds of self-help groups, such as mental patient groups, can make some conclusions about size, geography, age of the group, and leadership styles but these studies are only indicative of certain types of groups.[37] The median age of a member of the self-help movement is difficult to gauge due to the variety and interest areas of each group. For example, the average age of a member of Narcotics Anonymous differs greatly from the average age of a member of Alcoholics Anonymous or of Adult Children of Alcoholics.

The kinds and forms of the self-help movement are as varied as the problems they treat. The organizations cover behavior ranging from alcohol and drug abuse to family therapy for traumatic illness to sex addictions, dispelling mythology, and the men's movement.[38] The movement has spawned an enormous money making machine, with billions of dollars spent annually on books, tapes, and lecture series. Some of the top names in the self-help industry can command upwards of a million dollars for personal appearances and lectures. John Bradshaw, recognized as one of the leaders of the men's movement, regularly speaks to groups of more than 3,000 and many of his lectures are sold out for weeks in advance.[39]

Perhaps one of the most influential texts in the history of the self-help movement was "Co-dependent No More" by Melody Beattie. This text created

the phrase "co-dependent," which became a buzzword for thousands of Americans and self-help groups. Margaret Jones, a reporter for Publishers Weekly notes, "The book coined a recovery buzzword, defined a population (just about everyone) and made its author a recovery superstar. Suddenly, it seemed, virtually every New York publisher was filling the pipeline with recovery books."[40] One need only watch any of the dozens of daily talk shows, such as *Oprah* or *Donahue*, to see the salience of recovery programs.

There are critics of the self-help movement that argue the recovery programs are in some ways just as dangerous as the destructive behavior they claim to address. Phyllis Hobe, in her book Lovebound, argues that self-help groups simply replace one addiction for another and members become addicted to the meetings and group psychology in which they take part.[41] But there are others that view the success of the self-help movement as indicative of a larger, cultural change. Ehud Sperling, the head of a new age publishing group, "views the emergence of a recovery movement as part of a megatrend of shifting values and priorities, and points out that the same baby boomers who spent the 60's looking for an inner experience through marijuana, LSD and other drugs are today bonding in 12 step groups."[42]

Whatever the impact the self-help movement may be having on the behaviors it seeks to address, or the generation that seems to be taking part in the movement, one thing is certain; the self-help movement has changed the face of modern American culture. One of most obvious ways is the addition of the self-help vocabulary into American language.

Margaret Jones writes, "Recovery jargon has become part of the American household lexicon; codependency, shame, dysfunctional families, denial, healing, serenity, adult child, inner child. . . Recovery permeates the culture: there are tabloids, seminars, cable shows, Hollywood movies whose

heroes and heroines are in recovery."[43] The vocabulary of the movement has become so pervasive that it is instantly recognizable as part of a sub-culture in America. Those who use the language are recognized by those who know the language, and both recognize the commonalties of a shared background. Suffering and recovery, according to one leader of the self-help movement, are no longer individual experiences. They take part in a community whose members know the rules and the vocabulary.[44]

Given the broad range of people involved in the movement, and the large number of people who have second hand experience with recovery programs, the potential audience for a politician who uses this language effectively is equally large. Al Gore's use of this vocabulary in his public address is significant not only because it is a unique rhetorical strategy but also because of the insight its use gives into Gore as a speaker, as a politician, and his view of his potential audience. The fact that Gore's failure in the 1988 bid for the presidency was, according to many analysts, a result of his inability to connect to his audience provides an even more powerful incentive for examining this rhetorical device. Perhaps the use of this vocabulary was an attempt by Gore at overcoming past weaknesses in his rhetorical style? In addition, the unique qualities found in his disclosure of personal tragedies in a public setting may have been an attempt at overcoming the perception that Gore was cold and wooden. Whatever the answer to these questions, the intrusion of the self-help movement into the realm of American politics is unique, and the combination of the history of Al Gore and the social elements of the past ten years has created a topic of great interest. A critical examination of this rhetoric of self-disclosure will be the focus of the next chapter and will be an attempt at answering some of these questions.

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CHAPTER FOUR:
A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE RHETORIC OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

With an understanding of the theories of secrecy, disclosure and the second persona, combined with the historical and social contexts discussed in the last chapter, a critical examination of the rhetoric of self-disclosure is now possible. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the ways in which the rhetoric of self-disclosure function in the discourse of Al Gore. Included in those functions are the ways in which the rhetoric creates a persona of a mystic or seer, the way the rhetoric broadens Gore's potential audience base, and the way the rhetoric establishes and promotes Gore's ideology. Specific instances of the rhetoric of self-disclosure will be identified to determine which function they are serving. This critical examination will begin with the best selling book by Gore, Earth in the Balance. The discussion of what Gore calls our "dysfunctional civilization" will be of paramount interest, as will references to his son's accident and its effect on his life. Also, the nomination acceptance speech delivered by Gore at the Democratic National Convention in July of 1992 will be examined, with particular attention paid to his use of the informal rules of self-disclosure that are at the heart of the self-help movement. Finally, a number of stump speeches will be studied for instances of the rhetoric of self-disclosure and finally, the speech given on the evening of the 1992 Presidential election will be analyzed for further evidence of this rhetorical style.

The critical approach to this rhetorical style will include the simple identification of the vocabulary of the self-help movement, what Edwin Black

has called "stylistic tokens." These stylistic tokens will first be examined in an attempt to identify Gore's second persona and what ideological pressures Gore is bringing to bear on his audience. Secondly, the implications for the values of secrecy and disclosure will also be examined with specific attention paid to what audience Gore is speaking to and what he may hope to gain from this rhetorical style.

Earth In The Balance

As evidenced in both the 1988 Democratic primaries and in the 1992 presidential election, the environment is the most often discussed issue in the campaigns of Al Gore. His book Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit is the seminal statement of Gore's views on what he perceives as the Earth's current environmental crisis and how best to address that crisis. In the introduction to the book, Gore states that it is not meant to be a singularly scientific text, although it does rely on some scholarly studies in environmental science. Rather, the book is meant to be a statement of Gore's personal beliefs and provides a chronicle of Gore's reasons for caring so deeply for this issue. He writes, "Writing this book is part of a personal journey that began more than twenty-five years ago, a journey in search of a true understanding of the global ecological crisis and how it can be resolved."[1] Gore claims that this personal journey began with his introduction to the world of national politics, but later in the introduction to the book Gore argues that one experience in particular had a more significant impact on this journey. Gore writes, "The searching is not new -- either in my personal life or where the environmental crisis is concerned. What is new in both cases is the intensity. And I know exactly when and how that started, because a single horrifying event triggered a big change in the way I thought about my relationship to life itself."[2] Gore then

goes on to describe the accident that nearly killed his young son. The disclosure of this event plays a significant role in framing the remainder of the book. In fact, Gore argues that the spiritual and emotional struggles of his son and his entire family are at the heart of the book's inquiry into the ecological crisis. Gore states, "For many. . . months, our lives were completely consumed with the struggle to restore his body and spirit. And for me something changed in a fundamental way. . . . This life change has caused me to be increasingly impatient with the status quo, with conventional wisdom, with the lazy assumption that we can always muddle through."[3] The fact that this description comes at the beginning of the book is important to note, as the remainder of the text is colored with references back to this experience and the power of revelation it possessed for Gore. In fact, the accident takes on the character of what Black calls a "sacred text." Black describes a sacred text as "anything at all that may have a latent meaning in addition to its manifest one." It is here, in Gore's description of the accident as both an accident and a transcendental moment, that he begins to take on the character of what Edwin Black would call a "translator".

Gore uses information that only he is aware of, specifically the accident involving his son and the subsequent struggles to heal his son and his family, and translates that information for his audience. The event is sacred because it alone possessed the power that transformed Gore and informed him about secrets that could only be discovered through this experience. In other words, Gore argues that the event was unique to Gore and provided him with unique insight into many things. The fact that Gore's family had gone through a difficult time is only part of the process, but the fact that Gore takes that incident and begins to make it prophetic is also very important. The rhetoric of self-disclosure has, in its prophetic nature, the function of generating a persona

for Gore than implies prophecy. In other words, Gore is not only a politician in the eyes of the audience but also possesses the character of a seer or prophet. Black argues that the translator must possess a special knowledge which is then delivered to an audience in a prophetic, or purposeful, way.[4] Gore does exactly this. The text in this case is the accident involving Gore's son and the purpose of the translation is to call into question basic relationships between Gore, his audience, and the world. In fact, Gore goes on to make the connection between text and audience when he says, "Such complacency [Gore's life prior to his son's accident] has allowed many kinds of difficult problems to breed and grow, but now, facing a rapidly deteriorating global environment, it threatens absolute disaster. Now no one can afford to assume that the world will somehow solve its problems. We must all become partners in a bold effort to change the very foundations of our civilization."[5] Although the logical connections between Gore's experiences and the environmental crisis are unexplored by Gore, his argument is that his personal experiences have made him uniquely suited to understand the problems facing the environment. The rhetoric of self-disclosure is, in essence, functioning as a mediate device to advance a mystical persona for Gore. By using the rhetoric of self-disclosure to indicate that only Gore has the ability to see and understand the essence of the environmental crisis, Gore is generating an image that, like a priest or a seer, he alone can see the root causes and the best corrective measures.

The previous passage is also important because Gore links his own experiences to what he sees as the current ecological disaster and then translates that link into a mandate for his audience. But as Black also argues, the translation of the text must not destroy the mystery of that text. Gore fulfills this requirement as well when he calls for action on the part of his

audience that is tinted with the same kind of vague and mysterious character as his own transformation. He calls for a global partnership that will change the foundations of civilization but does not describe this partnership other than in obscure and almost arcane language. He allows this call to action to have the same kind of mysterious character as his own realizations about his role in the larger order. In essence, Gore is giving his audience a glimpse into the mystery but leaving it completely without substance. Another example of this protection of the text's mystery can be seen when Gore uses a famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi to explore the "details" of what he means by individual efforts. Gore tells his audience, "We must become the change we wish to see in the world."[6] Now this may sound like instruction about what actions need to be taken on the part of his audience, but it is an instruction that lacks form and specificity. Gore translates the text for his audience in a purposeful manner, but the lack of specificity and detail retains the mystery inherent in that text. In this instance, the rhetoric is serving another function. The rhetoric is used as a tool that attempts to influence Gore's audience and establish ideology. Although the ideology lacks definition, it is still ideological because it calls for a belief on the part of the audience that is directly linked to Gore's beliefs and experiences.

These vague instructions seem to become a bit more detailed later in the book, specifically in the chapter titled "Dysfunctional Civilization." It is in this chapter that Gore attempts to lay the foundation for his plan to restore balance to the global environment. Gore begins this chapter by exploring the metaphors of addiction and substance abuse in order to establish what he sees as our civilization's denial of immanent danger. Gore writes, "Anyone who is unusually fearful of something -- intimacy, failure, loneliness -- is potentially vulnerable to addiction, because psychic pain causes a feverish hunger for

distraction. The cleavage in the modern world between mind and body, man and nature, has created a new kind of addiction: I believe that our civilization is, in effect, addicted to the consumption of the earth itself."[7]

Although Gore has used language similar to this previously in the text, it is at this point that the metaphors and the vocabulary he uses become almost exclusively those of the self-help movement. He argues that at the heart of the ecological problem is a human addiction, and that the problem is confounded by both "denial" and "enablers." Gore describes examples of addiction to consumption by saying, "Indeed, many political, business and intellectual leaders deny the existence of any such patterns in aggressive and dismissive tones. They serve as enablers, removing inconvenient obstacles and helping to ensure that the addictive behavior continues."[8] Gore is, in effect, taking the huge and complex problems associated with environmental degradation and describing them using the vocabulary of the addiction counselor. Again, the rhetoric is serving as a mechanism that generates and promotes the particular ideological perspective that is at the heart of Gore's political philosophy.

In just these few examples, the "stylistic tokens" discussed by Black are evident. Gore uses these tokens with regularity and persistence, and they become the foundation for Gore's theoretical discussions of the causes of the environmental crisis as well as the basis for the preventative measures he supports. And these are not simple ideas. In fact, the mechanisms of addiction, of denial, and of the pathology behind addictive behavior have been the topics of research for decades. But still Gore formulates his entire discussion using these concepts. As Black notes in his essay on the second persona, a speaker does not create a text for his or her own ears. Rather, the text is crafted for a very specific audience with very specific goals in mind.[9] It would seem stupid for Gore to utilize such a precise language and set of

metaphors if he did not believe his audience would respond to them. Gore, in Black's terms, would be using this vocabulary not only for its persuasive character but because the use of these terms will move his audience to a particular world view. In other words, the rhetoric of self-disclosure functions to shape the audience's perception of the world by using the stylistic tokens of the self-help movement. Gore writes,

> With addiction, an essential element in recovery is a willingness on the part of addicts to honestly confront the real pain they have sought to avoid. Rather than distracting their inner awareness through behavior, addicts must learn to face their pain -- feel it, think it, absorb it, own it. Only then can they begin to deal honestly with it instead of running away. So too our relationship to the earth may never be healed until we are willing to stop denying the destructive nature of the current pattern.[10]

This passage synthesizes a number of important concepts expressed in the theories of Edwin Black. First of all, Gore uses the rhetoric of self-disclosure to depict the problems facing the world using the stylistic tokens of addiction and denial. In other words, the rhetoric is a mechanism that not only establishes a particular ideological perspective, but also serves as the medium through which that ideology is passed to the audience. Gore begins by arguing that the problem we all now face is one of addictive behavior, and as such the logical response is the same response that a drug or alcohol addict would make. That response is to honestly confront the pain that the patient has sought to deny. In essence, the addict must do what Gore himself has described in an earlier passage about his own experiences with his son's accident. The individual must recognize the pain, must acknowledge it and learn from it. Once that has been done, the truth of the situation is inescapable and denial is impossible. Gore is arguing that the unique experiences of his life provide the insight necessary to understand what is needed to stop the destruction of the environment. Gore alone, it would seem, is in possession of this knowledge

and the rhetoric is used to create this persona. In this example, the rhetoric of self-disclosure in functioning both as a means to create the mystic persona but also to establish and promote Gore's ideology.

Gore returns to the concept of sacred text and translator in this passage by linking a mystical revelation discovered through pain to the understanding of the environmental crisis. This is akin to the pain he underwent with his son that he describes at the beginning of the book. In essence, Gore's own experiences with pain and the recognition of the transformational power of that pain has made him uniquely able to see and describe the problems facing the environment. Gore argues that he has accepted that pain and learned from it and is now calling on his audience to do the same. In this instance, the rhetoric functions as a mechanism that attempts to link Gore to his audience while calling upon the audience to adopt a particular mode of action. In addition, the translation follows form by providing the audience with a purposeful way to act that does not destroy the mystery of the text. Gore tells his audience that only when they "feel it, think it, absorb it, own it" will they be able to heal their relationship to the earth. While this sounds like a means of approaching the problem purposefully, the instructions retain the mysterious and vague nature of the initial translation.

As Black argues in his essay on the second persona, the use of stylistic tokens is part of the speakers attempt to tell his or her audience how to view the world. It is, in Black's language, the "pull of ideology".[11] As Black argues, the use of stylistic tokens is innately persuasive because the terms identify the speaker's ideology and influence the audience's perception of the world. Gore's discussion is doubly powerful in that he uses stylistic tokens in the prophetic character of a translator. In Black's words, Gore's prophecy is powerful because he translates a mysterious text in such a way as to direct his

audience to action, but is also powerful in that the language itself implies an ideology. It would be quite different if Gore attempted to persuade his audience about how to affect change in the world without using the vocabulary of the self-help movement. It would also be quite different if Gore used the vocabulary of the self-help movement alone without a sacred text to translate. The combination of the two makes the discourse that much more complex and also provides an intersection for the two theories of Edwin Black. In essence, Gore is translating a sacred text and is making that text prophetic through his use of the vocabulary of the self-help movement. The action he asks his audience to take part in is therapy, and he calls for that action using the language of therapy. In this instance, the rhetoric of self-disclosure is used as a mechanism to advance the mystical persona of Gore, but is also used to influence Gore's audience to adapt his ideology.

Gore states,

> Just as the members of a dysfunctional family emotionally anesthetize themselves against the pain they would otherwise feel, our dysfunctional civilization has developed a numbness that prevents us from feeling the pain of our alienation from our world. Both the dysfunctional family and our dysfunctional civilization abhor direct contact with the full and honest experience of life. But there is a way out. A pattern of dysfunctionality need not persist indefinitely, and the key to change is the harsh light of truth.[12]

This passage reveals not only the same translation and call to action of the other examples, but also offers the "way out," or as Gore calls it, truth. Gore argues that the revelation of truth is the cure to the dysfunctional pattern Gore sees in our civilization. Uncovering the truth, especially the "harsh light of truth", is significant in that it is a direct link back to Black's discussion of secrecy and disclosure. In that article Black argues, "the secret, which is simultaneously concealed because it is evil and evil because it is concealed, will shrivel in the light of revelation."[13] This healing power of "light" and "truth" is an image

Gore uses quite often to explore the ways of stopping the ecological crisis. Gore continues, "Just as an addict can confront his addiction, just as a dysfunctional family can confront the unwritten rules that govern their lives, our civilization can change -- must change -- by confronting the unwritten rules that are driving us to destroy the earth."[14] Again, the same kind of discovery of the truth, the exposure of that which is hidden or unwritten, is essential to the transformation Gore calls for. Gore is acting as the translator that uncovers these truths in order for the secret to be destroyed in the act of disclosure. The rhetoric of self-disclosure is again functioning as a tool that Gore uses to advance his ideology while at the same time asking his audience to adopt that ideology.

These examples are just a few of the many uses of the rhetoric of self-disclosure found in Earth in the Balance. Indeed, Gore continues his discussion of our dysfunctional civilization throughout the text, and even makes specific references to self-help icons like Robert Bly and John Bradshaw.[15] Gore ends his book by saying,

> Throughout our family's ordeal we were upheld by thousands of people . . . .That sharing was an experience that moved me as deeply as any I have ever had; in a sense it gave me permission to fully realize my grief and go, in Robert Bly's words, 'into the ashes.' It is that experience of personal healing, in turn, which made it possible for me to write this book and which convinced me that the healing of the global environment depends initially upon our ability to grieve for the deep tragedy that our collision with the earth's ecological system is causing. Yet if we do so, I have no doubt that the human spirit is capable of the transformation that that healing and recovery will entail.[16]

In these last few words of the text, Gore returns again to the message of his own transformation through the experience of his son's accident. And yet again his translation of that experience is prophetic in that it calls for a similar "transformation" on the part of his audience that will eventually lead to

"healing" and "recovery". The use of stylistic tokens of the self-help movement within the process of translation is apparent in this quotation, as in so many other points in the text. The rhetoric functions, throughout the text, to create a mystic persona for Gore, to link Gore to his audience, and to call upon that audience to adopt a particular ideology. But Earth in the Balance is by no means the only significant artifact in the rhetoric of self-disclosure. The book is the first truly detailed example of this rhetorical device, but the nomination acceptance speech delivered by Gore at the Democratic National Convention in New York provides even more evidence of this style.

The Nomination Acceptance Speech

Senator Gore began his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention by recognizing the struggles of countries all around the world and the radical changes in government that nations like Germany and South Africa were currently undergoing. Of these changes, Gore said, "Their faith in the power of conscience and their confidence in the force of truth required a leap of the human spirit. Can we truthfully say that their chance for change was better than ours? And yet we face our own crisis of the spirit here in America."[17]

Gore begins his speech by framing his comments in terms of truth and spirit, a language that is reminiscent of his rhetoric in Earth in the Balance. Gore's reference to the power of truth is similar to his characterizations of truth as a cleansing or revelatory force in his environmental text. In addition, the phrase "crisis of spirit" is identical to language he used in Earth in the Balance to characterize the causes of the environmental crisis. By coloring his speech with this kind of language, especially language that seems mystical or mysterious in nature such as "crisis of the spirit," Gore is beginning the "pull

of ideology" that Black associates with stylistic tokens.[18] Black argues that stylistic tokens possess a persuasive character that is tied up in their nature. In other words, the tokens themselves have a persuasive power that not only correspond to the speaker's ideology but attempt to move the audience to accept that ideology. The use of these words in the previous passage, although not specifically part of the vocabulary of the self-help movement, lend a mystical flavor to the discussion. This mystical quality is also part of the mystery inherent in the sacred text that Black discusses in his theories of secrecy and disclosure.

The speech continues with references to the loss of hope, lost faith, and the disheartened spirits of the American people. The Bush administration is identified as the cause of these problems, and Gore recounts the political victories of Governor Clinton in his home state of Arkansas. Gore argues that what is needed to stop the destruction of the American spirit is a turning away from the Bush administration's style of politics towards Clinton's style. Included in that style is the recognition that the environment is an essential part of America's future. Gore discusses the environment in the very familiar terminology of the self-help movement when he states,

> I believe there is a fundamental link between our current relationship to the earth and the attitudes that stand in the way of human progress. For generations we have believed that we could abuse the earth because we were somehow not really connected to it. But now we must face the truth. The task of saving the earth's environment must and will become the central organizing principle of the post-Cold War world.[19]

The relationship between humanity and the environment is of special interest to Gore, and it is a theme he touches on often in Earth in the Balance. The concept of interconnectedness, or of community, is a basic ideal of the self-help movement. Although establishing a sense of community, recognizing that all people and things in a system are interconnected and interdependent, is a

concept that is often used in political discourse, the use of the term "community" takes on a different meaning when coupled with Gore's use of the vocabulary of the self-help movement. The "community" theory is at the heart of many self-help therapists efforts to aid dysfunctional families. Gore explores the "disconnectedness" of humans and the environment as if this lack of emotional or psychological connection is just as much to blame for environmental degradation as pollution and green house gases. Indeed, many therapists theorize that it is a similar lack of community that is directly responsible for abusive relationships in family situations.[20] They argue that a parents inability to recognize the effects of abusive communication styles on a child enables that parent to continue those actions without considering the impact. Gore extrapolates from this theory when he says that our lack of connection to the earth is the cause of the "abuse" that is destroying the planet.

But, as Gore says numerous times, the cure for this problem is the truth. As with so many of his messages, Gore identifies the truth as the mechanism for change and for healing. But Gore is not alone in this response. Truth as the cure for an ailment is a basic assumption made in the self-help movement.[21] Therapists have argued for years that healing is impossible unless the patient is willing to be honest. Without the patient's willingness to face the truth, to express and understand the reality of the situation, denial will continue to hamper the recovery process. It is, in fact, denial that is at the heart of the problem Gore is expressing. He goes on to state,

> Just as the false assumption that we are not connected to the earth has led to the ecological crisis, so the equally false assumption that we are not connected to each other has led to our social crisis. Even worse, the evil and mistaken assumption that we have no connection to those generations preceding us or those who will follow us has led to the crisis of values we face today. Those are the connections that are missing from politics today.[22]

Gore also talks about the assumptions and patterns of behavior that have been passed down from one generation to the next. It is the passing down of the patterns of behavior, specifically denial, that has caused the current ecological crisis, as well as the crisis of spirit and values. This same concept is expressed in the theories of dysfunction when dysfunctional communication styles are passed from the parents to the children in a family.[23] Dysfunctional family theory again provides the structure for Gore's analysis of the problems facing the United States. Gore argues that we must break these patterns of dysfunctional behavior that are being passed from one generation to the next by accepting the truth; that we are all interconnected. The "false" and "mistaken" assumptions must be seen for what they are, and the truth of our relationships to each other must be fully accepted for healing to begin. Gore uses the process of dysfunctional families to describe the root cause of the problems, and also identifies truth and honesty as the cure. This process is a standard in the self-help movement, and although only a few of the stylistic tokens of the self-help movement are in evidence, the process is steeped in self-help concepts. In this instance, the rhetoric functions as a means to generate an ideology that is rooted in the self-help movement.

Although these particular sections of the speech utilize the rhetoric of self-disclosure in a fairly indirect manner, Gore returns to the more easily identifiable uses of the style later in the speech. In the last third of the speech, Gore returns to the mystical language he used in the beginning. In fact, Gore

begins to retell the story of his son's accident and the effect that accident had on him. Gore writes,

> Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to tell you this straight from the heart -- that experience changed me forever. When you've seen your 6 year old son fighting for his life, you realize that some things are more important than winning. You lose patience with the lazy assumptions of so many in politics that we can always just muddle through. Wen you've seen your reflection is the empty stare of a boy waiting for a second breath of life, you realize that we weren't put here on earth to look out for our needs alone; we are part of something much larger than ourselves. All of us are part of something much greater than we are capable of imagining.[24]

First, Gore explains that this experience is a unique one that cannot be repeated or understood by anyone other than him. Gore says that only after a person has been in this specific situation are these revelations clear. It is, in Black's terminology, the apotheosis of the translator that Gore is trying to achieve. By placing himself in a position that no other human being could possibly occupy, Gore is establishing authority and credibility about what he has learned from this experience. Black argues, "the text is sacred because it holds the key that will make experience coherent."[25] The sacredness of a text is dependent upon what lessons it can teach the initiate, in this case, Gore. But only Gore is aware of those lessons as a result of his personal experience. Gore translates that experience for his audience by exploring those lessons, but he does not destroy the sacred nature of the text because there are no other people who could understand these lessons. In addition, the lesson Gore attributes to this experience is that "we are part of something larger than we can possibly imagine." This translation retains the sacred mystery of the text because Gore is the only one aware of the lessons, and the lesson itself is vague and ambiguous. Being part of something larger than we can possibly imagine is being part of something we cannot understand or even describe in any meaningful way. This amorphous nature of the message allows the mystery to

remain in tact. In this passage, the rhetoric of self-disclosure functions as a means to gain credibility with Gore's audience, to further the mystic persona, and to identify Gore's world view.

Gore continues the formula described by Black when Gore says,

> And my friends, if you look up for a moment from the rush of your daily lives, you will hear the quiet voices of your country crying out for help. You will see your reflection in the weary eyes of those who are losing hope in America. And you will see that our democracy is lying in the gutter, waiting for us to give it a second breath of life. . . . The time has come for all Americans to be part of the healing. . . . Americans will say of our labors that this nation and this earth were healed by people they never even knew.[25]

In this passage Gore fulfills the prophetic aspect of Black's theory of translation by calling for action on the part of his audience while at the same time retaining the mystery. The call to action here is just as vague and mystical as his previous mandates, and it also uses the vocabulary of the self-help movement when it calls for communal healing. As in Earth in the Balance , Gore is asking his audience to recognize the pain that surrounds them, to accept that pain, and in doing so begin the process of healing. Even though this call for action is still vague and ambiguous in terms of specific actions, it is more detailed than others. It is a call for the kind of healing found within therapy sessions such as those utilized by "dysfunctional families." In fact, Gore is following the process of therapy exactly when he asks for a recognition of the destructive patterns in which his audience members themselves are currently engaged.

In Earth in the Balance Gore described the mechanism of recovery as beginning with the patient's recognition of the patterns of destructive behavior and a cessation of denial. After the denial has been overcome, the healing process may truly begin. In this passage, Gore is asking his audience to

recognize the destructive patterns in their "daily lives" and with that recognition he is urging them to begin the healing process.

Gore is not only utilizing the vocabulary of the self-help movement, the rhetoric itself is structured around therapy procedures that therapists have advocated for years. This is not the only example of this phenomenon. Gore also makes use of the therapy process when he begins his discussions with a testimonial to his own pain. This is what is known as an "introduction" in 12 step programs, where a group member introduces him or herself by detailing the pain or addiction that has caused the membership in that particular group.[26] Gore uses his son's accident in a similar fashion, discussing the emotional impact of the accident and what the pain of that incident did to his life. Gore then goes on to ask for the audience, or the group members, to learn from his experiences. The rhetoric of self-disclosure is not only textual, but is also rooted in the processes that are a part of the self-help movement and as such serves as a means of transferring ideology to the audience through both stylistic tokens and structure.

Gore states, "In order to renew our nation, we must renew ourselves. Just as America has always transcended the hopes and dreams of every other nation on earth, so must we transcend ourselves, and in Gandhi's words, become the change we wish to see in the world."[27] Again, Gore translates his text in a prophetic manner using the stylistic tokens of the self-help movement in his call to action. In Black's discussion of the second persona, he argues that the "pull of ideology" is indeed a persuasive attempt on the part of the speaker, but it is also an attempt by the speaker to create a new audience.[28] In other words, the language a speaker uses is an attempt to alter the nature of his or her audience. Gore specifically asks for his audience to change when he calls for "transformations" and when he requests that his audience "renew"

themselves, and "become the change they wish to see in the world." But what exactly is Gore asking? The request seems to be as steeped in mystery as his translations, and yet the stylistic tokens he utilizes are clear. Gore is asking for his audience to heal themselves, to change themselves, using a language immersed in disclosure and therapy. Gore is, in essence, asking for his audience to take part in therapy. Gore himself starts the process by disclosing his own pain and past experiences to the audience, and then telling the audience what he has learned from those experiences. The expected response from the audience is that they do learn from Gore's past and avoid similar mistakes in their own lives. Not only is the therapy/disclosure pattern seen here, but so is the prophetic nature of the translation as detailed in Black. In essence, the mechanisms inherent in the disclosure process as seen in the self-help movement are part of the purposeful translation process described by Black. In this instance as well, the rhetoric can be seen as a mechanism that transfers Gore's ideology to his audience and influences his audience to adopt that ideology.

Gore ends the address by saying, "When we bring the community of America together, we will rekindle the American spirit and renew this nation for generations to come. And the way to begin is to elect Bill Clinton president of the United States of America."[29] This is an interesting approach because Gore does give a call to action that is specific; elect Bill Clinton. Although this call to action, as it comes after another translation about "rekindling the American spirit" and "renewal", is somewhat different from other translations, it still retains the same form as the others. Gore asks for his audience to vote for Clinton because doing so will enable the renewal of spirit that is so essential for the healing of the country. The mysterious nature of the translation is

preserved in that a vote for Bill Clinton is just one part of a larger, spiritual healing.

Given the use of the rhetoric of self-disclosure in both Earth in the Balance and in the nomination acceptance speech, it is possible to identify the device as a characteristic part of Gore's overall rhetorical strategy. But further examinations of a number of stump speeches will shed even more light on the use of this rhetorical style in the discourse of Al Gore.

The 1992 Campaign

With the closure of the 1992 Democratic National Convention, the campaign for the presidency began in earnest. Senator Gore campaigned all across the nation, giving speeches on a number of different issues. Although his history on environmental issues was one of the main reasons he was chosen as the vice-presidential candidate, the environment was by no means the central issue of the campaign. During the campaign, Senator Gore devoted a great deal of his time to issues ranging from aerospace technology to the Bush administration's handling of the war in Iraq. America's involvement in Desert Storm was an issue of much debate during the campaign, as the Bush/Quayle re-election campaign used the U.S. victory in the gulf as one of its most popular appeals. But the causes of the war, and President Bush's involvement with Saddam Hussein, became a sore spot for the Bush administration and a target for Senator Gore.

On October 14 1992, Senator Gore held a press conference in Washington D.C. , questioning the ethical nature of President Bush's involvement with Iraq when he served as Vice-President. Senator Gore, spurred by reports of arms sales to Iraq by the Reagan/Bush administration,

called upon President Bush to "tell the whole truth" about his involvement with Saddam Hussein.

Gore began the press conference by saying,

> The Bush/Quayle administrations policy toward Iraq is deeply shadowed in profound error, in duplicity, and in amoral disregard for our most basic values as a nation. . . . The record provides a deeply disturbing look at . . . a dangerous blindness to the murderous ambitions of a despot, and what certainly appears to be an ongoing effort to hide the facts from the American people. . . .[30]

Although Gore does not use the stylistic tokens of the self-help movement in this passage, the position he takes in regard to the concealment of information does give insight into Gore's values towards secrecy and disclosure. Edwin Black argues that the identification of a speaker's values about secrecy and disclosure can be seen in the value judgments that speaker makes. The fact that Gore is accusing the Bush administration of "hiding facts," of being "blind," and that the U.S. policy was "deeply shadowed in duplicity" is a clear indication of which side of the secrecy and disclosure dichotomy Gore favors. The reference to "shadows" is reminiscent of his earlier use of "light" to indicate truth and healing. Given Gore's propensity for using "light" metaphors when discussing the healing power of truth, the reference to shadows takes on a decidedly negative character. But it is not just a negative character, rather it is a damaging attack against the character of President Bush and an attempt to place blame on the Bush administration for the devastation of the war. Gore says later in the same speech that, "[Bush's] poor judgment, moral blindness and bungling policies led directly to a war that should never have taken place. And, because of his naiveté, . . . the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans had to be put on the line. . . ."[31] It is interesting to note the combination of the terms "blindness" and the concept of intentional concealment. Gore is arguing that President Bush not only

purposefully lied to the American public, but also was incapable of doing anything else. The President was blind, and as such was unable to see the right action. The issue of intent is left without question; it is in the President's nature to lie because he is incapable of doing otherwise.

Gore is, in the language of Black, "conducting an expose."[32] In other words, Gore is disclosing the secrecy of the Bush administration in the hope that such a disclosure will damage the Bush/Quayle re-election campaign. Gore states, "Bush deserves heavy blame for intentionally concealing from the American people the clear nature of Saddam Hussein. . . ."[33] This statement, in addition to the reference to "moral blindness," is an attempt at laying the blame for the war on the quality of President Bush's character. More importantly, the character flaw that is responsible for these atrocities is the willingness of the President to intentionally conceal information from the American people. This follows closely what Black argues in his essay on secrecy and disclosure. In this way, the rhetoric of self-disclosure is used as a means to establish the desirability of Gore's ideology while at the same time showing the innate flaws in the oppositions ideology.

Black states that the moral distinctions we make about secrets and the disclosure of secrets are based wholly on the purpose of the act of keeping or disclosing the secret. What Black means is that the keeping of a secret, or for that matter the disclosure of a secret, does not possess an inherent moral character. We look to the purpose of the act to determine what the moral character of that act will be. In the case of Gore's expose on President Bush's reasons for keeping the secrets, it is clear that the "intentional" concealment was for no other purpose than to hide "immoral" actions by the President that are a result of his character. Gore attempts to disclose the secrets in the hopes of damaging the keeper of those secrets. At the same time, Gore is holding

himself up as a foil to the President's intentional concealment by disclosing those secrets. The purpose for this disclosure should be equally as clear. Gore is hoping to damage the character of the President while at the same time increase his own credibility by placing himself squarely in line with people who value honesty, truth and disclosure. By joining himself with the American people, whom Gore believes should be outraged by the blatant lies of the Bush administration, Gore places himself in opposition to secrecy and concealment. By association, therefore, Gore is sided with openness and disclosure. Gore ends the speech by saying, "George Bush refused to face the truth. . . . Has George Bush told the truth, the whole truth about a policy that left our nation facing a brutal, murderous dictator? . . . . The answer is 'no'."[34] Again, Gore uses the rhetoric to set up the distinctions between the virtues of truth and the damaging and dangerous consequences of concealment, with himself and the Clinton campaign on the side of virtue.

These distinctions between truth and falsehood and the relative moral quality each possesses are expressed in a great many of Gore's public addresses. Given Gore's propensity for using truth as a cure-all for the dysfunctions of American culture, the environmental crisis, and the problems of politics, it is important to understand the role that truth plays in the rhetoric of self-disclosure. As argued by Black, the use of specific rhetorical strategies on the part of a rhetor can help a critic identify the speakers preference for secrecy or disclosure.[35] Black also argues that the values of secrecy and disclosure have two audiences that are distinct because of the rhetorical forms to which they respond.[36] Black identifies a number of values that are important for those people who respond more to disclosure than to secrecy, including openness, shaping, sincerity, spontaneity, and honesty.[37]

When a speaker places so much importance on truth and honesty, the audience that is most likely to respond to those values is the audience associated with disclosure. But on another level, the simple fact that a speaker would disclose personal information about him or herself that would otherwise be considered inappropriate also gives the impression that the speaker is more open and willing to share information about his or her background.

It is difficult to imagine an American voter who would not respond to truth and honesty, but the specific information that Gore is disclosing might be a little difficult for some audience members to digest. Black also argues that many people may not believe that concealment is good but that too much information can be dangerous. Black states, "One can inquire too far. One can reveal too much. Some things are better left unknown."[38] Indeed, there is a point at which disclosure of private experiences in a public setting, especially information about personal tragedies, can seem almost morbid or in bad taste. It is in the distinction between those who feel Gore's disclosure to indicate honesty, spontaneity and openness and those who feel it to be morbid, inappropriate to the situation, or insincere that the different audiences identified by Black can be seen. Part of that distinction is created by Gore's use of truth as a cleansing, healing, or revelatory, force. In this case, the rhetoric functions as a way for Gore to establish credibility with his audience and to promote his image as a sincere and honest politician.

The issue of truth was the focus of a speech delivered by Gore on October 27 1992 at a rally at the University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh.[39] Gore was responding to published reports that President Bush was intimately aware of the Reagan administrations sale of weapons to Iran as payment for the release of a group of U.S. hostages. Since the end of the Reagan Presidency, Bush had denied involvement in, or awareness of, any sale of arms to Iran

made by then President Reagan. Gore, using the information published in the popular press, attacked President Bush's character and ability to serve when he had lied to the American people.

Gore also questioned the President's honesty and truthfulness in a speech delivered in Atlanta, Georgia on October 14, 1992.[40] The popular media had reported that the State Department engaged in a politically-inspired search of the records of Governor Bill Clinton's travels abroad. In his speech, Gore requests that the President release the contents of a personal note he sent to Saddam Hussein just days before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Gore said the President had "once again"[41] abused his power and violated U.S. principles and values.

In both speeches, Gore identifies what he believes to be a pattern of deceit and dishonesty on the part of the President. In fact, he argues that President Bush "denied his connections"[42] to the Reagan administrations actions, and purposefully lied to the American people when he claimed to be unaware of the arms for hostages scandal. This pattern of dishonesty on the part of President Bush and the resulting call for honesty and truth has the same essential character as the identification of destructive communication patterns in dysfunctional families seen in Earth in the Balance and the nomination acceptance speech. These are just two more examples of how the processes explored in the self-help movement find their way into the rhetorical style of Gore and how the rhetoric functions as a means of establishing ideology.

On October 30, 1992, Gore addressed a group of supporters in Manchester, New Hampshire. The focus of the speech were the economic and technological opportunities that were present in environmental science. Gore started the speech by saying, "An election is a defining moment in America. It should be a time when we recognize that we stand on common ground and

share common hopes."[43] With these words, Gore begins the speech with the same kind of links to the concept of community that were discussed in his nomination acceptance speech. The recognition of similar goals and shared hopes is an essential part in the creation of a feeling of community.

Gore goes on to state,

> But too many Americans no longer feel a sense of excitement about our country's future. As I've criss-crossed America, I've seen the pain and frustration of good people who have been hurt by a failed government whose leadership is out of touch with their needs and deepest values, a government whose economic policy sacrifices the needs of the many for the privileges of the few. It is time to bring prosperity and hope back to America, and to reclaim the future for our children.[44]

In this passage, Gore first identifies the loss of a "sense of excitement," the crisis of spirit as he calls it in other addresses, and then goes on to establish that this loss of spirit is the result of the pain inflicted on America by the government. Specifically, it is the result of a government that is "out of touch" with the needs and values of the people. Although the vocabulary is not as precise as in other examples, this passage is similar to Gore's discussion of the crisis of spirit in Earth in the Balance. He argues that the our civilization has lost touch with what people really need to flourish, both economically and spiritually. This lack of connection is also reminiscent of the lack of connection that is at the heart of the need for community.

In addition, the process of "reclaiming" is an essential part of the self-help movement, and it finds expression in any number of programs. A specific example would be Robert Bly's call for men to "reclaim" the emotional and tender side of themselves that has been taken away as a result of generations of suppression.[45] Another example would be the feminist therapists who call for women to "reclaim" their bodies and to "reclaim" their sexuality, or the therapists who ask for patients to "reclaim" their inner child.[46] The whole idea

of reclaiming something is a very important part of the therapy process, and Gore is calling for a "reclaiming" of the future.

More specifically, Gore is calling for his audience to again take part in a therapy process. Gore is using the vocabulary of the self-help movement to identify the means through which his audience can achieve healing and regain their future. That mechanism is the process of "reclaiming," a process that places the blame for the loss of a thing on a specific person or event. Gore identifies the policies and practices of the Bush administration, an administration that is out of touch with the deepest needs and desires of the people, as the cause for the lost future. The process of reclaiming is essentially a recognition of what has been taken, and a realization that the individual is not to blame for that loss.

Even though the nature of the self-help movement is essentially non-judgmental, Gore uses the rhetoric of self-help movement as a means of blaming the Bush/Quayle Administration. Gore continues by saying, "Bill Clinton and I understand that Americans care deeply about the kind of economy we build. . . .George Bush and Dan Quayle don't understand. . . ."[47] Gore essentially sets up a choice for his audience between someone who understands the feelings and needs of the people and someone who not only does not understand the needs of the people but is also responsible for the loss of their children's future. The process of reclaiming that future begins with a recognition of who it is that understands the needs of the people and the expulsion of those responsible for the initial loss. This is another example of how Gore not only uses the vocabulary of the self-help movement in his rhetoric of self-disclosure, but also uses the processes that are an essential part of that movement. In addition, this example illustrates the promotion of ideology function played by the rhetoric of self-disclosure.

On November 3, 1992 Senator Gore delivered his victory speech on the steps of the Governors Mansion in Little Rock, Arkansas. Following the remarks of President-elect Clinton, Vice President elect Gore began his speech by thanking all of the members of his family and all of the supporters of the ticket. Gore then went on to say,

> This has been a time of discovery, a time of restored dreams and renewed hope, a time when the strength and promise of America has revealed itself poised to meet the challenges of a new day. . . . There is a sense of excitement and possibility this evening. . . . But if we change this country, . . . then we will have given them [our children] something much greater than the memory of this evening: we will have restored the basic thread in the American dream, the responsibility of one generation to the next. We will have given them back their future.[48]

In this passage, Gore is bringing a number of different themes together. First, the fact that this particular evening is responsible for "restored dreams", "renewed hope," and a "sense of excitement" is of particular interest. Recalling that Gore described the crisis of the American spirit in terms of lost hope, devastated dreams, and an overall lack of excitement, the sudden renewal of all of these things would seem to indicate some kind of monumental change. It would appear that Gore is arguing that the election of the Clinton/Gore team is directly responsible for the renewal of hopes, dreams and excitement that the Bush/Quayle administration had taken away from the American people. But there is more going on here than just Gore asserting his the healing of the country.

Gore is also recalling a number of issues that had been brought up during the election, such as the dysfunctional belief that one generation is unconnected to another, that humans are not connected to their environment, and that the future needed to be reclaimed. All of these issues are addressed in this passage. Gore claims that the victory has not only revived a sense of

excitement, it has also replaced the assumptions of the "American Dream", and restored the sense of responsibility of one generation to the next. In essence, Gore is claiming that the dysfunctional nature of the America culture will be reversed by the victory of Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

Gore goes on to state, "We respect the values of community, and among them is our obligation to protect the environment in which we live. . . . It is symbolically an expression of the reality that sectional wounds of the past are finally and irrevocably healed. We are one country now."[49] This is a very strong statement, and Gore intends for this language to convey not only the concepts inherent in the ideal of community but also to identify the Clinton/Gore victory as a healing agent for any number of wounds. Using the language of the self-help movement, Gore is generating a powerful image of himself and Clinton as the healers, as the therapists, for the nations ills. Indeed, Gore is arguing, it is the Clinton/Gore team that heard the cries of the people, it is they who were "in touch" with the needs of the people, it is they who "reclaimed" the future, who restored a sense of community, ended denial, and healed the dysfunctions of the country.

With these examples in mind, it is now possible to turn away from a critical examination of the rhetoric of self-disclosure and attempt to come to some conclusions. The use of this rhetorical style can provide a number of insights into Gore as a speaker, the strategic merit of this style, and the ethical nature of such a style. These issues will be the focus of the next chapter.

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CHAPTER FIVE:
CONCLUSIONS

There are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from Al Gore's use of the rhetoric of self-disclosure. Using the theories of Edwin Black alone, the issues that need to be addressed include Gore's persona of seer or mystic, what audience he is attempting to reach, who Gore believes makes up that audience, and what his use of specific stylistic tokens implies about what he wants his audience to become. Even beyond these issues are questions of Gore's character, what this particular rhetorical choice tells us about Gore's world view, and how this strategy fits into the larger picture of national political rhetoric.

The purpose of this chapter is to answer these questions based on the critical evaluation of the rhetoric of self-disclosure completed in the last chapter. Of paramount concern will be the conclusions to be gained from the theories of Edwin Black, specifically the questions regarding Gore as mystic or seer, his use of the rhetoric of self-disclosure to attract one of the audiences identified by Black, and what Gore hopes to gain from this strategy in relation to his second persona. Next, the strategic merit of this decision will be questioned, with special attention paid to Gore's history in the political arena and the tactical advantages this device gave to Gore's 1992 campaign. In addition, the issue of character will be addressed with a focus on the moral quality of this choice and what this device call tell us about Gore as a person and a politician. Finally, the rhetoric of self-disclosure will be discussed in terms of its relation to other forms of rhetorical strategies.

Secrecy, Disclosure, and the Second Persona

In his article on secrecy and disclosure as rhetorical forms, Edwin Black argues that the use of certain rhetorical devices can give a critic insight into whether a speaker values secrecy or disclosure. The preference for secrecy over disclosure manifests itself in the rhetorical decisions the speaker makes, and has very clear implications for both the image of the speaker and the makeup of the audience most likely to respond to those choices. Black argues that there are, in fact, two very distinct audiences, and the distinctions between the two are based not only upon which rhetoric form they respond to but also upon their differing political ideologies.[1] Black states, "We are finally able to identify two distinct publics, each clustered about its own defining commonplaces concerning secrecy and disclosure."[2] Black goes on to argue that the audience disposed to disclosure has within its ideology the recognition of the importance of disclosure, openness, sharing, being equal, and being unacquisitive. The other audience, responding to secrecy, values privacy, private property, hierarchy, capital accumulation, and individuality. Black states, "These groups differ in their politics, in their sexual attitudes, in their views of science and art, probably even in what the eat and drink and wear on their backs."[3]

Given these two very different publics, and the values that they hold dear, it is certain that the audience that values disclosure would be the one to respond to Gore's use of the rhetoric of self-disclosure. This should not come as a surprise, as a closer examination of Black's two different audiences would appear to be descriptions of the two different political groups in the United States. Clearly, Democratic values of equal rights, diversity, community, government programs that share the wealth of the nation, and the importance of

welfare programs are implied in the values of disclosure. Specifically, Black identifies equality and being unacquisitive in a proprietary sense as being trademarks of the audience that responds to disclosure. The opposite is true of Republican ideology. The importance of private property, capital accumulation, individuality, personal security and small government are also implied in the ideologies of the group that responds to secrecy.[4] In other words, Gore is talking to Democrats and not Republicans.

This may not seem to be much of an insight, but upon closer inspection there are more interesting insights that may be uncovered. Consider the fact that Gore is using rhetoric that stresses honesty, truth, and community with a language that is rooted deeply in a popular movement that transcends political ideology. The membership of the self-help movement is estimated at more than 15 million with another 100 million people in the U.S. related to someone in a self-help group. Alcoholics, drug addicts, sex addicts, dysfunctional families, men in the men's movement, divorced men and women, and other people who utilized self-help therapy are not unique to Democrats or Republicans. Gore may indeed be attempting to gain access to the traditional Democratic audience in his use of a rhetorical form that accentuates disclosure, but Gore is also using a vehicle or mechanism that has a much broader range of influence.

The stylistic tokens of the self-help movement are easily identifiable with a particular set of experiences and histories. When a person talks about "reclaiming," "denial," "dysfunction," or "addiction," the implication is that the speaker is aware of the issues, the experiences that go with the process of therapy. This shared history is a powerfully persuasive tool as it connects to deeply emotional experiences within an individual that may run deeper than membership in a political organization. One need not be a Republican to know what it is like to have an alcoholic father, an abusive mother, a child addicted

to drugs, or a child killed in an accident. These things happen to a wide spectrum of people and the connections between those people are very deep. In fact, Marc Galanter argues in his discussion of charismatic therapy groups that the behavior and thought processes of members are influenced by the group to an almost dangerous extent.[5] The cohesiveness of therapy groups is brought about first by shared experiences, a common vocabulary, and forces inside the group that require strict adherence to the rules and mores of the group.[6] In addition, the number of people in the United States that are currently involved in therapy groups, have been involved in the past, have had family members in therapy, or take part in the popular self-help literature is more than 115 million.[7] All of these people have at least a glancing familiarity with the language and processes involved in therapy. Also, consider the numbers of people that might not be involved in therapy situations but that are exposed to the language and concepts of the self-help movement in the popular press, media, and entertainment industry. Given the cohesiveness of members and the large membership of the self-help movement, the use of the rhetoric of self-disclosure has clear implications for the audience that would respond to this particular rhetorical form. Gore is, in essence, using a style that enables him to connect with the traditional Democratic audience, but Gore is also able to expand his audience base by using stylistic tokens that are not bound to a specific political group or ideology but that are very familiar to the more than 115 million Americans with connections to the self-help movement.[8]

The implications for Gore's audience do not end with the number of possible respondents or the political make-up of that group. Black also argues that the use of stylistic tokens can generate insight into the second persona of a speaker.[9] In other words, it is possible to examine the rhetoric of self-disclosure and get a picture of what audience Gore is seeking to influence and

what he would like his audience to become. Black states, "The critic can see in the auditor implied by a discourse a model of what the rhetor would have his real audience become."[10] So, what would Gore have his audience become? The rhetoric of self-disclosure makes use not only of the stylistic tokens of the self-help movement but the processes and mechanisms of that movement as well. Gore engages in "introductions," he uses his own past experiences as a model of how to overcome tragedy, and he gives his audience instructions about how to overcome denial and recognize the truth of their situations. These things are all part of the process of disclosure in a group therapy situation, and they are also the roles played by the therapist in that the therapist facilitates and directs the group to essential lessons and understanding. Gore is using a language that implies these actions in the political realm when he asks his audience to partake in the processes that are part of group therapy.

The rhetoric of self-disclosure is creating an persona for Gore that puts him in the position of a healer, or a mystic. This image is consistent with the concept of the seer or mystic translator as discussed in Black's article on secrecy and disclosure.[11] The translation of a sacred text, in Gore's case his son's accident and the Epiphany that resulted from that experience, generates a persona of a seer or mystic for the translator. Just as the Catholic priest is thought of as a prophet or seer in the process of interpreting the holy scriptures, so is the translator of any sacred text given a similar authority in any other situation. Through the use of the rhetoric of self-disclosure, Gore is creating the persona of a mystic, a healer, or a seer.

The translator is seen in a particular light depending on what the prophetic nature of the translation. As seen in any number of instances, the goal of the translation is to provide Gore's audience with a means to heal the wounds that are not only affecting them as individuals but the world as a

whole. Gore's use of the rhetoric of self-disclosure provides the insight and power of revelation that is needed for his audience to overcome their denial and move towards healing. With this in mind, Gore's persona in the translation can be seen as the provider of the healing power, the provider of the medicine that will heal the wounds. In other words, Gore's persona is that of a healer and his audience is his patient.

Black argues, "What the critic can find projected by the discourse is the image of a man, and that that man may never find actual embodiment, it is still a man that the image is of."[12] Gore's discourse implies a person who has begun the process of healing by escaping the destructive patterns of denial. Gore's discourse implies a person that has learned from his or her mistakes and is moving towards acceptance.

Throughout Earth in the Balance and other public addresses, Gore refers back to his own metamorphosis and the clarity of vision that resulted from his painful past. Gore also identifies that moment as the defining moment of his life, the moment that created the urgency he feels about the environmental crisis, the crisis of spirit, and the crisis of values. In Earth in the Balance, Gore argues for the recognition of one's pain, the ownership of pain that is necessary to overcome denial, the willingness to be honest about the past and a recognition of the truth. All of these things, Gore believes, occurred when Gore's son had his accident and in the subsequent therapy. It is the very process that Gore went through that is necessary for the healing of environment, for the healing of the divisions of the American people. Gore is indeed asking for his audience to become the "image of a man" and that man is Gore himself. But perhaps more than that, Gore is asking his audience to heal themselves just as Gore was called upon to do.

The Rhetoric of Self-Disclosure as Rhetorical Strategy

An examination of the rhetoric of self-disclosure in light of the theories of Edwin Black has produced a number of interesting insights into the usefulness of the style to connect Gore to his audience. But the question still remains as to whether or not this rhetorical device was intelligent political strategy. It would be naive to assume that the effectiveness of this style was unimportant to Gore or his political advisors. On the contrary, given the concerns about Gore's public image as generated in his 1988 bid for the nomination, the public persona of Gore had to be of great concern. With an understanding of the public perception of Gore after the 1988 primaries, it is important to question the tactical value of this particular rhetorical style.

The rhetoric of self-disclosure, in part, can be seen as a strategic response to the criticisms leveled against Gore in 1988. At its most simple level, the rhetorical form associated with disclosure as discussed by Black is a form that seeks to emphasize the spontaneity and sincerity of the speaker. These qualities were identified as missing from Gore's 1988 campaign. Black writes, "The magnification of openness and candor is strongly related to the promotion of sincerity as a virtue. Behind the reprehension of secrecy and hypocrisy is an abhorrence of any disparity between appearance and reality. . . . The prizing of sincerity is a demand that things be what they seem."[13] The values of openness, candor, and sincerity are parts of the larger ideological makeup of the audience that responds to disclosure in its rhetorical form. It is part of the basic assumptions that underlie the ideology of disclosure; that honesty and truth are of paramount importance, and those who value these things are sincere in their support.

In addition to the inherent nature of disclosure as a rhetorical form, the substance of Gore's public discourse must be taken into consideration. The

fact that Gore is willing to discuss such personal matters as his son's accident and his family's therapy experiences with an audience is unusual. Not only is it unusual, it also feeds into the image of sincerity and openness that disclosure as a rhetorical form establishes. Gore comes across to his audience as willing to discuss intimate details of his life with them in an honest and sincere way. In a strategic sense, therefore, the rhetoric of self-disclosure is an excellent response to criticisms of uninspirational rhetoric in that the use of disclosure carries with it the qualities of honesty, openness, and spontaneity.

The Rhetoric of Self-Disclosure and the Issue of Character

As a rhetorical tactic, the rhetoric of self-disclosure is a good response to criticisms of woodenness and uninspirational delivery, but it still leaves some questions. For example, if the rhetoric of self-disclosure is seen by Gore as a strategic response to an identified weakness, what is the moral quality of that decision? If Gore is using his son's accident, his family's therapy sessions, and the personal transformation that ensued as a strategic tool, how ethical is that choice? Given the non-judgmental character of the self-help movement, how ethical is it to use the vocabulary to condemn President Bush?

Black argues that the use of stylistic tokens can give a critic insight into the speaker's world view. But more importantly, the implied auditor of a discourse must become the basis for moral judgments of the speaker's character. Black writes, "We do not appraise the discourse in itself except in a technical or prudential way. Our moral judgments are reserved for men and their deeds. . . . We know how to make appraisals of men. We know how to evaluate potentialities of character."[14] The way is to look to the discourse for

clues into how the speaker thinks, how the speaker views the world, and what the speaker would have his audience become.

It has already been established that the rhetoric of self-disclosure gives Gore the persona of mystic or seer in relation to his audience. The remaining question is how Gore views the world. Again, we must look to the rhetoric for the answer to this question.

As evidenced in Earth in the Balance and the nomination acceptance speech, Gore uses the language of the self-help movement and the processes that are at its core to discuss the problems of American culture. Gore, indeed, uses the concepts of dysfunction, denial, and addiction to frame the entire discussion of the environmental crisis, while at the same time he sees the therapeutic responses to these ills as the correct political responses to the larger issues. It would not be an understatement to say that Gore frames his understanding of all of these issues in terms of therapy and healing.

If this is the case, then, what judgment can be made about Gore's character? The desire for healing, and the importance of the environmental crisis, are essentially good things. But as the critical examination of Gore's use of translation identified, the approach is lacking clarity and definition. The prophetic nature of Gore's translation is steeped in mysticism and the calls for action are vague and lacking specificity. Gore calls for recognition of the truth through the process of overcoming denial, but he does not tell his audience how to do this. Gore calls for his audience to "become the change they wish to see in the world," but this mandate is unclear.[15] And as noted by a number of critics of the self-help movement, the use of the vocabulary of the self-help movement can, in fact, say very little if anything at all. In fact Michael Vincent Miller, a psychologist writing for the New York Times Book Review, argues this very thing when he says, "Such indiscriminate use of terminology

creates jargon. Jargon is the language of pseudo-knowledge: hardened metaphor substitutes for reality, and premature certitude substitutes for the kind of curiosity and reflection that waits patiently for a phenomenon to emerge in its full disorderly and often elusive complexity."[16] In other words, the use of the vocabulary of the self-help movement to describe such complex issues as environmental degradation, clashes of values at a societal level, and economic inequalities can limit a precise understanding of the reality underlying these issues. Gore may be trying to play the role of therapist, he may want his audience to experience the transformation that comes with a recognition of truth, but he is limited by the vague and imprecise language of the self-help movement. Gore may be sincere in his attempts to heal his audience and in his calls for action, but he is working with a flawed tool that leaves any meaningful change difficult if not impossible to achieve.

In addition, the very nature of the self-help movement is non-judgmental in that it does not blame the individual for his or her dysfunctional character. The only real mandate inherent to the self-help movement is that the individual is responsible for his or her own healing. The past, in the self-help movement, is infinitely less important than the future. Gore still makes use of these concepts, however, to lay the blame for the "crisis of spirit" and in some sense the environmental crisis at the feet of the Reagan and Bush Administrations. This is an end for which the concepts underlying the self-help movement were not designed. Using them in this way is a violation of their very nature.

These criticisms may seem a bit strange when coupled with the earlier claim that the rhetoric of self-disclosure is a sound political strategy. But Gore may indeed be using an effective political strategy to get elected while the character of that strategy is ethically flawed. This is the case with Gore and the rhetoric of self-disclosure. The device is very effective at creating a wider

audience base for Gore. It is functional in terms of addressing earlier criticisms of Gore's speaking style. It is also helpful in the creation of a persona that is attractive to voters. But the effectiveness of this tool is dependent upon its lack of clarity, its usefulness in a number of contradictory situations, and its ability to give the impression of specific calls to action without saying anything substantive. As with so many other political tools, it is useful to get a politician elected but does little to inform the voting public about the politicians views of policy or about his or her character.

Implications for Future Study

Vice-president Al Gore has been in office for little more than 100 days, and the future of the Clinton/Gore administration is quite uncertain. Gore is considered one of the favorites for the Democratic party's nomination for President in the year 2000. Given the potential for future political activities, Gore will remain an important subject of study. Considering the impact a Gore presidency would have on the United States, a closer examination of Gore's rhetorical choices while in office should prove a worthwhile endeavor. Whether or not Gore continues to use the rhetoric of self-disclosure while in office would be an interesting topic of study.

Perhaps more interesting is the fact that Gore's disclosure of personal tragedy, exclusive from all of the other elements that define the rhetoric of self-disclosure, has been identified with a number of other political figures. Bill Clinton talked about his abusive father, Ted Kennedy discussed the assassination of his two brothers, Mario Cuomo discussed the extreme poverty in which he grew up, and Ann Richards talked about her experiences with alcoholism.[17] The use of personal tragedy in the political arena has been viewed with some skepticism by the American people, as if the disclosure of

such personal secrets tarnished the political process. At the Democratic National Convention in 1992, the disclosure of personal tragedy was the norm, not the exception. What does this change in substance say, not only about the Democrats, but about political rhetoric in general?

Also, there are definite generational implications in the rhetoric of self-disclosure. The fact that the baby-boomer generation is now in power, and that this same group is most familiar with the self-help movement, and in fact spawned its success, is of interest. Looking at Gore's personal life, the experiences that left the most impact on him were his time spent in Vietnam, his failed 1988 campaign, and the accident involving his son. Although the specifics may be different, the politicians of the late 1990's will all have been born and raised during the Vietnam era, the political and social unrest of the 1960's, and the economic growth of the Reagan years. Politicians like Dan Quayle, Bill Clinton, Bob Kerrey, Al Gore, and others have all been touched by the power of Vietnam and the 1960's. Perhaps, as argued by Hank Hillin in his biography of Gore, the need for healing is at the heart of many people who lived through those times. If that is the case, then how is the need for healing or atonement represented in the rhetorical styles of these other politicians?

Finally, the style itself is a radical change in the rhetorical choices of politicians at a national level. The rhetoric of self-disclosure is a departure from the more conventional forms of presidential rhetoric, as well as an example of the successful use of personal tragedy at a national level. Given the propensity of Presidential candidates to use heroic imagery, narration, and more traditional American mythology as their over riding rhetorical style, the use of therapy as a defining characteristic is quite unique. The traditional Presidential style of rhetoric relies heavily on establishing the heroic character

of the candidate, and in doing so relies almost exclusively on the strengths of that candidate. But the rhetoric of self-disclosure has as its focus something quite different. The rhetoric of self-disclosure is dependent upon the flaws of the candidate, the shared illnesses of the country, and the weaknesses of the speaker. This is a radical departure from traditional political rhetoric, and it has been a failure in historical terms. The Thomas Eagleton example, in which a Democratic vice presidential candidate admitted to electric shock therapy for bouts of severe depression, is an excellent example of how perceived weakness of the part of a candidate can mean the death of a career. Gore is by no means setting himself up as a hero. Rather, Gore is characterizing himself as a victim, as a patient, or as someone in need of healing. A future study that examined this change in focus could provide some valuable insights into the reasons why a common-weakness based rhetorical strategy was successful now and has not been in the past.

Whatever the answers to these questions, the rhetoric of self-disclosure played an important role in Al Gore's 1992 campaign. The history and background of Al Gore, as well as the success of the self-help movement in the 1980's provides a historical context for a critical evaluation of Gore's discourse. Through the critical lens of Edwin Black's theories of secrecy and disclosure and the second persona, it is possible to evaluate the role the style played in the discourse and arrive at some conclusions. Even with insight into Gore's persona of mystic, his use of stylistic tokens, and the issue of Gore's character, the rhetoric of self-disclosure has generated a number of future research questions.

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