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Abstract

African American speakers who participated in William McKinley's 1896 Front Porch campaign events used epideictic rhetoric to address the issues of racial equality. They praised McKinley, but presented few arguments on policy matters. This rhetorical strategy helped them to advocate policies in a manner that would superficially appear to be ceremonial more than deliberative. Paradoxically, in doing so, the speakers advocated their views to ameliorate the injustices of the Jim Crow era, while adapting to the campaign's rituals.

African American Rhetoric of Greeting During McKinley's 1896 Front Porch Campaign

Hundreds of delegations visited presidential candidate William McKinley during his 1896 Front Porch campaign. The campaign events, although often quite dramatic, frequently seemed more like celebrations than venues for persuasive rhetoric. That is, the theme was more to celebrate McKinley's impending victory than to delve into controversial issues. This was, in a sense, true of the several delegations of African Americans who marched to McKinley's modest home on Market Street in Canton, Ohio. During a time when African American rights were rapidly eroding—Logan (1957) terms the era "A Low, Rugged Plateau" in racial justice (p. 58)—these groups' leaders addressed key issues in elliptical terms. This study develops and illustrates a relationship between epideictic and deliberative discourse, developing the understanding of late 19th century American political campaigns.

Investigating the rhetoric of some of McKinley's African American supporters, this essay asks: what rhetorical techniques did these members of an oppressed group employ to address practical and social problems within the context of a national campaign? Several African American speakers at the campaign events employed fundamentally ceremonial or epideictic rhetoric to address racial justice. That is, their theme was to praise McKinley rather than to offer detailed arguments for public policy. In doing so, however, the speakers were able to establish a deliberative position that addressed some of the injustices of the Jim Crow era, while conforming to the expectations of the campaign.

For example, on September 28, 1896, Bishop B. W. Arnett, accompanying a delegation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, assured McKinley that "We come to

assure you that we will never cease our efforts in your behalf until we have achieved such a victory in November as was won by our fathers in their early struggles for liberty." Bishop Arnett continued that "you represent the cardinal principles of the Republican Party which have so benefitted our race—the principles for which you and your comrades struggled from 1861 to 1865" (McKinley, 1896e, p. 292).[1] This statement followed an epideictic formula by praising McKinley and heroic figures of the past. At the same time, however, Arnett tendered political support to the candidate and implied, without giving details, that civil rights carried weight. The rhetoric that this essay examines is remarkable for its place in the political activities of the time and for the opportunity that the speakers had to reach audiences through a significant, albeit transitory, venue.

The 1896 front porch campaign

In 1896, the Republican presidential nominee campaigned from his front porch in Canton, Ohio. Hundreds of delegations traveled from far and wide to parade, listen to music, meet the candidate, sing songs to him, and hear him speak (Harpine, 2005; Jones, 1964).

Although McKinley's front porch campaign, which featured about 250 speeches, was larger and more energetic than the others, it stood in a tradition (Harpine, 2005). In 1881, James Garfield received visiting delegations from his home in the small town of Hiram, Ohio, not far from Cleveland. Campaign tours seemed a bit undignified at the time (Harpine, 2004; Leech & Brown, 1978; Peskin, 1978). Benjamin Harrison campaigned from his home in Indianapolis in 1888. More than 80 groups, totaling almost 300,000 individuals from various parts of the country, came to hear Harrison speak. The campaign events in Indianapolis featured torchlight parades, cider barrels, and speeches adapted to the various groups (Foraker, 1932; Sievers, 1959; see, e.g., Harrison, 1888/1892; cf. Harpine, 2000).

Warren G. Harding would follow suit by campaigning from his front porch in Marion, Ohio during his 1920 presidential campaign (Daugherty, 1932; Johnson Allays Fears, 1920). Harding had campaigned for the state Senate from his front porch in 1899, to the extent that the house's original porch collapsed. Harding's rebuilt porch stood behind the same flagpole that McKinley used in 1896 (Murray, 1969).

McKinley's front porch campaign enabled the leaders of various groups to appear in a national forum. Each delegation's leader gave a speech to McKinley, the text of which might receive circulation in the Republican press and in campaign documents. A shorthand reporter sat on McKinley's porch to take notes (Kissed, 1896). The delegations that came to visit McKinley at his home in Canton, Ohio included several groups of African Americans. At a time when the recognition of African American rights was deteriorating, the campaign provided an opportunity for certain African American leaders to express their views and advocate their race's interests.

For comparison, it could be useful to look at an example of a speech of greeting, delivered by a presumably White speaker on behalf of a large delegation from Sandusky, Ohio. Linn W. Hull spoke first of the "blight of free trade," to which McKinley was opposed, and continued that "we congratulate you that the skies are aflame with the signs of victory and promise you our aid, and obedience to your commands as our great leader." He referred to "the honor of America" to be preserved by a McKinley victory, leaving the flag with "no stripe sullied" (McKinley, 1896f). These remarks focused on praise, advocating issues by praising McKinley's position on them. So, speakers visiting McKinley in this campaign faced the rhetorical challenge of adjusting to audience expectations for a political speech of greeting.

McKinley and the African American voter

The historical context influenced the rhetoric of African American speakers in the campaign. A few decades hence, many minority group members would come to support the Democratic Party. In 1896, however, the Civil War was only 31 years distant. Reconstruction had ended in 1877, less than twenty years earlier, when Rutherford B. Hayes withdrew federal troops from the South (Franklin, 1956; Logan, 1957; Woodson & Wesley, 1958). Despite its increasingly conservative economic policies, the Republican Party was still the party of Lincoln and Grant: the party that received credit for ending slavery in the United States. McKinley was himself a Civil War veteran. He had, in fact, served under Hayes's command (Heald, 1964). This made the 23rd Ohio Volunteers the "Regiment of Presidents," although those who supported civil rights tended not to mention McKinley's and Hayes' names in the same sentence.

In 1896, African Americans faced increasing obstacles in the larger society's inflexible conduct. The African American groups that participated in the 1896 campaign gave overt and, to all appearances, enthusiastic support to the political process and the Republican candidate. This was also, however, the era during which the Jim Crow laws came into being. It was in 1896 that the United States Supreme Court issued its infamous decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that called for equal accommodations for the races, but allowed states to mandate separate facilities. Southern White orators of the time often threatened the security of African Americans: if African Americans sought equality, they would "be denied food, jobs, shelter, and personal safety" (Logue, 1977, p. 246; see also Mustard, 2003; Ranney, 2006).

McKinley did pursue African American support. While in Congress, McKinley supported the Radical Republican agenda and spoke against the Democratic Party's White supremacy measures. He opposed lynching while serving in the Ohio legislature and, in general, was well-respected by the African American community (Gould, 1980; Hoyt, 1967). In 1896, he opposed holding the Republican convention in St. Louis, fearing that African American delegates would be denied hotel rooms. After the Republican National Committee overruled him, McKinley's fears proved to be well-founded (Dawes, 1950; Jones, 1964). Nonetheless, the Republican Party no longer relied as heavily on African American votes (Klarman, 2004). By 1896, many Southern states had begun to adopt laws that restricted African Americans' voting rights (Grantham, 1988; Logan, 1957; Ranney, 2006). These included residency requirements, which often denied African American sharecroppers access to the polls, as well as poll taxes and literacy tests. These actions endangered the Republican Party in the Southern states, which had depended since Reconstruction on the support of African American voters (Lawson, 1976). In response, the Republicans seemed to turn toward other constituencies.

Compared with previous platforms, the 1896 Republican platform gave civil rights only cursory mention (Klarman, 2004). It did, nonetheless, include planks in favor of equal voting rights and against lynching, which was termed an "uncivilized and barbarous practice" (Republican platform, 1896). These provisions were more moderate than the stronger civil rights planks of previous Republican platforms (Logan, 1957; Logan, 1965, Sherman, 1973). The 1896 Republican convention and campaign focused instead on the tariff and the gold standard (Curtis, 1904).

All the same, the African American vote was still heavily Republican in 1896 (Diamond, 1941; Walters, 1988). Despite the Republicans' move away from the principles of Reconstruction, mainstream politics offered African Americans no obvious place to turn. The 1896 Democratic platform contained no civil rights provisions at all, not even one against lynching, but did include two states' rights planks, including a statement that: "We denounce arbitrary interference by Federal authorities in local affairs as a violation of the Constitution of the United States and a crime against free institutions" (Democratic Platform, 1896). Thus, the Democratic Party did not offer a clear alternative for African American voters disappointed by the Republican Party's efforts. As a consequence, although Republican dedication to African American rights was "tenuous," African American voters still generally remained loyal to the party in 1896 (Sherman, 1973, p. 2). In any case, the *Pittsburg* [sic] *Post* pointed out that McKinley's margin of victory in the 1896 popular vote was due to African-American support (What the Papers, 1896).

The Democratic Party had for years been the party of slavery. It was, at the time, hardly conceivable for large numbers of African Americans to turn to the party of James Polk and James Buchanan. The Democratic Party had taken control of state legislatures in the South and was, in 1896, in the midst of a systematic campaign to undo the progress that former slaves had made under Reconstruction. Voting rights in the South were under attack from unrepentant Confederates, virtually all of them Democrats (Goldman, 1990; Kleppner, 1982; Lewinson, 1963). Indeed, the North Carolina Democratic State Committee spoke out during the campaign to accuse the Republicans of registering supposedly illegal African American voters. Worried about their own political prospects, the Committee contended that

African American voters were completely united for McKinley (Drawing the Color Line, 1896).

Furthermore, McKinley repeatedly spoke of the nation's unity. McKinley surely knew that he would not carry the southern United States, but seems to have favored a conciliatory style of rhetoric. Logan (1965) argues that McKinley's appeal to national unity represented a retreat from his appeal to African American voters (see also Klarman, 2004). The rhetoric of the campaign in general, particularly the Republican rhetoric, tended to contend that what was good for the country would be good for any group in the country. For example, McKinley told one delegation that he was grateful that regional animosity "receives no encouragement from the sturdy citizens of New York" (It's an Honest, 1896). In an atmosphere of supposed unity, an explicit plea for civil rights legislation might have seemed politically inexpedient.

The African American speakers in the Front Porch campaign dealt with this situation insightfully. One can conceive of their rhetorical task as being to establish their credentials, either to the candidate or to the larger public, as loyal citizens and steadfast supporters of the Republican cause, while pointing up to the candidate—and to the national audience—the importance of recognizing the rights of former slaves and their descendents. The speakers examined in this essay sought to use the political process to ameliorate their race's difficulties. This was, of course, a somewhat tautological phenomenon: only persons committed to the mainstream political process were likely to travel to Canton. Disaffected leaders would, presumably, not bother. Complicating the rhetorical challenge was the possibility that McKinley's appeal for unity would become a symbol of reconciliation between the Republicans and southern Whites (Attack on the President, 1899; Logan, 1957).

Epideictic form, deliberative issues

How can epideictic rhetoric address policies? In his *On Rhetoric,* Aristotle (1991) explains that epideictic rhetoric aims to establish praise and blame. In the 1896 campaign, not surprisingly, praise for the candidate dominated much of the rhetoric. Although sometimes dismissed as a trivial genre, epideictic discourse can nonetheless influence an audience. Some authorities might sympathize with Barilli's (1989) evaluation of ancient Greek epideictic discourse, which he finds to be "almost superfluous" (p. 2). Gwynn (1926) feels that epideictic oratory "is assigned the lowest place" in Aristotle's rhetoric (p. 98). Perelman's (1971) work, however, leads one to think of epideictic rhetoric as a tool for communicating values: "epideictic speeches are . . . essential because they increase in us a commitment to the values which make it possible to justify action" (p. 116; see also Danisch, 2007; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1960). As Rosenfield (1980) puts it: "far from forcing his ideas on an audience with cold logic, the orator charms" the audience; seeking to attract them "to a mode of thinking" (p. 139; cf. Hauser, 1986; Munz, 1985). Rhetorical scholars have recognized that epideictic rhetoric rarely offers policy arguments, but this does not imply that it cannot advocate policy.

Epideixis is, nonetheless, a genre of substance. Following Perelman (1971), one might see the ways in which epideictic rhetors praise or blame an honored person as a way to communicate a society's values (Chase, 1961; Condit, 1985; Consigny, 1992; Sullivan, 1993a; Sullivan, 1993b; cf. Burgess, 1902). Advancing on this position, Vivian (2006) notes that "epideictic organizes the terms of public remembrance in order to shape perceptions of shared values and commitments serviceable to future deliberative agendas" (p. 2). Jamieson and Campbell (1982) note that rhetorical hybrids follow rules of their own, but also find that

one "can perceive the unique fusion that is a response to the idiosyncratic needs of a particular situation, institution, and rhetor" (p. 157).

Noting that epideixis means, literally, a "showing forth," Hyde (2005) argues that "truth happens, first and foremost, as an act of disclosure, a revealing or epideictic display of something that presents itself to us" (p. 3). In this conception, Hyde feels that all heroic rhetoric becomes, in a sense, fundamentally epideictic. Chase (1961) notes that authorities disagree as to what is shown forth: the speaker's skill, the subject matter, or the underlying content. During the campaign, what was shown forth was mostly candidate McKinley's assumed luminosity.

The idea here, then, is that a political epideictic speech might praise the candidate to the point of embarrassment, implying that such a praiseworthy candidate deserves election to office. At the same time, speakers can conceal policy positions within such a speech. By carefully selecting the topics for which the candidate receives praise, the speaker can direct the attention of the audience to larger issues. Any campaign surely does provide venues for deliberative argumentation, but such argumentation was at a premium in the speeches greeting McKinley at his front porch. The speakers who praised McKinley for his perceived fairness in racial matters were also advising the public that racial fairness demanded their attention. The same content might also have served to remind McKinley to follow the Republican tradition of racial justice.

Speeches of greeting in 1896 Republican campaign

The Front Porch campaign offered a venue for several African American speakers to address significant issues. The typical campaign event went something like this. A delegation, which might consist of a few dozen or, sometimes, a few thousand persons,

arrived at a Canton train station. A local reception committee met them, a parade with musicians was quickly organized, and the group marched to McKinley's home on Market Street (Jones, 1964). McKinley came to his porch or to a reviewing stand in front of the house, a leader of the delegation gave a brief speech greeting McKinley, and McKinley gave a brief speech, adapted to the audience, discussing the campaign's issues. The speech greeting McKinley usually sang his praises. Music, cheers, and other exhilarations often accompanied the speeches. The speech of greeting quickly became a campaign ritual of which the speakers that this essay examines took advantage (Harpine, 2005).

The various delegations generally represented particular groups. A group might consist of traveling salesmen, pottery workers, or railroad employees. Organized political groups were common, for example, a Garfield Club or a sound money club (Harpine, 2005). A few of the delegations consisted of groups that were explicitly African American. One might reasonably assume that African Americans participated in other groups. This study, however, concentrates on those groups that were identifiably African American.

The principal campaign issues were the protective tariff and the gold standard, both of which McKinley advocated in hundreds of speeches (e.g., Call to Patriotic, 1896; To a Call, 1896). Democrat William Jennings Bryan was nominated for the Presidency in July, not long after his famous "Cross of Gold" speech, on a platform that advocated the coinage of both silver and gold to increase the money supply (Oliver, 1964). Most Republicans and many conservative Democrats tended to fear that this policy would be inflationary. They dismissed it with pejorative terms such as "repudiation," while holding that the gold standard stood for national honor and integrity. The idea of calling bimetallism "repudiation" was to imply that inflationary monetary policy would reduce the value of debt.

Farmers tended to oppose the tariff and to support silver, while business interests tended to hold the reverse views (Jones, 1964).

Praise and policy: African American rhetors in the campaign

The first group of African Americans to visit McKinley was a delegation from the Colored Republican League of New York State. This delegation hurried to take advantage, however briefly, of the opportunity to establish their support for the Republican candidate. They arrived on June 18, the day McKinley was nominated. The campaign was obviously not yet organized into full swing. The Reverend Dr. Ernest Lyon from St. Mark's Methodist Episcopal Church in New York, a leader of the group, presented McKinley with a brief written statement of greeting. He congratulated McKinley about his "nomination as the standard bearer of the grand old Republican party" [*sic*]. He promised that the group would industriously support McKinley's campaign. There is no record of a speech by McKinley (McKinley, 1896d).

This may, indeed, have been one of the events that stimulated the development of the Front Porch campaign. That a group of supporters was so dedicated that they would reach McKinley's home mere hours after his nomination may well have reinforced the Republican leadership with the idea that it would be practical for McKinley to campaign from Canton.

An African American group from Stark County, Ohio arrived at McKinley's home on Market Street on July 3. This was still very early in the campaign, before the nomination of Bryan as the Democratic candidate. Since the group was local, no difficult travel arrangements were necessary. The speech of greeting was very brief. William Bell of Massillon, Ohio spoke as follows:[2]

> You have always treated us, just as you do everybody else . . . with great consideration and kindness, and on every occasion have been our friend, champion and protector. We come to congratulate you and assure you of our earnest support until you are triumphantly elected next November. (McKinley, 1896b)

This speech seemed to address several objectives. Its ostensible purpose was to praise McKinley. Thus, it was, superficially, an epideictic speech. At this early stage of the campaign, Bell may or may not have been aware that his words might circulate around the nation. He reminded McKinley that he had hitherto supported African Americans, and united his group with McKinley's campaign. Bell's theme was equality. He mentioned McKinley's support of African Americans in a way that stressed the absence of special favors to anyone: "just as you do everybody else" (McKinley, 1896b). Doing so, he continued the theme of avoiding special interest pleading, while, at the same time, putting forth the idea of fair and equal treatment. Finally, although the speech discussed such policy issues as friendship toward African Americans while urging McKinley to a triumphant victory, the speaker focused on praise. One presumably praises a candidate to encourage the candidate's election. In this case, however, part of the praise addressed McKinley's support for African Americans, which, in turn, carried a subtle but unmistakable appeal to public policy. That is, in praising McKinley, Bell reminded the candidate that he was "friend, champion, and protector." In this way, a speech of praise implied a policy. In one sense, Bell's audience seems to have been the general public, but the gentle reminder can be read as addressed directly to the future president.

The next delegation of African Americans to participate in the Front Porch campaign was the L'Ouverture Rifles of Cleveland. This was a rifle drill team named in honor of the Haitian revolutionary. Founded about a year earlier, this unit would later merge with the Ohio National Guard (Black military, n.d.). They were accompanied by a delegation of about four hundred African Americans from Akron and Cleveland, two large cities within about an hour's train ride of Canton. A reception committee of about fifteen African Americans from Canton met them at the train station and helped organized the parade (McKinley, 1896c).

Harry C. Smith delivered the speech of greeting. Smith was a member of the Ohio Legislature and, later, founder of the *Cleveland Call and Post* newspaper (Davis, 1972). Smith delivered a speech of a few hundred words. He asserted the Republican Party to be "the greatest political party in this country." Praising McKinley, Smith said that the Republican candidate was "the friend of every honest and upright American, whatever his class or vocation" (McKinley, 1896c). Smith's praise for McKinley contained an underlying argument: not a call for McKinley to support pro-minority policies, but rather to support a policy of friendship toward African Americans. With the spread of Jim Crow laws, a simple reluctance to adopt more discriminatory laws may have been welcome, as would the election of a candidate who did not favor increased discrimination.

Smith continued that "The Afro-American has watched with the eye of an American eagle every act of especial interest to him in your wonderful career as a soldier and statesman." Next, Smith called McKinley "a true friend" and explicitly endorsed the Republican platform. He praised the L'Ouverture Rifles and promised that the African American voters would support McKinley in the November election. McKinley's

subsequent speech to the group remarked on the progress that African American citizens had made, and he then shook hands with the delegation's members (Afro-Americans, 1896; McKinley, 1896c).

Near the end of September, McKinley received a delegation of ministers and parishioners from the annual conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The speechmaking began with a presentation by Justice of the Peace John P. Green, the first African American official elected to office in Ohio (National Rites of Passage, n.d.). After referring to the Church, Green proposed that the members would work for McKinley's election. "The colored race," Green asserted, "have [*sic*] always been on the right side of every question before the American people, and now that the Nation's honor and integrity are at issue, they are again on the right side." This was presumably a reference to the Republican's 1896 issue of sound money, or the gold standard. Bishop B. W. Arnett then gave the principal speech of greeting. Arnett referred to the "cardinal principles of the Republican Party" for which McKinley fought during the Civil War. He assured McKinley that he was a worthy heir to Lincoln, "the beloved railsplitter who led us out of bondage." Arnett brought up the names of Benjamin Wade, Ulysses S. Grant, and other Reconstruction-era Republicans. He called them "men who fought for the preservation of our dearly purchased liberty, purchased by the blood of your fathers and of mine" (McKinley, 1896e, p. 292).

Arnett's comments were, superficially, simple praise for McKinley, Lincoln, Wade, and so forth. This is a classic epideictic approach. Their importance, however, is that he praised them for their work on behalf of justice, a fundamental value. This, in turn, entailed that those figures deserved to be emulated, which is the fundamental point of much

epideictic speech. As Perelman (1971), pointed out, such value-laden rhetoric offers a guide to action without specifying a particular course. Promising McKinley a great election victory, Arnett assured the candidate, perhaps optimistically given the restrictions on voting rights in the rural South, that "eight millions of colored people look upon you as the star of hope of their race and of their country." This discussion was entirely typical of epideictic rhetoric: the theme was praise and the praise was founded on values. It would, however, be hard to miss the speaker's expectation that a McKinley administration would continue the cause of racial justice. In a rhetorical flourish, Arnett told McKinley that he had "shaken hands with every President since Lincoln" and could therefore confer "the Presidential succession on you." The two men then shook hands (McKinley, 1896e; on voting rights, see Diamond, 1941).

Although this speech was full of praise, Arnett was careful in what he did praise. Arnett praised the Union veterans whose sacrifices had ended slavery. He appealed to McKinley as "the star of hope of their race and of their country." He stressed such values as "liberty" and reminded McKinley of the Republican Party's "cardinal principles," implying racial justice to be central among those principles. One of the traditional principles behind the founding of the Republican Party in the 1850's had been resistance to the spread of ante-bellum slavery (Gienapp, 1986; Mayer, 1967). Again, a speech that offered praise and celebration reinforced a political position.

McKinley's speech to the group commented on the egalitarian principles of the Constitution, admired the progress of African Americans, and remarked on Arnett's distinguished career. McKinley added that "It is a matchless civilization in which we live; a civilization that recognizes the common and universal brotherhood of man." McKinley

acceded to the value without promising an action based on it. He then offered to shake hands with every member of the delegation (McKinley, 1896e; Brotherhood, 1896).

Toward the end of the campaign, one group that came to see McKinley on October 24, 1896 was a delegation of a few hundred African Americans from Pittsburgh. Speaking for the delegation was William M. Randolph, a Republican politician from Pennsylvania. Randolph assured McKinley of the loyalty of African Americans. He reminded McKinley that "The colored man played his part in the war." Randolph added that "The Afro-American is no longer an issue in political campaigns. He must fight his own way." Taken out of context, this comment might have led listeners to think that Randolph lacked interest in legislation helpful to African Americans. He continued, however, that "We are satisfied that through loyalty to you we will reap the rewards which our efforts merit." He expressed satisfaction with McKinley's work for equal voting rights "and with your denunciation against riot and mob law." Thus, his speech had a bit of piquancy, in that his advocacy of specific policies was more explicit. Nonetheless, the advocacy still emanated from praise: instead of saying "as president, you should adopt X, Y, and Z policies," Randolph praised McKinley for his advocacy of certain policies. Showing a family touch, the group presented Ida McKinley, the candidate's wife, with a bouquet of flowers (Eight States, 1896).

Responding to Randolph's speech, McKinley complimented Randolph on his eloquence. Rather idealistically, he said that "It is our pride and glory that in free America we know neither race, color, class, caste nor distinction; the native born and naturalized, black and white, all have equal rights in our Constitutional law." Turning the discussion back toward his bread and butter campaign positions, McKinley expressed gratitude that he

could count on them to support "the National honor, the supremacy of our courts and the preservation of law and order" (Caste, Color, 1896).

Conclusion

Overall, much of the rhetoric examined in this essay unashamedly praised McKinley. In this respect, it differed little from the rhetoric produced by McKinley's White supporters. For example, on August 24, a group of McKinley supporters arrived from East Liverpool Ohio. Their leader, Mayor W. V. Blake, praised McKinley for "your ardent devotion for the cause of protection, your toil for everything American, your principles, which have never been vacillating or ambiguous," and so forth (McKinley, 1896a, p. 93). Blake praised McKinley for his advocacy of certain issues. Comparably, White (1998) points out the importance of epideictic forms in African American didactic literature. The speeches of greeting by African Americans found a way to mention the issues of particular concern to them. Vivian (2006) makes a similar point about epideixis in his discussion of post-9/11 rhetoric, as he advocates "republican principles of civic participation vital to the protection and extension of . . . individual liberties" (p. 21). The African Americans who spoke in Canton in 1896 stood for civic involvement as the key to justice and success.

Epideictic rhetoric depends for its effect on the sharing of common values. There is a sense in which epideictic rhetoric draws on and reminds the audience that they all agree on basic beliefs. It is quite unclear that all of McKinley's constituents shared the same values as the African American speakers in this campaign. As shown above, McKinley appealed for unification, not confrontation. He may not have felt that vigorous action on civil rights would gain him strong support from the nation at large. Thus, although the epideictic

approach—to praise McKinley for his racial justice—was an ingenious rhetorical tactic, it may have run aground due to the deep divisions that continued to afflict the nation.

As African American speaker John Hope (1998) told an audience a few months before the launch of the 1896 campaign, "If we are not striving for equality, in heaven's name for what are we living?" (p. 833). The universal human struggle for equality and justice never fully escapes our attention. Although McKinley downplayed civil rights issues throughout the 1896 campaign, the African American speakers who visited him in Canton took advantage of the opportunity to place their perspective before the candidate as well as to address a larger audience that otherwise might overlook the issues that concerned them. As it turned out, President McKinley did take very modest steps toward civil rights (O'Reilly, 1995). The speakers praised the candidate not for his record on the tariff, but for his sense of justice. By employing methods typical of epideictic genre to address policy questions, these speakers reminded the speaker and the nation of their pressing needs. Given the great difficulty of measuring rhetorical effects, it is impossible to say whether more direct rhetoric would have been more effective. Faced with subtle and difficult rhetorical circumstances, these speakers made an interesting contribution to American rhetoric.

These African-American orators took advantage of a unique situation, exploiting the features of an unusual presidential campaign to support a candidate while simultaneously implying their advocacy of particular policies. This study shows how these speakers advocated their views about racial justice, more typically a function of deliberative rhetoric, while praising their favored candidate for president. It thus illustrates and expands on Jamieson and Campbell's concept of rhetorical hybrids, blurring or fusing the deliberative and epideictic genres, while developing Perelman's view that epideictic rhetoric is

significant. It also illuminates the work of a group of African-American rhetorical politicians and advocates of the late 1800's, whose work has previously received little attention.

Note

[1] In no way should it be inferred from this citation that McKinley himself contributed to the authorship of this or other speech texts, other than his own speeches. The collections of McKinley speeches (*McKinley as a Candidate, McKinley's Speeches in September*) appear to be campaign documents compiled from newspaper and wire service stories, compiled and sometimes edited by McKinley's advisor, Joseph P. Smith. The speech texts are presumably founded on shorthand records (see Kissed, 1896). These collections are occasionally more complete, especially in their reporting of the speeches of greeting, than were the newspaper stories. However, when complete texts are available from newspapers, they are preferred because they are presumably less extensively edited. McKinley's staff frequently screened advance copies of speeches of greeting to ensure that they contained no divisive content (Manning, 1896).

[2] It seems likely that McKinley could have known some of these speakers, especially those from Ohio, but this author has discovered no relevant evidence to that effect.

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