TROPES AND *TOPOI* OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM IN THE DISCOURSE OF THE

CHRISTIAN RIGHT

A Thesis

by

ZOË LYNN HESS CARNEY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

May 2010

Major Subject: Communication

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Chair of Committee,	Jennifer R. Mercieca
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ABSTRACT

Tropes and *Topoi* of Anti-Intellectualism in the Discourse of the Christian Right.

(May 2010)

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Christianity is not anti-intellectual; however, there is a distinct quality of anti-intellectualism in the rhetoric of the Christian Right. This thesis explores the ways in which rhetors in the Christian Right encourage anti-intellectual sentiment without explicitly claiming to be against intellectualism. I argue that the Christian Right makes these anti-intellectual arguments by invoking the tropes and *topoi* of populism, anti-evolution, and common sense.

I analyze how Pat Robertson, as a representative of the Christian Right, used the stock argument, or *topos*, of populism in his 1986 speech, in which he announced his intention to run for President. I argue that while Robertson used the generic argumentative framework of populism, which is "anti-elitist," he shifted the meaning of the word "elitist" from a wealthy person to an intellectual person. This formed a trope, or turn in argument. Next, I consider the Christian Right's argument against the teaching of evolution. I analyze William J. Bryan's argument in the Scopes Trial, a defining moment in the creation-evolution debate. I show that Bryan used the *topos* of creationism, which included the *loci* of quality and order, to

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condemn the teaching of evolution, arguing that it would be better to not have education at all than for students to be taught something that contradicts the Bible. Finally, I consider how both Ronald Reagan and Sarah Palin used the *topos* of common sense. Reagan used this *topos* to create a metaphorical narrative that was to be accepted as reality, or common sense. Sarah Palin, then, used the common sense narrative that Reagan had created to support her views. By calling her ideas "common sense" and frequently referencing Reagan, her rhetoric gives the illusion that good governing is simple, thus removing the space for an intellectual in public life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is the strangest election I've seen in my lifetime. The thing
that struck me as so strange is the anti-intellectual bent . . . I'm not
a super genius, but why did the media suddenly go to a plumber's
house? . . . It's that strange elitism— what's wrong with elite?
Doesn't elite mean good? Don't you want your president to be
good? Aren't the Navy Seals an elite squad? The Blue Angels are
elite flyers. Why must your president be a dumb ass? . . . I want my
president to be embarrassingly smarter than me. I want him to be
one of those science fiction guys with one of those giant throbbing
heads.[1]

Jon Stewart seemed as alarmed as many academics are about the current state of

public opinion—intellectualism, even in the case of a presidential candidate, is

being treated as a negative characteristic.[2] Richard Hofstadter first popularized the

term anti-intellectualism in U.S. public discourse in his book *Anti-Intellectualism in*

American Life. Hofstadter argued that anti-intellectualism is "a resentment and

suspicion of the life of the mind and of those who are considered to represent it;

and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life."[3] Written as a

_____

This thesis follows the style of *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*.

response to McCarthyism and the defeat of Democratic Party presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson, Hofstadter argued that the 1956 election represented a rise in anti-intellectualism in American politics.[4] Hofstadter argued that anti-intellectualism has existed in the United States since colonization, and that it comes in cycles; it was originally brought by an evangelical religion that "purveyed many humane and democratic sentiments."[5]

Anti-intellectualism can be seen, and felt, in political speeches, in advertisements, by commentators on the news, and in general public discourse; and it almost always stems from the conservative movement.[6] For example, the conservative discourse surrounding Adlai Stevenson's campaign, which encouraged Hofstadter to write about the matter, parallels the discourse from the conservative figures of the 2008 presidential election. A newspaper reported in 1956, "Stevenson, the intellectual, must share the views of his advisers or he would not have selected them. A vote for Eisenhower, the plain American, is a vote for democracy." More specifically than the conservative movement, however, anti-intellectual rhetoric stems from the Christian Right. Republican Vice-Presidential candidate Sarah Palin, who is strongly associated with the Christian Right, similarly appealed, "You can call me a common sense conservative. My approach to the issues facing my country and the world, issues that we'll discuss today, are rooted in this common-sense conservatism . . . . Common sense conservatism deals with the reality of the world as it is."[7] This thesis explores the relationship between the rhetoric of the Christian Right and that of anti-intellectualism. It finds that actors in

the Christian Right make anti-intellectual arguments without explicitly saying that they are anti-intellectual. I argue that they do this by using three tropes of anti-intellectualism, which are "populism," and "anti-evolution," and "common sense." These tropes, in turn, become commonplace arguments, or *topoi*, that the Christian Right can draw upon, helping its audience members understand and relate to the argument.

Literature Review

Tropes and Topoi

There are several ways that tropes have been described. Traditionally, to trope is to turn, or to deviate. This can be thought of in terms of figures. Kenneth Burke argued that there are four "master tropes" that function as rhetorical turns, and that they are metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, and irony.[8] However, Scott Porter Consigny argued that there is another Classical way of thinking about tropes. For instance, Gorgias (among others) viewed all language as inherently rhetorical, or persuasive, and metaphorical. When considered this way, a trope is a strategic maneuvering in language. Consigny explained,

> So unlike Aristotle, who sees tropes such as metaphors and puns as "deviations" from the proper function of language, that of naming essential features of the world itself, Gorgias sees *all* languages as inherently tropical, consisting of tropes or "maneuvers" in specific games. For Gorgias, literal discourse designates the family of tropes that a community is so accustomed to using that that they no longer realize that they are tropes."[9]

This idea of tropes is particularly useful because it acknowledges that although tropes create a "turn," they are used so frequently that they become the accepted "literal" way of thinking about things; although maneuvers they are also commonplace truths. Consigny argued that when these tropes have reached this point of acceptance, they become *topoi.* He said,

> When, as users of a language, we take some tropes or modes of speaking for granted and no longer attend to their use, our tropes become *topoi*, or "commonplaces," ways of using words that we accept as literal. The "everyday" is thus generated and reinforced through conventional uses of words, and the way we are persuaded to speak shapes the way we see and describe the world in which we live.[10]

Ruth Clark and Jesse Delia argued that the classical rhetorical use for *topoi*, or commonplaces, was to provide "general strategic approaches to be adapted to specific communicative needs." [11] More explicitly they argued that *topoi* functioned as "schemes for strategy analysis based upon such a concept would consist of general lines of reasoning and ways of casting ideas to elicit these same forms of reasoning in others."[12]

William Nelson summarized Aristotle, the first person to develop the idea of *topoi*, and Francis Bacon, to explain how it is that *topoi* develop into these schemes for reasoning. He said,

> Aristotle and Bacon argue that *topoi* represent places in memory where the dimensions of a thing to be looked for are marked or

indexed. Because each *topos* represents a conceptual dimension, focusing on the *topos* directs the mind to a particular place and assists recall of items associated with that place. Use of a topical system directs the mind to all places (dimensions) where items related to a concept may be stored and thereby assists recall of the total universe of information a speaker has associated with a given concept.[13]

These ideas taken together can be understood in the following way: a trope signifies a turning of an argument; often tropes are described as figures of speech. However, when the trope becomes common discourse, it becomes a *topos. Topoi* are stock arguments that speakers can draw on, and to which the audience can relate. That is, "they all [tropes, *topoi*, and figures] lead the rhetor to recall knowledge, or to reorder what is already known for an audience's sake."[14] These *topoi*, or *loci*, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca argued, can be classified into *loci* of quantity, quality, order, the existing, essence, and the person."[15]

Anti-Intellectualism

Richard Hofstadter presented anti-intellectualism as the American way, although not something for which American should be proud. In fact, he said, even though the term anti-intellectual became popular in American public discourse in the 1950s, it has actually been present since before we had a national identity.[16] And although Hofstadter argued that America is anti-intellectual, he explained that it is not anti-intelligence.

Hofstadter defined intelligence as "an excellence of mind that is employed within a fairly narrow, immediate, and predictable range; it is a manipulative, adjustive, unfailingly practical quality." Intellect, on the other hand, "is the critical, creative, and contemplative side of the mind."[17] There is a vocational quality to intelligence that is not a part of intellect. A person uses intelligence to get a job done; however, a person uses intellect for the sake of the ideas. These ideas can be too removed from public life for others to appreciate. Americans value the intelligent person over the intellectual person. For instance, Hofstadter said, Thomas Edison was highly praised for inventing a light bulb, for this was an invention directly influential on ordinary life, while Josiah Willards Gibbs, who laid the theoretical framework for modern physical chemistry, was hardly noticed in the United States.[18]

Although Hofstadter recognized anti-intellectualism throughout American history, he argued that the term is difficult to define. He categorized anti-intellectualism into three forms—an idea, attitude, and historical subject:

> As an idea, it is not a single proposition but a complex of propositions. As an attitude, it is not usually found in a pure and unalloyed dislike of intellect or intellectuals is uncommon. And as a historical subject, if it can be called that, it is not a constant thread but a force fluctuating in strength from time to time and drawing its motive power from varying sources.[19]

Hofstadter said that the common strain between these forms is "a resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and of those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of that life."[20] Of course, this definition is still rather oblique, so Hofstadter explained the concept further with examples. We can understand notions of anti-intellectualism throughout the examples of anti-intellectual discourse: First, an intellectual is "soft," meaning he or she is prone to being weak. This person would not be able to "fight" American evils, such as communism. Second, an intellectual does not have common sense. Although the person may have much academic achievement, he or she is not competent in the "real world." Third, an intellectual has communist tendencies. The person may not actually be a communist, but certainly he or she is closer to being a communist than a true, capitalist American. The person reads and accepts the communist philosophical worldview. Fourth, the intellectual is depraved of all morality, and is taking the rest of America down with him or her. Education leads to the moral decline of the otherwise Christian, moral, God-fearing country.

Hofstadter offered examples of anti-intellectualism within the political sphere, arguing that anti-intellectual politicians had recently changed the way that they talked about intellectuals. For instance, people who were at one time considered "highbrow" were now called "eggheads." Conservative Louis Bromfield wrote that an "egghead" is a person of "spurious intellectual pretensions." This person is probably a professor, superficial, confused in thought, and most likely a "supporter of Middle-European socialism as opposed to Greco-French-American

ideas of democracy and liberalism" and "subject to the old-fashioned philosophical morality of Nietzsche which frequently leads him into jail or disgrace."[21] President Eisenhower defined an intellectual as, "a man who takes more words than are necessary to tell more than he knows."[22]

Hofstadter also explained how businesspeople consider intellectuals. Hofstadter argued that anti-intellectualism is mainly expressed by the businessman's suspicion of experts working outside his control. This could mean scientists, politicians, or lawyers. Popular rhetoric describing professors might be that they are, "burdened with Kappa keys and academic honors but not equally loaded with honesty and common sense," while an intellectual politician might fight communism "with kid gloves."[23] In fact, "Our universities are the training grounds for barbarians of the future, those who, in the guise of learning, shall come forth loaded with pitchforks of ignorance and cynicism, and stab and destroy the remnants of human civilization."[24]

Hofstadter argued that anti-intellectualism is also very prominent within evangelicalism. The sentiment displayed in this circle is that America is declining in morality every day, and this is the result of too much education. Hofstadter quoted evangelist Billy Graham saying, "[In place of the Bible] we substituted reason, rationalism, mind culture, science worship, the working power of government, Freudianism, naturalism, humanism, behaviorism, positivism, materialism, and idealism."[25] Hofstadter, of course, credited evangelicalism for much of the anti-

intellectual sentiment, and Graham's quotation seemed to sum up this anti-intellectual evangelical argument.

Hofstadter continued to narrow the scope of his argument. He proposed that anti-intellectualism is not unique to the United States; however, he was primarily interested in the study of this thought in America. He did not believe anti-intellectualism prevails in all areas of American life. Instead, anti-intellectualism sometimes exists at the same time as intellectualism; intellectuals have moments of anti-intellectualism, just as most people are not completely hostile to ideas. Some anti-intellectuals even have intellectual passions. He exemplified this point with the idea that for an anti-intellectual sentiment to become widespread it must have a competent spokesperson. Most of the time, Hofstadter said, anti-intellectualism is simply a consequence of another justifiable intention. He argued that this somewhat incidental anti-intellectualism has seeped into American culture because it was fostered by an evangelical religion.[26]

Evangelicalism

The evangelical movement has transitioned between civic engagement, in the form of both progressivism and conservatism, and withdrawal throughout U.S. history; however, since the 1970s it has been politically involved in the form of the Christian Right, and therefore the Republican Party.[27] Evangelicalism is multi-faceted and has a history connecting it to different Christian worldviews, such as liberal Protestantism and Catholicism.

John Green defined the Christian Right as "a social movement located principally among evangelicals, dedicated to restoring traditional values in public policy. Beginning in the late 1970s, it has grown in size and sophistication so that by the mid-1990s it exercised influence in national politics, especially by mobilizing evangelical religious voters on behalf of Republican candidates."[28] This movement re-emerged under the Nixon-era as the president increased "paranoia, self pity, obsession with conspiracy, and hatred of establishment" and gave a pejorative meaning to the word "liberal," defining a liberal as an elitist who cares more about everyone other than hard working, straight, white Americans.[29] It was during the Nixon era that social and political tensions began to rise between what Schulman and Zelizer term "liberal Protestantism," that is, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregational churches, and "evangelicalism," which includes Southern Baptist and Assembly of God churches. The liberal Protestant churches were marching for civil rights and against the war, while the future leader of the highly political Moral Majority, Jerry Falwell, said, "Preachers are not called to be politicians, but to be soul winners." Nixon picked up on this shift within churches and conservatism, thus appealing to the "Silent Majority" of evangelicals who were against the liberal Protestants' social activism.[30] It was also during this time that evangelical churches, which held strong, unambiguous views of moral issues, grew, and by 1976 thirty-four percent of Americans identified themselves as "evangelicals."[31] These evangelicals soon became known as the Christian right, who picked up their own political agenda concerned with "family values."

From Puritans to the Christian Right

Martin Luther coined the word "evangelicalism," according to Wheaton College's Institute for the American Evangelical, during the Protestant Reformation, but the word stems from the Greek *euangelion,* which means "good news" or "gospel." The word became popular in Anglo-American culture after the revivals in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries. These revivals heavily influenced the rise in Methodist and Baptist churches, which make up the largest denominations of Protestantism in the United States; this is one cause for the word "evangelical" being used as a canopy term for all Protestants. Justin Watson argued that the evangelical worldview originally had two pillars: "The first was the traditional Protestant doctrine of the authority, reliability, and perspicuity of scripture. The second was Scottish common sense realism, a philosophical tradition that held that human beings can have direct and reliable knowledge of reality, religious truth, and morality."[32] This idea of common sense realism becomes an important idea when studying the worldview of the eventual Christian Right. Watson said that "educated evangelicals of the Nineteenth Century used Common Sense Realism to synthesize their understandings of the Bible, science, morality, democracy, and social progress into a single worldview."[33] Although Watson argued that there is one overarching worldview, evangelicals do not follow one specific creed. Historian George Marsden, however, argued that there is a kind of consensus among evangelicals to follow five doctrines, which are:

1) the Reformation doctrine of the final authority of Scripture; 2) the

real, historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture;

3) eternal salvation only through personal trust in Christ; 4) the

importance of evangelism and missions; and 5) the importance of a

spiritually transformed life.[34]

From this we can gather that the evangelical worldview holds God, as revealed by

Scripture, as the ultimate reality. They believe in absolute truths that can be found

through common sense. They also believe that God is the creator and savior of

humans and that this "Good News" should be shared with everyone else.

Early American Christians were concerned with conversion and social

reform because of their eschatological view of postmillennialism.[35] People who

hold the postmillennial worldview believe that they must create a dominion over

the world before Christ will return. This dominion will occur after a millennium of

gradual turn to peace and righteousness, in which the entirety of society has been

Christianized, with the final perfection occurring with the apocalypse, or the return

of Christ. Barry Brummett argued that the postmillennial period of Christ's reign is

characterized by justice, peace, harmony, and, especially, order.[36] Postmillennialism

is tied to common western thought, and can be used for explaining colonialism as it

views the world as continually becoming better through Christianization of the

nations. Tuveson noted that a postmillennial "notion of history as a process

generally moving upwards by a series of majestic stages, culminating inevitably in

some great, transforming event which is to solve the dilemmas of society . . . is the

concept destined to dominate 'modern' thought."[37] Similarly, Brummett argued that

postmillennial rhetoric is sometimes even left unnoticed because it embodies the

idea of progress, which is central to western thought.[38] In the United States, this

"positive eschatology" led evangelicals to political progressivism. This came in the

form of abolitionist activism and the desire for a strict separation of church and

state, among other spiritually motivated political goals.[39] The Puritans were

postmillennial thinkers, which accounts for their reformed mindset and their use of

the jeremiad, a "political sermon" that coupled "the progress of the Kingdom of God

with the progress of the American nation."[40] The postmillennial worldview takes a

turn from progressivism toward theocracy, however, in Christian

Reconstructionism, which is a view that became largely popular in the 1970s and

accounts for some major leaders in the Christian Right (such as Christian Coalition

founder Pat Robertson). Reconsructionism teaches that Christians have the

responsibility to enact biblical law throughout the world before Christ will return.[41]

In the late Nineteenth Century evangelicals were faced with the influx of

modernity and, with it, the process of secularization. Watson argued that

modernization presented a problem for evangelicals because "functional rationality

undermined the supernaturalistic basis of the evangelical worldview, especially the

authority of the Bible. Cultural pluralism threatened evangelicalism's ability to

provide American culture with a commonly held set of values. Structural pluralism,

especially the differentiation of public and private spheres of life, helped deprive

evangelicalism of a public and political role. All three elements aided secularization

. . . ."[42] Watson argued that evangelicals responded to modernity in three ways:

withdrawal, accommodation, and resistance.[43] While accommodation refers to

allowing a flexible worldview to change with society, withdrawal and resistance

help to explain the politicization of evangelicals.

Withdrawal took the form of fundamentalism, and with fundamentalism

came a negative form of eschatology called premillennialism. Premillennialism is

the belief that the world will continue to get worse until Christ returns and then

physically reigns on earth for a thousand years. This is the accepted concept among

most Protestants, and also frames modern political conservatism. Fundamentalism

encourages a certain lifestyle that promotes living separately from "worldly"

customs and materials. Paul Heelas, David Martin, and Paul Morris argued that

fundamentalism is:

> a thoroughly contemporary, postmodern phenomenon, embracing
> fully the 'rationalizing' reforms and technological developments of
> modernity, and attempting not so much to 'roll back' modern
> departures as to 'have the cake and eat it [too].' It makes possible
> a full enjoyment of modern attractions without having to pay the price
> they demand. The price in question is the agony of the
> individual condemned to self-sufficiency, self-reliance and a life of
> never fully satisfying and trustworthy choice.[44]

This means that, as a general rule, fundamentalists believe in personal inadequacy,

which leads them to look toward a higher being that will direct

them. Fundamentalists are lured away from the agony of personal choice because there is already a framework for living, and an ultimate authority.

Premillennialism frames fundamentalist rhetoric, as it stresses that the world is a bad, chaotic place full of persecution *because* the end times are coming soon. This kind of rhetoric fit perfectly for evangelicals as they felt like religious minorities during an age of humanist secularism.[45] The view holds that earthly troubles are a sign of Christ's imminent return and also leads to the sentiment that the people could not and should not attempt to reconcile these problems because, in the end, God, not man, is in control. This new worldview led to what historians call the "Great Reversal." Mark Regnerus and Christian Smith explained that this phenomenon was "the u-turn of northern evangelicalism from earlier public (and progressive) positions on such issues as slavery, woman's suffrage, prison reform, and child labor, to a policy of privatized faith that concentrated on a personal evangelism rooted in the premillennial conviction that the world was inevitably worsening."[46] While Christians were once considered progressive in their political views, this new form of eschatology provided them with a reason to become apolitical.

The other way evangelicals reacted to modernity was through resistance; this marked the "Re-Reversal," as the Christian Right was ushered in and evangelicals were once again politically and socially engaged; instead of being politically progressive like their postmillennial counterparts they aligned with the Republican Party's "conservative" views.[47] The industrialization and

urbanization of modernity helped evangelicals to be upwardly mobile, thus

creating a new evangelical constituency, which was popularized and spread

through electronic networks, mainly in the form of charismatic televangelists.

These evangelicals were moved by trigger issues that involved outside threats to

their religious values and institutions.[48] Watson argued that "resistance defends

supernaturalism, maintains universal and exclusive truth claims, and rejects the

privatization and depoliticization of religion."[49] The politicization of evangelism can

be seen by the election of evangelical Presidents Carter, Reagan, and G. W. Bush, the

boom in conservative religious lobbies, the rise of political religious leaders of

Christian Right organizations and television evangelism shows, and, finally, "the

salience given such issues as abortion, sexual orientation, race policies, taxation,

and free market economics."[50] This resistance is noticeably different than

traditional conservatism. While traditional conservatism can be passive, resistance

is always aggressive and politically active.

The renewal of political activism among conservatives began with Cold War

populist conservatism in the 1960s and appealed to southern and western

resentment of northern elites.[51] Instead of conserving, or preserving, the status

quo, this conservatism focused on restoring an idealized status quo of years past.

The movement was led by white, traditionalist, pro-family religious

fundamentalists who targeted progressivism in the form of the Civil Rights

Movement, the legalization of abortion, and other moral issues.[52] The term

conservative is simply defined as "characterized by a tendency to preserve or keep

intact or unchanged."[53] When applied to a political tradition it cannot be defined so easily, as many times conservatives are not pleased with the status-quo. Rather, U.S. conservative ideology can be thought of as a "philosophy of imperfection, committed to the idea of limits, and directed towards the defense of a limited style of politics."[54] And although the traits generally follow in the conservative tradition, modern conservatism does not seem to have a secure and consistent internal structure. Instead, "it is a cluster of related (and sometimes unrelated) ideas from which those who consider themselves conservatives draw different elements at different times."[55]

Rhetorical Scholarship on Evangelicalism

There has been much rhetorical scholarship done about Christian rhetoric and its intersection with politics. Thus far, the scholarship has been primarily interested in prophetic rhetoric, usually in the form of apocalyptic and jeremiadic rhetoric, moral frameworks and conversely, the use of "evil" and "otherness/enemy," specifically displayed by Presidents Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush. Michael Calvin McGee studied the theory of rhetoric with the influence of Christianity, and the ways in which ultimate terms were produced, which proved to be particularly helpful in this study.

Barry Brummett, Stephen D. O'Leary, and Michael McFarland argued the historical importance of apocalyptic rhetoric as a rhetorical genre.[56] Barry Brummett considered what premillennial and postmillennial apocalypse theology means to Christians, and then how this theology has been displayed, through form

and style, in their rhetoric. O'Leary and McFarland used Brummett's ideas,

expanding his mythic notion of apocalyptic discourse by studying a particular

case—Pat Robertson's rhetoric during 1980-1988, which included Robertson's

unsuccessful Presidential bid.[57] In this study O'Leary and McFarland argued that

the ambiguities of the Book of Revelation, which is where most ideas of the

apocalypse originate, provides Christian politicians with discursive space to move

between premilliennialist and postmillennialist rhetoric without any social

consequences.[58] This was exemplified with Pat Robertson, who claimed to be a

premillennialist, but in running for President used the rhetoric of a

postmillennialist. O'Leary and McFarland argued that Robertson could not have

been effective as a premillennialist because of its inherent negativity (if the world is

getting worse until Jesus' return, and there is nothing humans can do about it, there

would be no reason for Robertson to run as an elected official). So, Robertson

merged the two theological views, using the phrase "a new vision for America," all

the while advocating the same conservative agenda that had been in place during

Reagan's years in office.[59] O'Leary later considered the *topoi* involved in apocalyptic

discourse, which seeps through the rhetoric of the Christian Right. He used "Burke's

dramatistic theory of communication to develop a dynamic model of the genres of

apocalyptic rhetoric that can account for the variety of ethical and political

commitments inspired by the Christian apocalyptic myth."[60]

 Kurt Ritter and John Murphy studied the jeremiad, another rhetorical genre

used by Christians.[61] Ritter argued that Ronald Reagan won over conservatives in

the 1960s by replacing his apocalyptic rhetoric with the conservative jeremiad; this was a strategic move because while apocalyptic rhetoric is, in the end, about the Armageddon, the jeremiad is "essentially optimistic." While the jeremiad does include the transgressions of the people it also always "proclaims that the nation can repent, reform, and recapture its true mission."[62] The jeremiad is concerned with a falling from grace, which happened as a result of evil, but with a turning of ways the people can be good again, so there is an optimistic of bringing "good out of evil."[63] Kurt Ritter and David Henry argued that in American society, the President acts as America's pastor, with the media as his pulpit.[64]

Also concerned with good and evil, David Bailey, Christian Spielvogel, James Aune, Colleen Shogan, Jeremy Engels, and Robert Ivie considered moral frameworks, the use of "evil," and the construction of "the enemy."[65] David Bailey studied how George W. Bush used the "Pauline conversion narrative" before the 2000 election, which helped him market himself as a person who could "restore the moral fiber of the presidential office."[66] Christian Spielvogel likewise studied Bush's campaign, but in the 2004 election. He argued that Bush gained the support of the "value voters" because of the way he framed the War on Terrorism as a battle between good and evil.[67] James Aune also looked specifically at Bush's use of the term "evil" as well as the use of evil from other spokespersons of the Christian Right. He argued that Christians "from the beginning posited the existence of independent and powerful demonic forces at work in the cosmos generally and in the political realm in particular."[68] Jeremy Engels and Robert Ivie both studied the

discursive practice in which people name whatever is considered to be evil as the enemy. Engels considered how Thomas Jefferson named the country's enemies by rhetorically focusing on the physical appearance of the enemies while David Walker focused on the way they talked, but Jefferson and Walker both believed that it was the inward character of their enemies that made them evil.[69] Robert Ivie specifically wrote about Reagan's populist appeals as he named the Soviet enemy, using *topoi* of savagery. Ivie argued that Reagan's use of the savage metaphor took the form of a narrative and was told as if it were "common sense."[70]

The theme of "common sense" appears often when studying the rhetoric of the Christian Right. Allen Scult, Michael Calvin McGee, and Kenneth J. Kuntz studied Christian epistemology and its rhetorical embodiment.[71] They studied the first three chapters of the Book of Genesis to discover the relationship between discourse and power in the Judeo-Christian culture. They chose the first three chapters of the book because they argue that its power "is great enough to have enabled the story of creation it contains to endure to this day even after the onslaught of scientific evidence which contradicts its details." They argued that this story not only shows power, but it is "powerful enough to establish the conditions of sacred knowledge." [72] Michael McGee also considered the impact of Christian rhetoric on rhetorical theory; he argued the relationship between the two is that the Christian worldview "changed the meaning of rhetorical theory rather than the form of rhetorical theory."[73] He argued that the difference between ancient and patristic traditions is the "Christian belief in the absolute truth of the Bible."[74] So,

instead of absolute truths, or ultimate terms, being "manipulable within the range of historical-traditional interpretations," they were now believed to be concrete and immutable.[75] He said, "Early Christians thought pagan rhetoric 'evil' because its emphasis on a doctrine of probability [e.g., 'For every argument there is an equal and weighty counter-argument.'] tended toward schism."[76] As opposed to the divisiveness of pagan rhetoric, Christians believed that "the materials of rhetorical argument were most certain: though signs, examples, commonplaces, and the like were used in profusion and were still drawn from opinion, they were reinforced by the absolute description of reality found in the Bible."[77] The Bible therefore creates a commonplace argument for how to view the world.

Research Question

Richard Hofstadter wrote broadly about anti-intellectualism, while rhetorical scholars have investigated evangelical rhetoric and its intersection with political life. Hofstadter wrote that evangelicalism was one cause for anti-intellectualism in American life. I will build on the literature of Hofstadter and rhetorical scholars to discover the connection between anti-intellectualism and the discourse of the Christian Right. My research question is: What are the ways in which the Christian Right makes anti-intellectual arguments without saying explicitly that they are "anti-intellectual"?

Chapter Preview

I argue that the Christian Right makes anti-intellectual arguments by invoking the tropes and *topoi* of populism, anti-science, and common sense. In

chapter two I consider how the Christian Right uses populist appeals to make anti-intellectual arguments. In this chapter I analyze how Pat Robertson, as a representative of the Christian Right, used the stock argument, or *topoi*, of populism in his 1986 speech in which he announced his intention to run for President. I argue that while Robertson used the generic argumentative framework of populism, which is "anti-elitist," he shifted the meaning of the word "elitist" to signify anti-intellectual rather than anti-wealthy, forming a trope, or turn in argument. The third chapter considers the Christian Right's argument against evolution. In this chapter I analyze an argument against evolution by William J. Bryan in the Scopes Trial. I show that Bryan used the powerful *topos* of creationism, which includes what Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca argued as the *loci* of quality and order, to condemn the teaching of evolution, arguing that it would be better to not have education at all than for students to be taught something that was what he believed to be against the Bible.[78] The fourth chapter considers both Ronald Reagan and Sarah Palin's use of the *topos* "common sense." I argue that Reagan created a common sense anti-intellectual narrative that includes the recurrent use of metaphors, or tropes, as reality. Palin draws upon the common sense narrative that was made of metaphors to persuade her audience that it does not need or want elitist leaders. These elitist leaders are, of course, experts and intellectuals.

CHAPTER II

POPULISM

Populism is a representative anecdote for the anti-intellectualism displayed by the Christian Right. The Christian Right's populist rhetoric reveals that to be an "ordinary American" has less to do with economic class and much more to do with education and intellectualism. The Christian Right makes populist appeals by scoffing at an intellectual elite and praising the workingman. As one can see, the word "populism" has been used in different ways through history, and populist rhetoric even began with the left, and is now mostly used by Conservatives on the right; however, Michael J. Lee argued that populism has sustained a particular argumentative frame throughout history. This frame has four themes: a definable "people" that represent defenders of "traditional values," the identification of the enemy, the framing of the revolutionary era as an "expression of singular political will," and finally, an apocalyptic confrontation as the "vehicle to revolutionary change."[79] This chapter extends Lee's rhetorical analysis of the People's Party, Huey Long, and George Wallace to the rhetoric of the next populist, Pat Robertson. I chose to study Robertson because in 1988 he sought a presidential nomination from the Republican Party and formed two organizations that are a part of the "Christian Right." Although both political parties have used populist rhetoric, I look to the Republican Party because it is the party currently arguing within this framework.[80] I am specifically looking at candidates who are part of, or are

promoted by, the Christian Right, because the Christian Right has a perceived

significant power bloc in the Republican Party.[81]

I begin the paper with a review of relevant populist literature, including that

of Michael Kazin and Richard Hofstadter, which provides a history of the shifts in

attitudes toward populism and populist rhetoric itself and shows the transition of

the popular meaning of the word "elitist" during the Cold War. I then review Lee's

populist framework theory; finally, I analyze Robertson's 1986 presidential bid

speech within Lee's framework to see how Robertson constituted "the people" as

anti-elitist, thereby anti-intellectual, moral, religious, and conservative. From this

analysis we learn that Robertson, as a representative of the Christian Right, uses

the *topos* of anti-intellectualism, but forms a trope by turning the argument in order

to make an enemy of the intellectual elitist rather than the wealthy elitist.

History of Populist Rhetoric

Richard Hofstadter found many faults in the populist movement. He

submitted the belief that the movement was honorable only in that it was "the first

modern political movement of practical importance in the United States to insist

that the federal government has some responsibility for the common weal; indeed,

it was the first such movement to attack seriously the problems created by

industrialism."[82] However, Hofstadter argued that the populist movement

contained an ideology befallen with "the idea of the golden age; the concept of

natural harmonies; the dualistic version of social struggles; the conspiracy theory

of history; and the doctrine of the primacy of money."[83] Michael Kazin argued that

there are two shifts in the way that populist rhetoric has been utilized in the United States. The People's Party developed first in the 1890s.[84] The Party's discourse consisted of two strands of grassroots rhetoric: first, "the moral revivalism of plebeian preachers and lay campaigners against slavery and strong drink"; second, "a spirited defense of 'producers'—both rural and urban, wage earners and the self-employed—upon whose labor and loyalty the Republic depended." Hofstadter argued that this first strand of populists arose because of what he called the agrarian myth, which can be traced in the American political tradition most prominently to Thomas Jefferson. This myth holds that the rural and agrarian way of life is sacred. It is the root of America. This widely held myth led to a "certain complacency and self-righteousness" in rural thinking, which changed upon the Industrialization of the United States. It was the populist notion of this time that the farmer was more important than all the others because he fed and supported them.[85] Hofstadter argued that this populism can be explained better by American entrepreneurial radicalism than a product of frontier inheritance, because the farmers participated heavily in the commercialization that came with Industrialization.[86] Kazin argued that during the Progressive era these small farmers lost enthusiasm for reform and were replaced by wage earners and evangelical churchgoers, which marked the beginning of the labor movement.[87]

Kazin argued in the late 1940s that populism shifted from left to right. He said:

> The rhetoric once spoken primarily by reformers and radicals (debt-ridden farmers, craft and industrial unionists, socialists attempting to make their purposes sound American, even prohibitionists eager to wipe out the saloon interests) was creatively altered by conservative groups and politicians (zealous anti Communists, George Wallace, the Christian Right, and campaigns and presidential administrations of Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan).[88]

Kazin linked this change to the onset of the Cold War and the change in perceived identity of white Americans—they, even the poor farmers, began to think of themselves as middle-class consumers and taxpayers.[89]

The Cold War brought about a new relationship between populist and evangelical rhetorics. When situated within the context of modernity and the great world wars we can see a shift in the ideology of mainstream evangelicalism as well as a reclaiming of the populist framework; the Cold War brought about a new pro-capitalist evangelical populism that differs from the earlier agrarian populism.

The Cold War, Modernity, and Populist Rhetoric

The Cold War was fought with techniques driven by the fears of industry and modernity. Modernization, Nils Gilman argued, "deemed good governance to be *of* the people and *for* the people, but most assuredly not *by* the people."[90] Gilman said that modernization includes all aspects of society—increased industrialization,

mobilization, literacy, mass media, and rationalism.[91] The First World War

influenced the "modernization" and industrialization of the West, and the war

brought "modernity fully into existence."[92] Then, through the Cold War, the

modernization strategies of both the West and communism were discredited,

which can be seen in the change of populist rhetoric, which came as a reaction

against the modernism that led to the war.[93] This rhetoric was marked both by the

new glorification of the producer and the disowning of the ungodly, modern elite.

There is a gap between two groups in the United States who both used the populist

framework, constituting themselves as "the people."[94] The populist rhetoric that

began in the 1890s stemmed from both the small farmers and the revivalist

plebeian preachers. This situation was mirrored in the next strand of populist

rhetoric during the Cold War. Michael Kazin explained the distinction well:

> Mutual suspicion thus estranged a movement originating in the
> church from one whose lifeblood was the industrial workplace . . . . the
> gap between those who see ordinary Americans primarily in
> economic terms and those who view the people as belonging to God
> has never really closed. And it continues to divide populist persuaders
> today. Activists who blame an immoral, agnostic media for America's
> problems have little in common with those who indict corporations
> for moving jobs overseas.[95]

This distinction between the traits of the two different groups of people claiming to

be the "common man" was highlighted in the Cold War, when there was a

resurgence of populist rhetoric. Some populists reacted against modernism by glorifying the producer. Other populists abhorred the "moral anarchy fostered by a cosmopolitan elite."[96] These two groups formed a new populist right. Although they had different definitions of "the people," they still knew who they were not. Ernest Bormann, John Cragan, and Donald Shields said that the Cold War vision was one that included a "loyal, patriotic American" while the villain was "an unscrupulous terrorist [who] sought to subjugate the world."[97]

The Cold War changed populist and evangelical rhetoric. At one time postmillennial evangelicals believed that a way to reform and progress society was to take care of the poor, and that the best way to do this was by providing government support (mostly to farmers). Then, when threatened with communism and in reaction to modernism, evangelicals came together under the Republican Party and reframed their identity as average, pro-capitalist Americans. When framed this way, they had to send a different populist message. They were still anti-elitists, but they were not against the wealthy; instead, the new elitists were intellectuals. This was exemplified when President Nixon used evangelical populist rhetoric to slam liberal media sources. For example, Nixon's Vice President Spiro Agnew gave a speech titled "Television News Coverage" to lambaste what he called an "effete corps of impudent snobs who characterize themselves as intellectuals" and "nattering nabobs of negativism."[98] Agnew criticized the news commentators as being unrepresentative of the common people in the United States, as they were intellectuals broadcasting from Washington D.C. and New York City. Reagan also

employed evangelical populist rhetoric seamlessly. Similarly, in 1988, Pat

Robertson ran as a populist who "waged a presidential campaign 'aimed at Main

Street as opposed to Wall Street.'"[99] And now, Sarah Palin advertises herself as a

supporter of "Joe Six Pack" and "Joe the Plumber" as she makes appeals to what she

calls common sense, rather than elitist intellectualism. As we can see, the

evangelical response to modernity during the Cold War changed how Americans

think of both populism and the identity of those who populists are concerned

with—the common man.

The Uprising of the New Christian Right and its Populist Rhetoric

The 1970s brought a growth in evangelical churches, and by 1976 thirty-

four percent of Americans identified themselves as "evangelicals."[100] Many of these

evangelicals soon became known as the Christian Right, who picked up their own

political agenda concerned with "family values." John Green defined the Christian

Right as "a social movement located principally among evangelicals, dedicated to

restoring traditional values in public policy. Beginning in the late 1970s, it has

grown in size and sophistication so that by the mid-1990s it exercised influence in

national politics, especially by mobilizing evangelical religious voters on behalf of

Republican candidates."[101] It is this second transition that enabled the candidacy of

Pat Robertson: at this time populists' rhetorical strategies sought to reverse social

change, rather than promote it. Chip Berlet and Matthew Lyons explained that this

change in right-wing populism reflected the interests of two social groups, which

act in combination. These groups were:

1) middle-level groups in the social hierarchy, notably middle- and working class whites, who have a stake in traditional social privilege but resent the power of upper-class elites over them, and 2) 'outsider' factions of the elite itself, who sometimes use distorted forms of anti-elitism as part of their own bid for greater power.[102]

The Rhetorical Framework

While Berlet and Lyons nicely explained *who* makes up the populist movement, Michael J. Lee explained populism as a primarily rhetorical framework. Lee identified four sustaining themes in populist rhetoric framework. This is useful for our analysis of evangelical populism because when applied to a case study we find that the Christian Right uses the *topos* of populism, remaining in the established rhetorical framework, while changing the argument to become anti-intellectual. First, Lee argued that populists portray themselves as a stable and definable people. This "people" is "ordinary, simple, honest, hard-working, God-fearing, and patriotic Americans."[103] Lee argued that these characteristics stem from "Biblical virtues . . . and the ideal Horatio Alger citizen."[104] The Alger myth came about after Horatio Alger wrote children's books about young, originally unfortunate boys who defeated all odds through their "energy, ambition, and an honest purpose." Richard Weiss argued that Alger's message paralleled the Protestant work ethic as he "reiterated the established litany of hard work, frugality, and prudence."[105]

The second theme of Michael Lee's populism framework is the labeling of

the enemy. This means that when the grassroots constituents form a cohesive identity, they also decide upon an identity of an "opposite" or "other." The opposite of "the people" would naturally be the enemy. This enemy is what every bad thing in society can be blamed on. Lee looked to Kenneth Burke when forming this argument; Burke wrote about Nazi Germany finding their enemy materialized in the form of Jews. Once the non-Jewish Germans had established this enemy of societal ills, a path appeared that would allow them to build up their society. This idea is transferable to any people, whether their enemy is differentiated and demonized for their race, class, or location.[106] However, Jeremy Engels argued that within the Judeo-Christian heritage, character is everything, because with it comes "a means to and evidence of salvation."[107] Robert Ivie also studied the naming of the enemy. Ivie argued, "rhetors are guided by the *topoi* of savagery in their search for communicable forms that fulfill the dramatistic function of purification through victimage." By making an enemy of others, Ivie argued, a rhetor is able to build support for a call to arms.[108] For the populists the enemy was found in plutocrats, big business, corrupt politicians, and bankers. This enemy was responsible for the system that had been corrupted.

The third part of Michael Lee's framework is an attack on the system. What this means for populists is that at one point the system, or government, was right and good. The Founding Fathers created a perfect Constitution, which could uphold justice and was not corrupted by the evils that were being brought in by big business. Lee argued, "For the People's Party, the intrusion of plutocratic interests

into government resulted in numerous corruptions of the 'system.' The creation of the national bank, the paper money system, unregulated corporate control of railroads, the gold standard crisis, and 'machine' politics were evidence of enemy control of the system."[109]

With these three parts of the framework in place, we have a view of populism as a group of people who thought of themselves as simple, God fearing, hard working Americans; these people have found their enemy who are characterized by money (elitism) and corruption, and because these things are not what the Founding Fathers had in mind, the populists believe that they need to act to defend the framer's intent of the government. This leads us to the goal of the fight against the enemy, which is restoration.[110]

According to Michael Lee, restoration is the fourth theme of populist rhetoric. Restoration, or redemption, is not a promised outcome from the populists, for they are skeptical that the system could ever be fully restored. They simply want a more democratic system, where they, "the people," will be represented. Lee noted that this is different than Biblical redemption, which was used by the Puritans in the form of a Jeremiad. Biblical redemption requires that the people have sinned and fallen from grace, from which point they can be fully brought back up to their rightful place in society. However, the populists believed that the evils were acted upon them, and they were trying their best to fight it.[111]

Lee's analysis of the populist framework is helpful in analyzing populists of the Christian Right. His use of examples proved that this is a sustaining framework

from the first strand of populists in the 1800s to George Wallace. Therefore, when

other populist rhetorics are measured against this framework, we are able to better

see how the discourse works.

Analysis

I now investigate how Pat Robertson's rhetoric used the *topos* of populism

during the 1988 presidential election by considering how it fits within the four

points of the Lee's framework. I argue that he turns the argument within the

framework, identifying the elitist enemy as an intellectual. Again, the four points of

analysis are as follows: 1) that populist rhetoric has a definable "people" that

represents defenders of traditional values; 2) that these people create a common

enemy, an "other"; 3) that in order to fight this "other" they need to begin by

working on the system; and 4) that there is, in the end, a redemptive quality. I will

specifically look at Robertson's September 17, 1986, speech, delivered in

Constitution Hall in which he announced that if one year from that day three

million registered voters had signed petitions that they would support him, then he

would run for the presidential nomination of the Republican Party.[112] I chose this

speech because it is the first time Robertson directly intervened with politics. At

this point he stopped being solely a Christian evangelist and became a politician. I

find through the analysis of the speech that there are qualities of this populist

framework that does not completely adhere to Lee's: first, and most importantly,

instead of making the enemy a wealthy elite, it is clear that the new enemy to

populists is the intellectual; second, it seems that the new populist does *not* want

the financial support of the government for the people. Lee's analysis demonstrated that populism once meant resenting the wealthy and advocating that the government help those who they thought of as hard workers (the farmers). Now, Robertson's view of populism argued that all government spending is foolish. Additionally, I argue that Robertson's populism is a reasonable progression from the rhetoric of 1940s populist George Wallace.

Robertson began his speech with the third theme of Lee's framework—an appeal to the Founding Father's intended system for the United States; this system was now, according to Robertson, in jeopardy because of a great moral decline, which, in turn, was the result of progressive education. "On September 17, 1787, just 199 years ago today, 391 men meeting in solemn assembly at Independence Hall in Philadelphia votes their approval of a document drafted on behalf of the people of the United States," recalled Robertson.[113] The Founding Fathers swore an oath upon the Holy Bible, Robertson pointed out, marking the first reference to the people's belief and reverence of the Christian God. He explicitly stated this idea when he said, "The vision born on September 17 was of one nation under God with liberty and justice for all."[114] This statement actually referenced the Pledge, and not the Constitution. He continued making appeals to the past, perfect system framed by Christian men who valued morality and religion. He argued that "the people" were to be defenders of traditional values by arguing that originally America was a Christian nation founded on religious and moral principles. To support this claim, he used quotations from our first three presidents. His first quotation tells the

audience that they cannot expect people to be moral without religion. George

Washington said, "Reason and experience forbid us to expect public morality in the

absence of religious principle." He then told the audience that it could not be

successful using the Constitution if it is not moral and religious because the

Constitution was written for such moral and religious people. He quoted John

Adams saying, "We have not government armed with power capable of contending

with human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was

made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the

government of any other." And, finally, he used a quotation from Thomas Jefferson

to show the audience that liberties are from God, and if they "remove" Him, they

will in turn lose their liberties. Thomas Jefferson said, "And can the liberties of a

nation be thought secure, when we have removed their only firm basis—a

conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God? And

they are not to be violated but with his wrath." These quotations from the

presidents do two things: first they show that it is "traditional" to be religious; then

they show that if we do not defend this tradition the Constitution will fail and God

will revoke our liberties.

Once he had shown that traditional Americans are religious and moral, he

argued that these values contradict reason and intellectualism, constituting "the

people" as anti-elitist, conservative, and anti-intellectual. He said, "We have taken

the Holy Bible from our young and replaced it with the thoughts of Charles Darwin,

Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and John Dewey." Not only can religion and

intellectualism not go hand in hand, intellectualism is actually aggressively fighting

morality. This portion of his speech also reflects the element of redemption of Lee's

framework. Instead of "the people" sinning, they are innocent (with the exception

of passivity), but have been abused by the enemy elites. He said, "Despite these

warnings [by our forefathers] we have permitted during the past 25 years an

assault on our faith and values that would have been unthinkable to past

generations of Americans."

Robertson separated "the people" from the elite by implicitly arguing that

"we" are not elitists and intellectuals. This exemplified Lee's second theme of

populism, which is the naming of the enemy. He created the enemy by setting up

the fracture between moral and immoral America. The moral Americans are those

who would stand up for traditionalism, which, he believed, means religion playing a

bigger part in state affairs. He argued that it is the fault of the elites that the

establishment clause is being interpreted in the wrong way. He said, "A small elite

of lawyers, judges, and educators have given us such a tortured view of the

establishment of religion clause of the First Amendment to our Constitution that it

has been called by one United States Senator, 'an intellectual scandal.'" He then

argued that liberal elites gave "us" *the* big problem in America today, which is that

we are immoral and irreligious. He said, "Now in 1986 the same liberal elites that

gave us the problem deny the cause and tell us that this is a problem for

government. Ladies and gentlemen, what we are facing is not a governmental

problem, it is a moral problem."

Robertson put forth a postmillennial vision; a vision that he said was first imagined by the Founding Fathers. The vision was one of redemption and "hope for ourselves and our prosperity" that is mostly concerned with giving children a happy home life with two parents to care for them; he is also concerned with the children gaining the potential that comes from good education and job training. In order to achieve this goal, he listed four precursory changes that must take place. They all involve the changing of the educational system—away from the liberal (intellectual, godless) elites, and back in the hands of "the people" who believe in basic education and God in the classroom. The first change he wanted was for the people to promise stricter discipline regarding drugs and alcohol in schools, thus solving the moral problem. Second, the people must guarantee

> . . . to them a return to a basic broad based phonics approach to reading. Our children must learn basic language and basic math. They must know the facts of history, the facts of geography, [and] the facts of science. The 'progressive education' advocated by John Dewey and his followers is a colossal failure and must be abandoned."

Robertson believed that Dewey was a communist sympathizer who wanted children to be relativists and emotional, always disregarding reason in favor of immediacy.[115] This is one way in which Robertson displayed his turning of the populist argument, as he decried the intellectual instead of the rich.

He said the third aspect the audience must guarantee is that parents and taxpayers should be given control of education, rather than the liberals. He said,

"For our children's sake we must insure that control of education is returned to their parents and caring teachers in local communities, and taken away from a powerful union with leftist leaning tendencies." This statement is pretty clear: the "left" is in control of the system that he says is failing. Instead of the intellectuals having influence in public education "the people" should.

The fourth change that he said must be made is that God needs to be brought back to the classroom. He said, "There can be no education without morality, and there can be no lasting morality without religion. For the sake of our children, we must bring God back to the classrooms of America." This statement is a bit more ambiguous as he probably did not actually believe that people could "take" and "bring back" God in schools. So what exactly would he have changed? Was he advocating mandated prayer? Did he want children to be taught the Christian Bible? What we can be sure is that intellectuals, who he believes are liberals, are also atheists, and control the educational system. When talking about putting God back into schools, he said, "Studies done for us by George Gallup show that 94 percent of all Americans believe in God. Only six percent are atheists . . . . I passionately believe that the atheists among us should have every right to citizenship . . . but I do not believe that the 94 percent of us who believe in God have any duty whatsoever to dismantle our entire public affirmation of faith in God just to please a tiny minority who don't believe in anything."

We can see through this speech that Robertson's argument aligned with the *topos* of populism, which Michael Lee described. What we can also see is that within

this framework Robertson was able to invoke evangelical rhetoric that turned the argument to fight against the intellectuals, the people who were pervading society with humanist and atheist ideals. He constituted "the people," also known as "the populists" as people who were moral, Christian, and non-intellectual.

From George Wallace to Pat Robertson

Populism, in its earlier agrarian state, was concerned with welfare, but against big business. George Wallace ran for president on the American Independent Party ticket in 1968, and marked a transitional phase in populism—one that supported social welfare, but still advocated against the federal government. Chip Berlet and Matthew Lyons argued the following:

> Thus, the Wallace Campaign was the first major political initiative since Father Charles E. Coughlin's social justice movement in the 1930s to combine antielitism, racist appeals, and support for social welfare programs. This combination was tailored to the large bloc of working-class Whites who supported the New Deal system but opposed the social changes of the 1960s . . . . Even though Wallace supported the welfare state, he still reinforced many lower-income whites in their belief that the federal government was their enemy.[116]

Robertson, however, took things a step farther than Wallace, although he carried the same constituency. He did not believe in socialized programs to help "ordinary [struggling] Americans." Instead, he believed that the government only hurt society. This view makes him sound much more like a traditional Conservative than a

Populist. Under the heading "What the Liberal Elite Say" of Robertson's speech, he addressed this issue of societal ills. He said, "And certainly the answer does not lie in once again penalizing the productive sector of our society with high taxes and wasteful spending." He also said, "Government will guarantee to every citizen the right to pursue happiness. No longer will it try to guarantee happiness for every citizen." This hands-off political ideology does not seem to help the little people, but alas, it was the new populism.

There have been arguments made that Pat Robertson is paranoid about the government having control because he believes that there is a grand conspiracy of a new world order. This idea started with his book, appropriately titled *The New World Order.* James Aune summarized Robertson's argument:

> Harvard, Yale, the University of Chicago, the mass media—including *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and "Rothschilds owned" *Economist* magazine—Shirley MacLain, John Dewey, Fritjof Capra, John Lennon, the Brussels supercomputer responsible for handling worldwide bank clearings . . . and Margaret Sanger, were all connected in a veritable witches' cauldron conspiracy.

Aune noted that, while Robertson wrote about a new world order conspiracy, he mostly expressed an "antielitist, populist thesis" that condemns those who were "educated at Groton, Harvard, and Oxford" who work on Wall Street and do not understand the ordinary Americans from Iowa, Nebraska, Texas, or Florida.[117]

Conclusion

The rhetorical construction of populism changes with the political, social, and religious climate of the United States. However, it seems that there are a few lasting threads that form a *topos* of populism. For instance, Kazin argues that populism is a "language whose speakers conceive of ordinary people as a noble assemblage not bounded narrowly by class, view their elite opponents as self-serving and undemocratic, and seek to mobilize the former against the latter."[118] So, whoever the elitists are, whether they be the wealthy or the intellectuals, they are evil, or the enemy. Populism is concerned with the ordinary Americans, and both the right and the left struggle to claim the term.

Pat Robertson, who founded both the Christian Broadcasting Network and the Christian Coalition, attempted to run for president as a populist. To do this, he drew upon the *topos* of populism, and then used a sustaining populist framework to promote Christian Right views of anti-intellectualism. In order to define "the people" as those who defend "traditional values," Robertson showed us that traditional values are Christian values, and that these Christian values are common sense, anti-elitist, anti-intellectual, and conservative. His rhetoric changed the traditional populist argument, which was concerned with the financial support of the "common man." He, however, was so concerned with conspiracy involving the United States that he did not support the government giving financial support to the poorer members of society. Since he was against this way of supporting ordinary Americans, his rhetoric was directed at the other elitist—the intellectual.

He preached for the redemption of the education system, which meant "bringing God back," while his implicit argument was, "take the intellectuals out."

CHAPTER III

ANTI-EVOLUTION

Christianity, in and of itself, is not against the exploration of science. In fact, many scientists have been, and are, devout Christians. In Eighteenth Century America, Christianity and science worked together seamlessly as American scientists embraced both Lockean and Puritan thought as part of their heritage, and to them, the two schools of thought did not contradict one another.[119] However, with the 1859 introduction of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and, more controversially, *The Descent of Man*, a division arose between many Christians and scientists, and also, between Christian scientists and "natural" scientists. There is a fundamental reason why Christianity and science do not always mix well, which is brought to the surface most aptly in the evolution debate. Christopher Ellison and Marc Musick summarized the disagreement between Christianity and science:

> Scientific materialism holds 1) that matter (or matter and energy) is the fundamental reality in the universe, and 2) that the scientific method is the only reliable means to disclose the nature of this reality. . . . In contrast, Western religious traditions generally assume that the universe and its inhabitants have been created by, and often are guided by, a supreme intelligence that transcends the material world. Further, the material world is postulated to reflect a divine plan, the full magnitude of which lies beyond human discovery or comprehension.[120]

This explanation showed the conflicting worldviews between those who believe that all things are discoverable and those who believe the truth lies within a divine, mysterious creator. This chapter reviews the history of the evolution debate in America, as well as the theologies and their histories that play a part. The major themes that arise in histories of the debate between evolutionists and antievolutionists are 1) a shift in accepted scientific method, from the Baconian method to a mixture of inductive and deductive reasoning, and 2) the new possibility of an atheistic view of the existence of humanity. In this chapter I review historical literature to trace intellectual thought regarding science, evolution, and the Christian Right's response. Then I move to an analysis of the Scope's Trial to illustrate how William J. Bryan, as a representative of the Christian Right, employs the *topoi* of creationism, quality, and order to create an anti-intellectual arguement against evolution.

Science in America

David Livingstone, Darryl Hart, and Mark Noll argued that there is a strong connection between religion and science; however, there are conflicting theories about how exactly the two relate. R.K. Merton argued that Puritanism is tied to Baconianism, and that it was these two schools of thought that, perhaps unintentionally by the Puritans, helped institutionalize science.[121] Merton suggested that Puritanism, in this sense, does not mean the particular Christian sect, but rather, "the dominant value system of broadly English 'Protestant' religion generally," or, as Margaret Jacob defined, the "formation of a Baconian-inspired,

Erastian, millenarian, national alliance between scientific learning and Protestant

culture." [122] The theory is that Puritans advocated science for two reasons. One,

Puritanism upheld a principle of acting for the "good of the many," and so they are

thought to have appreciated the utilitarianism and empiricism of natural

philosophy.[123] Most importantly, Puritans valued science because it is based on

reason, and reason could help them to better appreciate God and his works. The

idea that reason is the basis for science is from Seventeenth Century

Baconianism.[124]

It is also important to look at American Puritans in the light of Calvinism,

which came about in the second generation of the Reformation from theologian

John Calvin and greatly influenced the religious climate of the United States today.

An accepted characteristic used to describe both evangelicals and Calvinist Puritans

is that they are marked by "conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed;

activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; Biblicism, a particular regard for the

Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on

the cross."[125]

The tenant of Biblicism is particularly important for Calvinists. Calvinism

holds the Bible alone as religious authority, which differs greatly from other forms

of Christianity, such as Catholicism, which holds the belief that the Catholic Church

has been ordained by God to interpret scripture and provide sacraments by which

people can receive grace. Calvinism, on the other hand, holds the belief that God,

solely, is in control. People are not able to have any control of their salvation.

Because they view man to be totally depraved, they do not rely on humanity at all when it comes to religious matters, but rather, the Bible only.[126] Therefore, it was inconsequential to some Calvinists whether or not scientific discoveries completely aligned with the Bible because of their belief that there is a vast difference between the Word and the world.

Livingston et al. argued that this distinction between the Word and the world parallels the Baconian idea that natural science could not lead to "any light for the revealing of the nature or will of God."[127] Theological historian George Marsden argued a different theory than Merton about the Puritan relationship with science. Instead of linking Puritans with Bacon, he linked them with Locke and Jefferson. In the age of Enlightenment, there was a turn from tradition to the scientific method and reason. Puritans put an emphasis on solving problems through reason, which they found in the Bible rather than traditional authority. The new Lockean and Jeffersonian thought also rejected authority, and sought to discover universal scientific principles through the scientific method. This theory is not completely unlike the Baconian one, as both scientific philosophers were concerned with rules of reasoning.[128] Michael McGee explained how it is that Christians in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries found Biblical preaching to be scientific demonstration. He argued that,

> A thing is "demonstrated" if it is shown to be true by every possible
> test of reason. Tests of reason take two generic forms: analysis and
> synthesis, deduction from known truths and induction from verifiable

perception toward truths. In the Christian mind, the *product* of demonstration (ethical prescriptions dictated by Scripture) was already immutable; therefore, by exhausting the *forms* of demonstration, the preacher automatically "demonstrated" (in an undeniable, scientific sense) the Truth of the Christian Story.[129]

Intelligent Design and Darwinism

George Marsden argued that science and Christianity also did not conflict in the minds of evangelicals in the early republic because natural science was thought of as a "foundation to build irrefutable proofs of the truth of Christianity."[130] This can be considered the beginnings of the argument of intelligent design, although it was not coined as such until much later. The allegory that Marsden uses to explain this idea, which was originally in William Paley's book *Natural Theology* in 1802, began with a person finding a watch on a deserted beach. This person would naturally assume that a watchmaker made the watch, not chance. So, in the same way, when considering the laws of nature, a person should infer a Creator.[131]

The agreement between Christianity and science was greatly challenged with the introduction of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. However, the book is not as directly atheistic as one might believe. In fact, John Roberts argued that Darwin "explicitly credited God with having 'impressed on matter' the laws governing the universe."[132] Of course this was still a very different version of natural science than had been accepted previously, as it rejected special creation.

Then, Darwin's *Descent of Man* came about. This book extended his theory of

evolution to people, which increased controversy.

Asa Gray, a respected botanist, made the first mainstream American

response to the Darwin in the *American Journal of Science and Arts*, of which he was

the senior editor. Gray's review showed that he was pleased, overall, with Darwin's

hypothesis, although he agreed with Harvard geologist Louis Agassiz that Darwin's

theory was atheistic, a collection of "mere guesses," and unscientific.[133] Scientists

were still following Francis Bacon's inductive scientific method when *Origins* and

Gray's response was released. Many American scientists were displeased with

Darwin's theory because they did not consider it to be "Baconian enough."[134] Gray,

however, argued that although gaps existed in Darwin's theory, it could be possible

to prove the theory of evolution, unlike Agassiz's theory of specific creation, which

Gray found to be too theistic.[135] Gray was a Calvinist, though, which explains why

he argued that Darwin's theory was not necessarily atheistic. He found it plausible

that Darwin "had based his theory on some concept of design and an intelligent (or

divine) first cause, and that these natural laws were a part of the will of its

author."[136]

However, many Christians objected to the theory, especially since Agassiz

was also an opponent, which added scientific credibility to their theological

inclinations. The theologians studying the theory of evolution were trained in

Scottish common sense realism, which descended from Baconianism. George Webb

explained that "this tradition held that all truth, scientific or religious, must be

based on observable facts."[137] Because Darwin could not observe the actual changing of one animal into another, the theory could not be true. People of this tradition believed that everything in the world is part of God's order and truth, and people with common sense were capable of knowing God's truth. They can pursue this truth by studying what they believed to be facts in the Bible. Legitimate science was thought to be "the gathering and classification of facts"; this is juxtaposed to what they considered Darwin's work-- "mere theory."[138] There were several theologians and scientists who tried to reconcile Darwinism with theism in the Gilded Age, Gray being the leader. However, this was an age of Scottish common sense, and there were not enough evolutionary "facts" to change the dominant Christian worldview, especially for those in the South.

The late Nineteenth Century marked a change in the American theological and scientific communities. Darwin's theory had been refined several times, and it was now accepted among many theologians. However, there was also a great separation between conservative and liberal Christians. The division was based on the authority of the Bible for scientific, rather than spiritual, matters. The people who fought for the authority of the Bible in science were later described as fundamentalists.[139] Fundamentalists reacted to modernity soon after the First World War. They were generally premillienialists, marked by revivals, and thought of Darwinism as a symbol of the secularism and humanism they hated and the loss of morality that came with it.[140]

Evolution and Germans

George Marsden argued that after the war Americans sought an explanation of the German barbarism that they learned about through American media. Politician William Jennings Bryan advocated one conservative explanation of German activity, which was that it was caused by the "might is right" philosophy of German Frederic Nietzsche. Conservative Christians tied this idea of no objective moral standards or truths to newly popular Biblical criticism. They rejected the idea of the Bible being a cultural product that will change over time. Evolution signified that humans were nothing more than animals, so there could be no basis for morality. Marsden said that Darwinism was the "symbolic center" for such thought.[141]

The term fundamentalist was first used in 1920 to describe the new "coalition of militantly conservative Protestants who were trying to preserve the Nineteenth Century revivalist Protestant establishment."[142] The fundamentalists believed that America was in a terrific moral decline during this new era of flappers, speakeasies, and jazz music, and of course, the cause of this moral decline was the teaching of evolution. One of the most popular Conservative Christians to hold this view of Darwinism was aforementioned politician William Jennings Bryan. Bryan was a late convert to the antievolution movement, but after reading Vernon L. Kellogg's *Headquarters Nights* and Benjamin Kidd's *The Science of Power,* he was convinced that the German military had applied evolution to a social philosophy that was against Christianity. He taught that it is better to trust the Bible than

speculations of modern science.[143] He, and other "traditionalists" set up a binary with a civilization built on God's truth and morality on one side and atheism, natural science, and evolution on the other. Conservative Christians were also on the opposing side of liberal Christians who the conservatives claimed would rather accept evolutionary views than traditional biblical views of society. To fight the cause, Bryan and others tried to ban the teaching of evolution in public schools.[144]

Bryan's concern did not seem to be that evolution was "bad science"; rather, he was worried about other consequences of teaching evolution. Because there was a public Christian outcry against the teachings, if the teachings were to stay in place it would mean Christian Americans were no longer in control of society or teachers (whom he referred to as "hired servants" in a 1921 article in the *Commoner*). Webb argued that this belief of teachers "led him to argue that the "Christian taxpayers" who supplied the money to run American schools ought to be the ones to determine what was taught, rather than the skeptics and atheists who appeared to be controlling American education.[145] Webb noted that while Bryan was enraged with science teachers, he was even more furious with the scientists who gave the information to the teachers. Bryan said,

> A scientific soviet is attempting to dictate what shall be taught in our
> schools, and, in so doing, is attempting to mould the religion of the
> nation. It is the smallest, the most impudent, and the most tyrannical
> oligarchy that ever attempted to exercise arbitrary power.[146]

Webb argued that Bryan had other reasons to be distrustful of intellectual elitists.

Other than feeling like they were taking away education from the hands of parents

and Christian taxpayers, he thought they were to blame for World War I.

Intellectuals were those who made the weapons and who controlled the

governments involved in the war. Bryan said, "Scientists mixed the poisonous gases

and manufactured liquid fire. Intellect guided the nations, and learning without

heart made war so hellish that civilization itself was about to commit suicide."[147]

Bryan had many concerns about science and intellectualism. He believed

that the study of science led to wars, and that the belief in evolution led to social

Darwinism. He had also come to the conclusion that intellectuals should not run

school systems, because their teachings were dangerous. Instead, he believed that

Christian taxpayers should run the system and mold the next generation into Bible-

believing citizens who did not study evolution nor become too intellectual.

The Scopes Trial: An Analysis

The movement to take the teaching of evolution into the classroom reached

its pinnacle in 1925 with the Scopes Trial. John T. Scopes, a high school teacher in

Tennessee, challenged the ban of teaching biological evolution with the help of the

ACLU's trial lawyer Clarence Darrow. Darrow cross-examined Bryan, sarcastically

challenging the authority of the Bible, which Bryan used as expert witness. Bryan

won the case, but Scopes received only a trivial fine, and critics stopped taking

fundamentalists seriously.[148] In this section I argue that Bryan drew upon the *topoi*

of creationism, quality, and order to argue his anti-intellectual case against the teaching of evolution.

The *topos* of creation comes from Genesis 1-3, which is the Biblical story in which God created the heavens, earth, and everything living in it. Allen Scult, Michael McGee, and J. Kenneth Kuntz argued that this story evokes so much power that it is accepted not just as a representative of truth, but as a timeless and ultimate truth. It establishes "the conditions of knowledge" and is its own authority. I argue that when speakers engage the *topos* of creationism, they also invoke the *topos*, or *locos,* of quality and the *topos*, or *locos*, of order. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca argued that *loci* "of quality occur in argumentation when the strength of numbers is challenged." The example they use for the *locos* of quality is the arguments made by Calvin in which "the struggle of one in possession of the truth, guaranteed by God, against the multitude that is in error. The truth cannot be subdued however numerous its adversaries: we are dealing with a higher order, beyond compare."[149] This is the same way Bryan argued, as he stressed that Biblical truths outweigh elitist expertise. Bryan also uses the *locos* of order, which "affirm[s] the superiority of that which is earlier over that which is later."[150] Bryan would argue that the theory of creationism came first, making it more legitimate than evolution.

There are many different ways a person can respond to the evolution debate. There are, even, many different ways a Christian person can respond. As I explain below, in the Scopes Trial we see an anti-intellectual response: William J.

Bryan believed it was better to throw out education altogether than to let evolution be taught to public school children. This section will argue that Bryan drew upon the powerful *topoi* of creationism, quality, and order to make his claim that evolutionary teaching should be replaced by creationism.

The "Monkey Trial" consisted of famous Clarence Darrow as Chief Defense Attorney and William Jennings Bryan as Chief Prosecutor.[151] The trial lasted eight days, and there are a considerable number of interesting factors that played into its fame and outcome, such as the opening prayers in which the preacher thanked God "the creator of the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" and the famous journalist H.L. Menken, who coined "Monkey Trial" covering the trial. However, I will mostly focus on arguments made by Bryan, as my goal is to examine the rhetoric of those in the Christian Right.

Bryan's statements in the trial especially express the anti-intellectual sentiments that intellectuals (who are in this case science teachers who teach evolution and the scientists who begot the theories) are immoral, ungodly, and the great contributors to American's moral decline. He argued that they take matters that should be simple and make them complex. Finally, he argued that the intellectuals attempt to make a supposed change in the religious and moral culture of the students that they do not have sufficient evidence to support.

Bryan began with one of his common arguments, which was that teaching evolution to schoolchildren would lead them to become atheists and scoff the religion of their parents.[152] He believed that the religion of students should be

harbored by parents; thus, if science curriculum changed children's attitudes toward religion, then parents had the right to remove said curriculum. The reason that Bryan argued that the teaching of evolution would lead children to atheism is because he believed there exists a conflict between evolution and the Bible, but also that this conflict is detrimental to the Christian faith because it eliminates Biblical miracles. If there are no miracles, he said, there could be no Virgin birth or resurrection of the Jesus Christ's body. He argued:

> . . . they eliminate the doctrine of atonement and they believe that man has been rising all the time, that man never fell, that when the Savior came there was not any reason for His coming, there was no reason why He should not go as soon as He could, that He was born of Joseph or some other co-respondent, and that He lies in his grave . . . . [153]

Bryan argues that with evolution, the fundamentals of Christianity fall, rendering it useless. Bryan used this argument because he was invoking the *topos* of quality. Bryan showed that if anything interfered with what he perceived as the ultimate truth, it must not be correct, even if science were to adequately support it.

Above all, he argued that parents and Christian taxpayers have the right to control education. Because he has now shown evolution and Christianity to be irreconcilable, he evokes emotion as he warns his Christian audience members that the teachers will take away their children's religion while they stand by and do nothing. He said,

. . . and when the Christian of this state have tied their hands and said we will not take advantage of our power to teach religion to our children, by teachers paid by us, these people come in from the outside of the state and force upon the people of this state and upon the children of the taxpayers of this state a doctrine that refutes not only their belief in God, but their belief in a Savior and belief in heaven, and takes from them every moral standard that the Bible gives us. . . .[154]

He believed that Christian taxpayers should not be paying for their religion to be thrown out by teachers through the teaching of evolution. In this argument Bryan invoked the *topos* of order, by implying that until now Christian parents have been in control of the school system, and that they should stop the infiltration of this new scientific theory that threatened to replace the religion of old.

At another point in the trial, Bryan refuted the testimony of defense experts. Bryan said that they do no need science experts, and they also do not need Bible experts. Every person can interpret the Bible as well as anyone else, because it speaks for itself, which he believed to be the beauty of the Bible. He said,

The one beauty about the word of God is [that] it does not take an expert to understand it. They have translated that Bible into five hundred languages, they have carried it into nations where but a few can read a word, or write, to people who never saw a book, who never read, and yet can understand the Bible, and they can accept the

salvation that the Bible offers, and they can know more about that

book by accepting Jesus and feeling in their hearts the sense of their

hearts the sense of their sins forgiven than all of the skeptical outside

Bible experts that could come in here to talk to the people of

Tennessee . . . ."[155]

This is an anti-intellectual stance in that it blatantly devalues expert knowledge.

This populist appeal says that a person can better understand the Bible if it is

simply read, rather than studied in a critical, scholarly fashion or explained by

experts. He continued his argument by saying that bringing experts in science

would not help the defendants because they could, if need be, bring in more Bible

experts than evolution experts. He said, "We can bring our experts here for the

Christians; for every one they can bring who does not believe in Christianity, we

can bring more than one who believes in the Bible and rejects evolution, and our

witnesses will be just as good experts as theirs on a question of that kind."[156]

Beyond those reasons for not using experts, Bryan argued, experts are

truly unnecessary because it is a simple case. He said, "The facts are simple, the case

is plain, and if those gentlemen want to enter upon a larger field of educational

work on the subject of evolution, let us get through with this case and then convene

a mock court for it will deserve the title of mock court if its purpose is to banish

from the hearts of the people the word of God as revealed!"[157] Earlier in the trial

Bryan had said that scientists believe that life is a mystery, when it isn't, and even if

they admitted that God started everything, evolution would still dispute the

Bible."[158] Bryan's argument is that whether or not there were experts, Biblical or

scientific, the outcome would not change. He could not be persuaded that it is

lawful or good to teach evolution because in the end, truth comes from the Bible,

and the Bible makes it clear that God created the world in six days. This, to Bryan,

meant that evolution could not possibly be true, regardless of what any experts had

to say; this shows Bryan's use of the *topoi* of creationism and quality. Bryan

simplifies the argument by drawing on Biblical claims that God created the world is

six days, which he interprets literally. Because the words in the authoritative

Scripture say "six days," Bryan argued that the idea must be taken as truth and in

more seriousness than the theory of evolution, which are "mere guesses."

At one point in the trial, Bryan was questioned in a cross examination with

Darrow, during which time two themes emerge. One theme is Bryan's belief that it

is not good to think about things for the sake of thinking about them, which I argue

is anti-intellectual, using Hofstadter's criteria. The second theme is Bryan's belief

that evolutionists have not given enough evidence for Christians to consider

changing their beliefs. This invokes the *topos* of order: if scientists want Christians

to change their mind from believing in what came first (the story of creation in

Genesis), they would have to make a stronger case.

First I look at Bryan's sentiment that it is not important to engage thoughts

for the sake of themselves. This is important when looking at tropes and *topoi* of

anti-intellectualism because Hofstadter differentiated intellectualism from

intelligence by arguing that intellectualism involves the playfulness of the mind.

When asked when the Flood took place, Bryan said, "I would not attempt to fix the date." Questioning further, Darrow asked, "What do you think?" and Bryan answered, "I do not think about things that I don't think about."[159] Later, Darrow asked, "You have never in all your life made any attempt to find out about the other peoples of the earth—how old their civilizations are—how long they had existed on the earth, have you?" Bryan responded, "No sir. . . . I have all the information I need to live and die by." Darrow asked, "And that's all you're interested in?" Bryan responded, "I am not looking for any more on religion."[160] Darrow asked, "Did you ever discover where Cane got his wife?" Bryan said, "No, sir; I leave the agnostics to hunt for her." Darrow responded, "You have never found out?" Bryan said, "I have never tried to find."[161] Bryan made it clear that, to him, it did not matter whether or not science tells us that there are ancient civilizations or that the Flood did not take place. He did not look into these matters. He believed that it is better to read the Scriptures independently and absolutely, as the beginning and the end of all knowledge, which again exemplifies the related *topoi* of creationism, quality, and order.

The next theme I focus on is how Bryan invokes the *topos* of order to express the belief that scientists have not given the rest of society enough evidence to accept evolution; therefore, the idea should be thrown out. For example, when Darrow asked Bryan how old the earth is Bryan said, ". . . the scientists differ, from 24,000,000 to 306,000,000 in their opinion, as to how long ago life came here. I want them nearer together before they demand of me to give up my belief in the

Bible." At another point Darrow asked, "Do you say that you do not believe that there were any civilizations on this earth that reach back beyond 5,000 years?" Bryan, responded, "I am not satisfied by any evidence that I have seen."[162] Because Bryan is not satisfied, or does not understand the evidence, he believes the theory should not be taught.

Bryan had a closing summation that he never delivered because the Scopes trial ended suddenly when Darrow asked the jury for a guilty verdict. He delivered the speech for days after the trial to Tennessee crowds.[163] There are two anti-intellectual arguments made: 1) that science is evil, so it is better to stay away from it, and only concern oneself with the Bible, and 2) that there is no possible way to reconcile science with religion, therefore science must be thrown out. Both of these arguments use the *topos* of quality.

As for the first of these arguments, he said that science has only led to war and the cruelties that come with it. What we need instead is the Word alone, which will solve all of society's problems. He argued:

> In war, science has proven itself an evil genius; it has made war more terrible than it ever was before. Man used to be content to slaughter his fellow man on a single plane—the earth's surface. Science has taught him to go down into the water and shoot up from below, and to go up into the clouds and shoot down from above, thus making the battlefield three times as bloody as it was before; but science does not teach brotherly love. Science has made war so hellish that civilization

was about to commit suicide; and now we are told that newly discovered instruments of destruction will make the cruelties of the late war seem trivial in comparison with the cruelties of wars that may come in the future. If civilization is to be saved from the wreckage threatened by intelligence not consecrated by love, it must be saved by the moral code of the meek and lowly Nazarene. His teachings, and His teachings alone, can solve the problems that vex hearts and perplex the world."[164]

The reason that this is anti-intellectual is that he believed that it was best to disregard scientific inquiry because it did not favor his worldview. Instead of encouraging the life of the mind he preferred to ignore it. Then he argued that science was irreconcilable with Christianity. He said, "Again force and love meet face to face, and the question, 'What shall I do with Jesus?' must be answered. A bloody, brutal doctrine—evolution—demands, as the rabble did 1900 years ago, that He be crucified. That cannot be the answer of this jury, representing a Christian State and sworn to uphold the laws of Tennessee."[165]

Bryan, who would now be considered a part of the Christian Right, made an anti-intellectual argument against evolution using the *topoi* of creationism, quality, and order. He believed that there was a danger in education and in new ideas, so the people should stick to what is simple—which he argued was the Bible. He implied that to investigate would challenge the worldview of the people and deny the authority of the Biblical story of creationism.

After Scopes

The fundamentalist fight to outlaw the teaching of evolution, state by state, only lasted about five more years (although the fight was revived later), and then fundamentalists put their efforts into evangelism. For the science classroom the mid 1920s showed a dramatic decrease in evolution literature. John Cole argued that this was a type of self-censorship because textbook companies took the Scopes Trial as a warning and did not want to lose sales.[166] However, Webb argued that science was at a low point in public esteem until the 1950s.

In the 1950s, Americans began to realize a general anti-intellectual temperament, and specifically, the disparity of scientific education in the United States. This was especially noticeable when the Soviet Union launched their successful satellites, Sputnik I and II, and the United States attempted to launch its own satellite, which was unsuccessful.[167] The United States feared the Soviet Unions' communism, but also their nuclear arms. Theologian Reinhold Niebuhr argued that we could understand the mindset of Americans as ironic during the Cold War. While Americans criticized the Soviet Union for believing science could produce an ideal society, for changing the economic system to give humans the ability to be in control of their destiny, and for justifying their actions by the virtue of their intentions, the United States was doing the same thing. Niebuhr also argued that America used their religious heritage to "rationalize for themselves unlimited powers and rights."[168] In reaction to the Soviet threat there was a rejuvenation of literature in biology textbooks that were no longer afraid to teach evolution.[169]

Textbooks changed again in the 1970s because of a rise in Conservative thought.
Cole noted that most of the statewide textbook committees were located in the
South, and none were in the East.[170] Statewide textbook committees were
committees that chose textbooks that were then adopted by all the other schools in
the state. By the 1980s, creationism studies in textbooks were officially allowed in
some states; Arkansas and Louisiana ruled that equal time be given to evolution
and creationism; Texas ruled that evolution must be taught as one of several
theories of the origin of mankind; California dictated that evolution be taught as
theory rather than fact.[171] The New Right argued, "secular humanism, evolutionism,
and cultural relativism were elements of a conspiracy to subvert students,
substituting nationalism, old time religion, and the natural authority of leaders,
parents and traditional values." Godfrey argued that students were being asked to
"question authorities and to discuss rather than simply memorize values," which
antievolutionists feared because of the implications of evolution. The Right then
appealed to old glory days in which children respected their elders, valued hard
work, and believed in God.[172]

Conclusion

We have seen the ways in which anti-evolution functions as a trope for anti-
intellectualism in the discourse of the Christian Right. Bryan used the *topoi* of
creationism, quality, and order to argue that evolution should be rejected. The
question may be asked whether or not the Christian Right could intellectually argue
that there is a creative element to the beginning of life. The intellectual approach to

the subject would be to contemplate all of the different possibilities using established fact. Bryan's discourse shows that he believed a person should consider the evolution/creationism debate simply: when science and theology disagree, one should banish the education of science. Advocating for the teaching of creationism, in opposition to evolution, is anti-intellectual because it is based on accepting authority, rather than investigation. However, as evolution does not claim to answer for the origin on life, but rather, examines the changing of organisms once already on earth, the belief in a Creator should not be assumed anti-intellectual. John Cole argued similarly:

> . . . scientists might do well not to condemn it [creationism], but when creationism interferes with the education of nonbelievers through censorship, curriculum changes, or other political acts, the situation is different. By advocating antiscientific beliefs in an age of science . . . creationists contribute to the kind of ineffective education that led to the Sputnik shock.[173]

CHAPTER IV

COMMON SENSE

Sarah Palin is the former governor of Alaska and the 2008 Republican Vice-Presidential candidate. She also represents the Christian Right, as she supports evangelical Christian values in public policy; she is staunchly pro-life, pro-abstinence-only education, and anti-gay marriage. Complementing these notions, she is also a self-described "common sense conservative" who looks to Ronald Reagan as her political role model, and his creation of the "moral majority" as the great unifying act of common sense conservatism.[174] This chapter explores the use of the *topos* of "common sense." I do this by first looking at what "common sense" meant to early evangelical Americans. Next, I will contrast this earlier view of common sense with the way in which Reagan formed common sense through rhetorical narratives. Finally, I argue that Palin uses "common sense" to trigger the anti-intellectual worldview originally promoted by President Reagan. In this way, she does not need to "create" a "common sense," because it had already been created—by the hero of the Christian Right in the Republican Party.

Early American Evangelical Common Sense

Scottish common sense flourished during the American Revolution when Americans "self-consciously set aside many of the assumptions that had heretofore structured their political and religious lives—whether an unthinking deference to political authority or a fideistic trust in revelation, whether an allegiance to

traditional government or a contentment with inherited denominations."[175] They began to ground their scriptural beliefs on natural observation and intuition.

Presbyterians, in particular, took hold of the Scottish common sense philosophy. For instance, when Princeton was still closely tied with the Presbyterian church, the president of the school, then the College of New Jersey, was John Witherspoon. Witherspoon was born and taught in Scotland; later he signed the Declaration of Independence.[176] Thomas Reid, however, was "the most articulate proponent of the philosophy," and he put forward the emphasis of epistemological common sense, which was that "the mind is structured in such a way that it is impossible not to act and think as if our perceptions revealed the real world to us directly."[177] This meant that there was no need to question the cause-and-effect relationship, as Hume had. Obvious realities should be accepted straightforwardly.[178]

Another emphasis of the Scottish philosophy was ethical common sense. Ethical common sense was "the assertion that just as humans know intuitively some basic realities of the physical world, so they know by the nature of their own being certain foundational principles of morality"; this idea also countered Hume's skepticism.[179] Ethical common sense was supported by Witherspoon, was a "staple of Nineteenth Century Unitarianism and transcendentalism," and also rooted the idea of free agency.[180]

Finally, the third emphasis of the Scottish common sense philosophy was methodological common sense, an idea that originated with Francis Bacon. "It is the

assertion that truths about consciousness, the world, or religion, must be built by a strict induction from irreducible fact of experience."[181] The methodological aspect of common sense was especially important to American evangelicals as it created a way to study not only the natural world, but also scripture in relation to the natural world. For evangelicals in the common sense school the Bible was to "the theologian what nature is to the man of science."[182] With methodological common sense, Christians could find facts and, through induction, create a universal worldview. This type of common sense has largely impacted the evangelical tradition, especially that of the Calvinist variety; however, sometime in history, after the Civil War, "common sense" began to be used a bit differently by Americans at large and evangelicals in particular.

Cultural Common Sense

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz argued that common sense, rather than being a particular scientific, methodological, or naturally evident way of thinking acknowledged by ordinary people, is a cultural system. This system is "a loosely connected body of belief and judgment, rather than just what anybody properly put together cannot help but think."[183] He said that there are facts in life, of course, that no one doubts, such as "rocks are hard," but this is not the essence of common sense. He said,

> Common sense is not a fortunate faculty, like perfect pitch; it is a
> special frame of mind, like piety or legalism. And like piety or legalism

(or ethics or cosmology), it both differs from one place to the next and

takes, nevertheless, a characteristic form.[184]

By arguing that common sense differs from place to place he submitted that

common sense is not a universal way of knowing, which is the way common sense

is usually thought of. Instead, it is created and carefully considered, like other

cultural systems. Common sense, likewise, is as influential as other cultural

systems. He said that it is totalizing: "no religion is more dogmatic, no science more

ambitious, no philosophy more general."[185] Despite the cultural specificity of

common sense, Geertz located five stylistic features that allow common sense to be

"transculturally characterized."[186]

Geertz argued that the first feature is naturalness. By naturalness he meant a

sense of "of-courseness" that is cast on an idea. It is the feature that allows some

things to be thought of as "intrinsic aspects of reality."[187] "The second feature is

"practicalness," This practicalness is in the folkloric sense, though, rather than

pragmatics. For instance, if referring to behavior it means to act in a way that

conforms to what is considered wise.[188] The third feature is "thinness," which he

said could also be described as "simpleness," or even "literalness." Common sense

views "this matter or that to represent them as being precisely what they seem to

be, neither more nor less."[189] The fourth feature differs most drastically with

Scottish common sense, as it is "immethodicalness." Geertz said that

immethodicalness is:

common-sense thought [that] represents the world as possessing, it

caters at once to the pleasures of inconsistency which are so very real

to any but the most scholastical of men; and also to the equal

pleasures, felt by any but the most obsessional of men, of the

intractable diversity of experience. . . .Common-sense wisdom is

shamelessly and unapologetically ad hoc. It comes in epigrams,

proverbs, *obiter dicta*, jokes, anecdotes, *contes morals*—a clatter of

gnomic utterances—not in formal doctrines, axiomized theories, or

architectonic dogmas.[190]

The last stylistic feature of common sense is "accessibleness." Accessibleness is the

idea that any reasonable, functioning person would be able to reach the same

common-sense conclusions. It is open to all and there are no experts.[191]

These stylistic features laid out by Geertz are easily seen when American

politicians refer to common sense. Yet, while politicians do not explicitly claim that

the faculty of common sense is cultural, I argue on the side of Geertz: what Reagan

and Palin say is "common sense" is so only to the people who are in their cultural

system who, therefore, hold their worldview.

The Common Sense of Ronald Reagan

I will begin by showing how Reagan used the *topos* of common sense to

communicate with and persuade his audience of his views. I argue that this

common sense narrative is inherently anti-intellectual. Later, conservative and

evangelical politician Sarah Palin finds Reagan's anti-intellectual common sense

narrative a useful stock argument to provoke support from the audience. I argue

that she criticizes the liberal elite intellectual without forming any new arguments

because she is able to call upon Reagan's common sense narrative.

Reagan used "common sense" to argue many conservative values, such as a

small government and a strong military. He argued in his 1982 midterm campaign:

> For the truth is that Americans must choose between two drastically
>
> different points of view. One puts its faith in the pipedreamers and
>
> margin-scribblers in Washington; the other believes in the collective
>
> wisdom of the people and their commitment to the American dream.
>
> One says tax and tax, spend and spend, and the other says to have
>
> faith in common sense of the people . . . . That's what the political
>
> choices boil down to this election year—a choice between basic
>
> values, between two differing political and social philosophies;
>
> between government as master or government as servant . . . .[192]

In this statement, Reagan lays out what common sense is—most basically, it is

"collective wisdom of the people and their commitment to the American dream." At

the end of his presidency, in his Farewell Address, Reagan stated:

> And in all of that time I won a nickname, "The Great Communicator."
>
> But I never thought it was my style or the words I used that made a
>
> difference: it was the content. I wasn't a great communicator, but I
>
> communicated great things, and they didn't spring full bloom from my
>
> brow, they came from the heart of a great nation—from our

experience, our wisdom, and our belief in the principles that have
guided us for two centuries. They called it the Reagan revolution.
Well, I'll accept that, but for me it always seemed more like the great
rediscovery, a rediscovery of our values and our *common sense.*[193]

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca would describe this *topos* as relating to quantity.
They said, "By *loci* relating to quantity we mean those *loci communes* which affirm
that one thing is better than another for quantitative reasons. More often than not,
a *locus* relating to quantity constitutes a major, though implied, premise, without
which the conclusion would have no basis."[194] For Reagan, we can see that the
implied premise is that the majority of the American people have the same view of
what "common sense" means.

Rhetorical scholar William Lewis explained that Reagan is "accused
repeatedly of being unrealistic, simplistic, and misinformed."[195] Despite this, he
was, and remains in public memory, a very popular president, especially among
Republicans. Lewis and Robert Ivie both credited his success as an orator to his use
of stories as reality, which simplified policy issues and created a common sense.[196]
Ivie considered Reagan's use of metaphors to create common sense conclusions.
The particular metaphor Ivie analyzed was Reagan's description of the Soviet
threat as savagery. Reagan used the savagery/barbarism metaphor as reality,
playing up all evidence that supported the metaphor and dismissing anything that
contradicted it as untrustworthy and deceitful. The audience that accepted the
premise that the Soviets are barbaric, therefore, could not deny the importance of

Reagan's foreign policy, because "there is no other sense to be made of the evidence he presents . . . ."[197]

Similarly, William Lewis explored how Reagan created and reinforced common sense, but instead of studying one metaphor he looked at the narrative form that employed these metaphors. Lewis argued that because narratives "make sense of experience, the sense that is made will be grounded in the presuppositions of those who accept the narrative, and those presuppositions are common sense. Persuasive narratives, then, both express and assume a knowledge that is shared by the community."[198] Reagan's narratives made a complicated situation simple by painting a picture of an enemy, a hero, and a moral choice. In his stories, America is continually struggling for "progress against great obstacles imposed by economic adversity, barbaric, enemies, or Big Government."[199] In his story, there is the hero usually described as the common man who, we can infer, has common sense. At his 1981 inaugural address he said:

> We have every right to dream heroic dreams. Those who say that we're in a time when there are not heroes, they just don't know where to look. You can see heroes every day going in and out of factory gates. Others, a handful in number, produce enough food to feed all of us and then the world beyond. You meet heroes across a counter, and they're on both sides of that counter. There are entrepreneurs with faith in themselves and faith in an idea who create new jobs, new wealth and opportunity. They're individuals and families whose taxes support the

government and whose voluntary gifts support church, charity,
culture, art, and education. Their patriotism is quiet, but deep. Their
values sustain our national life. Now, I have used the words "they" and
"their" in speaking of these heroes. I could say "you" and "your,"
because I'm addressing the heroes of whom I speak—you, the citizens
of this blessed land. Your dreams, your hopes, your goals are going to
be the dreams, the hopes, and the goals of this administration, so help
me God.[200]

In Reagan's common sense narrative, the hero is the individual person who has a protestant work ethic, who is an entrepreneur, and who supports the local community. This argument implicitly shows that a hero is the businessman, not the intellectual. It can also be seen as an argument against big government, as it praises the man who gives to charity, which removes the need for increased taxes. In his narrative there are also villains, including Democrats and communists.[201]

These elements—the hero, villain, audience, and character/speaker—created a narrative that his supportive listeners accept as the common sense truth. By creating this overarching story of America using already accepted myth, Reagan was able to show that his decisions and attitudes are reliable and true while others are not, because other ideas do not fit into this story.

The Common Sense of Sarah Palin

Sarah Palin, a Republican and Tea Party politician, as well as a representative of the Christian Right, draws upon Reagan's *topos* of common sense

to promote anti-intellectualism, many times in the form of criticisms against the intellectuals in public office. Palin promotes the idea that difficult issues can be solved very simply, in ways that everyone knows—or that are common. In this way, Palin eliminates the need for the intellectual. I argue that this "common sense" Palin speaks of is not common to all citizens of the United States; instead, it is part of the evangelical Christian worldview that is currently embracing conservative, as well as anti-intellectual, ideals. Reagan, I argue, instilled this "common sense" into Palin's supporters when he was in office, thus eliminating Palin's need to create a common sense cultural system. When she refers to "common sense" she reinforces Reagan's political values. Sarah Palin regularly says that President Reagan is her political model, and believes that they both embody "common sense conservative" values. Palin's rhetoric displays strains of early American evangelical common sense, but especially, I argue, a use of the *topos* of common sense, which very much embodies the stylistic features Clifford Geertz described.

Her use of common sense is, like Reagan's, anti-intellectual. I show how Palin's rhetoric aligns with Hofstadter's analysis, which argued that anti-intellectuals view intellectuals as weak, lacking common sense, having communist tendencies, and being immoral. I will explore what Palin means when she calls herself a "common sense conservative," and how Palin subsequently uses this established common sense to reinforce her audience's anti-intellectualism.

At the first Tea Party National Convention, held in Nashville, Tennessee, Sarah Palin made the keynote address. The date of the convention was February 6,

2010, which would have been President Reagan's 99th birthday; this signifies

Palin's first connection to Reagan. During this speech, Palin spent much of her time

talking about national security, which marks it as one of her main concerns, and

one of her main ties to Reagan's narrative. She introduced the great hero of

Reagan's narrative of an American who fights for justice by saying that Reagan

"used to talk about that peace through strength." The common sense that Reagan

showed in stories was that the role of the good American in this story was to fight

hard. Then she said, "Now, though, we must spend less time courting our

adversaries and working with our allies. And we must build coalitions capable of

confronting dangerous regimes like Iran and North Korea. It is time for more than

just talk. I'm just like you, probably so tired of hearing the talk, talk, talk."[202] This

line was an attack against President Obama, who Palin considers weak. She later

said,

> Our president spent a year reaching out to hostile regimes, writing
> personal letters to dangerous dictators and apologizing for America,
> and what do we have to show for that? Here's what we have to show.
> North Korea tested nuclear weapons and longer-range ballistic
> missiles. Israel, a friend and critical ally, now questions the strength of
> our support. Plans for a missile defense system in Europe, they've
> been scrapped. Relations with China and Russia are no better. and
> relations with Japan, that key Asian ally, they are in the worst shape in
> years.[203]

She juxtaposes President Obama's leadership with Reagan's. At Reagan's farewell address, he said, "common sense also told us that to preserve the peace, we'd have to become strong again after years of weakness and confusion. So, we rebuilt our defenses . . . .[204]

By invoking Reagan's common sense narrative of a strong American hero who fights wars rather than negotiating, Palin uses "common sense" as a trope for anti-intellectualism. Hofstadter said that the anti-intellectual describes the intellectual as being afraid to fight. Moreover, saying that Obama tries to use words to negotiate, rather than military action would classify him as an "egghead." When she said that she is tired of the "talk, talk, talk," describing Obama's Administration, she sounds very much like President Eisenhower when he defined an intellectual as, "a man who takes more words than are necessary to tell more than he knows."[205] This distaste for the intellectual is a theme in Palin's speech. Also, when Palin described the need for strong national defense, she said, "To win that war we need a commander-in-chief, not a professor of law standing at the lectern."

For Palin, "common sense" means not knowing more than anybody else. Common sense is accessible and available to all, as long as the seeker is someone who believes the same narrative. She said, "And then I do want to be a voice for some common-sense solutions. I'm never going to pretend like I know more than the next person. I'm not going to pretend to be an elitist." With Palin's logic, everyone is an expert who believes the same common sense story. The intellectual

does not fit into the story, so the intellectual is not needed. In fact, intellectuals are dangerous. She said,

> I'm going to fight the elitist because for too often and for too long now, I think the elitists have tried to make people like me and people in the heartland of America feel like we just don't get it and big government is just going to have to take care of us. I want to speak up for the American people and say, 'no, we really do have some good common-sense solutions.' I can be a messenger for that.[206]

This idea that intellectuals want big government, thereby taking away the agency of the people, echoes Regan's narrative about the struggles of America. Palin does not need to explain how it is that "elitists" have forced big government on the common people and how this has hurt them, because it was already part of the story they knew from Reagan's American dream narrative. Lewis argued that in Reagan's story, the only way that America could fail is if the government gained too much power. For a time, said Reagan, "we failed the system." The United States was in a state of decline because "we yielded authority to the national government that properly belonged to the states or to local governments or to the people themselves."[207] It follows that the way to get America back on track would be to follow the common sense of the people.

Palin believes that nothing has changed since Reagan's time and, because Reagan's narrative is true, we should follow its warnings. She said,

These ideas resonate just as strongly today [as in Reagan's time]. Encourage the free market. Lower taxes. Get government out of the way. Put the people's money back into their hands so that they can reinvest. Empower them to be generous. Respect honest work. Strengthen families. But because these are common sense ideas, they will be ignored by politicians until their employers—the American people—make them listen."[208]

Palin's constant commitment to lowering taxes and getting the "government out of the way," also parallels Hofstadter's analysis that characterizes intellectuals as having socialist tendencies.[209]

Another part of Reagan's narrative-formed common sense is that America is a chosen country by God, an idea passed down from the Puritans. He said, "America is a chosen nation, grounded in its families and neighborhoods, and driven inevitably forward by its heroic working people toward a world of freedom and economic progress unless blocked by moral or military weakness."[210] Likewise, Palin takes this notion delivered by Reagan and said,

The best of America can be found in places where patriots are brave enough and free enough to be able to stand up and speak up and where small businesses grow our economy one job at a time and folks like Reagan, we know that America is still that shining city on a hill. I do believe that God shed his grace on thee. We know that our best

days are yet to come. Tea Party nation, we know that there is nothing

wrong with America that together we can't fix as Americans.[211]

By saying that "folks like Reagan . . . know that America is still that shining city on a

hill," she juxtaposes what "folks" unlike Reagan would believe: that America is not a

country chosen by God. This parallels another part of Hofstadter's analysis—that

the anti-intellectual believes the intellectual to be atheistic and immoral.[212]

Conclusion

Ronald Reagan's great narrative qualifies as "common sense" because it

adheres to the common sense as cultural system qualities set out by Clifford

Geertz. That is, it has an essence of "naturalness," "practicalness," "thinness,"

"immethodicalness," and "accessibleness."[213] It also shadows Scottish common

sense realism from early American evangelicalism. This way of thinking favored

trusting human senses and nature; said another way, believing in the obvious

rather than always being skeptical."[214] Another part of the philosophy was ethical

common sense, or the intuitive knowledge of some morality.[215] Palin shows this

when she argued for the need for consequences of Wall Street executives after

government bailouts.[216] The third emphasis was methodological common sense, an

idea that originated with Francis Bacon, which is "the assertion that truths about

consciousness, the world, or religion, must be built by a strict induction from

irreducible fact of experience."[217] The methodological aspect of common sense was

especially important to American evangelicals as it created a way to study not only

the natural world, but also scripture in relation to the natural world."[218] This marks

a point of discrepancy between the Scottish philosophy and that of Geertz. While Reagan did inductively reason from experience, the narrative form's mythic base is one more of "immethodicalness." That is, it is more concerned with cultural proverbs and anecdotes than a scientific way of thinking. The common sense narrative that Reagan proposed, and that Palin later used, was anti-intellectual because it took away the agency and purpose of the expert, or scholar. They both argued that America does not need professors-- they are weak and talk too much. Instead, they need fighters and military men to take action and lead the country into economic prosperity.

Reagan used the *topos* of common sense, with metaphors as truths, and the *topos* of quantity to persuade the audience of his public policies. Palin uses this common sense narrative to energize the right into an anti-intellectual stance against the "elitists" and "law professors" in office. They argue that their ideas are common, and that every real American believes in them, thereby encouraging anti-intellectual sentiment.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Anti-intellectualism is pervasive in American public discourse, and arguably has been since America's founding. This anti-intellectual discourse includes criticism of the President for having been a professor of law; scholars being considered "elitists" and out of touch with reality and "common sense"; and representations of the intellectual as an enemy that has taken over the system, whether the system is the government generally or education specifically. This thesis argues that Christian Right discourse produces much of this anti-intellectual sentiment, though rhetors in the Christian Right do not explicitly say that they are against intellectualism. The Christian Right produces arguments that use tropes and *topoi* of anti-intellectualism, and these are populism, anti-science, and common sense.

When the Christian Right advocates for populism, or the rule of the common people, they mostly adhere to a sustaining populist argumentation structure, as put forth by Michael J. Lee. This framework is: 1) that populist rhetoric has a definable "people" that represent defenders of traditional values; 2) that these people form a common enemy, an "other"; 3) that in order to fight this "other," they need to start with the system; and 4) that there is, in the end, a redemptive quality.[219] I argue that Pat Robertson draws on this *topos* of populism, but turns the argument in two ways, making it anti-intellectual. Instead of criticizing the wealthy and supporting the poor, as the first strand of agrarian populists did, he argued that the

government should not give financial support to the poor, and did not mention the wealthy. This illustrates that the enemy, or "other," is no longer the wealthy person; contrarily, Robertson argued that the enemy is the intellectual. He blamed intellectuals for all social, financial, spiritual, and moral ills in society. However, he was mostly concerned with the intellectuals who are responsible for the teachings in public schools.

The Christian Right also produces anti-intellectual sentiment through the *topoi* of creationism, quality, and order. This is exemplified in William J. Bryan's speeches during and after the Scopes Trial. In his speeches, Bryan expressed that the creation/evolution debate is actually quite simple: because the story of creationism is found in the Book of Genesis, it is true. If an argument is simple, it means that an intellectual is unnecessary, and, in this case, unwanted, as Bryan believed that the teaching of evolution was a rejection of Scripture. He argued, using the *topos* of creationism, that the scientific evolutionary theory is incompatible with creationism; therefore, it must be false. He also invoked the *topos* of order, which is that whatever comes first is better, more important, or truer than any explanation that comes later, so creationism is more legitimate than evolution because it is found in the Bible, which is the beginning and end of all knowledge. He most often used the *topos* of quality. He argued that the theory of evolution is merely a set of guesses, while the Biblical story of creationism is divine. I argue that Bryan attributed a kind of evilness to evolutionists, and argued that it was better to not have education at all if the teaching of evolution came with it.

The Christian right also produces anti-intellectual discourse using the *topos* of common sense. Ronald Reagan used this *topos* to create a narrative, which was made of metaphors that were to be accepted as reality or common sense. The "common sense" that he created was not, indeed, common sense to all people, but rather, it was a cultural construction targeted at a particular audience. This audience was made of the conservative Christian Right. However, I argue that the common sense narrative that he produced did have the same common sense qualities put forth by Clifford Geertz. These qualities are: an essence of "naturalness," "practicalness," "thinness," "immethodicalness," and "accessibleness." Former Governor Sarah Palin, then, uses the cultural common sense that Reagan had invoked into a narrative. By calling her ideas "common sense" and frequently referencing Reagan, her rhetoric gives the illusion that good government is simple—the people just need to abide by Reagan's common sense narrative. This common sense includes removing intellectuals from the White House and supporting the ideas of the common man.

Overall, this study shows the connection between American evangelicalism and anti-intellectual sentiment found in the discourse of the Christian Right. The Christian Right makes anti-intellectual arguments when it invokes the tropes and *topoi* of populism, anti-evolution, and common sense. However, there is much more research that could be done. While this study shows *how* the Christian Right invokes anti-intellectual rhetoric (and certainly not all of the ways), we still do not know *why* they invoke such rhetoric, when Christianity itself is not anti-intellectual.

More interesting than that, though, might be to complicate the subject a bit and consider the response of Christian intellectuals to the claim that they are anti-intellectual. For this study, a scholar could look to Christian theological seminaries, popular books being published, and blogs. If a person were to search the phrase "Christian anti-intellectualism" online, he or she would find several results to be Christians critiquing evangelical anti-intellectualism as a negative trend that could hurt the Christian community. It might be interesting to uncover the rhetorical trends of these intellectual Christian activists, and to discover how they are going to try to reverse the anti-intellectual sentiment in the discourse of people in their communities and of the politicians that represent them.

NOTES

[1] Jon Stewart is speaking to the students and faculty at Northeastern University after a presidential debate in which "Joe the Plumber" was made popular. "Jon Stewart at Northeastern University," *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVjHoEUpxW0* (accessed February 24, 2010).

[2] See Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, "Anti Intellectualism as Romantic Discourse," *Daedalus* (Spring 2009); Evan R. Goldstein, "The Impoverishment of Political Rhetoric," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (October 3, 2008); David Isaacson, "Anti-Intellectualism in American Libraries," *Library Journal* (February 1, 1982).

[3] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 7.

[4] Sam Tanenhaust, "The Education of Richard Hofstadter," *The New York Times* (August 6, 2006).

[5] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 23.

[6] See Elvin T. Lim, *The anti-intellectual presidency : the decline of presidential rhetoric from George Washington to George W. Bush* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2008) for examples of anti-intellectualism in political speeches; In August 2008, McDonald's launched a McCafe advertisement. In the ad, two women were sitting in a coffee house. When one woman brings up McDonald's new drinks, they both start rejoicing that they could get out of the stuffy coffeehouse where they have to listen to jazz music. Now they would be free to stop reading books in favor of magazines, start watching television, and wear heals and skirts. They go on to show their lack of geographical knowledge by admitting they do not know where Paraguay is; See David Horowitz, *The professors : the 101 most dangerous academics in America*, (Washington, DC : Regnery, 2006) for an argument against professors who he believes are too liberal or politically minded.

[7] Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 226; Sarah Palin at a CLSA Asia Pacific Markets Conference, see Alex Frangos and Tatiana Lau, "Excerpts of Sarah Palin's Speech to Investors in Hong Kong," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 23, 2009, http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2009/09/23/excerpts-of-sarah-palins-speech-to-investors-in-hong-kong/ (accessed February 24, 2010).

[8] Kenneth Burke, "Four Master Tropes," *The Kenyon Review* 3 (1941): 421-438.

[9] Scott Porter Consigny, *Gorgias, Sophist and Artist,* (Columbia, S.C : University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 78.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ruth Anne Clark and Jesse G. Delia, "*Topoi* and Rhetorical Competence," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 65 (1979): 195.

[12] Ibid.

[13] William F. Nelson, "Topoi: Functional in Human Recall," *Speech Monographs* (Vol. 37, Issue 2, 1970): 121.

[14] Barry Brummett,"Partisan epistemology and transparent tropes in contemporary discourse," Speech Communication Association Convention, Miami, November (1993), *www.msubillings.edu/CommFaculty/Gross/.../BrummettEpistemicArticle.DOC* (accessed February 24, 2010).

[15] Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric,* Trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dam Press, 1969), 85.

[16] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 6.

[17] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 25.

[18] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 24-27.

[19] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 7.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 10.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 12.

[24] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 13.

[25] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 15.

[26] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, 22-23.

[27] Mark D. Regnerus and Christian Smith, "Selective Deprivation among American Religious Traditions: The Reversal of the Great Reversal," *Social Forces* 76 (1998): 1347-1372.

[28] John Clifford Green, *Religion and the Culture Wars,* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), 2.

[29] John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge: *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), 69.

[30] Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer, *Rightward bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 34-35.

[31] Schulman and Zelizer, *Rightward bound: Amaking America Conservative in the 1970s*, 33.

[32] Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 10.

[33] Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 10.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 11.

[36] Barry Brummett, *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric*, ed. Robert E. Denton, Jr., (New York: Praeger, 1991), 48-49.

[37] See Barry Brummett, *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric*, 65.

[38] Barry Brummett, *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric*, 52.

[39] Mark D. Regnerus and Christian Smith, "Selective Deprivation among American Religious Traditions: The Reversal of the Great Reversal," *Social Forces* 76 (1998): 1349.

[40] The American jeremiad is a rhetorical framework that is being followed by many politicians today, but was begun in the 1600s and 1700s by the Puritans. See Richard L. Johannesen, "The Jeremiad and Jenkin Lloyd Jones," *Communication Monographs* 52 (1985).

[41] Anson Shupe, "The Reconstructionist Movement on the New Christian Right," *The Christian Century*, (October 4, 1989): 880-882, *http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=234*, (accessed February 24, 2010) .

[42] Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 12-13.

[43] Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 13.

[44] Paul Heelas, David Martin, and Paul Morris, *Religion, Modernity, and Postmodernity*, (Oxford, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1998), 72.

[45] Barry Brummett, *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric*, 54.

[46] Mark D. Regnerus and Christian Smith, "Selective Deprivation among American Religious Traditions: The Reversal of the Great Reversal," *Social Forces* 76 (1998): 1349.

[47] John C. Green, et al., *Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front* , 7-8.

[48] John C. Green, et al., *Religion and the Culture Wars: Dispatches from the Front,*, 31.

[49] Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 14.

[50] Mark D. Regnerus and Christian Smith, "Selective Deprivation among American Religious Traditions: The Reversal of the Great Reversal," *Social Forces* 76 (1998): 1351.

[51] Justin Watson,*The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 19.

[52] Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition*, 27.

[53] *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Conservative," *http://dictionary.oed.com.lib-ezproxy.tamu.edu:2048/cgi/entry/50047828?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=conservative&first=1&max_to_show=10* (accessed March 22, 2010).

[54] Noël O'Sullivan, *Conservatism,* (London: J.M Dent & Sons Ltd, 1976), 11-12.

[55] Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *The American Historical Review* (1994): 414.

[56] Stephen D. O'Leary, "A Dramatistic Theory of Apocalyptic Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79 (1993): 385-426; Barry Brummett, "Premillennial Apocalyptic as a Rhetorical Genre," *Communication Studies* 35 (1984): 84-93; Barry Brummett, *Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric*, ed. Robert E. Denton, Jr., Praeger Series in Political Communication (New York: Praeger, 1991); Stephen O'Leary and Michael McFarland, "The Political Use of Mythic Discourse: Prophetic Interpretation in Pat Robertson's Presidential Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989): 433-452

[57] Stephen O'Leary and Michael McFarland, "The Political Use of Mythic Discourse: Prophetic Interpretation in Pat Robertson's Presidential Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989): 434.

[58] Stephen O'Leary and Michael McFarland, "The Political Use of Mythic Discourse: Prophetic Interpretation in Pat Robertson's Presidential Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1989): 448-449.

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