

ISSA Proceedings 2002 - Cognitive And Abductive Foundations For Sentimental Arguments In Politics



In 1936 A. J. Ayer wielded the ax that chopped away sentimentality and other emotions, ethics, and aesthetics from their roots in rational argument theory. He divided the world into the arenas of sense and non-sense. The verifiability principle was used for the sorting process: that which was verifiable, accessible to the senses, was adjudged sensible and hence capable of supporting truth-claims and reasoning about them, while everything else was relegated to the world of non-sense. (And, of course, it was easy to remove that hyphen.) Mathematics, ethics, self-expressive statements, and aesthetic judgments were dispossessed and dispatched to non-sense. In Ayer's (1936/1952: 108) words, sentimental arguments are "used to express feelings about certain objects, not to make any assertion about them." Thus, they could be considered "normative," yet "unanalysable... pseudo-concepts" (107).

And so, to Ayer and much of the western world of ethics and aesthetics since then, value and aesthetic theories - other than those grounded on utilitarian or admittedly subjectivist speculation - have faced the so-called "problem of truth." Ethical and aesthetic statements or reports of feelingfulness have been confronted with serious problems in reasoning because of modernist assumptions that premises in arguments should be propositions capable of being assessed as true or false (1936/1952: ch. V, *passim*). If feelings, moral pronouncements, and aesthetic judgments can be expressed but not asserted, then there is no place for evidence in support of such propositions that, when taken together, would be recognized as an argument.

A year ago at the biennial Alta conference (Gronbeck, 2002), I started an inquiry into these problems particularly as they operate in a portion, at least, of the American political arena. I examined some of the events of the 2000 Republican

and Democratic national political conventions. Each party hosted a four-day convention filled with broadcast videos, parades of citizens and politicians who synecdochally re-presented or epitomized the policies advocated in their platforms and by their leaders, and both of the presidential candidates - Governor George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore - permitted viewers to see personalized, romanticized depictions of their lives.

Regarding those personalized videos, Bush's campaign offered us a nine-minute documentary of his life as a "great American dream" built around value-laden invocations of safe environments, the Church, entrepreneurial promise, and limitless horizon. It was a dream where, as leader, he would handle national difficulties with strength, humor, caring, and love; and where he would govern with the visions of Theodore Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, John Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and, for goodness sakes, even Richard Nixon. Driving through a ranch in a Wrangler Jeep, Bush ended the video talking about his pride, his Americanness, and his overflowing love - a veritable romance between himself and the people. Gore's team assembled a twelve-minute slide show that was scripted for and then read by his wife Tipper, as she said, to "show you a little more about Al and life in our family" and to present us with "the man I love." As the pictures clicked by, Tipper depicted Al as a good listener, wise, strong, and independent; as a father-hero who loved his family and served in the Army, spending time after Vietnam at the Vanderbilt School of Religion before becoming a journalist; and as an idealistic politician with a warm leadership style, the ability to rise to his "destiny" when he challenged toxic waste, yet always with time for his family. The slide show was built around the notion that Gore's private or personal virtues would become public virtues when he was installed in the presidency.

The Democratic and Republican national conventions of 2000 generally, and those multimediated constructions of the candidates more particularly, are emblematic of where American political communication has been going over the last half-century. Rhetorical analysts such as Roderick Hart (1999) have become alarmed, convinced that not only is politics becoming highly sentimentalized but that emotionality is, in ways that Ayer understood, destroying the rational bases for political choice and policy: "Television... has ushered in a Second Renaissance, substituting mass emotion for mass subservience to the church in Rome. Television has also ushered in a Second Enlightenment, requesting that the brain,

too, serve the dictates of the heart" (153). Here, indeed, to Hart is the destruction of a scientistically sound, modernist political practice where policy proposals can be tested for their evidentiary and inferential soundness - that is, for their truth and validity.

In the Alta paper (2002), I suggested that we turn, not to traditional inductive and deductive logics, but to alternative reasoning mechanisms when discussing political argumentation of the type so often exhibited in televised political events. Specifically, I examined Martha Nussbaum's discussion of so-called "rational emotions" (1995: ch. 3), which in turn was based on a reading of Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759/1976). She drew upon Smith's conception of sympathy as a psychological state whereby some depiction of suffering or trouble causes an observer to feel sympathy for that which is depicted. Smith was not arguing that the spectator and the object of spectating became identical or identified as such. Rather, the spectator remained what Smith called the "judicious spectator," which in Nussbaum's as well as Smith's words (1995: 73-74, quoting Smith, 12) means that "both empathetic participation and external assessment are crucial in determining the degree of compassion it is rational to have for a person: 'The compassion of the spectator must arise altogether from the consideration of what he himself would feel if he was reduced to the same unhappy situation, and what is perhaps impossible, was at the same time able to regard it with his present reason and judgment.'" Nussbaum's conception of rational emotions, therefore, depended upon the phenomenological co-existence of emotion and rational judgment in a single psychological act.

In this paper I will not review Nussbaum's arguments about judicious spectators, imagination and ethical judgment, or relationships between the fictive and the social worlds that allow literature to become what Kenneth Burke (1964) called equipment for living. I did enough of that in the Alta paper. I want here to explore more systematically what I identified as the reasoning mechanisms featured in her analysis of poetic justice. More specifically, I want to examine what are called abductive and conductive inferential processes - two kinds of arguments she featured in her literature-based arguments about social-political matters. I want to free abduction and conduction from her literary applications and, yes, explore their utility in helping us deal with televised political sentimentality. Are such arguments testable in useful ways?

First, then, I will define abductive and conductive argumentation, and then retrofit

sample discourses from the 2000 Republican and Democratic national party conventions to their formal characters, so that in the third place I can explore the issue of the rational assessment of such arguments. Can abductive and conductive arguments be validated? If so, we may well have isolated analytical instruments for probing contemporary, mass-mediated political discourses not only from the United States but, by now, from most of the rest of the world.

1. Abductive and Conductive Inference

One of the mechanisms that Nussbaum asserted underlies the work of the judicious spectator is what students of argument will recognize as C.S. Peirce's conception of abduction (Bouissau, 1998). To Peirce, abduction is firstness, that is, the tool for exploring existence or actuality, preceding the secondness of deduction and thirdness of induction. It is less a form of logic per se than a mechanism for critical thinking, built around the positing of hypotheses that account for features of the observed world (Behrens & Yu, 1995). More technically, in abductive reasoning an observation is made, alternative hypotheses accounting for the observation are offered, and then one is selected that seemingly best accounts for it. Then, additional observations can be made, to check on the power of the selected hypothesis to account for what has been seen. If additional observations do not conform to the hypothesis, then others can be explored until a better one can be found. Students of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) will recognize such toggling back and forth between observation and hypothesis-building; abductive reasoning has been a part of qualitative social sciences for more than a third of a century. One way to move toward conclusions based on hypotheses and their empirical testing, therefore, even when the subject matter involves human moral and aesthetic values, is via abductive reasoning.

Nussbaum's and Smith's judicious spectator also can offer debatable propositions that operate via what she (1995: 76) called, following Wayne Booth (1988), *coduction*. In his book, *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, Booth was exploring methods whereby a reasonable and constructive kind of ethical criticism - working outside the normative ethical criticism flowing from Marxists and others in the post-everything camps - could be rationalized in literary practice, of course, but also in "all narratives, not only novels, short stories, epics, plays, films, and TV dramas but all histories, all satires, all documentaries, all gossip and personal anecdotes, all biography and autobiography, all 'storied' ballets and operas, all mimes and puppet shows, all chronicles - indeed, every

presentation of a time-ordered or time-related experience that in any way supplements, re-orders, enhances, or interprets unnarrated life" (14). More explicitly, Booth was seeking an inferential form of argument that could overcome the fact-value split, recognize that successful argument not only gains assent but conquers critical doubt, and avoid the problem of different values simply canceling each other in disputes (ibid.: ch. 2).

The key, to Booth, was the fact that the ethics of narrative must be reciprocal (42). While the ethics of, say, medicine can be unidirectional, with the doctor charged in his or her professional role with morally telling patients what to think and do and with patients in no way guided necessarily by an ethical code, the ethics of literature is interactive. Both tellers and those told-to interact with the stories, and, by extension, those listening to or reading narrative criticism can have a knowledge of those stories sufficient enough to aid them in judging the critics' interpretive and evaluative arguments about those narratives. To make this argument more concrete, the analyses that I'll offer of the 2000 Republican and Democratic national parties convention videos will be presented in ways that anyone who'd seen the videos could engage me in conversation. Humanists work, certainly, at times in vocabularies arcane enough to drive citizens out of the arenas of critical analysis, yet their subject matters usually are the kinds upon which even their everyday friends and their mothers could and probably do have opinions. It is that reciprocity of positions in relationships between critics and their readers that suggests the importance of conductive reasoning to Booth.

Conductive reasoning is the kind you engage in whenever you compare some experience now before you with others you have had, judging or weighing it against those others so as to evaluate it as better or worse, more beautiful or ugly, more just or unjust, than those others. Like abductive reasoning, conductive reasoning is experientially based and rises to a level of generality in its hypothesis-building. But, unlike abductive reasoning, it is also public in its search for confirmation. It is offered as a testable proposition - that is, a proposition supported by reasons - that is presented to others for inspection and assessment. That is what we earlier termed the reciprocal move, leading, as Booth said, to the question "How does my conduction compare with yours?" (73). "In short," he said, "we do not first come to know our judgment and then offer our proofs; we change our knowledge as we encounter, in the responses of other readers to our claims, further evidence ... When it is performed with a genuine respect both for one's

own intuitions and for what other people have to say, it is surely a more reasonable process than any deduction of quality from general ethical principles could be" (76).

Abductive and conductive inference-making come out of attempts, therefore, to explore relationships between the literary and the social worlds. Perhaps it is their source in those most informal of logics, the logics of critical-cultural studies, that makes them so suitable to the study of televised politics.

2. The 2000 Republican and Democratic Party National Conventions

To examine the sorts of hypothesis-making and inference-drawing that work with abductive and conductive reasoning about sentimental discourse, let me return to two different kinds of emotion-laden segments from the 2000 national party conventions in the United States. I will examine a patriotic musical performance by Melissa Etheridge opening the first evening of the Democratic party convention, and a video about children for the GOP's "Education Night," backgrounded by Michael Smith's popular Christian rock song, "My Place in this World" (Appendix A).

2.1 The Etheridge Patriotic Montage

The public, televised portion of national party conventions generally opens with some patriotic event involving the national anthem. On the opening night (14 August 2000) of the Democratic convention, pop singer Melissa Etheridge, who has been involved in high-profile civic and cultural agitations especially related to lesbian lifestyle issues and fur, performed a montage of three songs in the patriotic slot: the national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," the turn-of-the-century hymn to the country, "America the Beautiful," and the Woody Guthrie song that was immortalized in 1960s counter-culture, "This Land is Your Land." Here was a piece of unadorned patriotic gore touching the most basic of civic sentimentalities for many Americans.

Appendix A contains a transcription of the montage, and the actual event is available on my website (Gronbeck, 2001). What Etheridge succeeded in doing was integrating the official discourse of the state (three lines from the national anthem) with the 1913 romantic ode to the land (ten lines from "America the Beautiful") and with Guthrie's declaration that the country's government and its territory belong to the people (ten lines from his 1940 song). The montage thus attempted a fusion of distinctively state or governmental, territorial or spatial, and civic or political discourses about the United States into a series of concentric

circles. The outer circle or layer was constructed out of the opening two lines and the closing line from the national anthem. The next circle, two passages from "America the Beautiful," was provided by four lines about the physical beauty of the country near the beginning of the medley and six lines about God's grace and the people's brotherhood near the end. The middle was made out of ten lines from the first verse and the chorus of Guthrie's song, describing the singer's experience with the ribbon of highway, the endless skyway, and the golden valley that stretched from California to New York, from the redwood forest of the north to the Gulf Stream waters in the south. And that song's emphatic final line was sung three times: "The land was made for you and me."

All three songs are highly evocative. They're played often and stereotypically associated with the honor of and sacrifice for the nation-state, with the beloved agrarian and majestic countryside, and with the citizens' right to take charge of the whole society, border to border. The sheer repetitiveness with which all three songs are heard publicly in various venues - sporting events, political occasions, '60s revival concerts, and even neighborhood singalongs - means that they were etched on the brainpans of most Americans watching the Democratic convention. But, the question remains, what political inferences - relative to party ideology and party activism - could be drawn from Etheridge's montage of patriotic melodies? To put that another way: she attempted to amalgamate ideas about the state, the land, and the people. Was there any political payoff for her effort?

My answer is no. To think about Etheridge's medley as an argument is, first, to charge it with incoherence. "The Star-Spangled Banner," "America the Beautiful," and "This Land is Your Land" were simply butted together in her performance. There were no musical bridges, no segues from one portion to another, no sets of accompanying images - nothing in what was sung or what was shown to the TV audience that forced the integration of the state, the land, and the people. Even though the American national anthem has been performed publicly in stylized versions at least since 1968 (Feliciano 1999) - including Aretha Franklin's soul versions at the 1992 and 1996 Democratic conventions - Etheridge played each song in a traditional fashion, except for holding the word "free" in the last line for several seconds. And, they were not forged into a coherent statement about relationships between the state, the land, and the people. The convention announcer had introduced her by saying "The music and words Melissa Etheridge has written and performed have lifted our spirits and spoken to our hearts for

nearly two decades. Ladies and gentlemen, let's welcome a powerhouse singer and a terrific performer and a fervent activist for the people, Melissa Etheridge" (C-Span 2000). She showed herself the singer and performer, but not the activist. Even the jumbotron screen overhead started by showing nature scenes to accompany the "America the Beautiful" lines, but mostly just projected her image from the stage to the screen. Visibly, then, there really was no imagaic discourse constructed in conversation with her vocal communication - an opportunity lost by the Democrats.

And so, abductively, there were no grounds for advancing a political hypothesis. What were delegates and viewers to make of the medley? Should we understand it as a declaration that "the people" rule, that the *vox populi* should be the voice of the state, that citizens' interests in the land - environmentally and in other ways - should be privileged over corporate interests? Etheridge's own political past might have suggested such hypotheses, but yet there was nothing in what was performed, in how that performance was assembled, and in the other events of that evening at the convention that encourage such hypotheses. A political proposition was not advanced, nor were there other concrete events designed to resonate with what Etheridge had performed.

Consider what else appeared on stage that evening. Organizers did not develop the idea of fusing the state, the land, and its people into a more complex social vision. Actor Dylan McDermott and some children recited portions of the Declaration of Independence, with some brass-dominated patriotic music playing in the background. Nancy Santana's video on her family and the importance of governmental programs serving the people was offered, but without a patriotic gloss and with no sense of her possession of land. Senator Max McClelland (GA) and Senator Bob Kerrey (NE) presented and personally framed a video on the "courage, heroism, and sacrifice of American veterans" that drew the hall to its feet in applause, yet here was an example of the people serving the state, not the other way around. And so, while liberal parties such as the Democratic organization often worry that they are not perceived as deeply patriotic enough, the 2000 convention managed to reduce what might have been Etheridge's theme of a popular-based democracy into a eulogy to the state, *per se*.

Coductively, as well, nothing can be said. You and others who might have been viewing the convention certainly could debate the political force of Etheridge's montage. You could try to convince each other that her non-conforming public behaviors, even her regular flaunting of social convention in her lifestyle and

public advocacy, gave her performance political bite. Part of conductive inference-drawing is a matter of bringing past experience to bear on the present, and the other part is a kind of comparative process wherein you and others examine each other's past experiences as well as the present case to see whose reasoning is the more sound. Yet, I think, those acts would get you nowhere in this example because there seemed to be nothing in Etheridge's performance itself, beyond the announcer's statement of her activism, that was in anyway linked to that past. And further, as I've suggested, the rest of the events from the platform that evening bespoke of patriotic feelings, not the control of the state and the land by the people.

Now then: if I have worked fairly with the Etheridge montage of patriotic songs that presumably were meant to sentimentalize the delegates' and the television viewers' relationship with the Democratic party and with the evening's continued paean to love of country, then we must conclude that those sentimentalized performances provided inconsistent and unfocused bases for political identity and action. I'll come back to that assertion later.

2.2. The Republican Video on Education

We face a different situation with the Republican convention's video built around the Christian pop song, "My Place in This World" (see Appendix A for the lyrics). Michael W. Smith wrote the music, co-wrote the lyrics with Wayne Kirkpatrick, and then performed it. He's a vortex in the Christian popular music movement. His website, for example, advertises not only his own CDs (his latest is called "Worship") also but *iLumina* (an interactive Bible on CDs), family Christian stores, Rocketown Records (a Christian recording label he established in 1995), the Rocketown Youth Club, and the Presidential Prayer Team, which encourages individual prayers in support of the President of the United States as he deals with pressing issues. And the song, "My Place in This World," was a 1991 hit that helped cement his reputation. Its Christian message was muted enough - with only one reference to God in the phrase "I need Your light to help me find/My place in this world" - to be playable in a national political context.

First, we should examine the music video. With the song sung by Smith playing in the background, the video itself is a simple assemblage of seven different sorts of shots:

1. head-and-shoulder shots of multi-raced children,
2. classroom pictures,

3. shots of groups of children laughing,
4. teachers in both traditional and computerized classrooms,
5. one set of images of a coach working with a sprinter,
6. graduation shots, and
7. older teens talking with pre-teen kids.

While some of the children pictured in the head-and-shoulder shots are pensive, most smile and even laugh. These are predominantly happy kids who move by the camera in a brisk fashion. The visual signs are arrayed in such a way as to create the impression of primarily early- and late-teenaged children, seeking answers yet contented with what is happening to them.

The song itself complements the visuals, in that it's a soft-rock, thoughtful arrangement built around the singer's declaration that his is "A life of pages/Waiting to be filled," with "A heart that's hopeful [and]/A head that's full of dreams" (all lyrics in Appendix A). The second verse cries for divine answers to the questions, "Can you still hear me/Hear me asking/Where do I belong[?]/Is there a vision/That I can call my own[?]." The overall effect is one of expectantly waiting for direction and mobility; that effect is captured in the first metaphor of the song, "The wind is moving/But I am standing still."

The mixture, then, of individual, two-person, and group pictures, ranging emotionally from the contemplative to the exuberant, is coupled with lyrics calling up rites of passage myths together with the realization that such passage can occur only with outside (even divine) help. There is an unmistakable consonance between and among the visual, the acoustic, and the verbal images, producing what W.J.T. Mitchell (1994) called an *imagetext*, that is, fused codes whereby the visual, the acoustic, and the verbal signs are so interpenetrated that what we normally would call "a representation" in fact is comprised of all three sign systems. The argument of the Education Night video is grounded in an empathy for and commitment to help children work through the struggle to find their place in this world. That empathy - like Adam Smith's (1759/1976) notion of sympathy - becomes the bases for demanding of the judicious spectator some moral-yet-pragmatic political actions.

Abductively, this music video is but a framing discourse for a full evening of additional concrete events and repeated generalized themes. The evening's program was built around twin themes that regularly appeared on the jumbotron screen: "Opportunity: Leave No Child Behind" and "Opportunity with a Purpose."

Blending the ideas of “opportunity” and “education” was bedrock in the Bush platform, where opportunity was to become available largely through private and local, not national, initiatives. Following the music video was a stream of individual speakers and videos featuring privately financed educational programs – from a “healthy start” ghetto program, to “pillars of character” programs, to literacy programs, to the buoyant Kipp Academy and other such mind-and-body, developmentally oriented educational systems. Each of the speakers and the videotaped programs became another datum that confirmed the implicit ideological hypothesis, “Educational opportunity is best provided by local, privatized efforts to improve educational quality for all.” The abductive argument had range and, presumably, typicality.

Coductively, the array of moral and ideological judgments articulated by the various speakers likewise was coordinated so as to reinforce each other and the dominant hypothesis. They were also available as concrete tests-for-rationality to any audience member wishing to explore the claims about the privatization of educational opportunity in the United States. Those wishing to counter with examples of equally successful public educational opportunities had to supply them themselves.

3. Abduction, Coduction, Sentimentality, and Political Argumentation

One robin does not a spring make, nor two examples a case for repudiating Rod Hart’s claims about sentimentality and televised politics. My purpose, however, is less one of definitively outlining theories of abduction and coduction than of exploring some ways by which such arguments can be tested for something approaching validity.

Recall that I noted earlier Behrens and Yu’s (1995) observation that abduction has less to do with logic than with critical thinking. That observation is based in part on Rescher’s (1978) claim that abductive arguments are not falsifiable. Staat (1993) goes even further, arguing that abduction can but generate ideas or hypotheses; only deduction and induction can evaluate and justify them. Abductions, therefore, produce hypotheses to be tested rather than assertions to be accepted as actual declarations or judgments (Hilpinen 1992). Similarly, recall that Booth (1988) saw coduction as a process of conversational flow. He further suggested that while deductions occasionally enter that conversation, “they will always be modifiable by what *we* – not I – discover as we re-read and converse” (76, emphasis in original). That conversation for Booth must remain open, which means that literary-ethical reasoning for him is unalterably dialectical[i]. While

individual propositions – that is, contestable statements – are to be verified, even validated in a loose sense, through experience and contestation by interlocutors, yet they can never gain the status of having-been-proved.

Yet, I hope that the two examples I offered herein suggest some means by which they can be assessed. I sought to examine Melissa Etheridge's medley in two ways: internally, through a test of coherence, and externally, through a test of resonance or reinforcement. I found it wanting in both respects: the parts did not cohere nor was the overall theme of multifaceted, citizen-based nationalism replayed in other events of that evening. The video celebrating educational opportunity, on the other hand, showed internal coherence to the extent that the song and the video images blended so well that I could call them an imagetext, and the video itself was bracketed by the thematic announcements on the jumbotron and the thematic developments in the stories that individual speakers and video reports offered to the delegates and television viewers.

Following Booth's leads into the matter of coduction, we can go even farther. Etheridge's songs presented us with little to disagree about. What sorts of claims about sentimentalization and political action could be engaged through her performance? One could travel the experiential route, as I suggested, comparing what is publicly known about her life and commitments with what was publicly depicted in the presentation of her song. Doing that, however, might lead you to conclude that she sold out her own causes, for they were evoked in no way whatsoever. Discussing relationships between the visual and verbal-acoustic codes likewise would be a dead-end, because only a few images of anything other than the celebrity singer herself were shown. Indeed, probably the only political issue that her performance created was through the party's obvious invitation to her to sing. It signaled its left-leaning politics by calling upon her talents, but she was exhibited in a flattened patriotic medley rather than, say, through any direct statements about popular sovereignty. That meant that any leftist politics worth discussing was not presently discursively – that is, in what the audience heard and saw. Certainly audiences viewing Etheridge that evening could go no farther than Diane Ravitch did when she said “the United States has a common culture that is multicultural” (qtd. in Schlesinger 1991/1993: 135). Etheridge may well embody multiculturalism, but her song echoed the common culture that the likes of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. are calling for – pluralist, not multiculturalist. In other words, the experiential test for what might have been a sentimental call for

popular-based political identity and action could not provide convincing support for that identity and activity.

I am left, then, thinking that abduction and coaction - while still very much in need of theorization as a logic of action - have interesting possibilities as rationalistic structures for describing and assessing some of the kinds of arguments that were deemed as non-sensical by A.J. Ayer and his positivist successors. I will leave it to another paper and, perhaps, even another scholar to pursue that theorization. For now, I am content that I understood in a much clearer way why I was disappointed in the political performance of a singer I am drawn to and why, conversely, I can appreciate the continued rhetorical-argumentative talent of a political party whose ideology I find selfish and exclusionary. In one case, sentiment did not reinforce ideology or sculpt political identity, while in the other, it not only resonated with a political ideology but even gave it velocity and force in political arenas. Abduction and coaction may well provide superior foundations for ways of coming to grips with the political viability and rhetorical probity of sentimentalized appeals to collective identity and action.

NOTES

[i] That dialectic he captures (1988: 488) in this quotation from John Milton's *Areopagitica*: "He that apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue, unexercis'd & unbreath'd, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where the immortall garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat... [T]hat which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary... [T]rue temperance [is that which can] see and know, and yet abstain" (1644/1959: 2:514-516).

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Appendix A: Lyrics for the Music from the 2000 National Political Conventions (C-Span, 2000; videos available on Gronbeck, 2001)

Melissa Etheridge Patriotic Montage

[SSB = Star-Spangled Banner, 1814; AB = America the Beautiful, 1913; and TL =

This Land is Your Land, 1940]

[SSB] Oh say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?

[AB] O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

[TL] As I was walking a ribbon of highway
I saw above me an endless skyway,
I saw below me that golden valley,
This land was made for you and me.

(Chorus) This land is your land, this land is my land
From California, to the New York Island,
From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters,
This land was made for you and me.

(Repeat) From the redwood forest, to the gulf stream waters,
This land was made for you and me.

[AB] America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

(Repeat) And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

[SSB] O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

My Place in This World, Music Performed by Michael W. Smith [1991]

(First verse) The wind is moving,
But I am standing still

A life of pages
Waiting to be filled
A heart that's hopeful
A head that's full of dreams
But this becoming
Is harder than it seems

Feels like I'm
(Chorus) Looking for a reason
Roaming through the night to find

My place in this world
My place in this world
I need Your light to help me find
My place in this world
My place in this world
(Second verse) If there are millions
Down on their knees
Among the many
Can you still hear me
Hear me asking
Where do I belong
Is there a vision
That I can call my own
Show me I'm
(Chorus, extended) Looking for a reason
Roaming through the night to find
My place in this world
My place in this world
Looking for a reason
Roaming through the night to find
My place in this world
My place in this world
Not a lot to lean on
I need Your light to help me find
My place in this world
My place in this world
Looking for a reason
Roaming through the night to find
My place in this world
My place in this world