

Final Exam Study Guide
Rhetoric 275
African American Public Address

Part 1: Identification

Identify the speaker/writer, the Public Address; and explain the purpose of the quote. Your explanation should always try to relate the quote to a reading, class discussion, how it is relevant to the jeremiad, the myth of Queen Esther, or political idea. These answers should be 50-100 words. For your information, 100 words is roughly the length of an average paragraph containing four to five sentences.

My parents came to this country as immigrants over 70 years ago. They came here, as had millions of others, with nothing but hope, a willingness to work hard and a desire to use the opportunities given them by their new land. A land which they came to love with all their hearts.

It's truly, for most of us the best and worst of times. For as gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, as people of color, as feminists, in short, as the outcast, marginalized collective Other, we have achieved, over humankind's entire history, an unprecedented public visibility, an unparalleled strength to define a world view that affirms the totality of our lives. Isn't this event in this space a metaphor of our achievement?

We are on the brink, I believe, of a New Nation Time. A nation unlikely to be seen until the next century, but coming nonetheless, in which notions of identity—based on gender, race, sexuality or nationality—will explicitly embrace multiple subjectivities of human experience and points of view.

I say to America's black leadership open the plantation gates and let us out! We refuse to be led into another political Jonestown as we were led during the Presidential campaign. No more Kool-Aid, Jesse, Vernon and Ben! We want to be free.

Mr. Bruce said he follows me closely and supports what I'm doing and saying. He watches me today as he watched me growing up in Washington, D.C. He was the neighborhood barber prior to going to the White House. Who could know me better?

If our people are to fight their way up out of bondage we must arm them with the sword and the shield and the buckler of pride—belief in themselves and their possibilities, based upon a sure knowledge of the achievements of the past. That knowledge and that pride we must give them “if it breaks every back in the kingdom.”

Whatever man has done, we have done and often, better. As we tell this story, as we present to the world the facts, our pride in racial achievement grows, and our respect in the eyes of all men heightens.

No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. . . I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare.

. . . we need new friends, we need new allies. We need to expand the civil-rights struggle to a higher level—to the level of human rights.

There is an endless chain of Negroes all over the world, and wherever Negroes are to be found this day they are suffering from the brutality of the white man, and because Negroes are suffering all over the world we

feel that the time has come for the four hundred millions of us scattered all over the world to link up our sentiment for one common purpose—to obtain liberty and democracy.

My constituency is the desperate, the damned, the disinherited, the disrespected, and the despised. They are restless and seek relief. They've voted in record numbers. They have invested faith, hope and trust that they have in us. The Democratic Party must send them a signal that we care.

Leadership can part the waters and lead our nation in the direction of the Promised Land. Leadership can lift the boats stuck at the bottom.

The Republican party, the Republican party must always be the party of inclusion. The Hispanic immigrant who became a citizen yesterday must be as precious to us as a Mayflower descendant; the descendant of a slave or of a struggling miner in Appalachia must be as welcome—and must find as much appeal—in our party as in any other party or any other American might.

He realizes that we are a nation that has been forged not from common blood but from common purpose—that the faces of America are the faces of the world. It has not been easy for our country to make “We, the people” mean all the people. Democracy in America is a work in progress—not a finished masterpiece.

George W. Bush would have liked Granddaddy Rice.

They are the strongest shield and surest sword in the maintenance of peace. If the time ever comes to use military force, President George W. Bush will do so to win—because for him, victory is not a dirty word.

When I weaned my daughter in 1963 to go to Washington in August to work in the coffee tents along with Lena Horne, making coffee for the marshalls because that was what most Black women did in the 1963 March on Washington, I was a Black Lesbian.

Well, I do not want to be tolerated, nor misnamed. I want to be recognized. I am a Black Lesbian, and I am your sister.

In the last ten years America has experienced more calamities than at any other time period in American history. Why America? God is angry. He's not angry because you're right. He's angry because you're wrong and you want to stone and kill the people who want to make you see you're wrong.

Let the party of Lincoln be in the forefront, leading the crusade, not only to cut off and kill discrimination, but to open every avenue of educational and economic opportunity to those who are still denied access because of their race, ethnic background or gender.

A divine providence that gave us this land, told us to be good stewards of it and to be good stewards of each other. A land that God has truly, truly blessed and that we are proud to call America.

It is only after a great deal of agonizing consideration, and sleepless—number of—great number of sleepless nights, that I am able to talk of these unpleasant matters to anyone but my close friends.

It would have been more comfortable to remain silent. It took no initiative to inform anyone. But when I was asked by a representative of this committee to report my experience, I felt that I had to tell the truth. I could not keep silent.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation.

I question America, is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave where we have to sleep with our telephones off of the hooks because our lives be threatened daily because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?

And from my standpoint, as a black American, it is a high-tech lynching for uppity blacks who in any way deign to think for themselves, to do for themselves, to have different ideas, and it is a message that unless you kowtow to an old order, this is what will happen to you. You will be lynched, destroyed, caricatured by a committee of the U. S. Senate rather than hung from a tree.

Young America, dream. Choose the human race over the nuclear race. Bury the weapons and don't burn the people. Dream—dream of a new

value system.

We come from disgrace to amazing grace. Our time has come. Give me your tired, give me your poor, your huddled masses who yearn to breathe free and come November, there will be a change because our time has come.

I was carried out of that cell into another cell where they had two Negro prisoners. . . . The first Negro prisoner ordered me, by order from the State Highway Patrolman for me, to lay down on a bunk bed on my face, and I laid on my face. The first Negro began to beat, and I was beat by the first Negro until he was exhausted, and I was holding my hands behind me at that time on my left side because I suffered from polio when I was six years old. After the first Negro began to beat and I began to work my feet, and the State Highway Patrolman ordered the first Negro who had beat me to sit upon my feet to keep me from working my feet. I began to scream and one white man got up and began to beat my head and told me to hush.

And so, my children, I caused you to suffer in the furnace of affliction so that I might purify you and resurrect you from a grave of death and ignorance. I, God, put in your soul, not a law written on stone, but I have written the law on the tablets of your heart. So, I'm going to make a new covenant with you. Oh, Black Man.

The eagle symbolizes God because there is something about an eagle that is a fit symbol of things about God.

God said through the Psalmist that Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto him and that princes shall come out of Ethiopia. I believe fervently that the hour has come for Ethiopia to stretch forth her hands unto God, and as we are stretching forth our hands unto God in New York, in

Pennsylvania, in the West Indies, in Central America and in Africa and throughout the world . . .

Has the white man any mercy? Not before the black man returns to power will there be any mercy in the world. The Negro has been the savior of all that has been good for mankind.

Part 2: Essays for the Exam.

You should prepare these for the exam. I will choose at least two of them for the exam.

1. How did the Republican Party use the rhetoric of the black jeremiad to move from a racially divisive discourse in the 1980s to a racially inclusive discourse in the 1990s and 2000s?
2. Build an argument that explores how the addition of the rhetorical figure of Queen Esther would allow David Howard-Pitney to give a discussion of African American public address that is both more gender balanced and more favorable to black women.
2. Why did women not assume a larger role in the rhetoric of the Civil Rights Movement and in public life after that movement ended? How have women's public addresses differed from men's in this same time period?

2. Bebe Moore Campbell repeats and revises the myth of Queen Esther as a mediator in her novel *Brothers and Sisters*. Identify at least two powerful groups, forces, or individuals for whom Esther Jackson mediates. Do you think Esther Jackson is a successful mediator? Explain your answer, and in your explanation, provide *a rationale* for why you think Campbell has her protagonist to succeed or to fail. Your *rationale* should also explain what you think Campbell is saying as a public address about the myth of Queen Esther.
2. Evaluate David Howard-Pitney's conclusion when he writes that at present "it is premature to forecast the demise of the black American jeremiad and of the resilient hope on which it rests" (194). Do the speeches and public addresses we have examined post-Martin Luther King, Jr. support or reject Howard-Pitney's conclusion? Give examples from at least three public addresses and the issues represented in these addresses to support your contention.
2. Identify one public address that we have discussed in the second half of this class. Explain why you believe it is the most significant public address for understanding African American oratory and public address.