

Mr. Wilder Summer Reading Essays

In lieu of a third novel, you will be reading the following essays.

- 1. "What Do Students Need to Know About Rhetoric?"
by Hepzibah Roskelly (p. 2-8)**

This is an introduction into what we'll be focusing on this year.

- 2. "On Being a Cripple" by Nancy Mairs (p. 9-16)**

- 3. "The Ballot or the Bullet" by Malcolm X (p. 17-25)**

*****Come to school with opinions on essays #2 and #3. Feel free to annotate (underline, circle, highlight, write opinions in the margins) freely as well.**

What Do Students Need to Know About Rhetoric?

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The AP Language and Composition Exam places strong emphasis on students' ability to analyze texts rhetorically and to use rhetoric effectively as they compose essay responses. It's an important question for teachers, therefore, to consider what students need to know about this often misunderstood term in order to write confidently and skillfully.

The traditional definition of rhetoric, first proposed by Aristotle, and embellished over the centuries by scholars and teachers, is that rhetoric is the art of observing in any given case the "available means of persuasion."

"The whole process of education for me was learning to put names to things I already knew." That's a line spoken by Kinsey Millhone, Sue Grafton's private investigator in one of her series of alphabet mystery novels, *C is for Corpse*. When I began a graduate program that specialized in rhetoric, I wasn't quite sure what that word meant. But once I was introduced to it, I realized rhetoric was something I had always known about.

Any of these opening paragraphs might be a suitable way to begin an essay on what students need to know as they begin a course of study that emphasizes rhetoric and prepares them for the AP English Language Exam. The first acknowledges that the question teachers ask about teaching rhetoric is a valid one. The second establishes a working definition and suggests that the writer will rely on classical rhetoric to propose answers to the question. And the third? Perhaps it tells more about the writer than about the subject. She likes mysteries; she knows that many people (including herself when she was a student) don't know much about the term. But that third opening is the one I choose to begin with. It's a *rhetorical* decision, based on what I know of myself, of the subject, and of you. I want you to know something of me, and I'd like to begin a conversation with you. I also want to establish my purpose right away, and Millhone's line states that purpose nicely. Rhetoric is all about giving a name to something we already know a great deal about, and teachers who understand that are well on their way to teaching rhetoric effectively in their classes.

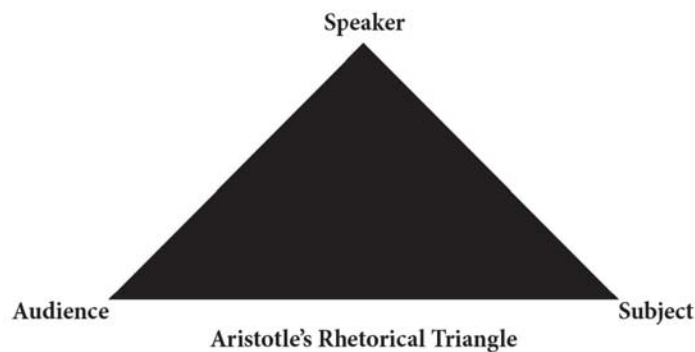
The first thing that students need to know about rhetoric, then, is that it's all around us in conversation, in movies, in advertisements and books, in body language, and in art. We employ rhetoric whether we're conscious of it or not, but becoming conscious of how rhetoric works can transform speaking, reading, and writing, making us more successful and able communicators and more discerning audiences. The very *ordinariness* of rhetoric is the single most important tool for teachers to use to help students understand its dynamics and practice them.

Exploring several writers' definitions of rhetoric will, I hope, reinforce this truth about the commonness of rhetorical practice and provide some useful terms for students as they analyze texts and write their own. The first is Aristotle's, whose work on rhetoric has been employed by scholars and teachers for centuries, and who teachers still rely on for basic understandings about the rhetorical transaction.

The Rhetorical Triangle: Subject, Audience, Speaker's Persona

Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.
—Aristotle

Aristotle believed that from the world around them, speakers could observe how communication happens and use that understanding to develop sound and convincing arguments. In order to do that, speakers needed to look at three elements, graphically represented by what we now call the rhetorical triangle:



Aristotle said that when a *rhetor* or speaker begins to consider how to compose a speech—that is, begins the process of invention—the speaker must take into account three elements: the *subject*, the *audience*, and the *speaker*. The three elements are connected and interdependent; hence, the triangle.

Considering the *subject* means that the writer/speaker evaluates what he or she knows already and needs to know, investigates perspectives, and determines kinds of evidence or proofs that seem most useful. Students are often taught how to conduct research into a subject and how to support claims with appropriate evidence, and it is the subject point of the triangle that students are most aware of and feel most confident about. But, as Aristotle shows, knowing a subject—the theme of a novel, literary or rhetorical terms, reasons for the Civil War—is only one facet of composing.

Considering the *audience* means speculating about the reader's expectations, knowledge, and disposition with regard to the subject writers explore. When students respond to an assignment given by a teacher, they have the advantage of knowing a bit of what their

audience expects from them because it is often spelled out. “Five to seven pages of error-free prose.” “State your thesis clearly and early.” “Use two outside sources.” “Have fun.” All of these instructions suggest to a student writer what the reader expects and will look for; in fact, pointing out directly the rhetoric of assignments we make as teachers is a good way to develop students’ rhetorical understanding. When there is no assignment, writers imagine their readers, and if they follow Aristotle’s definition, they will use their own experience and observation to help them decide on how to communicate with readers.

The use of experience and observation brings Aristotle to the *speaker* point of the triangle. Writers use who they are, what they know and feel, and what they’ve seen and done to find their attitudes toward a subject and their understanding of a reader. Decisions about formal and informal language, the use of narrative or quotations, the tone of familiarity or objectivity, come as a result of writers considering their speaking voices on the page. My opening paragraph, the *exordium*, attempts to give readers insight into me as well as into the subject, and it comes from my experience as a reader who responds to the personal voice. The creation of that voice Aristotle called the *persona*, the character the speaker creates as he or she writes.

Many teachers use the triangle to help students envision the rhetorical situation. Aristotle saw these rhetorical elements coming from lived experience. Speakers knew how to communicate because they spoke and listened, studied, and conversed in the world. Exercises that ask students to observe carefully and comment on rhetorical situations in action—the cover of a magazine, a conversation in the lunchroom, the principal’s address to the student body—reinforce observation and experience as crucial skills for budding rhetoricians as well as help students transfer skills to their writing and interpreting of literary and other texts.

Appeals to Logos, Pathos, and Ethos

In order to make the rhetorical relationship—speakers to hearers, hearers to subjects, speakers to subjects—most successful, writers use what Aristotle and his descendants called the *appeals*: logos, ethos, and pathos.

They appeal to a reader’s sense of *logos* when they offer clear, reasonable premises and proofs, when they develop ideas with appropriate details, and when they make sure readers can follow the progression of ideas. The logical thinking that informs speakers’ decisions and readers’ responses forms a large part of the kind of writing students accomplish in school.

Writers use *ethos* when they demonstrate that they are credible, good-willed, and knowledgeable about their subjects, and when they connect their thinking to readers’ own ethical or moral beliefs. Quintilian, a Roman rhetorician and theorist, wrote that the

speaker should be the “good man speaking well.” This emphasis on *good* character meant that audiences and speakers could assume the best intentions and the most thoughtful search for truths about an issue. Students’ use of research and quotations is often as much an ethical as a logical appeal, demonstrating to their teachers that their character is thoughtful, meticulous, and hardworking.

When writers draw on the emotions and interests of readers, and highlight them, they use *pathos*, the most powerful appeal and the most immediate—hence its dominance in advertisements. Students foreground this appeal when they use personal stories or observations, sometimes even within the context of analytical writing, where it can work dramatically well to provoke readers’ sympathetic reaction. Figurative language is often used by writers to heighten the emotional connections readers make to the subject. Emily Dickinson’s poem that begins with the metaphor “My life had stood—a loaded gun,” for example, provokes readers’ reactions of fear or dread as they begin to read.

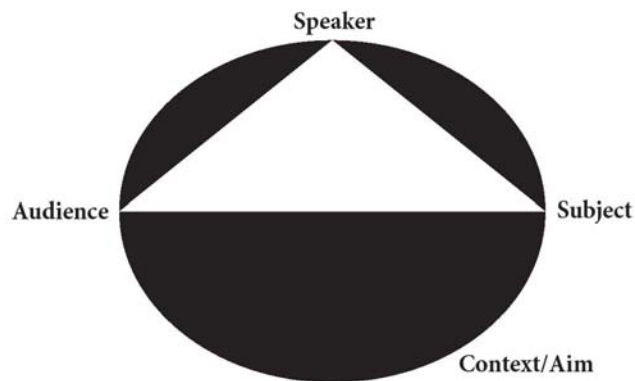
As most teachers teach the appeals, they make sure to note how intertwined the three are. John F. Kennedy’s famous line (an example of the rhetorical trope of *antimetabole*, by the way), “Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country,” calls attention to the ethical qualities of both speaker and hearer, begins to propose a solution to some of the country’s ills by enlisting the direct help of its citizens, and calls forth an emotional patriotism toward the country that has already done so much for individuals. Asking students to investigate how appeals work in their own writing highlights the way the elements of diction, imagery, and syntax work to produce persuasive effects, and often makes students conscious of the way they’re unconsciously exercising rhetorical control.

Any text students read can be useful for teachers in teaching these elements of classical rhetoric. Speeches, because they’re immediate in connecting speaker and hearer, provide good illustrations of how rhetorical relationships work. In Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, Marc Antony’s speech allows readers to see clearly how appeals intertwine, how a speaker’s persona is established, how aim or purpose controls examples. Sojourner Truth’s repetition of the phrase “Ain’t I a Woman?” shows students the power of repetition and balance in writing as well as the power of gesture (Truth’s gestures to the audience are usually included in texts of the speech). Asking students to look for rhetorical transactions in novels, in poems, in plays, and in nonfiction will expose how rhetorical *all* writing is.

Context and Purpose

Rhetoric is what we have instead of omniscience.
—Ann Berthoff

It's important to note that Aristotle omitted—or confronted only indirectly—two other elements of the rhetorical situation, the *context* in which writing or speaking occurs and the emerging aim or *purpose* that underlies many of the writer's decisions. In part, Aristotle and other classical rhetoricians could assume context and aim since all speakers and most hearers were male, upper class, and concerned with addressing important civic, public issues of the day. But these two considerations affect every element of the rhetorical triangle. Some teachers add circles around the triangle or write inside of it to show the importance of these two elements to rhetorical understanding.



Ann Berthoff's statement suggests the importance of context, the situation in which writing and reading occur, and the way that an exploration of that situation, a rhetorical analysis, can lead to understanding of what underlies writers' choices. We can't know for sure what writers mean, Berthoff argues, but we have rhetoric to help us interpret.

The importance of context is especially obvious in comedy and political writing, where controlling ideas are often, maybe even usually, topical, concerned with current events and ideas. One reason comedy is difficult to teach sometimes is that the events alluded to are no longer current for readers and the humor is missed. Teachers who have taught Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," for example, have to fill in the context of the Irish famine and the consequent mind-numbing deprivation in order to have students react appropriately to the black humor of Swift's solutions to the problem. But using humorist David Sedaris's essays or Mort Sahl's political humor or Dorothy Parker's wry social commentary provides a fine opportunity to ask students to do research on the context in which these pieces were written. Students who understand context learn how and why they write differently in history class and English or biology. And giving students real

contexts to write in—letters to the editor, proposals for school reforms, study notes for other students— highlights how context can alter rhetorical choices in form and content.

Intention

Rhetoric . . . should be a study of misunderstandings and their remedies.
—I. A. Richards

Richards’s statement reveals how key *intention* or aim is to rhetorical effectiveness. Words and forms carry writers’ intentions, but, as Richards indicates, those aims can be miscommunicated. Investigating how readers perceive intentions exposes where and how communication happens or is lost. For Richards, rhetoric is the way to connect intentions with responses, the way to reconcile readers and writers. Intention is sometimes embodied in a thesis statement; certainly, students get lots of practice making those statements clear. *But intention is carried out throughout a piece, and it often changes.* Writing workshops where writers articulate intentions and readers suggest where they perceive them or lose them give students a way to realize intentions more fully.

Many texts students read can illuminate how intentions may be misperceived as well as communicated effectively. “A Modest Proposal,” for example, is sometimes perceived as horrific by student readers rather than anguished. Jane Addams’s “Bayonet Charge” speech, delivered just before America’s entrance into World War I, provoked a storm of protest when it seemed to many that she was impugning the bravery of fighting soldiers who had to be drugged before they could engage in the mutilation of the bayonet charge. Although she kept restating her intention in later documents, her career was nearly ruined, and her reputation suffered for decades. I use that example (in part because you may not be familiar with it) to show that students can find much to discuss when they examine texts from the perspective of misunderstandings and their remedies.

Visual Rhetoric

One way to explore rhetoric in all its pervasiveness and complexity is to make use of the visual. Students are expert rhetoricians when it comes to symbolic gesture, graphic design, and action shots in film. What does Donald Trump’s hand gesture accompanying his straightforward “You’re fired” on the recent “reality” television program *The Apprentice* signal? (Notice the topical context I’m using here: perhaps when you read this, this show will no longer be around.) Why does Picasso use color and action in the way he does in his painting *Guernica*? Why are so many Internet sites organized in columns that sometimes compete for attention? Linking the visual to the linguistic, students gain confidence and control as they analyze and produce rhetoric.

Conclusion

So what do students need to know about rhetoric? Not so much the names of its tropes and figures, although students often like to hunt for examples of asyndeton or periphrasis, and it is also true that if they can identify them in texts they read they can in turn practice them in their own writing, often to great effect. (If you're interested in having students do some work with figures of speech and the tropes of classical rhetoric, visit the fine Web site at Brigham Young University developed by Professor Gideon Burton called *Silva Rhetoricae*, literally "the forest of rhetoric": humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm. That site provides hundreds of terms and definitions of rhetorical figures.) However, it's more important to recognize how figures of speech affect readers and be able to use them effectively to persuade and communicate than it is to identify them, and the exam itself places little emphasis on an ability to name *zeugma* (a figure where one item in a series of parallel constructions in a sentence is governed by a single word), but great emphasis on a student's ability to write a sentence that shows an awareness of how parallel constructions affect readers' responses.

Students don't need to memorize the five canons of classical rhetoric either—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery—although studying what each of those canons might mean for the composing processes of today's student writers might initiate provocative conversation about paragraph length, sentence structure, use of repetition, and format of final product.

What students need to know about rhetoric is in many ways what they know already about the way they interact with others and with the world. Teaching the connections between the words they work with in the classroom and the world outside it can challenge and engage students in powerful ways as they find out how much they can use what they know of the available means of persuasion to learn more.

Some useful books on rhetoric:

Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 3rd Ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004.

Covino, William A., and David A. Jolliffe. *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, Boundaries*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.

Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything's an Argument*. 3rd Ed. New York: Bedford, St. Martin's, 2004.

Mailloux, Steven. *Rhetorical Power*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989.

The Lame Dame

[RSS](#)

On Being a Cripple -By Nancy Mairs

**Note from the mod* I wanted to share an essay that has always meant a great deal to me, but I see it's only available in paid academic library systems now; so I bought it, and will be hosting it here. **

To escape is nothing. Not to escape is nothing.

—Louise Bogan

The other day I was thinking of writing an essay on being a cripple. I was thinking hard in one of the stalls of the women's room in my office building, as I was shoving my shirt into my jeans and tugging up my zipper. Preoccupied, I flushed, picked up my book bag, took my cane down from the hook, and unlatched the door. So many movements unbalanced me, and as I pulled the door open I fell over backward, landing fully clothed on the toilet seat with my legs splayed in front of me: the old beetle-on-its-back routine. Saturday afternoon, the building deserted, I was free to laugh aloud as I wriggled back to my feet, my voice bouncing off the yellowish tiles from all directions. Had anyone been there with me, I'd have been still and faint and hot with chagrin. I decided that it was high time to write the essay.

First, the matter of semantics. I am a cripple. I choose this word to name me. I choose from among several possibilities, the most common of which are "handicapped" and "disabled." I made the choice a number of years ago, without thinking, unaware of my motives for doing so. Even now, I'm not sure what those motives are, but I recognize that they are complex and not entirely flattering. People—crippled or not—wince at the word "cripple," as they do not at "handicapped" or "disabled." Perhaps I want them to wince. I want them to see me as a tough customer, one to whom the fates /gods /viruses have not been kind, but who can face the brutal truth of her existence squarely. As a cripple, I swagger.

But, to be fair to myself, a certain amount of honesty underlies my choice. "Cripple" seems to me a clean word, straightforward and precise. It has an honorable history, having made its first appearance in the Lindisfarne Gospel in the tenth century. As a lover of words, I like the accuracy with which it describes my condition: I have lost the full use of my limbs. "Disabled," by contrast, suggests any incapacity, physical or mental. And I certainly don't like "handicapped," which implies that I have deliberately been put at a disadvantage, by whom I can't imagine (my God is not a Handicapper General), in order to equalize chances in the great race of life. These words seem to me to be moving away from my condition, to be widening the gap between word and reality. Most remote is the recently coined euphemism "differently abled," which partakes of the same semantic hopefulness that transformed countries from "undeveloped" to "underdeveloped," then to "less developed," and finally to "developing" nations. People have continued to starve in those countries during the shift. Some realities do not obey the dictates of language.

Mine is one of them. Whatever you call me, I remain crippled. But I don't care what you call me, so long as it isn't "differently abled," which strikes me as pure verbal garbage designed, by its ability to describe anyone, to describe no one. I subscribe to George Orwell's thesis that "the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts." And I refuse



About
The Lame Dame

I'm A Fashionable Lady with a Cane.

This blog is a safe space for cripples of all kinds, and I regularly feature pictures of young people with disabilities. This is a submission based blog, so if you feel something is missing, please submit

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to participate in the degeneration of the language to the extent that I deny that I have lost anything in the course of this calamitous disease; I refuse to pretend that the only differences between you and me are the various ordinary ones that distinguish any one person from another. But call me “disabled” or “handicapped” if you like. I have long since grown accustomed to them; and if they are vague, at least they hint at the truth. Moreover, I use them myself. Society is no readier to accept crippledness than to accept death, war, sex, sweat, or wrinkles. I would never refer to another person as a cripple. It is the word I use to name only myself.

I haven't always been crippled, a fact for which I am soundly grateful. To be whole of limb is, I know from experience, infinitely more pleasant and useful than to be crippled; and if that knowledge leaves me open to bitterness at MY loss, the physical soundness I once enjoyed (though I did not enjoy it half enough) is well worth the occasional stab of regret. Though never any good at sports, I was a normally active child and young adult. I climbed trees, played hopscotch, jumped rope, skated, swam, rode my bicycle, sailed. I despised team sports, spending some of the wretchedest afternoons of my life, sweaty and humiliated, behind a field-hockey stick and under a basketball hoop. I tramped alone for miles along the bridle paths that webbed the woods behind the house I grew up in. I swayed through countless dim hours in the arms of one man or another under the scattered shot of light from mirrored balls, and gyrated through countless more as Tab Hunter and Johnny Mathis gave way to the Rolling Stones, Credence Clearwater Revival, Cream. I walked down the aisle. I pushed baby carriages, changed tires in the rain, marched for peace.

When I was twenty-eight I started to trip and drop things. What at first seemed my natural clumsiness soon became too pronounced to shrug off. I consulted a neurologist, who told me that I had a brain tumor. A battery of tests, increasingly disagreeable, revealed no tumor. About a year and a half later I developed a blurred spot in one eye. I had, at last, the episodes “disseminated in space and time” requisite for a diagnosis: multiple sclerosis. I have never been sorry for the doctor's initial misdiagnosis, however. For almost a week, until the negative results of the tests were in, I thought that I was going to die right away. Every day for the past nearly ten years, then, has been a kind of gift. I accept all gifts.

Multiple sclerosis is a chronic degenerative disease of the central nervous system, in which the myelin that sheathes the nerves is somehow eaten away and scar tissue forms in its place, interrupting the nerves' signals. During its course, which is unpredictable and uncontrollable, one may lose vision, hearing, speech, the ability to walk, control of bladder and/or bowels, strength in any or all extremities, sensitivity to touch, vibration, and/or pain, potency, coordination of movements— the list of possibilities is lengthy and, yes, horrifying. One may also lose one's sense of humor. That's the easiest to lose and the hardest to survive without.

In the past ten years, I have sustained some of these losses. Characteristic of MS are sudden attacks, called exacerbations, followed by remissions, and these I have not had. Instead, my disease has been slowly progressive. My left leg is now so weak that I walk with the aid of a brace and a cane; and for distances I use an Amigo, a variation on the electric wheelchair that looks rather like an electrified kiddie car. I no longer have much use of my left hand. Now my right side is weakening as well. I still have the blurred spot in my right eye. Overall, though, I've been lucky so far. My world has, of necessity, been circumscribed by my losses, but the terrain left me has been ample enough for me to continue many of the activities that absorb me: writing, teaching, raising children and cats and plants and snakes, reading, speaking publicly about MS and depression, even playing bridge with people patient and honorable enough to let me scatter cards every which way without sneaking a peek.

Lest I begin to sound like Pollyanna, however, let me say that I don't like having MS. I hate it. My life holds realities—harsh ones, some of them—that no right-minded human being ought

to accept without grumbling. One of them is fatigue. I know of no one with MS who does not complain of bone-weariness; in a disease that presents an astonishing variety of symptoms, fatigue seems to be a common factor. I wake up in the morning feeling the way most people do at the end of a bad day, and I take it from there. As a result, I spend a lot of time in extremis and, impatient with limitation, I tend to ignore my fatigue until my body breaks down in some way and forces rest. Then I miss picnics, dinner parties, poetry readings, the brief visits of old friends from out of town. The offspring of a puritanical tradition of exceptional venerability, I cannot view these lapses without shame. My life often seems a series of small failures to do as I ought.

I lead, on the whole, an ordinary life, probably rather like the one I would have led had I not had MS. I am lucky that my predilections were already solitary, sedentary, and bookish—unlike the world-famous French cellist I have read about, or the young woman I talked with one long afternoon who wanted only to be a jockey. I had just begun graduate school when I found out something was wrong with me, and I have remained, interminably, a graduate student. Perhaps I would not have if I'd thought I had the stamina to return to a full-time job as a technical editor; but I've enjoyed my studies.

In addition to studying, I teach writing courses. I also teach medical students how to give neurological examinations. I pick up freelance editing jobs here and there. I have raised a foster son and sent him into the world, where he has made me two grandbabies, and I am still escorting my daughter and son through adolescence. I go to Mass every Saturday. I am a superb, if messy, cook. I am also an enthusiastic laundress, capable of sorting a hamper full of clothes into five subtly differentiated piles, but a terrible housekeeper. I can do italic writing and, in an emergency, bathe an oil-soaked cat. I play a fiendish game of Scrabble. When I have the time and the money, I like to sit on my front steps with my husband, drinking Amaretto and smoking a cigar, as we imagine our counterparts in Leningrad and make sure that the sun gets down once more behind the sharp childish scrawl of the Tucson Mountains.

This lively plenty has its bleak complement, of course, in all the things I can no longer do. I will never run again, except in dreams, and one day I may have to write that I will never walk again. I like to go camping, but I can't follow George and the children along the trails that wander out of a campsite through the desert or into the mountains. In fact, even on the level I've learned never to check the weather or try to hold a coherent conversation: I need all my attention for my wayward feet. Of late, I have begun to catch myself wondering how people can propel themselves without canes. With only one usable hand, I have to select my clothing with care not so much for style as for ease of ingress and egress, and even so, dressing can be laborious. I can no longer do fine stitchery, pick up babies, play the piano, braid my hair. I am immobilized by acute attacks of depression, which may or may not be physiologically related to MS but are certainly its logical concomitant.

These two elements, the plenty and the privation, are never pure, nor are the delight and wretchedness that accompany them. Almost every pickle that I get into as a result of my weakness and clumsiness—and I get into plenty—is funny as well as maddening and sometimes painful. I recall one May afternoon when a friend and I were going out for a drink after finishing up at school. As we were climbing into opposite sides of my car, chatting, I tripped and fell, flat and hard, onto the asphalt parking lot, my abrupt departure interrupting him in mid-sentence. "Where'd you go?" he called as he came around the back of the car to find me hauling myself up by the door frame. "Are you all right?" Yes, I told him, I was fine, just a bit rattly, and we drove off to find a shady patio and some beer. When I got home an hour or so later, my daughter greeted me with "What have you done to yourself?" I looked down. One elbow of my white turtleneck with the green froggies, one knee of my white trousers, one white knee sock were blood-soaked. We peeled off the clothes and inspected the damage, which was nasty enough but not alarming. That part wasn't funny: The abrasions took a long time to heal, and one got a little infected. Even so, when I think of my friend talking

earnestly, suddenly, to the hot thin air while I dropped from his view as though through a trap door, I find the image as silly as something from a Marx Brothers movie.

I may find it easier than other cripples to amuse myself because I live propped by the acceptance and the assistance and, sometimes, the amusement of those around me. Grocery clerks tear my checks out of my checkbook for me, and sales clerks find chairs to put into dressing rooms when I want to try on clothes. The people I work with make sure I teach at times when I am least likely to be fatigued, in places I can get to, with the materials I need. My students, with one anonymous exception (in an end-of-the-semester evaluation), have been unperturbed by my disability. Some even like it. One was immensely cheered by the information that I paint my own fingernails; she decided, she told me, that if I could go to such trouble over fine details, she could keep on writing essays. I suppose I became some sort of bright-fingered muse. She wrote good essays, too.

The most important struts in the framework of my existence, of course, are my husband and children. Dismayingly few marriages survive the MS test, and why should they? Most twenty-two- and nine-teen-year-olds, like George and me, can vow in clear conscience, after a childhood of chicken pox and summer colds, to keep one another in sickness and in health so long as they both shall live. Not many are equipped for catastrophe: the dismay, the depression, the extra work, the boredom that a degenerative disease can insinuate into a relationship. And our society, with its emphasis on fun and its association of fun with physical performance, offers little encouragement for a whole spouse to stay with a crippled partner. Children experience similar stresses when faced with a crippled parent, and they are more helpless, since parents and children can't usually get divorced. They hate, of course, to be different from their peers, and the child whose mother is tacking down the aisle of a school auditorium packed with proud parents like a Cape Cod dinghy in a stiff breeze jolly well stands out in a crowd. Deprived of legal divorce, the child can at least deny the mother's disability, even her existence, forgetting to tell her about recitals and PTA meetings, refusing to accompany her to stores or church or the movies, never inviting friends to the house. Many do.

But I've been limping along for ten years now, and so far George and the children are still at my left elbow, holding tight. Anne and Matthew vacuum floors and dust furniture and haul trash and rake up dog droppings and button my cuffs and bake lasagna and Toll House cookies with just enough grumbling so I know that they don't have brain fever. And far from hiding me, they're forever dragging me by racks of fancy clothes or through teeming school corridors, or welcoming gaggles of friends while I'm wandering through the house in Anne's filmy pink babydoll pajamas. George generally calls before he brings someone home, but he does just as many dumb thankless chores as the children. And they all yell at me, laugh at some of my jokes, write me funny letters when we're apart-in short, treat me as an ordinary human being for whom they have some use. I think they like me. Unless they're faking....

Faking. There's the rub. Tugging at the fringes of my consciousness always is the terror that people are kind to me only because I'm a cripple. My mother almost shattered me once, with that instinct mothers have—blind, I think, in this case, but unerring nonetheless—for striking blows along the fault-lines of their children's hearts, by telling me, in an attack on my selfishness, "We all have to make allowances for you, of course, because of the way you are." From the distance of a couple of years, I have to admit that I haven't any idea just what she meant, and I'm not sure that she knew either. She was awfully angry. But at the time, as the words thudded home, I felt my worst fear, suddenly realized. I could bear being called selfish: I am. But I couldn't bear the corroboration that those around me were doing in fact what I'd always suspected them of doing, professing fondness while silently putting up with me because of the way I am. A cripple. I've been a little cracked ever since.

Along with this fear that people are secretly accepting shoddy goods comes a relentless

pressure to please—to prove myself worth the burdens I impose, I guess, or to build a substantial account of goodwill against which I may write drafts in times of need. Part of the pressure arises from social expectations. In our society, anyone who deviates from the norm had better find some way to compensate. Like fat people, who are expected to be jolly, cripples must bear their lot meekly and cheerfully. A grumpy cripple isn't playing by the rules. And much of the pressure is self-generated. Early on I vowed that, if I had to have MS, by God I was going to do it well. This is a class act, ladies and gentlemen. No tears, no recriminations, no faint-heartedness.

One way and another, then, I wind up feeling like Tiny Tim, peering over the edge of the table at the Christmas goose, waving my crutch, piping down God's blessing on us all. Only sometimes I don't want to play Tiny Tim. I'd rather be Caliban, a most scurvy monster. Fortunately, at home no one much cares whether I'm a good cripple or a bad cripple as long as I make vichyssoise with fair regularity. One evening several years ago, Anne was reading at the dining-room table while I cooked dinner. As I opened a can of tomatoes, the can slipped in my left hand and juice splattered me and the counter with bloody spots. Fatigued and infuriated, I bellowed, "I'm so sick of being crippled!" Anne glanced at me over the top of her book. "There now," she said, "do you feel better?" "Yes," I said, "yes, I do." She went back to her reading. I felt better. That's about all the attention my scurviness ever gets.

Because I hate being crippled, I sometimes hate myself for being a cripple. Over the years I have come to expect—even accept—attacks of violent self-loathing. Luckily, in general our society no longer connects deformity and disease directly with evil (though a charismatic once told me that I have MS because a devil is in me) and so I'm allowed to move largely at will, even among small children. But I'm not sure that this revision of attitude has been particularly helpful. Physical imperfection, even freed of moral disapprobation, still defies and violates the ideal, especially for women, whose confinement in their bodies as objects of desire is far from over. Each age, of course, has its ideal, and I doubt that ours is any better or worse than any other. Today's ideal woman, who lives on the glossy pages of dozens of magazines, seems to be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five; her hair has body, her teeth flash white, her breath smells minty, her underarms are dry; she has a career but is still a fabulous cook, especially of meals that take less than twenty minutes to prepare; she does not ordinarily appear to have a husband or children; she is trim and deeply tanned; she jogs, swims, plays tennis, rides a bicycle, sails, but does not bowl; she travels widely, even to out-of-the-way places like Finland and Samoa, always in the company of the ideal man, who possesses a nearly identical set of characteristics. There are a few exceptions. Though usually white and often blonde, she may be black, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American, so long as she is unusually sleek. She may be old, provided she is selling a laxative or is Lauren Bacall. If she is selling a detergent, she may be married and have a flock of strikingly messy children. But she is never a cripple.

Like many women I know, I have always had an uneasy relationship with my body. I was not a popular child, largely, I think now, because I was peculiar: intelligent, intense, moody, shy, given to unexpected actions and inexplicable notions and emotions. But as I entered adolescence, I believed myself unpopular because I was homely: my breasts too flat, my mouth too wide, my hips too narrow, my clothing never quite right in fit or style. I was not, in fact, particularly ugly, old photographs inform me, though I was well off the ideal; but I carried this sense of self-alienation with me into adulthood, where it regenerated in response to the depredations of MS. Even with my brace I walk with a limp so pronounced that, seeing myself on the videotape of a television program on the disabled, I couldn't believe that anything but an inchworm could make progress humping along like that. My shoulders droop and my pelvis thrusts forward as I try to balance myself upright, throwing my frame into a bony S. As a result of contractures, one shoulder is higher than the other and I carry one arm bent in front of me, the fingers curled into a claw. My left arm and leg have wasted into pipe-stems, and I try always to keep them covered. When I think about how my body must look to others,

especially to men, to whom I have been trained to display myself, I feel ludicrous, even loathsome.

At my age, however, I don't spend much time thinking about my appearance. The burning egocentricity of adolescence, which assures one that all the world is looking all the time, has passed, thank God, and I'm generally too caught up in what I'm doing to step back, as I used to, and watch myself as though upon a stage. I'm also too old to believe in the accuracy of self-image. I know that I'm not a hideous crone, that in fact, when I'm rested, well dressed, and well made up, I look fine. The self-loathing I feel is neither physically nor intellectually substantial. What I hate is not me but a disease.

I am not a disease.

And a disease is not—at least not single-handedly—going to determine who I am, though at first it seemed to be going to. Adjusting to a chronic incurable illness, I have moved through a process similar to that outlined by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in *On Death and Dying*. The major difference—and it is far more significant than most people recognize—is that I can't be sure of the outcome, as the terminally ill cancer patient can. Research studies indicate that, with proper medical care, I may achieve a "normal" life span. And in our society, with its vision of death as the ultimate evil, worse even than decrepitude, the response to such news is, "Oh well, at least you're not going to die." Are there worse things than dying? I think that there may be.

I think of two women I know, both with MS, both enough older than I to have served me as models. One took to her bed several years ago and has been there ever since. Although she can sit in a high-backed wheelchair, because she is incontinent she refuses to go out at all, even though incontinence pants, which are readily available at any pharmacy, could protect her from embarrassment. Instead, she stays at home and insists that her husband, a small quiet man, a retired civil servant, stay there with her except for a quick weekly foray to the supermarket. The other woman, whose illness was diagnosed when she was eighteen, a nursing student engaged to a young doctor, finished her training, married her doctor, accompanied him to Germany when he was in the service, bore three sons and a daughter, now grown and gone. When she can, she travels with her husband; she plays bridge, embroiders, swims regularly; she works, like me, as a symptomatic-patient instructor of medical students in neurology. Guess which woman I hope to be.

At the beginning, I thought about having MS almost incessantly. And because of the unpredictable course of the disease, my thoughts were always terrified. Each night I'd get into bed wondering whether I'd get out again the next morning, whether I'd be able to see, to speak, to hold a pen between my fingers. Knowing that the day might come when I'd be physically incapable of killing myself, I thought perhaps I ought to do so right away, while I still had the strength. Gradually I came to understand that the Nancy who might one day lie inert under a bedsheet, arms and legs paralyzed, unable to feed or bathe herself, unable to reach out for a gun, a bottle of pills, was not the Nancy I was at present, and that I could not presume to make decisions for that future Nancy, who might well not want in the least to die. Now the only provision I've made for the future Nancy is that when the time comes—and it is likely to come in the form of pneumonia, friend to the weak and the old—I am not to be treated with machines and medications. If she is unable to communicate by then, I hope she will be satisfied with these terms.

Thinking all the time about having MS grew tiresome and intrusive, especially in the large and tragic mode in which I was accustomed to considering my plight. Months and even years went by without catastrophe (at least without one related to MS), and really I was awfully busy, what with George and children and snakes and students and poems, and I hadn't the time, let alone the inclination, to devote myself to being a disease. Too, the richer my life became, the

funnier it seemed, as though there were some connection between largesse and laughter, and so my tragic stance began to waver until, even with the aid of a brace and a cane, I couldn't hold it for very long at a time.

After several years I was satisfied with my adjustment. I had suffered my grief and fury and terror, I thought, but now I was at ease with my lot. Then one summer day I set out with George and the children across the desert for a vacation in California. Part way to Yuma I became aware that my right leg felt funny. "I think I've had an exacerbation," I told George. "What shall we do?" he asked. "I think we'd better get the hell to California," I said, "because I don't know whether I'll ever make it again." So we went on to San Diego and then to Orange, up the Pacific Coast Highway to Santa Cruz, across to Yosemite, down to Sequoia and Joshua Tree, and so back over the desert to home. It was a fine two-week trip, filled with friends and fair weather, and I wouldn't have missed it for the world, though I did in fact make it back to California two years later. Nor would there have been any point in missing it, since in MS, once the symptoms have appeared, the neurological damage has been done, and there's no way to predict or prevent that damage.

The incident spoiled my self-satisfaction, however. It renewed my grief and fury and terror, and I learned that one never finishes adjusting to MS. I don't know now why I thought one would. One does not, after all, finish adjusting to life, and MS is simply a fact of my life—not my favorite fact, of course—but as ordinary as my nose and my tropical fish and my yellow Mazda station wagon. It may at any time get worse, but no amount of worry or anticipation can prepare me for a new loss. My life is a lesson in losses. I learn one at a time.

And I had best be patient in the learning, since I'll have to do it like it or not. As any rock fan knows, you can't always get what you want. Particularly when you have MS. You can't, for example, get cured. In recent years researchers and the organizations that fund research have started to pay MS some attention even though it isn't fatal; perhaps they have begun to see that life is something other than a quantitative phenomenon, that one may be very much alive for a very long time in a life that isn't worth living. The researchers have made some progress toward understanding the mechanism of the disease: It may well be an autoimmune reaction triggered by a slow-acting virus. But they are nowhere near its prevention, control, or cure. And most of us want to be cured. Some, unable to accept incurability, grasp at one treatment after another; no matter how bizarre: megavitamin therapy, gluten-free diet, injections of cobra venom, hypothermal suits, lymphocytapheresis, hyperbaric chambers. Many treatments are probably harmless enough, but none are curative.

The absence of a cure often makes MS patients bitter toward their doctors. Doctors are, after all, the priests of modern society, the new shamans, whose business is to heal, and many an MS patient roves from one to another, searching for the "good" doctor who will make him well. Doctors too think of themselves as healers, and for this reason many have trouble dealing with MS patients, whose disease in its intransigence defeats their aims and mocks their skills. Too few doctors, it is true, treat their patients as whole human beings, but the reverse is also true. I have always tried to be gentle with my doctors, who often have more at stake in terms of ego than I do. I may be frustrated, maddened, depressed by the incurability of my disease, but I am not diminished by it, and they are. When I push myself up from my seat in the waiting room and stumble toward them, I incarnate the limitation of their powers. The least I can do is refuse to press on their tenderest spots.

This gentleness is part of the reason that I'm not sorry to be a cripple. I didn't have it before. Perhaps I'd have developed it anyway—how could I know such a thing?—and I wish I had more of it, but I'm glad of what I have. It has opened and enriched my life enormously. This sense that my frailty and need must be mirrored in others, that in searching for and shaping a stable core in a life wrenched by change and loss, change and loss, I must recognize the same process, under individual conditions, in the lives around me. I do not deprecate such

knowledge, however I've come by it.

All the same, if a cure were found, would I take it? In a minute. I may be a cripple, but I'm only occasionally a loony and never a saint. Anyway, in my brand of theology God doesn't give bonus points for a limp. I'd take a cure; I just don't need one. A friend who also has MS startled me once by asking, "Do you ever say to yourself, 'Why me, Lord?'" "No, Michael, I don't," I told him, "because whenever I try, the only response I can think of is 'Why not?'" If I could make a cosmic deal, whom would I put in my place? What in my life would I give up in exchange for sound limbs and a thrilling rush of energy? No one. Nothing. I might as well do the job myself. Now that I'm getting the hang of it.

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"The Ballot or the Bullet"

Malcolm X

Delivered 12 April, 1964 in Detroit (USA)

Mr. Moderator, Reverend Cleage, Brother Lomax, brothers and sisters, and friends and I see some enemies. In fact, I think we'd be fooling ourselves if we had an audience this large and didn't realize that there were some enemies present. This afternoon we want to talk about the ballot or the bullet. The ballot or the bullet explains itself. But before we get into it, since this is the year of the ballot or the bullet, I would like to clarify some things that refer to me personally - concerning my own personal position.

I'm still a Muslim. That is, my religion is still Islam. My religion is still Islam. I still credit Mr. Mohammed for what I know and what I am. He's the one who opened my eyes. At present, I'm the Minister of the newly founded Muslim Mosque, Inc., which has its offices in the Teresa Hotel, right in the heart of Harlem - that's the black belt in New York city. And when we realize that Adam Clayton Powell is a Christian minister, he's the - he heads Abyssinian Baptist Church, but at the same time, he's more famous for his political struggling. And Dr. King is a Christian Minister, in Atlanta, Georgia, but he's become more famous for being involved in the civil rights struggle. There's another in New York, Reverend Galamison - I don't know if you've heard of him out here - he's a Christian Minister from Brooklyn, but has become famous for his fight against a segregated school system in Brooklyn. Reverend Clee, right here, is a Christian Minister, here in Detroit. He's the head of the "Freedom Now Party". All of these are Christian Ministers, but they don't come to us as Christian Ministers. They come to us as fighters in some other category. I'm a Muslim minister - the same as they are Christian Ministers - I'm a Muslim minister. And I don't believe in fighting today in any one front, but on all fronts. In fact, I'm a black Nationalist Freedom Fighter.

Islam is my religion, but I believe my religion is my personal business. It governs my personal life, my personal morals. And my religious philosophy is personal between me and the God in whom I believe; just as the religious philosophy of these others is between them and the God in whom they believe. And this is best this way. Were we to come out here discussing religion, we'd have too many differences from the outstart and we could never get together. So today, though Islam is my religious philosophy, my political, economic, and social philosophy is Black Nationalism. You and I - as I say, if we bring up religion we'll have differences; we'll have arguments; and we'll never be able to get together. But if we keep our religion at home, keep our religion in the closet, keep our religion between ourselves and our God, but when we come out here, we have a fight that's common to all of us against an enemy who is common to all of us.

The political philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that the black man should control the politics and the politicians in his own community. The time when white people can come in our community and get us to vote for them so that they can be our political leaders and tell us what to do and what not to do is long gone. By the same token, the time when that same white man, knowing that your eyes are too far open, can send another negro into the community and get you and me to support him so he can use him to lead us astray - those days are long gone too. The political philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that if you and I are going to live in a Black community - and that's where we're going to live, cause as soon as you move into one of their - soon as you move out of the Black community into their community, it's mixed for a period of time, but they're gone and you're right there all by yourself again. We must understand the politics of our community and we must know what politics is supposed to produce. We must know what part politics play in our lives. And until

we become politically mature we will always be misled, lead astray, or deceived or maneuvered into supporting someone politically who doesn't have the good of our community at heart. So the political philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that we will have to carry on a program, a political program, of re-education to open our peoples eyes, make us become more politically conscious, politically mature, and then whenever we get ready to cast our ballot that ballot, will be cast for a man of the community who has the good of the community of heart. The economic philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that we should own and operate and control the economy of our community. You would never found - you can't open up a black store in a white community. White men won't even patronize you. And he's not wrong. He's got sense enough to look out for himself. You the one who don't have sense enough to look out for yourself.

The white man is too intelligent to let someone else come and gain control of the economy of his community. But you will let anyone come in and take control of the economy of your community, control the housing, control the education, control the jobs, control the businesses, under the pre-text that you want to integrate. No, you outta your mind. The political, the economic philosophy of Black Nationalism only means that we have to become involved in a program of re-education to educate our people into the importance of knowing that when you spend your dollar out of the community in which you live, the community in which you spend your money becomes richer and richer; the community out which you take your money becomes poorer and poorer. And because these Negroes, who have been misled, misguided, are breaking their necks to take their money and spend it with The Man, The Man is becoming richer and richer, and you're becoming poorer and poorer. And then what happens? The community in which you live becomes a slum. It becomes a ghetto. The conditions become run down. And then you have the audacity to complain about poor housing in a run-down community. Why you run it down yourself when you take your dollar out. And you and I are in the double-track, because not only do we lose by taking our money someplace else and spending it, when we try and spend it in our own community we're trapped because we haven't had sense enough to set up stores and control the businesses of our own community. The man who's controlling the stores in our community is a man who doesn't look like we do. He's a man who doesn't even live in the community. So you and I, even when we try to spend our money in the block where we live or the area where we live, we're spending it with a man who, when the sun goes down, takes that basket full of money in another part of the town.

So we're trapped, trapped, double-trapped, triple-rapped. Anywhere we go we find that we're trapped. And every kind of solution that someone comes up with is just another trap. But the political and economic philosophy of Black Nationalism - the economic philosophy of Black Nationalism shows our people the importance of setting up these little stores and developing them and expanding them into larger operations. Woolworth didn't start out big like they are today. They started out with a dime store and expanded and expanded and then expanded until today, they're all over the country and all over the world, and they get to some of everybody's money. Now this is what you and I - General Motors is same way. They didn't start out like they it is. It started out just a little rat race type operation. And it expanded and it expanded until today where it is right now. And you and I have to make a start and the best place to start is right in the community where we live. So our people not only have to be re-educated to the importance of supporting black business, but the black man himself has to be made aware of the importance of going into business. And once you and I go into business, we own and operate at least the businesses in our community. What we will be doing is developing a situation wherein we will actually be able to create employment for the people in the community. And once you can create some employment in the community where you

live it will eliminate the necessity of you and me having to act ignorantly and disgracefully, boycotting and picketing some practice some place else trying to beg him for a job. Anytime you have to rely upon your enemy for a job - you're in bad shape. When you have - he is your enemy. Let me tell you, you wouldn't be in this country if some enemy hadn't kidnaped you and brought you here.

On the other hand, some of you think you came here on the Mayflower. So as you can see brothers and sisters this afternoon, it is not our intention to discuss religion. We're going to forget religion. If we bring up religion, we'll be in an argument, and the best way to keep away from arguments and differences - as I said earlier - put your religion at home - in the closet. Keep it between you and your God. Because if it hasn't done anything more for you than it has, you need to forget it anyway. Whether you are a Christian, or a Muslim, or a Nationalist, we all have the same problem. They don't hang you because you're a Baptist; they hang you 'cause you're black. They don't attack me because I'm a Muslim; they attack me 'cause I'm black. They attack all of us for the same reason; all of us catch hell from the same enemy. We're all in the same bag, in the same boat. We suffer political oppression, economic exploitation, and social degradation - all of them from the same enemy. The government has failed us; you can't deny that. Anytime you live in the twentieth century, 1964, and you walkin' around here singing "We Shall Overcome," the government has failed us. This is part of what's wrong with you do too much singing. Today it's time to stop singing and start swinging. You can't sing up on freedom, but you can swing up on some freedom. Cassius Clay can sing, but singing didn't help him to become the heavy-weight champion of the world - swinging helped him become the heavy-weight champion. This government has failed us; the government itself has failed us, and the white liberals who have been posing as our friends have failed us. And once we see that all these other sources to which we've turned have failed, we stop turning to them and turn to ourselves. We need a self-help program, a do-it-yourself philosophy, a do-it-right-now philosophy, a it's-already-too-late philosophy. This is what you and I need to get with, and the only way we are going to solve our problem is with a self-help program. Before we can get a self-help program started we have to have a self-help philosophy.

Black nationalism is a self-help philosophy. What's is so good about it? You can stay right in the church where you are and still take black nationalism as your philosophy. You can stay in any kind of civic organization that you belong to and still take black nationalism as your philosophy. You can be an atheist and still take black nationalism as your philosophy. This is a philosophy that eliminates the necessity for division and argument. 'Cause if you are black you should be thinking black, and if you are black and you not thinking black at this late date, well I'm sorry for you. Once you change your philosophy, you change your thought pattern. Once you change your thought pattern, you change your attitude. Once you change your attitude, it changes your behaviour pattern and then you go on into some action. As long as you gotta sit-down philosophy, you'll have a sit-down thought pattern, and as long as you think that old sit-down thought you'll be in some kind of sit-down action. They'll have you sitting in everywhere. It's not so good to refer to what you're going to do as a sit-in. That right there castrates you. Right there it brings you down. What goes with it? Think of the image of someone sitting. An old woman can sit. An old man can sit. A chump can sit. A coward can sit. Anything can sit. Well you and I been sitting long enough, and it's time today for us to start doing some standing, and some fighting to back that up.

When we look like - at other parts of this earth upon which we live, we find that black, brown, red, and yellow people in Africa and Asia are getting their independence. They're not getting it by singing "We Shall Overcome." No, they're getting it through nationalism. It is nationalism that brought about the independence of the people in Asia. Every nation in Asia

gained its independence through the philosophy of nationalism. Every nation on the African continent that has gotten its independence brought it about through the philosophy of nationalism. And it will take black nationalism - that to bring about the freedom of 22 million Afro-Americans here in this country where we have suffered colonialism for the past 400 years. America is just as much a colonial power as England ever was. America is just as much a colonial power as France ever was. In fact, America is more so a colonial power than they because she's a hypocritical colonial power behind it. What do you call second-class citizenship? Why, that's colonization. Second class citizenship is nothing but 20th century slavery. How you gonna tell me you're a second class citizen. They don't have second class citizenship in any other government on this earth. They just have slaves and people who are free. Well, this country is a hypocrite. They try and make you think they set you free by calling you a second-class citizen. No, you're nothing but a 20th century slave. Just as it took nationalism to remove colonialism from Asia and Africa, it'll take black nationalism today to remove colonialism from the backs and the minds of 22 million Afro-Americans here in this country.

And 1964 looks like it might be the year of the ballot or the bullet. Why does it look like it might be the year of the ballot or the bullet? Because Negroes have listened to the trickery, and the lies, and the false promises of the white man now for too long. And they're fed up. They've become disenchanted. They've become disillusioned. They've become dissatisfied, and all of this has built up frustrations in the black community that makes the black community throughout America today more explosive than all of the atomic bombs the Russians can ever invent. Whenever you got a racial powder keg sitting in your lap, you're in more trouble than if you had an atomic powder keg sitting in your lap. When a racial powder keg goes off, it doesn't care who it knocks out the way. Understand this, it's dangerous. And in 1964 this seems to be the year, because what can the white man use now to fool us after he put down that march on Washington? And you see all through that now. He tricked you, had you marching down to Washington. Yes, had you marching back and forth between the feet of a dead man named Lincoln and another dead man named George Washington singing "We Shall Overcome". He made a chump out of you. He made a fool out of you. He made you think you were going somewhere and you end up going nowhere but between Lincoln and Washington. So today, our people are disillusioned. They've become disenchanted. They've become dissatisfied, and in their frustrations they want action. And in 1964 you'll see this young black man, this new generation asking for the ballot or the bullet. That old Uncle Tom action is outdated. The young generation don't want to hear anything about the odds are against us. What do we care about odds?

When this country here was first being founded there were 13 colonies. The whites were colonized. They were fed up with this taxation without representation, so some of them stood up and said "liberty or death." Though I went to a white school over here in Mason, Michigan, the white man made the mistake of letting me read his history books. He made the mistake of teaching me that Patrick Henry was a patriot, and George Washington, wasn't nothing non-violent about old Pat or George Washington. Liberty or death was what brought about the freedom of whites in this country from the English. They didn't care about the odds. Why they faced the wrath of the entire British Empire. And in those days they used to say that the British Empire was so vast and so powerful when the sun - the sun would never set on them. This is how big it was, yet these 13 little, scrawny states, tired of taxation without representation, tired of being exploited and oppressed and degraded, told that big British Empire "liberty or death". And here you have 22 million Afro-American black people today catching more hell than Patrick Henry ever saw. And I'm here to tell you in case you don't know it that you got a new generation of black people in this country who don't care anything whatsoever

about odds. They don't want to hear you old Uncle Tom handkerchief heads talking about the odds. No. This is a new generation. If they're gonna draft these young black men and send them over to Korea or South Vietnam to face 800 million Chinese - if you're not afraid of those odds, you shouldn't be afraid of these odds.

Why is America, why does this loom to be such an explosive political year? Because this is the year of politics. This is the year when all of the white politicians are going to come into the Negro community. You never see them until election time. You can't find them until election time. They're going to come in with false promises, and as they make these false promises they're gonna feed our frustrations and this will only serve to make matters worse. I'm no politician. I'm not even a student of politics. I'm not a Republican, nor a Democrat, nor an American, and got sense enough to know it. I'm one of the 22 million black victims of the Democrats, one of the 22 million black victims of the Republicans, and one of the 22 million black victims of Americanism. And when I speak, I don't speak as a Democrat, or a Republican, *nor an American*. I speak as a victim of America's so-called democracy. You and I have never seen democracy; all we've seen is hypocrisy. When we open our eyes today and look around America, we see America not through the eyes of someone who has enjoyed the fruits of Americanism, we see America through the eyes of someone who has been the victim of Americanism. We don't see any American dream; we've experienced only the American nightmare. We haven't benefited from America's democracy; we've only suffered from America's hypocrisy. And the generation that's coming up now can see it and are not afraid to say it. If you go to jail, so what? If you black, you were born in jail. If you black, you were born in jail, in the North as well as the South. Stop talking about the South. Long as you south of the Canadian border, you're south.

Don't call Governor Wallace a Dixie governor; Romney is a Dixie governor. 22 million black victims of Americanism are waking up and they're gaining a new political consciousness, becoming politically mature. And as they develop this political maturity, they're able to see the recent trends in these political elections. They see that the whites are so evenly divided that every time they vote the race is so close they have to go back and count the votes all over again. And that means that any block, any minority that has a block of votes that stick together is in a strategic position. Either way you go, that's who gets it. You're in a position to determine who will go to the White House, and who will stay in the doghouse. You're the one who has that power. You can keep Johnson in Washington DC, or you can send him back to his Texas cotton patch. You're the one who sent Kennedy to Washington. You're the one who put the present Democratic Administration in Washington DC. The whites were evenly divided. It was the fact that you threw 80% of your votes behind the Democrats that put the Democrats in the White House. When you see this, you can see that the Negro vote is the key factor. And despite the fact that you are in a position to be the determining factor, what do you get out of it? The Democrats have been in Washington DC only because of the Negro vote. They've been down there four years, and there all other legislations they wanted to bring up they brought it up and gotten it out of the way, and now they bring up you. And now, they bring up you. You put them first, and they put you last 'cause you're a chump, a political chump. In Washington DC, in the House of Representatives there are 257 who are Democrats; only 177 are Republican. In the Senate there are 67 Democrats; only 33 are Republicans. The Party that you backed controls two-thirds of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and still they can't keep their promise to you, 'cause you're a chump. Anytime you throw your weight behind the political party that controls two-thirds of the government, and that Party can't keep the promise that it made to you during election time, and you're dumb enough to walk around continuing to identify yourself with that Party, you're not only a chump, but you're a traitor to your race.

And what kind of alibi do they come up with? They try and pass the buck to the Dixiecrats. Now back during the days when you were blind, deaf, and dumb, ignorant, politically immature, naturally you went along with that. But today as your eyes come open, and you develop political maturity, you're able to see and think for yourself, and you can see that a Dixiecrat is nothing but a Democrat in disguise.

You look at the structure of the government that controls this country; it's controlled by 16 senatorial committees and 20 congressional committees. Of the 16 senatorial committees that run the government, 10 of them are in the hands of Southern segregationists. Of the 20 congressional committees that run the government, 12 of them are in the hands of Southern segregationists. And they're going to tell you and me that the South lost the war. You, today, are in the hands of a government of segregationists, racists, white supremacists who belong to the Democratic party, but disguise themselves as Dixiecrats. A Dixiecrat is nothing but a Democrat. Whoever runs the Democrats is also the father of the Dixiecrats, and the father of all of them is sitting in the White House. I say and I say it again: You got a President who's nothing but a Southern segregationist from the state of Texas. They'll lynch you in Texas as quickly as they'll lynch you in Mississippi. Only in Texas they lynch you with a Texas accent; in Mississippi they lynch you with a Mississippi accent. And the first thing the cracker does when he comes in power, he takes all the Negro leaders and invites them for coffee to show that he's alright. And those Uncle Toms can't pass up the coffee. They come away from the coffee table telling you and me that this man is alright 'cause he's from the South, and since he's from the South he can deal with the South. Look at the logic that they're using. What about Eastland? He's from the South. Make him the President. He can - if Johnson is a good man from the 'cause he's from Texas, and being from Texas will enable him to deal with the South, Eastland can deal with the South better than Johnson. Oh, I say you've been misled. You been had. You been took.

I was in Washington a couple weeks ago while the Senators were filibustering, and I noticed in the back of the Senate a huge map, and on this map it showed the distribution of Negroes in America, and surprisingly the same Senators that were involved in the filibuster were from the states where there were the most Negroes. Why were they filibustering the civil rights legislation? Because the civil rights legislation is supposed to guarantee voting rights to Negroes in those states, and those senators from those states know that if the Negroes in those states can vote, those senators are down the drain. The Representatives of those states go down the drain. And in the Constitution of this country it has a stipulation wherein, whenever the rights, the voting rights, of people in a certain district are violated, then the Representative who's from that particular district, according to the Constitution, is supposed to be expelled from the Congress. Now, if this particular aspect of the Constitution was enforced, why you wouldn't have a cracker in Washington DC. But what would happen when you expel the Dixiecrat, you're expelling the Democrat. When you destroy the power of the Dixiecrat, you're destroying the power of the Democratic Party. So how in the world can the Democratic Party in the South actually side with you in sincerity, when all of its power is based in the South? These Northern Democrats are in cahoots with the Southern Democrats. They're playing a giant con game, a political con game. You know how it goes. One of them comes to you and makes believe he's for you, and he's in cahoots with the other one that's not for you. Why? Because neither one of them is for you, but they got to make you go with one of them or the other. So this is a con game. And this is what they've been doing with you and me all these years. First thing Johnson got off the plane when he become President, he asked "Where's Dicky?" You know who "Dicky" is? Dicky is old Southern cracker Richard Russell. Look here, yes. Lyndon Johnson's best friend is the one who is the head, who's heading the forces that are filibustering civil rights legislation. You tell me how in the hell is he going to be

Johnson's best friend? How can Johnson be his friend, and your friend too? No, that man is too tricky. Especially if his friend is still old Dicky. Whenever the Negroes keep the Democrats in power, they're keeping the Dixiecrats in power. Is this true? A vote for a Democrat is nothing but a vote for a Dixiecrat. I know you don't like me saying that, but I, I'm not the kind of person who come here to say what you like. I'm going to tell you the truth, whether you like it or not.

Up here, in the North you have the same thing. The Democratic party don't do it. They don't do it that way. They got a think that they call gerrymandering. They maneuver you out of power. Even though you vote, they fix it so you're voting for nobody; they've got you going and coming. In the South, they're outright political wolves. In the North, they're political foxes. A fox and a wolf are both canine, both belong to the dog family. Now you take your choice. You going to choose a Northern dog or a Southern dog? Because either dog you choose I guarantee you you'll still be in the dog house. This is why I say it's the ballot or the bullet. It's liberty or it's death. It's freedom for everybody or freedom for nobody. America today finds herself in a unique situation. Historically, revolutions are bloody. Oh, yes, they are. They haven't never had a blood-less revolution, or a non-violent revolution. That doesn't happen even in Hollywood. You don't have a revolution in which you love your enemy, and you don't have a revolution in which you are begging the system of exploitation to integrate you into it. Revolutions overturn systems. Revolutions destroy systems. A revolution is bloody, but America is in a unique position. She's the only country in history in a position actually to become involved in a blood-less revolution. The Russian revolution was bloody, Chinese revolution was bloody, French revolution was bloody, Cuban revolution was bloody, and there was nothing more bloody then the American Revolution. But today this country can become involved in a revolution that won't take bloodshed. All she's got to do is give the black man in this country everything that's due him, everything.

I hope that the white man can see this, 'cause if he doesn't see it you're finished. If you don't see it you're going to become involved in some action in which you don't have a chance. And we don't care anything about your atomic bomb; it's useless because other countries have atomic bombs. When two or three different countries have atomic bombs, nobody can use them, so it means that the white man today is without a weapon. If you want some action, you gotta come on down to Earth. And there's more black people on Earth than there are white people on Earth.

I only got a couple more minutes. The white man can never win another war on the ground. His days of war, victory, his reign, his days of ground victory are over. Can I prove it? Yes. Take all the action that's going on this earth right now that he's involved in - tell me where he's winning. Nowhere. Why some rice farmers, some rice eaters ran him out of Korea. Yes, they ran him out of Korea. Rice eaters with nothing but gym shoes, and a rifle, and a bowl of rice took him and his tanks and his napalm, and all that other action he's supposed to have and ran him across the Yalu. Why? 'Cause the day that he can win on the ground has passed. Up in French Indo-China those little peasants, rice growers took on the might of the French army and ran all the Frenchmen - you remember Dien Bien Phu. No.

The same thing happened in Algeria, in Africa, they didn't have anything but a rifle. The French had all these highly mechanized instruments of warfare, but they put some guerilla action on, and a white man can't fight a guerilla warfare. Guerilla action takes heart, takes nerve, and he doesn't have that. He's brave when he's got tanks. He's brave when he's got planes. He's brave when he's got bombs. He's brave when he's got a whole lot of company along with him, but you take that little man from Africa and Asia, turn him loose in the

woods with a blade - that's all he needs, all he needs is a blade - and when the sun goes down and it's dark, it's even-steven.

So it's the ballot or the bullet. Today our people can see that we're faced with a government conspiracy. This government has failed us. The senators who are filibustering concerning your and my rights, that's the government. Don't say it's Southern senators. This is the government; this is a government filibuster. It's not a segregationist filibuster. It's a government filibuster. Any kind of activity that takes place on the floor of the Congress or the Senate, it's the government. Any kind of dilly-dallying, that's the government. Any kind of pussy-footing, that's the government. Any kind of act that's designed to delay or deprive you and me right now of getting full rights, that's the government that's responsible. And any time you find the government involved in a conspiracy to violate the citizenship or the civil rights of a people, then you are wasting your time going to that government expecting redress. Instead, you have to take that government to the World Court and accuse it of genocide and all of the other crimes that it is guilty of today.

So those of us whose political, and economic, and social philosophy is black nationalism have become involved in the civil rights struggle. We have injected ourselves into the civil rights struggle, and we intend to expand it from the level of civil rights to the level of human rights. As long as you're fighting on the level of civil rights, you're under Uncle Sam's jurisdiction. You're going to his court expecting him to correct the problem. He created the problem. He's the criminal. You don't take your case to the criminal; you take your criminal to court. When the government of South Africa began to trample upon the human rights of the people of South Africa, they were taken to the U.N. When the government of Portugal began to trample upon the rights of our brothers and sisters in Angola, it was taken before the U.N. Why even the white man took the Hungarian question to the U.N. And just this week Chief Justice Goldberg was crying over 3 million Jews in Russia about their human rights, charging Russia with violating the U.N. charter because of its mistreatment of the human rights of Jews in Russia.

Now you tell me how can the plight of everybody on this earth reach the halls of the United Nations, and you have 22 million Afro-Americans whose choices are being bound, whose little girls are being murdered, whose leaders are being shot down in broad daylight. Now you tell me why the leaders of this struggle have never taken it before the United Nations. So our next move is to take the entire civil rights struggle problems into the United Nations, and let the world see that Uncle Sam is guilty of violating the human rights of 22 million Afro-Americans.

Uncle Sam still has the audacity or the nerve to stand up and represent himself as the leader of the free world. Not only is he a crook, he's a hypocrite. Here he is standing up in front of other people, Uncle Sam, with the blood of your and mine mothers and fathers on his hands, with the blood dripping down his jaws like a bloody-jawed wolf, and still got the nerve to point his finger at other countries. You can't even get civil rights legislation. And this man has got the nerve to stand up and talk about South Africa, or talk about Nazi Germany, or talk about Deutschland. Why? No more days like those. So, I say in my conclusion the only way we're going to solve it - we've got to unite in unity and harmony, and black nationalism is the key. How we gonna overcome the tendency to be at each others throats that always exists in our neighbourhoods? And the reason this tendency exists, the strategy of the white man has always been divide and conquer. He keeps us divided in order to conquer us. He tells you I'm for separation and you for integration to keep us fighting with each other. No, I'm not for separation and you're not for integration. What you and I is for is freedom. Only you think

that integration would get you freedom, I think separation would get me freedom. We both got the same objective, we just got different ways of getting at it.

So I studied this man, Billy Graham, who preaches white nationalism, that's what he preaches. I say that's what he preaches. The whole church structure in this country is white nationalism. You go inside a white church that's what they preaching is white nationalism. They got Jesus white, Mary white, God white, everybody white - that's white nationalism. So what he does the way he circumvents the jealousy and envy that he ordinarily would incur among the heads of the church, wherever he go into an area where the church already is you going into trouble, 'cause they got that thing what you call it - syndicated, they got a syndicate - just like the rest of the Racketeers have. I'm going to say what's on my mind 'cause the churches are, the preachers already proved to you that they got a syndicate.

And when you're out in the rackets, whenever you're getting in another man's territory, you know, they gang up on you. And that's the same way with you ran into the same thing. So how Billy Graham gets around that, instead of going into somebody else's territory, like he going to start up a new church, he doesn't try to start a church. He just goes in preaching Christ. And he says everybody who believes in Him, wherever you go wherever you find him. So this helps all the churches and since it helps all the churches they don't mind fight him.

Well, we gonna do the same thing, only our gospel s black nationalism; his gospel is white nationalism; our gospel is black nationalism. And the gospel of black nationalism, as I told you, means you should control you own, the politics of your community, the economy of your community, and all of the society in which you live should be under your control. And once you feel that this philosophy will solve your problem, go join any church where that's preached. Don't join a church where white nationalism is preached. Now you can go to a Negro church and be exposed to white nationalism 'cause you are when you walk in a Negro church and a white Mary and some white angels - that Negro church is preaching white nationalism. But when you go to a church and you see the pastor of that church with a philosophy and a program that's designed to bring black people together and elevate black people - join that church. Join that church. If you see where the NAACP is preaching and practicing that which is designed to make black nationalism materialize, join the NAACP. Join any kind of organization, civic, religious, fraternal, political, or otherwise that's based on lifting the black man up and making him master of his own community.

It'll be the ballot or it'll be the bullet. It'll be liberty or it'll be death. And if you're not ready to pay that price don't use the word freedom in your vocabulary.

One more thing: I was on a program in Illinois recently with Senator Paul Douglas, a so-called liberal, so-called Democrat, so-called white man, at which time he told me that our African brothers were not interested in us in Africa. He said the Africans are not interested in the American Negro. I knew he was lying, but during the next two or three weeks it's my intention and plan to make a tour of our African homeland. And I hope that when I come back, I'll be able to come back and let you know how our African brothers and sisters feel toward us. And I know before I go there that they love us. We're one; we're the same; the same man who has colonized them all these years, colonized you and me too all these years. And all we have to do now is wake up and work in unity and harmony and the battle will be over. I want to thank the Freedom Now Party and the goal. I want to thank Milton and Richard Henley for inviting me here this afternoon, and also Reverend Cleage. And I want them to know that anything that I can ever do, at any time, to work with anybody in any kind of program that is sincerely designed to eliminate the political, the economic, and the social evils that confront all of our people, in Detroit and elsewhere, all they got to do is give me a telephone call and I'll be on the next jet right on into the city.