

that each new look at him reflects and refracts the nation's changing values. He has been vilified in romantic periods and lionized in entrepreneurial ones. Each era appraises him anew, and in doing so reveals some assessments of itself.

Franklin has a particular resonance in twenty-first-century America. A successful publisher and consummate networker with an inventive curiosity, he would have felt right at home in the information revolution, and his unabashed striving to be part of an upwardly mobile meritocracy made him, in social critic David Brooks's phrase, "our founding Yuppie." We can easily imagine having a beer with him after work, showing him how to use the latest digital device, sharing the business plan for a new venture, and discussing the most recent political scandals or policy ideas. He would laugh at the latest joke about a priest and a rabbi, or about a farmer's daughter. We would admire both his earnestness and his self-aware irony. And we would relate to the way he tried to balance, sometimes uneasily, the pursuit of reputation, wealth, earthly virtues, and spiritual values.

Some who see the reflection of Franklin in the world today fret about a shallowness of soul and a spiritual complacency that seem to permeate a culture of materialism. They say that he teaches us how to live a practical and pecuniary life, but not an exalted existence. Others see the same reflection and admire the basic middle-class values and democratic sentiments that now seem under assault from elitists, radicals, reactionaries, and other bashers of the bourgeoisie. They regard Franklin as an exemplar of the personal character and civic virtue that are too often missing in modern America.

Much of the admiration is warranted, and so too are some of the qualms. But the lessons from Franklin's life are more complex than those usually drawn by either his fans or his foes. Both sides too often confuse him with the striving pilgrim he portrayed in his autobiography. They mistake his genial moral maxims for the fundamental faiths that motivated his actions.

His morality was built on a sincere belief in leading a virtuous life, serving the country he loved, and hoping to achieve salvation through good works. That led him to make the link between private virtue and civic virtue, and to suspect, based on the meager evidence he could muster about God's will, that these earthly virtues were linked to heavenly ones as well. As he put it in the motto for the library he founded, "To pour forth benefits for the common good is divine." In comparison to contemporaries such as Jonathan Edwards, who believed that men were sinners in the hands of an angry God and that salvation could come through grace alone, this outlook might seem somewhat complacent. In some ways it was, but it was also genuine.

Whatever view one takes, it is useful to engage anew with Franklin, for in doing so we are grappling with a fundamental issue: How does one live a life

that is useful, virtuous, worthy, moral, and spiritually meaningful? For that matter, which of these attributes is most important? These are questions just as vital for a self-satisfied age as they were for a revolutionary one.

[2003]

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## Abraham Lincoln

### Second Inaugural Address

*Fellow-Countrymen:*

At this second appearing to take the oath of the Presidential office there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement somewhat in detail of a course to be pursued seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it, all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union and divide effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union even by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with or even before the conflict itself

should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

[March 4, 1865]

## Louise Erdrich

### Indian Boarding School: The Runaways

Home's the place we head for in our sleep.  
Boxcars stumbling north in dreams  
don't wait for us. We catch them on the run.  
The rails, old lacerations that we love,  
shoot parallel across the face and break  
just under Turtle Mountains. Riding scars  
you can't get lost. Home is the place they cross.

The lame guard strikes a match and makes the dark  
less tolerant. We watch through cracks in boards  
as the land starts rolling, rolling till it hurts  
to be here, cold in regulation clothes.  
We know the sheriff's waiting at midrun

to take us back. His car is dumb and warm.  
The highway doesn't rock, it only hums  
like a wing of long insults. The worn-down welts  
of ancient punishments lead back and forth.

All runaways wear dresses, long green ones,  
the color you would think shame was. We scrub  
the sidewalks down because it's shameful work.  
Our brushes cut the stone in watered arcs  
and in the soak frail outlines shiver clear  
a moment, things us kids pressed on the dark  
face before it hardened, pale, remembering  
delicate old injuries, the spines of names and leaves.

[2003]

## Before We Begin: Analysis of a Text *For Whom?*

Even before getting started with rhetorical analysis, we need to get one thing straight: When you analyze anything, you're always analyzing how it works *for someone*. So, while you analyze you need to hypothesize about what you think is the central idea, you need to think about what the author wants *readers* to take home, or what purpose the author wants to accomplish for *readers*, or what attitude about the subject the author wants *readers* to infer, or how the author wants *readers* to perceive the author's character, or how the author wants *readers* to respond emotionally—well, you get the idea.

Your analysis always must consider the text's audience, a potential set of readers or listeners—that's what makes it a *rhetorical* analysis, an examination of how a writer has crafted a text so that it conveys meaning, achieves a purpose or creates an effect for an audience. Some tasks might ask you to analyze how a text works for an audience of yourself and your peers; others might require you to analyze how a text works for an audience of generally well-educated, curious adults; still others might expect you to analyze how a text works for readers of a particular journal or people with highly specialized knowledge about the subject matter.

It's not unusual for an analysis assignment to *omit* specific instructions about the audience for the text being analyzed. In that case, your first hypothesis has to identify these readers. Whom does the text seem to be addressing? How do you know? How does your analysis take these readers into consideration?