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THE RACIAL DIVIDE: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF

LOUIS FARRAKHAN'S MILLION MAN MARCH ADDRESS

A Thesis

Presented to the

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and the

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Martin Andrew Bartness

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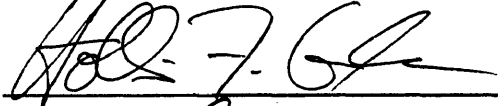789 East Eisenhower Parkway
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THE RACIAL DIVIDE: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF

LOUIS FARRAKHAN'S MILLION MAN MARCH ADDRESS

Martin Andrew Bartness

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Supervisor: Dr. Deborah Smith-Howell

This study examines Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March address delivered on October 16, 1995, in Washington, D.C. The address was analyzed to discover how Farrakhan responded to an historically significant and controversial rhetorical / situation and to determine how race can be discussed in America.

Farrakhan's address was analyzed through an application of Hart's (1990) model of the rhetorical situation. The elements of speaker, setting, audience, topic, and persuasive field were found to have a significant impact on what Farrakhan said during his address.

Despite Farrakhan's explicit statements to the contrary, analysis of the address revealed an attempt by Farrakhan to increase his legitimacy with African Americans beyond his audience of traditional appeal. His criticism of whites during the address, however, called into question his desire to bridge the racial divide between blacks and whites. The analysis concluded it is unlikely Farrakhan or

any other figure will be received as a nationally respected leader by large numbers of both races unless he or she speaks to the anger, fears, and frustrations of both whites and blacks.

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On a personal note, I would like to thank my parents who have sustained me through their love, encouragement, and unflagging belief in my abilities. And to my wonderful fiance, Melissa, for tolerating my personality while completing this thesis and for offering the promise of a wonderful life together.

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CHAPTER ONE   INTRODUCTION

Race relations between blacks and whites in America is a "hot issue." It has been a hot issue for at least forty years when, in the wake of the Supreme Court's controversial *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, "The Black Revolt" began in Montgomery, Alabama (Burns & Peltason, 1966, p.168). According to Bosmajian & Bosmajian (1969), the 1955 boycott of Montgomery's bus system marked the beginning of the civil rights movement, a movement previously unable to sustain itself (p.3). The Montgomery Bus Boycott also marshaled in the civil rights movement's first charismatic leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and leader of non-violent resistance to the status quo of race relations (Burns & Peltason, 1966, p.168). In turn, the 1960s witnessed the organization of the Committee on Racial Equality (CORE), the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (Burns & Peltason, 1966, p.168), and the birth of the more militant "Black Power" movement (Borden, 1973, p.428), all designed to improve the social, economic, and political plight of black Americans.

In 1995, race relations between blacks and whites in America remain fractured, hostile, and fervently discussed. Perhaps the most hotly-contested issue of race in America is affirmative action. Affirmative action has received cover-story treatment in the **New York Times Magazine** (1995, June

11), <u>The Chronicle of Higher Education</u> (1995, April 28),

<u>Newsweek</u> (1995, April 3), and <u>U.S. News & World Report</u>

(1995, February 13). In addition, well-known social

commentators such as Shelby Steele (1990), Andrew Hacker

(1992), Derrick Bell (1992), Rush Limbaugh (1993), and

Thomas Sowell (1994) have discussed the ethical dilemmas and

social effects of affirmative action policies.

It is important to recognize the issue of race has

reached far beyond affirmative action. The trial of Hall of

Fame football player O.J. Simpson, for example, was

"transformed into a national teach-in on the gulf that

exists between black and white attitudes toward the criminal

justice system" (Smolowe, 1994). Elsewhere, Washington Post

Writers Group columnist William Raspberry charged the

American Enterprise Institute's Dinesh D'Souza, author of

<u>The End of Racism,</u> with writing a book "only racists could

cheer" (1995, p.21). Similar to Murray and Herrnstein's <u>The</u>

<u>Bell Curve,</u> in which it is argued "'Success and failure in

the American economy, . . . are increasingly a matter of the

genes that people inherit'" (Bruning, 1994, p.13), D'Souza

attributed the lower status of blacks in America to "'a

natural hierarchy of racial abilities'" (Raspberry, 1995,

p.21).

Other issues have illuminated the social disparities

between blacks and whites. In public education, for

example, "savage inequalities" exist between schools
attended by minorities and those predominantly attended by
whites (Kozol, 1991). In the job market, despite closing
the education gap significantly, blacks still trail whites
in employment opportunities (1995, May 22, Jet, p.60) and
median income: "the median income for White families
increased 9 percent over the past 20 years to $39,310, while
the median income of Black families remained stagnant at
$21,550" (1995, March 13, Jet, p.40). "Even among the
younger, better-educated group, in which experience ought to
be less of a variable, [blacks] work longer hours but still
make less money than whites do" (Roberts, 1995, pp.1&4).

Family structure is also less stable for black
families. According to Benson (1995), out-of-wedlock births
for African Americans increased from 23 percent to 68
percent between 1960 and 1991, whereas for whites, although
dramatic, the rate increased from 2 percent to 22 percent
(p.47). Finally, Tonry (1994) concluded that "racial
disparities in arrests, jailing, and imprisonment steadily
worsened after 1980" because of politicians' appeals to
"anti-Black sentiments of White voters" and "harsh crime
control and drug policies that exacerbated existing racial
disparities" (p.475). Today, "Nearly 1 in every 3 black men
between 20 and 29 years of age is behind bars, on probation
or parole" (Lacayo, October 30, 1995, p.1). Clearly, then,

because race and "racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society" (Bell, 1992, p.ix), the issues surrounding it are discussed far-and-wide by figures both obscure and prominent.

One of the most vocal and widely-recognized figures weighing-in on the issue of race is Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam. Never one to shy from controversy, Farrakhan has branded Judaism a "gutter" and "dirty religion" (Meyers, 1993, p.23), lauded Hitler as a "great man" (p.23), accepted "a $5 million gift from Libya's patron of terrorism, Muammar al-Qaddafi" (Brackman, 1994, p.5), threatened to punish Washington Post reporter Milton Coleman "with death!" and his wife with eternal damnation (Time, 1984, April 16), charged the United States Government with "'genocide'" against blacks (Goldzwig, 1989, p.216), and vilified whites as "sick" and in need of burial (p.215). Even blacks have been ridiculed by Farrakhan, calling some "'Uncle Toms,'" and others "'dressed-up Brooks Brothers, alligator shoe-wearing, diamond ring-wearing slaves[s]'" (Goldzwig, 1989, p.217). It seems no one is exempt from his inflammatory rhetoric.

The upshot of Farrakhan's vitriol is widespread publicity (Mack, 1994, p.34). According to a Time/CNN poll of 504 African Americans, 73% of those surveyed were familiar with Farrakhan -- "more than any other black

political figure except Jesse Jackson and Supreme Court
Justice Clarence Thomas" (Henry, 1994, p.22). He has
appeared on *Donahue* (Reed, 1991, p.1), *CNN* (Berman, 1994,
p.5), *Black Entertainment Television,* and *Arsenio Hall*
(Schmuhl, 1994, p.42), to name a few, and has been the
attention of cover or feature-length stories in numerous
national publications: Newsweek (July 13, 1987; October 30,
1995), The Nation (January 21, 1991), Time (February 28,
1994; October 30, 1995), Society (September/October 1994),
Dissent (Summer 1994), and the Chicago Tribune (March 12-15,
1995). In addition, Farrakhan is a popular figure on the
lecture circuit, commanding fees of $15,000 to $20,000 per
speech (Henry, 1994, p.27). Although he typically draws
15,000 to 20,000 people to his lectures, he has been known
to attract as many as 60,000, as he did in Atlanta in 1992
outdrawing the World Series (Rolland, 1995, p.379). But his
greatest publicity coup occurred on October 16, 1995. The
Million Man March "to empower black men," envisioned by
Farrakhan and designed to attract the largest assembly ever
held in Washington, D.C., reached "far beyond the Muslim
sect's traditional constituency for support" (Moss, 1995,
September 25, p.3A). Although the exact attendance figure
is unknown and a source of great controversy, at least
400,000 black men listened to speakers throughout the day at
the nation's capital (Holmes, 1995, October 18, p.1).

Additionally, CNN officials stated 2.2 million households tuned in to Farrakhan's address at the March, making it the most widely-viewed speech of 1995, surpassing President Clinton's State of the Union Message and the pope's address to the United Nations (Holmes, 1995, October 18).

The publicity garnered by Farrakhan has won him both support -- 62% of blacks familiar with him said he was good for the black community, 63% said he speaks the truth, and 67% said he is an effective leader" (Henry, 1994, p.22) -- and condemnation -- according to a survey of over 100 radio stations conducted by Talkers magazine, he is the sixth most vilified personality on talk radio since 1990, preceded only by Bill Clinton, Hilary Rodham Clinton, Saddam Hussein, Dan Quayle, and George Bush (America Online, May 23, 1994). Favorable or unfavorable one's evaluation of his rhetoric, his voice is heard.

Justification/Rationale for this study

Despite the media attention given to Farrakhan and his emergence as a national political figure (Reed, 1991, p.56), a paucity of scholarly research concerning him exists. In fact, there are only two scholarly articles and two doctoral dissertations with more than a passing reference to him: Goldzwig's (1989) "A social movement perspective on demagoguery: Achieving symbolic realignment," Mamiya's

(1982) "From Black Muslim to Bilalian: The evolution of a movement," Gaber's (1986) "Lamb of God or demagogue? A Burkean cluster analysis of the selected speeches of Louis Farrakhan," and McFadden-Preston's (1986) "The rhetoric of Minister Louis Farrakhan: A pluralistic approach." Most alarmingly, given communication-oriented characterizations of Farrakhan as a "thespian" (Meyers, 1994), an opportunist capitalizing on bigotry (Henry, 1994, p.27), "articulate, skillful, and clever" (Meyers, 1994, p.23), "venomous but not inarticulate" (Berman, 1994, p.4), and a "demagogue" (Goldzwig, 1989, p.212) whose "reality is largely rhetorical" (Schmuhl, 1994, p.42), only Goldzwig's (1989) article is published in a communication studies journal. This thesis, in conducting an analyis of the rhetorical situation surrounding the October 16, 1995 Million Man March, and Louis Farrakhan's two hour and twenty-seven minute address delivered at the March, will serve to fill a void in communication research and shed light on a prominent contemporary figure in race relations.

The study of Louis Farrakhan is perhaps more important now than ever. Urban blight paralyzes the black community through high unemployment rates, family dissolution, drugs, gang warfare, urban flight by educated and professional blacks, and decaying institutions such as public schools, parks and recreation facilities, and settlement houses

(Sales, 1994, pp.6-7). As a result, interest in the Black
Muslims and their message of black pride and self-
determination has struck a chord within the black community,
particularly among the youth. There is a strong perception
within this sector of the population that conventional
avenues of civil disobedience produce few results in the
form of increased political and economic power, and
therefore, "today's youth generation, out of the desperate
conditions of its existence, is much less shocked by [the
Nation of Islam's] rhetoric and seeks to embrace [its]
revolutionary speech and example" (Sales, 1994, p.5).

The study of Farrakhan is a "daunting task," but an
"urgent" one, too (Henry, 1994, p.22), for he is someone to
whom both black people and white people should listen.
"Blacks because he speaks to them -- whites because he
speaks against them -- and both because his assessment of
the world, whether right or wrong, can force us to more
closely examine our own" (Rolland, 1995, p.376).

A History of the Nation of Islam

Before Farrakhan's rhetoric is analyzed, a brief
history of the Nation of Islam is warranted. This history
will be provided through a discussion of the Nation of
Islam's leaders: W.D. Farad Muhammad, Elijah Muhammad,
Malcolm X, Warith (Wallace) Deen Muhammad, and Louis

Farrakhan.

W.D. Farad Muhammad

C. Eric Lincoln (1973), in his seminal work on the Nation of Islam (NOI), <u>The Black Muslims in America,</u> coined the term "Black Muslims" to designate a movement of black Americans belonging to the Muslim faith (p.xi-xii).[1] The founder of the Black Muslims, W.D. Farad Muhammad,[2] appeared in Detroit in 1930 as mysteriously as he disappeared in 1934 (Lincoln, 1973, p.xxv). Before he departed, however, the silk peddler who worked the poor neighborhoods of Detroit (Rolland, 1995, p.377) had planted the seeds of an organization designed

> to recognize the anger and explain the
> disenfranchisement of black people -- poor and middle
> class alike -- while instilling group identity, self-
> respect and hope. The Nation of Islam addresses the
> issues of religion, racism, economic exclusion, drug
> abuse and destruction of the traditional family
> (Rolland, 1995, p.376).

When traveling door-to-door, Farad discussed three concepts which became the foundation of his ideology: "Allah is God, the white man is the devil and the so-called Negroes are the Asiatic Black people, the cream of the planet earth" (Marsh, 1984, p.52).

According to Marsh, "no Muslim community changed the doctrine, rituals, and beliefs [of Islam] as radically as did members of the Nation of Islam" (1984, p.2). The organization's doctrine, a mixture of Koranic principles, the Bible, Farad's own beliefs, and those of black nationalists Marcus Garvey[3] and Noble Drew Ali, formed primarily a social movement organization rather than a religious body (Marsh, 1984, p.3). At its core was the struggle to overcome the effects of slavery and to achieve equality within a capitalist economy and predominantly white society. Farad "fought fire with fire, racism with racism, and ignorance with ignorance. . . . [Blacks] were taught to believe that they were the ones who were favored by the god of creation, and they were to be his means of redemption for a world soon to be destroyed" (Battle, 1988, p.35). Because of Farad's vision of whites as "devils," his solution was a separation of the races (Marsh, 1984, pp.2-3). This included isolating themselves from and rejecting Christianity, '"the white man's religion'" (Lincoln, 1973, p.30). According to Farad, only through a complete rejection of whites, including their religion, could blacks restore a sense of self required to succeed.

One of the more mystical and certainly dubious reconstructions of reality to support Farad's contention that all blacks are good and all whites are evil is the Myth

of Yakub. Lincoln (1973) called this "the central myth of
the Black Muslim Movement. It is the fundamental premise
upon which rests the whole theory of black supremacy and
white degradation" (pp.78-79). Smith (1995) explained the
myth in the following manner:

> Blacks belong to the tribe of Shabazz, which came from
> space 66 trillion years ago. The white race was
> created 6,000 years ago by a black scientist named
> Yakub. Yakub, through genetic manipulation, created a
> number of races that were lighter, weaker and
> genetically inferior to the black man. The lowest
> order of races is the Caucasian. The white man turned
> out to be liar and a murderer . . . but Allah allowed
> the Caucasian to dominate the world as a test for the
> black race (p.378).

Narratives such as this have attempted to provide Black
Muslims with their own identity and significant place in
history.

The lasting effects of Farad's efforts "were some eight
thousand members of the black community who had been
converted to [his] brand of Islam, acquiring for themselves
both new beliefs and a new self-image" (Battle, 1988, p.34).
The most significant member to be converted by Farad before
his disappearance was Elijah Muhammad.

Elijah Muhammad

Upon the disappearance of Farad in 1934, Elijah

Muhammad, formerly Elijah Poole (Cone, 1993, p.49), assumed

leadership of the Nation of Islam (Mamiya, 1982, p.146). In

keeping with Farad's intentions of "dismantl[ing] the

Europeanized form of god" (Rashad, 1993, p.5), Muhammad

presented Master Farad Muhammad as Allah in person (p.4),

and himself as "the Messenger of Allah to black people"

(p.2). During his 41-year tenure, the longest of any of the

NOI's leaders, "The Honorable Elijah Muhammad laid the

foundation for the longest lasting, . . . most enduring,

and . . . most influential black religio-nationalist

movement in American history" (Rashad, 1993, p.1).

According to Elijah Muhammad's wishes, the Black

Muslims "state their protest in the form of . . . ten

propositions" (Lincoln, 1973, p.xxvii), a synthesis of the

teachings of Farad and Muhammad. The propositions are

printed in every issue of the Black Muslim newspaper The

Final Call (formerly Muhammad Speaks) (Lincoln, 1973,

p.xxvii):

1. We want freedom.

2. We want justice.

3. We want equality of opportunity.

4. We want our people in America, . . . to be allowed

   to establish a separate state or territory of their

own. . . .

5. We want freedom for all Believers of Islam now held
   in federal prison.

6. We want an immediate end to the police brutality and
   mob attacks against the so-called Negro throughout
   the United States.

7. As long as we are not allowed to establish a state
   or territory of our own, we demand . . . equal
   employment opportunities -- **NOW!** . . .

8. We want the government . . . to exempt our people
   from ALL taxation . . .

9. We want equal education but separate schools up to
   16 for boys and 18 for girls . . .

10. We believe that intermarriage or race mixing should
    be prohibited (Lincoln, 1973, p.xxvii-xxviii).

It is also policy to print in The Final Call "What the
Muslims Believe," as established by Muhammad:

1. WE BELIEVE in One God Whose proper Name is Allah.

2. WE BELIEVE in the Holy Qur'an and in the Scriptures
   of all the Prophets of God.

3. WE BELIEVE in the truth of the Bible, but we believe
   it has been tampered with and must be reinterpreted
   so that mankind will not be snared by the

falsehoods . . . added to it.

4. WE BELIEVE in Allah's Prophets and the Scriptures they brought to the people.

5. WE BELIEVE in . . . mental resurrection.

6. WE BELIEVE in the judgement.

7. WE BELIEVE this is the time in history for the separation of the so-called Negroes and the so-called white Americans.

8. WE BELIEVE in justice for all . . . we respect [the] laws which govern this nation.

9. WE BELIEVE that the offer of integration is hypocritical and is made by those who are trying to deceive the Black peoples into believing that their 400-year-old open enemies of freedom, justice and equality are, all of a sudden, their "friends."

10. WE BELIEVE that we who declare ourselves to be righteous Muslims, should not participate in wars which take the lives of humans, . . . [and] for [which] we have nothing to gain unless America agrees to give us . . . territory.

11. WE BELIEVE our women should be respected and protected as women of other nationalities are respected and protected.

12. WE BELIEVE that Allah (god) appeared in the Person of Master W. Fard Muhammad, July 1930 . . . . . We

believe further . . . that Allah is God and besides HIM there is no God (<u>The Final Call,</u> 1994, September 14, p.39).

By the time of Elijah Muhammad's death in 1975, there were approximately 70 NOI temples across the country and over 100,000 members who had converted to his unique brand of theology (Smith, 1990, p.112). He was also directly responsible for the recruitment and development of the NOI's future leaders: Malcolm X, Wallace Muhammad, and Louis Farrakhan.

Malcolm X

Thirty years after his assassination, Malcolm X has become "'a cult of the personality,' a larger than life figure" (Rashad, 1993, p.11). Through the tremendous energy of today's youth in search of a politics of liberation, Malcolm has been firmly established as an icon equal to Dr. King in the pantheon of Black heroes (Sales, 1994, p.19). But Malcolm's road to icon status was an arduous one.

His early years were very influential in forming the violent, separatist, supremacist, anti-Christian, and apolitical ideology with which he came to be associated (Watson, 1973, pp.194-195). His parents, a Grenadan woman and a Baptist preacher who spread the word of Marcus Garvey

(Haley, 1965, pp.2-3), provided his first experiences with a violent world: his parents were abusive toward each other and their children, his mother was raped by a white man, the family was driven out of Omaha, Nebraska by the Ku Klux Klan, and his father was killed by a street car (Cone, 1993, pp.42-43). After his father's death, Malcolm's family often went without food, his mother was committed to the state hospital in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and he and his brothers and sisters became wards of the state (Cone, 1993, p.44).

At the age of fifteen Malcolm dropped out of school and moved to Boston. Shortly thereafter the itinerant youth traveled to New York where he became schooled "in such hustles as the numbers, pimping, con games of many kinds, peddling dope, and thievery of all sorts, including armed robbery" (Haley, 1965, p.83). Just before his twenty-first birthday, Malcolm was caught and sentenced (for burglary) to eight to ten years in prison. In retrospect, Malcolm considered his arrest and incarceration "fortunate, . . . for it was in prison that he encountered the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, teachings that radically transformed his life" (Cone, 1993, p.49).

Although Malcolm is the NOI member considered most responsible for the impact of the Black Muslims on black American life (Cone, 1993, p.91), he never assumed the leadership position of the NOI. Despite his unflagging

commitment to Elijah Muhammad, both personally and ideologically (Cone, 1993, p.92), he only became the Nation's national spokesman. There are multiple reasons for this.

The first and primary reason is his assassination on February 21, 1965 (Bosmajian & Bosmajian, 1969, p.19), the circumstances of which remain a source of speculation. Some have implicated Louis Farrakhan (Rolland, 1995, p.379), others the CIA, and others yet the erstwhile Black Muslims convicted of the crime (Lincoln, 1973, p.211).

Another reason for Malcolm's halted ascendence through the ranks of the NOI is jealousy. Because he rapidly climbed the organization's hierarchy -- from grassroots proselytizer, to "minister of the powerful Temple No.7 in Harlem," to Elijah Muhammad's chief aide and national spokesman (Lincoln, 1973, p.207) -- he drew considerable resentment from the Nation's rank-and-file; many thought he was becoming too powerful (Lincoln, 1973, p.211).

A third explanation can be attributed to Malcolm's expressed opinion that President John F. Kennedy's assassination "was a matter of 'chickens coming home to roost'" (Lincoln, 1973, p.210). In order to disassociate the NOI from Malcolm's comments, Muhammad imposed a ninety-day suspension on him, preventing public appearances (Lincoln, 1973, p.211).

A fourth explanation is Malcolm's slow but steady ideological transcendence of the NOI. According to Sales (1994),

> He developed a profound concern for Africa and the
> Third World. . . . Most important, he wanted to
> establish an activist, nationalist presence within the
> Civil Rights movement, using the NOI as his base. This
> desire brought him into conflict with the leadership of
> the NOI (p.36).

This transformation can be placed temporally upon his return from his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964. Instead of strictly adhering to the NOI's propositions as he did in his early years as a member of the Black Muslims -- nonparticipation in American politics, anti-white sentiments, racial separation, repudiation of Christianity, and scorn of Martin Luther King and the mainstream civil rights movement -- Malcolm's rhetoric reflected a significant change in his fundamental beliefs. According to Malcolm, "'a blanket indictment of all white people is as wrong as when whites make blanket indictments against blacks'" (Bosmajian & Bosmajian, 1969, p.21). Furthermore, because of Malcolm's efforts to move the organization away from "its exclusively religious focus toward an engagement of issues in the mainstream of the socio-political life of America and the world" (Cone, 1993, p.186), he alienated himself from the

NOI's members and leadership.

The final contributing factor to the gulf between Malcolm and the rest of the organization's members was the charges of infidelity Malcolm leveled against Muhammad (Rashad, 1993, p.30). James H. Cone, author of <u>Martin & Malcolm & America,</u> summarized these contributing factors most succinctly: "the break between Malcolm and Muhammad could not have been avoided. Malcolm was too political and honest, and Muhammad was too religious and hypocritical for them to sustain their relationship" (p.190).

Because of the chasm formed between Malcolm and the NOI, "early in March of 1964, Malcolm withdrew from the Black Muslims and formed his own organization, The Muslim Mosque, Inc., followed by its secular counterpart, the Organization of Afro-American Unity" (OAAU) (Lincoln, 1973, p.211). This marked a dramatic shift in Malcolm's thoughts and practices. According to Karenga (1979), Malcolm cautioned

> nationalists not to be dogmatic or narrow and urged
> them to condemn people, not for their race, but for
> their social thought and practice. . . . Open-
> mindedness and flexibility, yet constant commitment to
> the overriding objective of Black liberation by any
> means necessary defined the development and direction
> of Malcolm's social thought (p.256).

Today, Malcolm's ubiquitous presence, in the forms of strident quotations and the defiant 'X' symbol, can be found emblazoned on hats, jeans, t-shirts, greeting cards, and posters, and in speech anthologies, books, rap lyrics, and feature-length films (p.4). To some scholars, this publicity has corrupted the memory of Malcolm X. Henry Louis Gates, for example, chair of the department of African-American studies at Harvard, charged popular culture with emptying Malcolm of his complexity (Whitaker, 1992, November 16, p.72). However, regardless of one's position on the legacy of Malcolm X, his status in history as an advocate for the black masses cannot be compromised. According to Sales (1994):

> Under Malcolm's direction, more than 200 additional
> temples were organized. During his stewardship, the
> NOI grew in size and prestige and was noted for its
> ability to reach and transform the lives of the most
> anti-social Black people, including those
> incarcerated in prison (p.36).

Warith Deen Muhammad

Upon the death of his father Elijah Muhammad in 1975, Warith (Wallace) Deen Muhammad, according to Elijah's wishes, was promoted to the leadership position in the Nation of Islam. "Wallace D. Muhammad's leadership ushered

in a new era for what had become the most misunderstood, powerful, and feared black separatist organization in the United States" (Marsh, 1984. p.5). More importantly for the purposes of this thesis, "Without him, most of us probably would never have heard of Louis Farrakhan" (Rolland, 1995, p.379).

The year 1975 marked the beginning of a schism in the organization. Instead of carrying on the tradition of the Nation of Islam as Farad and Elijah Muhammad had dictated, Wallace Muhammad took the dramatic step of moving toward orthodox Islam[4]. Instead of believing all whites are *ipso facto* evil, Wallace considered "whiteness" to be a "symbol of evil only when . . . linked to the attitudes and values that characterize white supremacy and racism" (Mamiya, 1982, p.143). According to Marsh (1984), author of <u>From Black Muslim to Muslim: The Transition from Separation to Islam, 1930-1980,</u> Wallace

> debunked the racial superiority doctrine of Elijah
> Muhammad; redefined Wali Fard Muhammad as wise man
> instead of 'God in person'; restored Malcolm X to a
> position of respect and prominence in the organization;
> separated business from religious practices; ceased the
> demand for a separate state; began to honor the
> American Constitution, and brought the doctrine in line
> with Orthodox Islamic practices (p.93).

Other changes implemented by Wallace included changing the
name of black Americans' nationality from the tribe of
Shabazz to "Bilalian," after the Ethiopian Muslim, Bilal
(Marsh, 1984, p.93); encouraging voting and honoring of the
American flag (Marsh, 1984, p.94); relaxing dress and
grooming codes (Marsh, 1984, p.95); and restructuring the
subservient roles of women to accommodate more egalitarian
positions in society (Marsh, 1984, p.96). These changes
were obviously very radical and often diametrically opposed
to the forty-five year tradition established by Wallace's
predecessors. As a result, there exist approximately 17 or
more American black Muslim sects that depart from orthodox
Islam (Henry, 1990, p.112), not the least of which is Louis
Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, formed in 1978 after his break
with Wallace's World Community of Islam in the West.

As part of his goal to "reconstruct and restructure the
Nation . . . to eradicate its black nationalist image
completely" (Mamiya, 1982, p.143), Wallace changed the name
of the NOI to the World Community of Islam in the West, and
again in 1980 to the American Muslim Mission (AMM) (Battle,
1988, p.37). Accompanying this name change was a shift in
the organization's primary audience: instead of appealing
to the lower-class members of the black community, Wallace's
movement focused on the middle-class (Mimaya, 1982, p.145).
This can be explained by the success of Elijah Muhammad's

emphasis on an independent black economy and ascetic lifestyle (Mimaya, 1982, p.147). Because the NOI invoked a "Black Puritan ethic" that ultimately created a black middle class (Mimaya, 1982, p.147), many of the nationalistic appeals such as the Myth of Yakub seemed "puzzling or intellectually repugnant" to some black intellectuals and college students (Mimaya, 1982, p.147). In Wallace's opinion, then, "'The message of Elijah Muhammad did not fit the times. Times have changed and people have changed'" (Mimaya, 1982, p.148). A more sophisticated appeal was therefore warranted.

The AMM was ultimately decentralized; since 1985, the local centers have been under the control of the imams (ministers) rather than the Chicago headquarters. Wallace now operates as an independent Muslim lecturer of the World Council Masajid headquartered in Mecca, Saudi Arabia (Smith, 1990, p.112).

Louis Farrakhan

Born in the Bronx and raised in Boston (Mamiya, 1982, p.141) as Louis Eugene Wolcott, Abdul Haleem Farrakhan, like Malcolm X, cast aside his "slave name" upon joining the Nation of Islam and became Louis X (Smith, 1990, p.126). An accomplished musician who attended Winston-Salem Teachers College in North Carolina, Farrakhan seemed headed for

other pursuits when he heard Elijah Muhammad speak in 1955.
Abruptly, he chose an unknown future as a member of the NOI
over a promising career in show business (Henry, 1994,
p.24).

Farrakhan's tenure as a member and leader of the Black
Muslims began as a soldier in the Fruit of Islam (Henry,
1994, February 28, p.25), "the most powerful single unit
within the movement"[5] (Lincoln, 1973, p.222). But he was
destined for greater things. Virtually attached to the coat
tails of Malcolm, Farrakhan quickly ascended the hierarchy
of the NOI. According to Mamiya (1982):

> Malcolm was influential in Farrakhan's professional
> conversion from professional musician (violinist) and
> calypso singer to minister in the Nation. Minister
> Louis X took over the Boston mosque which Malcolm
> founded, and later, after the split, was awarded
> Malcolm's Temple No.7 in Harlem, the most important
> pastorate in the Nation after the Chicago headquarters.
> He was also appointed National Spokesman or National
> Representative after Malcolm's demise and began to
> introduce the Hon. Elijah Muhammad at Savior Day
> rallies, a task which once belonged to Malcolm
> (p.141).

Both men also started newspapers for the Nation. Malcolm
launched <u>Muhammad Speaks</u> in 1960 (Lincoln, 1973, p.139), and

Farrakhan began printing editions of <u>The Final Call</u>[6] in 1979 (Mamiya, 1982, p.141).

Even today, thirty years after the death of Malcolm, it can be argued Farrakhan remains in his shadow. As author William Sales, Jr., (1994) stated:

> The renewed interest in Malcolm X has . . . led many Black youth who are not familiar with the history of Malcolm's relationship with the Nation of Islam (NOI) back to the various offshoots of the old NOI and most prominently to its new leader, Louis Farrakhan (p.19).

Thus, while renewed interest in Malcolm X is at times positive for Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, it is not always so. For example, the January 12, 1995 indictment against Quibilah Shabazz (one of Malcolm's six daughters), charging her with conspiracy to murder Farrakhan, has led to renewed allegations that Farrakhan was involved in the assassination of Malcolm X (1995, January 15, <u>Omaha World Herald</u>). Furthermore, while Malcolm X is credited with having evolved in his beliefs, Farrakhan is charged with remaining "consistently the same" (Mamiya, 1982, p.141). This is a significant difference between the two men. Henry Louis Gates concurred: "Farrakhan faces a choice. Does he want to be remembered as a great leader, someone who underwent transformation, like Malcolm X? Or does he want to be remembered as one more demagogue" (Henry, 1994,

February 28, p.27)?

"The message and program of Louis Farrakhan's 'second resurrection' of the Nation of Islam is basically the same as that under Elijah Muhammad" (Mamiya, 1982, p.142). Whereas Wallace Muhammad's AMM has retained a largely middle-class membership, Farrakhan's resurrected Nation has returned to the organization's roots, finding its base in society's dejected and forgotten masses (Mamiya, 1982, p.145). Although most noted for its eschewance of Christianity, advocacy of a separate territory or land for black people (Mamiya, 1982, p.142), and distinct garb of suits and bow ties (Henry, 1994, February 28, p.26), today's Nation of Islam adheres to a strict code of conduct, system of beliefs, and list of demands essential for improving the lot of blacks in America. According to Farrakhan's 1993 publication <u>A Torchlight for America,</u> Black Muslims are forbidden to partake in drugs, alcohol, smoking, extra-marital sex, and the consumption of pork (pp.146-147). Similar to his predecessors, Farrakhan educates his proselytes in the history of the black man and the doctrine of self-help (Monroe & Schwartz, 1987, July 13, p.38), admonishes them to sell copies of <u>The Final Call</u> (Henry, 1994, February 28, p.26), and encourages them to "buy black" (Farrakhan, 1993, p.84).

The practice of "buying black" and establishing a

strong economic base is very important to the NOI.
Following the footsteps of Elijah Muhammad, Farrakhan has
launched several business ventures "to provide job
opportunities for all [black] people" (Business Week, 1995,
March 13, p.40). Most notably is POWER (People Organized
and Working for Economic Power), a plan to "solicit every
Black man and woman in business . . . for a ten-dollar
yearly membership fee . . . to develop a national equity
capital fund for Black businesses and entrepreneurs to draw
upon" (Rhines, 1993, p.93). More recently, Farrakhan has
purchased 1,600 acres of farmland in Dawson, Georgia, and he
has plans to open a 2,000 seat auditorium, launch a trucking
company, and provide meat and dairy products for
supermarkets in economically distressed neighborhoods
(Business Week, 1995, March 13, p.40). A series in the
Chicago Tribune on Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam's
business ventures raised serious doubts as to the propriety
and financial management of the organization (Jackson &
Gaines, 1995, March 12). According to Chicago Tribune Staff
Writers David Jackson and William Gaines, "Nation-affiliated
companies are riddled with debt, failure and allegations of
fraud, while Farrakhan, some relatives and top aides live
lavishly" (March 12, 1995, p.1).

Most importantly, however, to sustain black Americans
in their social and economic struggles, Farrakhan instructs

one to look to Allah, "Who Came in the Person of Master Fard
Muhammad," and whose Servant and Apostle is the Honorable
Elijah Muhammad (Farrakhan, 1993, p.v).

Because the NOI is reluctant to divulge personnel
information, there is dispute over the membership size of
today's NOI (Henry, 1994, p.26). Some have tabbed the
number as small as 5,000 to 10,000 (Smith, 1990, p.126)
while others have cited estimates as high as 200,000 (Henry,
1994, p.26). The sect, still headquartered in Chicago
(Rolland, 1995, p.379), has mosques or temples in 120
cities, the ministers of which are appointed by Farrakhan,
and male recruits earn their way up in the organization
through the Fruit of Islam (Henry, 1994, p.26).

Based on this brief history, the Nation of Islam
appears to have come full circle: from separatism to non-
separatism and back to separatism. However, because of the
NOI's five dynamic, committed leaders, the Nation has
maintained one goal throughout: the improvement of black
Americans and their communities.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To provide a framework with which to develop original rhetorical scholarship, a review presenting extant literature on the rhetoric of African American social movements is necessary. In this literature review, a definition of social movements will be provided, the "African American oral tradition" will be discussed, and the strategies, values and religious themes present in African American rhetoric will be presented.

Social Movements Defined

In 1981, Simons and Mechling broadly conceptualized social movements "as sustained efforts in behalf of a cause by noninstitutionalized collectivities" (p.436). Eight years later, in <u>Persuasion and Social Movements,</u> Stewart, Smith, and Denton (1989) defined a social movement as

> an organized, uninstitutionalized, and significantly large collectivity that emerges to bring about or to resist a program for change in societal norms and values, operates primarily through persuasive strategies, and encounters opposition in what becomes a moral struggle (p.17).

Simons took this definition one step further in 1991:

> movements are struggles on behalf of a cause by groups

whose core organizations, modes of action, and/or guiding ideas are not fully legitimated by the larger society. By this definition, the paradigm case of social movements continues to be an antiestablishment grassroots group spouting radical ideas in a manner calculated to get the attention but not necessarily the approval of those it opposes (p.100).

However, instead of social movements being conceived exclusively as "*bottom-up* struggles by groups at the *margins* of society" (p.100), Simons (1991) articulated the possibility of *top-down* movements (non-paradigmatic) carried out by those in positions of institutional authority on behalf of causes not yet fully institutionalized (p.101).

Regardless of the definition, "the increasing realization (among historians and sociologists as well as rhetoricians) that social movements rely primarily upon rhetoric to bring about or to resist change *demands* studies of social movement rhetoric" (Stewart, 1983, p.77). The essential function of rhetoric in African American social movements will be the focus of this review of literature.

African American Oral Tradition

In the late 1960's, communication scholars began studying African-American rhetoric. Brought on by the "great increase in speech-making and pamphleteering by Negro

civil-rights leaders and organizations" (Bosmajian &

Bosmajian, 1969, p.5), the publication of Scott and

Brockriede's The Rhetoric of Black Power (1969), Bosmajian

and Bosmajian's The Rhetoric of the Civil-Rights Movement

(1969), and Smith's (now known as Asante) Rhetoric of Black

Revolution (1969) awakened scholars to a previously

neglected area of rhetorical scholarship. According to

Smith (1971), this uncharted territory warranted inquiry:

> Despite the paucity of research in the field, . . .
>
> rhetoric [as often defined] can be found in African
>
> culture. One man interacting vocally with another man
>
> for the purpose of getting him to act cooperatively has
>
> existed in Ghana as long as it has in Greece (p.14).

In fact, "any proper investigation of black history" must

incorporate "black rhetoric as manifest in speeches" (Smith,

1970, p.265). This is because of the African American

reliance upon the spoken word as the fundamental medium of

communication (Smith, 1970, p.264). Unable to read or write

due to antiliteracy laws during slavery, a "singular

appreciation for the subtleties, pleasures, and potentials

of the spoken word" developed and "has continued to enrich

and embolden [African American] history" (Smith, 1970,

p.264).

The African American oral tradition began in antebellum

slavery. Mike Thelwell, in his article "Back With the

Wind," differentiated between two languages that the African slave adopted: (1) one of subservience for the white overseer and slave master, and (2) another for communication among fellow slaves, poetic and spiritual (Spillers, 1971, pp.14-15). Logue and Garner (1988), who "define[d] and contrast[ed] the rhetorical statuses[7] of some blacks and whites under slavery, and analyze[d] the more powerful forms of persuasion employed by many blacks during Reconstruction and beyond" (p.1), claimed that before winning freedom, "blacks mastered phrases and titles that affirmed the dominance of owners and disguised their efforts for self-interest" (p.30). Logue (1981) further noted that in situations of coercion, "blacks exploited the plantation scene" through the rhetorical strategies of accommodation, concealment, and deception (p.45), thereby satisfying personal and group needs while avoiding retribution (p.46). After the Civil War, however, when whites began a rhetorical campaign to thwart blacks' newfound freedom (Logue, 1977, p.242; Logue & Garner, 1988, p.31), "Many blacks gained a new offensive rhetorically by displaying more imperious nonverbal behavior . . . and a more authoritative vocabulary" (Logue & Garner, 1988, p.32). As will be seen, this "imperious" and "authoritative" rhetoric is frequently noted in the scholarship of African American communication.

Strategies

The rhetoric of the black revolutionist has received the most treatment in the scholarship of African American communication, in part because the rhetoric is aggressive, confrontational, unifying, and unique. According to Smith (Asante) (1969) in <u>The Rhetoric of Black Revolution,</u>

> the contemporary black social revolution possesses a unique rhetoric that speaks to and for the black masses.

> The terms employed must signify unity and aggressiveness. . . . A revolutionary rhetoric must possess an offensive stance if it is to mold the beliefs of the masses into a tight compact against the *status quo* opinion. Thus, all revolutionary rhetoric is essentially aggressive rather than defensive. The aggression inherent in revolutionary rhetoric becomes a unifying force that gives revolutionists a mien of tremendous energy (p.1).

Commonly referred to as "Black Power," revolutionary black rhetoric has also been defined as a concern "with organizing the rage of black people and with putting new, hard questions and demands to white America" (Hamilton, 1969, p.181). Scott and Brockriede (1969) claimed Black Power implies three ideas:

> an emphasis on black pride and on the black person's

right to define and to structure the terms in which the struggle for racial equality is to be waged; a reinterpretation of integration as a need to assimilate black communities as *groups* into the larger society rather than to siphon off able black people, one by one, into that society; and a generally more militant insistence that ghetto conditions be improved now, an insistence which makes its point partially by being willing to step across the line of nonviolence into violence (p.195).

Even Martin Luther King's rhetoric, not commonly associated with Black Power, embodied some of these ideas. The rhetoric of his first speech as the leader of the non-violent civil rights movement, for example, had as a primary goal "image building, an effort to counteract attitudes of self-hatred and self-deprecation due to restrictions imposed by the larger white society upon American blacks" (Smith, D.H., 1968, p.15).

These strategies of the black revolutionary and civil rights protestor will become clearer as the literature illuminating African American rhetorical strategies is presented. Strategies to be discussed include legitimation, objectification, mythication, confrontation, and polarization, as well as the use of imagery, fear, refutation, and emotion. Some of the studies examine

multiple rhetorical strategies while others focus on one.

According to Smith (1969), "The special rhetorical strategies that emerge from analyses of revolutionary rhetoric, political or social, are (1) vilification, (2) objectification, (3) legitimation, and (4) mythication" (p.26). Vilification is the agitator's use of harsh language to belittle the opposition's "conspicuous leader" (Smith, 1969, p.26). In this stage, the rhetor hopes to provoke the opposition into more open combat so as to incite the masses to unite against the oppressors (Jensen & Hammerback, 1986, p.26). Slightly different is objectification, "the agitator's use of language to direct the grievances of a particular group toward another collective body such as an institution, nation, political party, or race" (Smith, 1969, p.29). This is considered to be a "safer strategy" as it directs grievances toward an ill-defined body, not an individual (Smith, 1969, p.29). In mythication, the "agitator creates a spiritual dynamism for his movement. . . . The agitator often attempts to use religious symbolism in an effort to demonstrate the righteousness of his cause" (Smith, 1969, p.34). Legitimation "seeks to explain, vindicate, and justify the activists involved in [the] movement" (Smith, 1969, p.40). Here, "the rhetor argues that his or her actions were provoked by the opposition" (Jensen & Hammerback, 1986,

p.28).

In a study that further explored the four strategies defined by Smith (1969), Jensen and Hammerback (1986) found evidence of vilification, objectification, legitimation, and mythication in the rhetoric of Eldridge Cleaver, a former member of the Nation of Islam, Organization for African Unity, Black Panther Party, Moonies, and Mormons (p.24). Cleaver's rhetoric bitterly attacked whites and urged his audiences "to unite against the oppressors (vilification). He objectified these attacks by blaming Whites for all the problems suffered by Blacks" (Jensen & Hammerback, 1986, p.28). Cleaver extended his rebellion to the dominant culture's religion, rejecting Christianity because of the poor conditions to which it had relegated blacks (mythication) (Jensen & Hammerback, 1986, p.31). Finally, Cleaver legitimated the movement's call to violence on the grounds that the "White establishment's lack of morality forced Blacks into their belligerency" (Jensen & Hammerback, 1986, p.30).

Scott and Smith (1969) identified confrontation -- "standing in front of as a barrier or threat" (p.1) -- as another dominant strategy among black radicals such as Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X. "Achieving an importance not readily attainable through decorum" (Scott & Smith, 1969, p.7), confrontation, a rhetorical strategy rooted in

the "nothing to lose" mentality borne of oppression (p.6),
seeks to reclaim the history and identity of blacks stolen
by whites. Although the black revolutionist is frequently
associated with advocating physical conflict (Scott &
Brockriede, 1968; Scott, 1968) -- a justified response to
prior White violence according to Scott (1968, Summer, p.97)
-- confrontation "is inherently symbolic" (Scott & Smith,
1969, p.7), and "harassing, embarrassing, and disarming the
enemy [whites] may suffice" (p.4), rendering physical
violence unnecessary.

Heath (1973) elaborated on Scott and Smith's (1969)
findings in his analysis of black radicalism and the use of
dialectical confrontation. According to Heath (1973),
dialectical confrontation illuminates the paradoxes and
inconsistencies of society and demands reconciliation and
readjustment (p.177). Agitators accomplish dialectical
confrontation by (1) establishing a "counterposition through
redefinition," (2) reordering "value priorities so that the
point of division is transcended," (3) forming "the values
of the counterposition into a declaration or constitution
which formalizes norms," and (4) destroying members of the
opposing faction through scapegoating and symbolic skills
(Heath, 1973, p.169).

The upshot of this demanding, non-compromising,
confrontational approach is an increased risk to those

(whites) who do not conform to "the trust establishing
function of Black Power" (Larson, 1970, p.52). Larson
(1970) discovered that "By escalating the risks of . . .
unpredictable behavior" through threats of boycott, walkout,
and ultimate total ruin, "Black Power hopes to increase the
predictability of the 'good white folk' who promised and
never delivered (p.54).

In his study of Louis Farrakhan's rhetoric, Goldzwig
(1989) identified strategies similar to those described by
Scott and Smith (1968), Smith (1969), Heath (1973), and
Jensen and Hammerback (1986). By viewing independently the
strategies of vilification, polarization, and conspiracy,
and the tactics of violent threat and obscenity, Goldzwig
(1989) argued, just as Gaber (1986) did, that Farrakhan's
public address warrants labeling him a "demagogue."
However, if viewed collectively, these strategies and
tactics reveal important rhetorical characteristics
concerning their ethicality (Goldzwig, 1989, p.206).
Through consensus creating/riting, consensus breaking, and
consensus renegotiation[8] (Goldzwig, 1989, p.210), Farrakhan
achieved "'symbolic realignment' -- the creation of an
alternative rhetorical reality" (p.208). It is the
ethicality of this new reality that remains open to question
(Goldzwig, 1989, p.218).

While Goldzwig (1989) touched on polarization, Campbell

(1970) elaborated upon its use as a rhetorical strategy. In
Malcolm X's speech "Message to the Grass Roots," for
example,

> the key pattern is polarity: the Grass Roots versus
> Grass Leaves, colonialized people's versus the
> colonializing people, 'landless against the landlord,'
> violence versus non-violence, 'swinging' versus
> 'singing,' field niggers against house niggers, . . .
> Martin Luther King against Malcolm X, the Black March
> on Washington versus the Negro March on Washington
> (Campbell, 1970, p.102).

Campbell (1970) also noted in Malcolm X's "Grass Roots"
address the prevalence of "powerful, judicious similes,
metaphors, and analogies which enrich the total texture of
his presentation" (p.102).

Flick and Powell (1988) stated the use of animal
imagery was prevalent throughout all of Malcolm's rhetoric.
By labeling blacks as "docile sheep" and whites as wolves,
foxes, and snakes, Malcolm sought to unify blacks, construct
a positive black self-image, and arouse hatred of whites
through the strategies of specification, illumination,
confrontation, and intensification (Flick & Powell, 1988).
Phifer (1967-1968) corroborated these results, in part, by
arguing Stokely Carmichael's rhetoric was found to employ
the same "two-edged goal of (1) instilling pride in black

people and (2) expressing contempt for white people" (p.89).

In a detailed examination of the strategy of mythication, Flick (1981) studied the use of myths in Malcolm X's rhetoric. It was found that similar to his purposes for employing animal imagery -- to downgrade, dehumanize, and demystify white America -- Malcolm rhetorically destroyed existing myths about blacks and whites and created new ones, noting blacks' "long and proud and historical record within the family of man" (p.171). "The myths Malcolm identified were (1) blacks were animals, (2) blacks were a minority, and (3) integration was a concept that served and was supported by a majority of black Americans" (Flick, 1981, p.167). According to Flick (1981), Malcolm replaced these myths with several new ones: blacks were

> (1) equal to, if not better than, whites, (2) facing an alien element that was animalistic in nature and behavior, (3) sharing common bonds with other blacks around the world, (4) having a rich and long history that they could be proud of, (5) not supporting the concept of integration, (6) being represented by leaders who did not represent and speak for the majority of black Americans, and (7) facing a series of inherent problems that could be overcome through a variety of different means and strategies (pp.180-181).

This newly structured reality gave blacks a new paradigm with which to guide their actions and situate themselves in America (Flick, 1981, p.167).

Erickson (1977) discovered fear to be a predominant rhetorical strategy in the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, prominent in the 1930s and 1940s and "one of the more prosperous and influential social movements of this century" (p.428). In order to convince black Americans of his divine being and to hold the movement together, George Baker (Father Divine) threatened his followers with retribution should they have strayed from him (Erickson, 1977, p.434). Although these threats initially lacked specificity and credulity, they gained credibility among followers when he and his staffers attributed various disasters to Father Divine's "cosmic energies" (Erickson, 1977, p.435). For example, after being sentenced to prison by a judge, Divine threatened retribution. Sure enough, the judge died of a heart attack four days later, and his death became a symbol of Divine's Messianic and retributive powers (Erickson, 1977, pp.434-435).

Another strategy employed by black rhetors is refutation. According to Fulkerson (1979), Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," through the extensive use of "enduring archetypal metaphors or metaphors drawn from contemporary technology" (p.131), refuted the arguments

made by Birmingham clergymen calling on protestors "to cease their activities and to work through the courts for the redress of their grievances" (p.121). Although one of the few non-public address analyses in the literature, Fulkerson (1979) argued the letter followed a rhetorical form:

> Its structure makes it both readable and thorough. Its refutative stance makes it alive with the fire of heated but courteous controversy, and the dual nature of the refutation makes it simultaneously persuasive and logically compelling. Its stylistic variety and nuance portray a personality in print, manipulate a reader's emotions, and create a union of reader and rhetor (p.136).

Thus, although less extreme and less demanding than the black revolutionist's, King skillfully employed rhetorical strategies to achieve his ends.

Like Fulkerson (1979), Benson (1974) studied the written word for analysis of rhetorical strategies employed by black rhetors. According to Benson (1974), Alex Haley's The Autobiography of Malcolm X moved "beyond the closed world of literary form towards the open forum of public address" (p.11-12). Through the use of "a dialectical rhetoric, in which a drama of enlargement saves Malcolm from being dismissed as a fanatic, a charlatan, or an existential anti-hero, and instead renders his life as the embodiment of

a principle of rhetorical action," Malcolm secured his enduring influence on black America (Benson, 1974, p.12).

A final strategy of note in the rhetoric of African American social movements is emotion. According to Taylor (1967-1968), Stokely Carmichael, in his April 16, 1967, address in Tallahassee, Florida, "was more concerned with stimulating emotion than with provoking thought" (p.92). Similarly, Kennicott and Page (1971) stated Carmichael's Cambridge, Massachusetts, speech on July, 24, 1963, after which a riot erupted, employed more emotion than topical continuity and logical transitions (p.328). Kennicott and Page (1971) further commented that although the use of emotion may provoke a dramatic response to a rhetorical event, critics should be reluctant to attribute subsequent effects to a single speech:

> the Cambridge Incident . . . cautions against the temptation to oversimplify the assessment of the effectiveness of a single speech and suggests the need to emphasize consideration of a given speech as part of a chain of events comprising a rhetorical incident or rhetorical event. But it simultaneously reminds us of the power of words and the potency of rhetorical behavior to produce a profound audience response as difficult to fully control as it is to accurately define (p.334).

In other words, speeches are not isolated transactions; they are one type of response available to a rhetor when presented with a rhetorical exigency. The rhetorical critic should therefore not neglect the antecedent conditions of public address when determining the causes of effects (Kennicott & Page, 1971, p.334).

This discussion reflects the strategies black rhetors have employed to create an alternative rhetorical reality: to build support for an aggressive, non-compromising social movement, to redefine the African American persona, and to direct grievances toward the white-dominated power structure.

Values

In addition to exploring the strategies of African American rhetors, communication scholars have examined how values have functioned in black American discourse. The most ambitious and comprehensive project undertaken to date is Condit and Lucaites' (1993) <u>Crafting Equality: America's Anglo-African Word,</u> an extension, in part, of their study on "The Rhetoric of Equality and the Expatriation of African-Americans, 1776-1826" (Condit & Lucaites, 1991). The book's genesis, however, began with their interests in Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. (Condit & Lucaites, 1993, p.xix). In their 1990 article on the culturetypal rhetoric

of King and the counter-cultural rhetoric of Malcolm, Condit
and Lucaites concluded that "In employing the term
<equality>, . . . King and Malcolm X urged different
meanings and practices" (p.6):

> Whereas Malcolm X saw <equality> as an empowerment of
> the self, present only in the condition of opposition,
> King had a Christian concept of moral power or justice
> which could be achieved only through consolidation with
> a transcendental unity that eschewed separation (Condit
> & Lucaites, 1990, p.7).

Thus, although King and Malcolm X both employed the rhetoric
of equality, their understanding of its nature and belief in
its ability to secure equal rights for all Americans was
much different.

Beginning with the unique definition of a social
movement as the "function of the changes in the form and
meaning of the public vocabulary over the course of the
historical and lived experiences of the members of a
collectivity" (Henry & Jensen, 1991, p.90), Condit and
Lucaites (1993), in their 1993 book, characterized the
transformation of the "root word *equality*" as a social
movement (Henry & Jensen, 1991, p.92). Starting with "The
Revolt from Britain, 1760-1774" (p.3), white American
discourse on equality was explored as the foundation for
inquiry into African American discourse on equality. In

conclusion, it was determined "The public meaning of equality has undergone perpetual transformation since the time it was first introduced as a key term in America's rhetorical culture in the 1760's" (Condit & Lucaites, 1993, p.217). Furthermore, just as it would have been "unreasonable" to assume "the egalitarian foundations of the nation . . . were inexorably fixed in 1776 or 1865 or 1954," it would be equally unreasonable to assert the meaning of equality [today] represents a final locus for its potential range of meanings" (Condit & Lucaites, 1993, p.217).

It should be acknowledged that the discussion of values in black rhetoric began much earlier than 1990. For instance, Burgess, in 1968, interpreted the rhetoric of Black Power "as calling America to its moral self" (p.133). Thus, instead of viewing Black Power advocates as violent, reprehensible, and un-American, white America could have interpreted Black Power rhetoric as "a call for a just moral decision" (p.131) to white racism.

Similar to Condit and Lucaites' (1993) study of the development of equality, Condit (1987) examined "The Rhetorical Construction of Public Morality" (p.79). Just as with equality, "a *new* moral code . . . had to be crafted through time and rhetorical effort" (Condit, 1987, p.92). Contrary to those who maintain "the moral relationship or principle was there all along -- simply 'unrealized' --

Condit (1987) argued blacks and whites did not perceive one another as fundamentally similar and agree to treat each other similarly until a more humane contact between the two races took place and discourse constructed a new code of morality (p.92).

On a less optimistic note, Heath (1973) argued that appeals to the values of humanity, equality, and patriotism have been used continually by black protest speakers since the early nineteenth century, often with little impact (p.147). According to Heath (1973),

> the problem with values arises from the fact that values are situational, rather than universal, and are applied normatively to protect the common interest of groups and are resistant to change or application when they challenge or threaten the self concept or group membership of the individual listener (p.156).

Condit and Lucaites (1993), however, disagreed. The authors claimed Malcolm X was constrained by "limits inherent to rhetoric itself" (p.309):

> Persuasion depends on the values and beliefs that exist or that can be reasonably constructed in conjunction with an audience. . . . A rhetor must, therefore, finally abjure a true revolution, which calls for an unfettered and absolute rejection of all that is, in favor of a torturous path through the constructive

visions of what might be (Condit & Lucaites, 1993,

p.309).

In order for black rhetors to be successful, then, society's

values must be held as ideals and more radical discourse

(e.g., "the ballot or the bullet" and "by all means

necessary") must be eschewed (Condit & Lucaites, 1993,

p.309).

Religion

In traditional African society, there are no

irreligious people (Hamlet, 1994, p.100). For this reason,

the Black Church has played an integral role in the lives of

African Americans, working "to liberate Blacks from past

positions of powerlessness within the political, cultural,

and economic caverns of their own communities" (Flick, 1980,

p.145).

A key rhetorical component of the Black Church is

sermonizing. Through the church, a distinctive black

preaching style, idiom, method of storytelling, and poetic

diction and rhythm are employed (Hamlet, 1994). Sermonizing

is not, however, the exclusive domain of the church (Smith,

1969, p.63). According to Eugene Genovese in Roll, Jordan,

Roll: The World the Slaves Made, "sermonic discourse has

assumed a significant and powerful role in the civil and

secular lives of . . . African-American society since at

least the seventeenth century (Calloway-Thomas & Lucaites, 1993, p.3). Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites (1993) contended that "rhetors of both a secular and an ecclesiastic cast enact the sermonic function of discourse whenever they prescribe a relationship between communal values and collective action" (p.3). Therefore, although sermons typically denote religion, it is not always the case.

Communication scholars have studied African American sermonizing from both a secular and ecclesiastical perspective. One of the most noted forms of African American sermonizing is the "call response." Daniel and Smitherman (1976) contended a "'Traditional African World View,'" in the form of the "call response" pattern, remains in today's African American community (p.28). "This African-derived process is the verbal and nonverbal interaction between speaker and listener in which each of the speaker's statements (or "calls") is punctuated by expressions ("responses") from the listener" (Daniel & Smitherman, 1976, p.27). For instance, Martin Luther King's audiences "frequently punctuated his 'calls' with various expressions, . . . [helping] to create a sense of community by synthesizing King and his audience into a unified movement for civil rights" (Harrison & Harrison, 1993, p.169).

Similar to the overwhelming emphasis on Malcolm X as a

black rhetor, communication scholars have studied Martin Luther King with seemingly equal diligence.[9] Most notably, King has been studied as a sermonizer. Spillers (1971), for example, upon reading King's sermons, pointed to two important features contained within: nominality -- verb and verb forms abounded by a great number of nouns, adjectives, and adjectival clauses -- and metaphoricality (p.17). Snow (1985) found King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" "an epistle in the Pauline style and also a sermon" (p.327). Through the "liturgical rhetoric of the Pauline letter," Snow (1985) stated, King accomplished his apostolic mission to bring about unity and justice (p.332).

The most comprehensive studies of King as sermonizer have been published in recent years. Worthy of note are Lischer's (1995) <u>The Preacher King</u> and Miller's (1992) <u>Voice of Deliverance.</u> Calloway-Thomas and Lucaites (1993), both well-published communication scholars, collected nine critical studies to illuminate "the range of King's public discourse as sermonic rhetoric" (p.2). To highlight the range of interpretations of King's sermonic rhetoric, all of which highlighted his concept of the "beloved community" -- a shared basic humanity of all persons (Condit & Lucaites, 1993) -- four of the collection's studies will be mentioned.

Miller (1993) held that King's sermons were representative of the "consummate expression of the

distinctive theology, epistemology, and rhetoric developed
by slaves" (p.32), not his formal white schooling (p.19).
In two other studies, Clark (1994) and Hoover (1994)
analyzed King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Clark (1993)
argued the letter was a response to the rhetorical situation
created by Birmingham clergymen. Hoover (1993), on the
other hand, reversed convention. According to Hoover
(1993), not only did "King's skillful use of apologia
[provide] a positive response to the immediate situation,
but his craftsmanship extended to the creation of a new
rhetorical situation" (p.65) in which he responded to those
who had criticized him and his movement's efforts. Finally,
Solomon (1993) argued the rhetorical power in King's "I Have
a Dream" speech was the result of the implicit matrix
metaphor of the "covenant." This "covenant" -- "the
Declaration of Independence and the Constitution . . . (with
the Emancipation Proclamation as a reaffirmation of them)"
(p.69) -- "most clearly and fully expressed in the passage
depicting black demands as a check," provided "imagistic
richness and thematic unity to the speech" (p.66). Clearly,
then, sermonizing has received considerable treatment in the
study of African American rhetors.

Nevertheless, sermonizing is not the only way religion
has been employed by black rhetors. Flick (1980) found
Malcolm X to have used "religious themes as a means for

developing a black identity" (p.140). The themes Malcolm articulated for developing a positive Black identity and sense of history were: "(1) God (Allah) was Black, (2) Blacks were descendents of the original man, and (3) Blacks were the Bible's lost sheep and were destined to be separated from white America" (Flick, 1980, p.147). Later in his life, Malcolm appropriated the rhetoric of religion through his conversion to orthodox Islam and use of the theological principles of the Koran (Houck, 1993). This "facilitated his attempts to actualize his political mission of internationalizing the battle for civil rights" and to legitimate his indictment of "the United States on human rights violations at the United Nations" (Houck, 1993, p.285).

Finally, Ware and Linkugel (1982) argued the success of Marcus Garvey, founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association in 1916, can be attributed to his rhetorical persona as a Black Moses. "Because Garvey's rhetoric fused the black experience with that of a New Israel, his auditors perceived him as a Black Moses, a type of cultural symbol that ultimately subsumed and stood for the ideas of election, captivity, and liberation" (Ware & Linkugel, 1982, p.61). In other words, Garvey's discourse served to validate the black ethos, deprecate the conditions blacks found themselves under, and affirm a future of equality

(Ware & Linkugel, 1982).

Summary

The literature on the rhetoric of African American social movements has been presented according to four prevalent themes: the African American oral tradition, rhetorical strategies, appeals to the values of equality and morality, and religion. In each study reviewed, qualitative methods of analysis were employed. More specifically, rhetorical criticism was used to analyze the verbal and textual messages of black rhetoricians. This thesis on Louis Farrakhan's address at the October 16, 1995 Million Man March in Washington, D.C., also uses rhetorical criticism as its method of analysis.

Statement of Purpose

According to Hart (1986), contemporary scholarship in public address must transcend case-specific analysis and interpretation if it is to have "genuine theoretical significance" (p.288). The purpose of this thesis, then, is to not only provide a close textual analysis of Louis Farrakhan's address at the Million Man March, but to contribute to rhetorical theory. Accordingly, this thesis will answer two research questions:

1) How did the rhetorical situation determine what Farrakhan did and did not say during his Million Man March address on October 16, 1995?

2) How can race in America be discussed?

In answering these two questions, this study of Farrakhan's Million Man March address will appeal to those who have an interest in a very controversial, contemporary public figure and to those who have an interest in one of the greatest mass demonstrations in the history of the United States. Perhaps more importantly, however, it will appeal to those not uniquely intrigued by Farrakhan and African American public address. This is ensured by transcending the individual case analysis and discussing a much broader issue, an issue affecting all Americans: race relations. Although a generalizable conclusion about how race in America can be discussed will be impossible -- a limitation resulting from the analysis of only one speech -- a preliminary discussion of racial discourse in America is possible and extremely worthwhile.

CHAPTER TWO   METHODOLOGY

Rhetorical Criticism

        Aristotle defined rhetoric as the art of discovering

all available means of persuasion in a given situation.

More broadly, Foss (1989) considered rhetoric to mean "the

use of symbols to induce thought and action" (p.4).

Rhetorical criticism, the method of this thesis, "is the

business of identifying the complications of rhetoric and

explaining them in a comprehensive and efficient manner"

(Hart, 1990, p.32). Rhetorical criticism has also been

defined as "the investigation and evaluation of rhetorical

acts and artifacts for the purpose of understanding

rhetorical processes" (Foss, 1989, p.5). Beyond definition,

rhetorical criticism permits the rhetorical critic to

accomplish two tasks. The first is to gain a deeper

understanding of a rhetorical artifact and "to use that

deeper understanding to help others appreciate it or to

change some aspect of the society that generated the

rhetorical artifact" (Foss, 1989, p.6). Furthermore, just

as Hart claimed (1990) the rhetorical critic must move

beyond the individual case and discuss the artifact's far-

reaching theoretical implications, Foss (1989) stated that

"a second and more important purpose of rhetorical criticism

is a theoretical one -- to make a contribution to rhetorical

theory or to explain how some aspect of rhetoric operates"
(p.7). After all, criticism serves no "useful purpose if it
has been devoted exclusively to an understanding of a
particular artifact" (Foss, 1989, p.6). This analysis of
Louis Farrakhan's address at the Million Man March will
adhere to these two reasons for engaging in rhetorical
criticism.

The Rhetorical Situation

Unlike other studies of African American public address
where the methods of analysis were frequently unarticulated
and seemingly lacking in rigor, the specific method of
criticism for this thesis will be Roderick P. Hart's (1990)
rhetorical situation, as detailed in his book Modern
Rhetorical Criticism. According to Bitzer's (1968) theory
of the rhetorical situation, rhetorical discourse obtains
its "character-as-rhetorical from the situation which
generates it" (p.3). Furthermore, situations are rhetorical
only if they can be modified through discourse (Bitzer,
1968). Within the rhetorical situation, there are several
general characteristics or features: (1) rhetorical
discourse is called into existence by situation; (2) the
rhetorical situation invites a *fitting* response, a response
that fits the situation; (3) the situation prescribes the
response; (4) because the rhetorical exigence occurs in

reality, its events are subject to scrutiny by a critic; and (5) the rhetorical situation comes into existence, and either matures or decays or matures and persists (Bitzer, 1968). Therefore, by understanding the situation that generates a piece of discourse, a rhetorical critic should more fully comprehend the unique, often unacknowledged factors impinging upon what a rhetor chooses to say and not to say in response to an exigency. As Hart (1990) stated, "all messages bear the imprints of the social situations that produced them, thereby making rhetoric a *situated* *art* that can only be understood when text and context are considered simultaneously" (p.60).

Hart's (1990) model of the rhetorical situation "conceives of messages as repositories of information about situational elements" (p.73). In fact, the various elements of a rhetorical situation are often imprinted upon the message (Hart, 1990, p.84). In order to understand this interplay between text and situation and situation and text, Hart's (1990) model provides a framework for developing the critical probes necessary to study both the text and the context of the discourse (p.73). There are six elements in Hart's model: speaker, setting, audience, topic, persuasive field, and medium. All of these elements are constrained by rhetorical conventions and are contained within the cultural boundary.

The element of **SPEAKER** addresses who is speaking and why. Questions a critic could ask relevant to the speaker-message relationship include:

Is the speaker making some sort of social statement by speaking?

Does the audience have firsthand knowledge of the speaker that the speaker can draw upon rhetorically?

Is the speaker 'sainted' or 'victimized' by stereotypes listeners have of 'speakers' like this?

Has the speaker subscribed to a particular ideology or doctrine that expands or limits what can be said?

Does the speaker possess any unique assets or liabilities when speaking on this topic (Hart, 1990, pp.73-74)?

The second element, **SETTING**, involves timing and location. Relevant setting-message issues to explore include:

Is a social statement being made by speaking at this time and place?

Is it appropriate and most effective for the speaker to be addressing the audience at this particular time?

Is there "history" attached to where the speech is being given?

Are there nonverbal events affecting the speaker's game plan?

Are future events likely to affect what can be said by the speaker (Hart, 1990, p.80)?

The third element of Hart's model is the **AUDIENCE**. Study of this element may include research into public opinion polls and magazine and newspaper articles preceding and proceeding the rhetorical event. Study of these resources should yield insight into whether the audience was predisposed to accept or reject the speaker's message. Potential questions exploring the audience-message relationship include:

Has the audience made any significant social statement by coming to listen to the address?

To what extent is this audience . . . one that can directly implement change the speaker is requesting?

Can the speaker capitalize on existing common ties with the audience when speaking to them?

What personal or philosophical commitments has the audience made (for example, group memberships) that may affect their responses to the speaker?

What recent experiences has the audience had that may affect their responsiveness (Hart, 1990, pp.76-77)?

The fourth element is **TOPIC**. Relevant topic-message considerations include whether a significant social statement is being made by discussing the topic, the topic's controversiality, complexity, and previous discussion.

The fifth element, **PERSUASIVE FIELD**, "consists of all those other messages impinging upon an audience in a given speech situation" (Hart, 1990, p.79). Relevant persuasive field-message questions include:

Taken as a whole, can the speech be seen as a counterstatement to some other set of messages?

Have the speaker's previous remarks to this audience expanded or limited current persuasive possibilities?

What statements have other people made in the past that constrain what can be said now?

What sort of 'verbal competition' . . . is the speaker being subjected to?

Can any future rhetorical messages be envisioned that require anticipatory strategies now (Hart, 1990, p.79)?

The sixth element, **MEDIUM**, concerns the channels through which the speaker delivers the message, and the effects the chosen media may have on the message. Relevant questions a critic could ask include:

Does the modality chosen enhance or distract from the message?

Does the size of the audience the medium can reach present or deny any important rhetorical possibilities?

Does the medium chosen permit the speaker's personality to become an important force of persuasion?

Do subaudiences exist because of the medium chosen for the message (Hart, 1990, p.81)?

These six elements are filtered through **RHETORICAL CONVENTIONS**. Here, the rhetorical critic must consider past rules established to guide discussion of the topic. In other words, because people "formulate rhetorical guidelines to deal with stock situations" (Hart, 1990, p.83), a critic should explore whether certain conventions are being followed or newly developed for the occasion.

Finally, the elements of the rhetorical situation occur within the **CULTURAL BOUNDARY** -- the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the national culture. Because "rhetoric is rooted in the age of its creation" (Hart, 1990, p.10), any analysis of a piece of rhetoric must include acknowledgement of the influence that culture has on audience perceptions and reactions. Furthermore, cultural boundary must be recognized because rhetoric loses its relevancy when examined outside the culture which gave rise to it.

An understanding of the cultural boundary for Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March address is gleaned from a brief history of the Nation of Islam, a review of literature, and an analysis of the persuasive field. It should be emphasized an afrocentric (Asante, 1992) perspective is not adopted. I do not purport to be versed on such an approach nor am I, as a caucasian, able to step

inside the world-view of an African American. Instead, by immersing myself in the relevant scholarly literature, a good portion of which is authored by African American scholars (e.g., Molefi Kete Asante, formerly known as Arthur L. Smith; Carolyn Calloway-Thomas; James H. Cone; Jack Daniel; and C. Eric Lincoln), I have gathered the requisite knowledge to draw connections between Farrakhan's address and the rhetoric of African Americans who have preceded him. A brief history of the Nation of Islam has informed me of the beliefs to which Louis Farrakhan subscribes, the review of literature has provided insight into the strategies black rhetoricians employ to achieve their goals, and analysis of the persuasive field awakened me to the public discussion of Louis Farrakhan, the Million Man March, and race relations in America.

It should be noted, however, there exist two cultural boundaries: an African American culture, and the culture of society-at-large, the majority of which is made up of whites. It is important to be familiar with both of these cultures for this rhetorical analysis. The African American culture is important because Farrakhan and a significant portion of his audience are African American. An understanding and interpretation of what was said and not said during Farrakhan's address, as well as its impact on the audience, would be unlikely without knowledge of the

African American culture. The more dominant, pervasive culture is significant because this analysis draws from how Farrakhan and the Million Man March were discussed in the mainstream press. This affords a comparison between the two cultures and how they received Farrakhan and his address at the Million Man March.

By immersing myself in the literature of these two cultural boundaries, my ambivalence toward Louis Farrakhan increased. On the hand, I admire him for his efforts to rid the African American community of drugs and violence. His admonitions for commitment to religious teachings and family are equally admirable. I am also rarely, if ever, offended by the "racist" comments attributed to him by the mass media, due in large part to my understanding of the strategies of the black revolutionist. On the other hand, it is difficult to ignore all of the negative deeds reported about Farrakhan. For instance, I question the financial propriety of the Nation of Islam and its purported efforts to build sustainable businesses in America's depressed inner-cities. Farrakhan's travels to the Middle East and Africa during which he made anti-American statements are also very troubling (Omaha World Herald, 1996, April 13, p.9). In short, my abiding interest in race relations and civil rights led me to Louis Farrakhan. This study is borne of an interest to sort out my conflicting beliefs about him.

Ultimately, the six elements of Hart's model of the rhetorical situation, the situation's rhetorical conventions, and the cultural boundary in which they occur, work together to produce the **MESSAGE.**

Study

This thesis was initially conceived as a longitudinal, comparative study of the public address of Louis Farrakhan and Malcolm X. However, because transcriptions of Farrakhan's speeches are extremely difficult to locate and audio and video cassettes of his public addresses are expensive, the study had to be reconceived. Unfortunately, it seems little has changed since the late 1960s and early 1970s when Smith (1969) and Borden (1973) wrote of the limited compilation of African American public address.

Nevertheless, an analysis of only one of Farrakhan's speeches is valuable. Analysis of Farrakhan's October 16, 1995 Million Man March address is valuable because of the national exposure Farrakhan and the Million Man March has received and because the unique rhetorical situation presents an opportunity for understanding how Americans can discuss the issue of race.

The critical probes outlined by Hart's model guide this study's data collection and analysis. Each probe is used to elicit information about the six elements comprising the rhetorical situation. The data is then interpreted and applied to answering the thesis' research questions.

In addition to critically analyzing Farrakhan's discourse via Hart's model of the rhetorical situation, this study examines the persuasive field -- the issues

surrounding the rhetorical event that are being discussed by the public. This is an important consideration for the purposes of this study. How Farrakhan, the Million Man March, race relations in America, and other national and international events were discussed in the media and by the public shortly before and after Farrakhan's address at the march have a significant impact on Farrakhan's message.

The persuasive field was illuminated by examining the media coverage and public opinion polls during the six week period surrounding the Million Man March. It was necessary to limit the scope of the examination because of the far-reaching discussion concerning Louis Farrakhan and the Million Man March. A LEXIS/NEXIS database search of the term "Farrakhan and Million Man March," for example, yielded 3,091 entries.

Information on media coverage was obtained by examining the seven issues of _Time_, _Newsweek_, _U.S. News & World Report_, and _Jet_ published during the four weeks before the Million Man March and the two weeks after the march: September 18, September 25, October 2, October 9, October 16, October 23, and October 30. These four major national newsweeklies were selected because of their national influence. According to Grossman and Kumar (1981), _Time_ and _Newsweek_ are the only print publications that approximate television news' connection to the American public (p.62).

They have a combined weekly circulation of more than seven
million copies (Grossman & Kumar, 1981, p.62). Because of
its status as an elite publication, U.S. News & World Report
was also examined (Lichter, Rothman, & Lichter, 1986).
According to Graber (1993), it is the third most widely-read
newsweekly, preceded by only Time and Newsweek (p.109).
Finally, Jet was examined for its national coverage of
issues affecting African Americans. It is advertised as
"Black America's Leading Newsmagazine" (Jet, 1995, September
25).

For a day-to-day description of the persuasive field,
The New York Times and USA Today were examined. The New
York Times warranted examination because of its status as an
elite (Lichter et al., 1986) and widely-read newspaper
(Graber, 1993). USA Today was looked at because of its
status as the country's first national newspaper (Graber,
1993, p.44). Due to its lack of accessibility, however,
analysis of USA Today was limited to a LEXIS/NEXIS search of
the term "Farrakhan or Million Man March." Only the titles
of stories printed on page one of USA Today during the
examined time-frame were noted.

Similar to the three newsweeklies, the articles in The
New York Times four weeks before and two weeks after the
march, beginning on September 18 and ending on October 30,
were examined for their coverage of Farrakhan, the march,

race relations in America, and other major national and international events. However, in contrast to the magazines in which the entire issues are examined, only the front pages and editorial sections of The New York Times were looked at. Thus, if a story mentioned Farrakhan, the march, race relations in America, and any other major national and international event on the front page and in the editorial section of The New York Times or in the issues of the newsmagazines, it was noted.

The Gallup Poll Monthly and Time/CNN polls were used to track public opinion between September 18 and October 30, the four week period prior to the march and the two week period after the march. From these polls, the following information was recorded:

1. What questions related to Farrakhan, the Million Man March, and race relations in America were asked?

2. What was the public response to the questions?

3. What questions related to other national and international events were asked?

The Gallup Poll Monthly was examined for polling of all issues and events, national and international, and Time/CNN polls mentioned in any Time magazine articles on Farrakhan, the Million Man March, and race relations in America during the relevant time period were also noted.

Text for analyzing and quoting Louis Farrakhan's

Million Man March address was taken from Haki Madhubuti's and Maulana Karenga's (1996) transcription, published in their book <u>Million Man March/Day of Absence</u>. Their transcription of the address is supplemented by my own because, in the interest of space, Madhubuti and Karenga -- members of the Executive Committee and Executive Council of the Million Man March -- omit small portions of the address. For purposes of accuracy, Madhubuti's and Karenga's transcription is cited when quoting from Farrakhan's address.

In summary, Hart's (1990) model of the rhetorical situation is one of the many methodologies available for doing rhetorical criticism. It is an appropriate method for this study because it permits the critic to perform the two functions of effective rhetorical criticism: increase understanding of particular symbols and how they operate, and contribute to rhetorical theory (Foss, 1989, pp.5-6). Completion of this rhetorical analysis should contribute greatly to the understanding of a complex social figure and significant historical event, how text and context simultaneously interact and affect one another, and how race can be discussed in America.

Newsmagazine and newspaper coverage of Louis Farrakhan, the Million Man March, and race in America

The application of Hart's critical probes, combined with an analysis of periodicals published during the six-week period surrounding the Million Man March, provide the data for rhetorically analyzing Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March address. Each element of Hart's model of the rhetorical situation -- speaker, setting, audience, medium, persuasive field, and topic -- was applied to Farrakhan's address. Therefore, six close-textual analyses of Farrakhan's two hour and twenty seven minute keynote address were conducted.

Research into the newsmagazine and newspaper coverage of Louis Farrakhan, the Million Man march, and race relations in America found a total of 198 articles published between September 18 and October 30. As shown in Table I (see page 69), the coding scheme located 66 articles published on Louis Farrakhan and the Million Man March. Newspaper coverage of Louis Farrakhan and the Million Man March was heavily concentrated around October 16, the day of the march. USA Today published page one stories about Farrakhan and the march on October 13, and October 16 through the 19th. No other page one stories were run during the examined time frame. Page one and editorial coverage by The New York Times was much more thorough than USA Today's,

but almost as short-lived. Like <u>USA Today</u>, <u>The New York

Times'</u> coverage of Farrakhan and the march began on October

13. Instead of ending on October 19, however, discussion

continued through October 25.

Table I: Newsmagazine and newspaper coverage of

Louis Farrakhan and the Million Man March

September 18 to October 30, 1995

	Cover/p.1 stories	Other stories
New York Times	10	22
Jet	1	3
U.S. News & W.R.	0	4
Newsweek	1	11
Time	1	6
USA Today	7	not analyzed

Newsmagazine coverage of Farrakhan and the march was

also concentrated around October 16. <u>U.S. News & World

Report</u> provided the least amount of coverage, running

stories on the 16th and 23rd of October. Unlike <u>U.S. News &

World Report</u>, <u>Newsweek</u> and <u>Time</u> elected to provide cover

story treatment of Farrakhan and the march, both in the October 30 issues. Time ran non-cover stories on the 16th and 23rd of October, while Newsweek ran non-cover stories on the 9th and 23rd of October.

Jet magazine's coverage of Farrakhan and the march was surprisingly limited. Advertised on the cover as "Black America's Leading Newsmagazine" (1995, September), Jet's coverage of the event was reserved to a total of four stories in the October 9 and 30th issues. Furthermore, neither of these two issues awarded the cover to Farrakhan nor the march, electing instead to place recording artists Whitney Houston and CeCe Winans on the cover of the October 9 issues, and actor Eddie Murphy on the 30th of October's issue. The march was, however, the feature story in the magazine's October 30 issue.

More than doubling the number of articles on Farrakhan and the march were the 132 articles published on race relations in America (see Table II, page 72). Most prevalent were the number of articles related to the murder trial of Hall-of-Fame football player O.J. Simpson and the potential presidential candidacy of Colin Powell. In fact, of the 132 articles related to race in America, 76 were devoted to Simpson and Powell.

With rare exception, race was discussed daily on the front page or in the editorial section of The New York

Times. Three lead stories -- September 27, September 28, and October 4 -- were devoted to the O.J. Simpson trial during the time period examined. Newsweek's coverage of race in America occurred in the issues between September 25 and October 23. Three cover stories with heavy emphasis on race -- two on O.J. Simpson (October 9 and 16th) and one on Colin Powell (September 25) -- were run in these five issues. U.S. News & World Report covered race in each issue between September 18 and October 23, devoting the September 25 cover to the U.S.'s "one nation, one language" debate, and the October 16 issue to the black and white racial divide experienced after the O.J. Simpson verdict. Time treated race in all the issues examined, and featured Colin Powell on its October 9 and 16th covers.

Not surprisingly, Jet covered issues of race most diversely between September 18 and October 30. However, instead of attributing the majority of coverage to the O.J. Simpson trial and Colin Powell, the magazine frequently allocated space to incidents of racial strife unreported by the other publications. One of the magazine's cover stories discussed the reinstitution of prisoner chain gangs in Alabama (September 18), another detailed the first black woman's selection as chief of a big-city police force (October 2), and a third was devoted to the O.J. Simpson trial (October 23). This reflects the different worldviews

of the African American and white cultures. Not only was race more important to black America and therefore discussed more diversely and broadly, but the two major stories (Powell and Simpson) about race in the dominant media were not as frequently covered in Jet.

Table II: Newsmagazine and newspaper coverage of

race in America

September 18 to October 30

	Cover/lead stories	Other stories
New York Times	3	49
Jet	3	19
U.S. News & W.R.	2	12
Newsweek	3	18
Time	3	20

This information discussed in the newspapers and magazines is referred to as supporting material throughout chapter three. When needed, data from TIME/CNN and Gallup polls are also drawn upon.

A close analysis of Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March

address based on Hart's critical probes warrants the
development of the following argument: Louis Farrakhan
attempts to legitimize himself as a nationally respected
leader of African Americans beyond his audience of
traditional appeal. This contradicts what Farrakhan would
have us believe. Instead of voicing his desire to increase
his legitimacy among a wider range of African Americans,
Farrakhan stated he has no desire to be "validated" or in
the "mainstream." Furthermore, this statement claims
Farrakhan worked to increase his legitimacy with blacks, not
whites. As will be discussed in chapter four, this has
implications for the prospect of improved race relations in
America.

It should be noted this argument is only one of many
that could be made about Farrakhan's address. Another
critic, for example, after having applied Hart's critical
probes, may have chosen to focus on how Farrakhan talks
about race relations, the role of black men in America, or
the relationship between black men and black women. These
issues are all worthy of discussion. However, because
Farrakhan's comments prior to and during the march proclaim
himself disinterested in the opinions of the masses, my
interpretation of his desire to legitimize himself with the
African American community notes the value of a close
textual analysis in illuminating the contradictions and

unspoken desires of a controversial figure prominent in America's discussion of race.

CHAPTER THREE   FARRAKHAN INCREASES HIS LEGITIMACY

Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March address represents a successful effort to legitimize himself with an audience beyond his traditional appeal. Despite making statements to the contrary, Farrakhan tacitly attempts to broaden his appeal with African Americans present at the march and those watching on television. Although whites were part of the nearly one million march attendees (Rainie, 1995, October 30, p.34) and the 2.2 million television viewers, this analysis does not consider whites as part of the audience to which Farrakhan attempts to legitimize himself. Rather, Farrakhan's rhetorical strategies reflect a desire to remain loyal to his audience of traditional appeal and to broaden his base of support with African Americans he is not typically associated with in a favorable manner.

Farrakhan's Efforts to Legitimize Himself

Despite explicit claims to the contrary, an implicit, primary purpose of Louis Farrakhan s Million Man March address was to legitimize himself as a nationally respected leader of the African American community -- to legitimize himself beyond the African American audiences he typically addresses: members of the Nation of Islam, youth, low wage-earners, and the poorly educated (as discussed in chapter

one). This contradicts what Farrakhan said during the address: "I stand here today knowing, knowing that you are angry. That my people have validated me. I don't need you to validate me. I don't need to be in any mainstream" (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.17). His address tacitly argues just the opposite: in an attempt to silence the incredulous and fortify himself as a *validated* and *legitimate* leader of all African Americans -- to be "in the mainstream" -- Farrakhan makes statements throughout the address in defense of his character. In order to advance this argument, two contentions will be articulated: first, Farrakhan attempts to respond to charges directed against him; and second, Farrakhan attempts to build alliances toward those with whom he has a negative past history. Before these arguments are made, however, it is worthwhile to examine the discussion surrounding Farrakhan and the Million Man March. Doing so establishes Farrakhan's tarnished reputation prior to the march and establishes a need for altering his public persona.

Persuasive Field

According to an October 4 and 5, 1995 TIME/CNN telephone poll of adult black Americans (Pooley, 1995, October 23, p.36), 33 percent believed Louis Farrakhan to be a positive force in the black community, 16 percent believed

he was a negative force, and 51 percent were not sure. This poll reflects considerable ambivalence toward Farrakhan, emphasizing the need for him to legitimize himself during the Million March address in order to move beyond his audience of traditional appeal.

The poll also found that 20 percent of those questioned believed only black men should participate in the march, while 70 percent believed black women should be allowed to participate (Pooley, 1995, October 23, p.36). On the whole, then, it appears a significant percentage of African Americans were against limiting the march to black men.

Newsmagazine and newspaper articles written before the march also illustrate the public's disapproval of Farrakhan. This disapproval is no more evident than in official representatives of well-known African American organizations declining to endorse and attend the march because of the leadership role of Farrakhan. Those who declined to endorse the march include Colin Powell, former prospective presidential candidate (Klein, 1995, October 30, p.48; Terry, 1995, October 15, p.1); Mary Frances Berry, chair of the United States Commission on Civil Rights (Clines, F.X., 1995, October 13, p.A30); Warith Deen Mohammed, the leader of the largest group of black Muslims in the country (Terry, 1995, October 15, p.1); Representatives Gary Franks, Charles Rangel (Pooley, 1995, October 23, p.36), and John Lewis

(Lewis, 1995, October 23, p.33); the National Urban League; the NAACP; the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; the 2.5 million-member Progressive National Baptist Convention; the 8.2 million-member National Baptist Convention; and "twenty influential Protestant ministers" (Van Biema, 1995, October 16, p.75; Terry, 1995, October 15, p.1).[10]

Others differently expressed their disapproval for Farrakhan. Harvard scholar Cornel West, for example, chose to attend the march in spite of Farrakhan. According to West in an editorial to The New York Times, the Million Man March was about much more than Farrakhan. It spoke to "the general invisibility of, and indifference to, black sadness, sorrow and social misery, and the disrespect and disregard in which blacks are held in America and abroad" (West, 1995, October 14, p.A19). Furthermore, West believed, "if white supremacy can be reduced to a minimum, then patriarchy, homophobia, and anti-Semitism" -- characteristics to which Farrakhan has been linked -- "can be lessened in black America" (West, 1995, October 14, p.A19). Thus, in spite of his "deep disagreements" with Farrakhan, West -- and presumably other African Americans like him -- chose to attend the march (West, 1995, October 14, p.A19).

This brief review of the persuasive field prior to the march is just a sample of the negative criticism Farrakhan received. Despite its brevity, however, this review should

make it clear Farrakhan was not well-received by a significant portion of the African American population. As a result, the rhetorical dilemma he faced was whether to appeal to the audience he typically addresses, or to attempt to legitimize himself to his critics and thereby broaden his appeal. I contend he chose the latter.

Repairing a negative image

<u>Responding to the call of God</u>

Louis Farrakhan strategically exploits the rhetorical situation of the Million Man March to legitimize himself as a leader of *all* African Americans. One of the ways he did this is by responding to charges leveled against him. For example, Farrakhan confronts head-on the public debate concerning "separation of the message from the messenger," a debate that reflects the overwhelming public support of the march's admirable purposes and the ambivalence of the public's attitudes toward the march's organizer.

According to Farrakhan, separation of the message from the messenger is not possible because the march's call did not come through him. Instead, Farrakhan says, the march was a response to the call of God; Farrakhan was merely the vehicle through which the word of God traveled. His emphasis on the source of credit for the march is evident in

the following statement:

> I didn't do it. Reverend Chavis didn't do it.
> Reverend Jackson didn't do it. Reverend Sharpton
> didn't do it. Conrad Worrill or Maulana Karenga (ph)
> didn't do it. But all of us worked together to do
> the best that we could but it's bigger than all of us.
>
> So since we can't take the praise, then we have to
> give all the glory, all the honor, all the praise to
> Him to whom it rightfully belongs (Madhubuti & Karenga,
> 1996, p.27).

Farrakhan further argues that because God chose the
messenger, it is inconceivable to believe He would have
chosen a malicious, corrupt individual for such a noble
purpose:

> So today, whether you like it or not, God brought
> the idea through me and He didn't bring it through me
> because my heart was dark with hatred and anti-
> semitism. He didn't bring it through me because my
> heart was dark and I'm filled with hatred for White
> people and for the human family of the planet. If my
> heart were that dark, how is the message so bright, the
> message so clear, the response so magnificent
> (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.11)?

In these two passages Farrakhan is attempting to demonstrate
to the audience -- despite criticism to the contrary -- he

is a "good guy." He would have the audience believe that although he has been charged with racism, anti-Semitism, separatism, homophobia, and patriarchy, his intentions are aboveboard. After all, he says, God would not have convened nearly one million blacks had his purposes or character been morally suspect. His interview in the October 30, 1995 issue of Newsweek supports this: "If a million black men showed up, I'm already legitimate," he said (Smith, 1995, October 30, p.26). Thus, despite his protestations to the contrary, these words during and after his Million Man March address speak to his desire to legitimate himself beyond his traditional audience. Claiming God created the rhetorical situation by bringing the idea of the Million Man March through Farrakhan serves to advance Farrakhan's legitimacy.

The messenger of unpopular truths

To further legitimate himself, Farrakhan speaks to his role as a messenger of unpopular truths. In so doing, he recognizes where and why charges of racism against him originate, but he considers them either fabrications or examples of people unwilling to cope with reality. For example, in the aforementioned October 30 Newsweek interview, Farrakhan is questioned about calling Jews "'bloodsuckers.'" In the interview, he accepts responsibility for calling Jews "'bloodsuckers,'" but he

charges the media with failing to contextualize and provide a complete account of why the characterization was made. Jews, he says, are just one of the many ethnic groups who have owned tenement buildings, businesses, and pawnshops in African American communities without giving back to the community from which their living is made. Unreported, he says, are similar charges he has leveled against Palestinians, Vietnamese, and Koreans (Smith, 1995, October 30, p.36). According to Farrakhan, his criticisms against these groups of people are an example of his role of saying things others are unwilling to say. It is costly to his image, but necessary, he believes, if the country is to transcend its racist nature.

An implicit purpose of his Million Man March address is to continue his role of pointing "'out the wrong and the evil of society'" he discussed in his _Newsweek_ interview. He justifies this role in the address by comparing himself to a physician, a person who is not very well liked but must be listened to if one's health is to improve:

> You don't hate the doctor when he points out what's wrong. You say, thank you, doctor. What's my prescription for healing? . . . Now, look, whoever is entrusted with the task of pointing out wrong, depending on the nature of the circumstances, is not always loved.

In fact, more than likely, that person is going

to be hated and misunderstood. Such persons are

generally hated because no one wants to be shown when

you're wrong (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.14).

Here, Farrakhan is attempting to convince his audience he is

disliked not because he is an evil person, but because he

has been chosen by God for an unpopular duty: to point out

human flaws. The flaws he spends the most time discussing,

however, are the flaws of whites.

Farrakhan's verbal attacks on whites can be seen as an

attempt to increase his legitimacy. By portraying himself

as a leader unwilling to forsake the airing of unpopular

truths, he attempts to favorably strengthen the opinion

African Americans have of his character. This is

accomplished by relentlessly criticizing the behaviors of

whites.

Farrakhan spins a narrative of white supremacy and

racism that begins with blacks being brought to America on

ships against their will and ends with the chastisement of

former Los Angeles Police Department Detective Mark Fuhrman.

He labels George Washington and Abraham Lincoln as slave

owners (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.10). He blasts the

white-run "mass media" for being mischievous in their

coverage of the Million Man March. He criticizes the white-

run government for calling Arabs and Hispanics "illegal

aliens" and for teaching Native Americans how to gamble (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.21). He vilifies whites for having "an appetite like a swine" (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.23), and he claims whites have "drawn out" talented blacks, taking them away from their communities and "imprison[ing] them with fear and distrust" (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.22). It is this unabashed willingness to directly state what he believes to be true that reflects Farrakhan's desire to increase his legitimacy. Rather than avoiding delicate issues, Farrakhan addresses them head-on. At a time when blacks still receive longer prison sentences than whites for similar federal crimes (Jet, 1995, October 16, p.24) and the country remains characterized as "Two nations, black and white, separate and unequal" (Thernstrom, 1995, October 12, p.A23), Farrakhan's directness is perhaps welcome to African Americans.

Building alliances

Making amends with the NAACP

Farrakhan also attempts to legitimize himself by building alliances with groups and individuals with whom he has had a stormy relationship. For example, he makes specific references to the individuals and organizations who did not endorse the march:

I know that the NAACP did not officially endorse this march. Neither did the Urban League. But, so what? So what? Many of the members are here anyway. I know that Dr. Lyons, of the National Baptist Association USA did not endorse the march, nor did the Reverend Dr. B.W. Smith, nor did Bishop Chandler Owens, but so what?[11] These are our brothers and we're not going to stop reaching out for them simply because we feel there was a misunderstanding. We still want to talk to our brothers because we cannot let artificial barriers divide us. . . .

No, we must continue to reach out for those who have condemned this, and make them to see that this was not evil; it was not intended for evil, it was intended for good (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.24).

Although his success in appealing to these organizations' members is unknown, it is clear he attempted to mend the bridges that divide them. Rather than referring exclusively to the Nation of Islam as an organization black men should join to improve their communities, he encourages men to return to their cities and join one of the many organizations working for the improvement of African Americans: the NAACP, the Urban League, the All African People's Revolutionary Party, PUSH, the Congress of Racial Equality, or the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Thus, rather than remaining divisive and dwelling on the fact many of the official representatives of these organizations did not endorse the march -- because of him -- he continues his effort to legitimize himself by recognizing the worthy efforts of these organizations.

Farrakhan even proposes a plan to save the NAACP from financial ruin by soliciting support for "a national economic development fund" to which each African American would contribute ten dollars per month (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.25). Moneys from this fund would be used to "free the NAACP, the Urban League and all Black organizations to work in the best interest of our people" (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.25). This may be the most convincing evidence of Farrakhan's efforts to legitimize himself. This is because Benjamin Chavis, the former Executive Director of the NAACP who was ousted from his leadership post for settling sexual harassment charges with NAACP funds (White, 1995, October 23, p.37), was appointed National Director of the Million Man March by Farrakhan. Farrakhan came under fire in the press for this decision. It was reported in the October 23 issue of _Time_, for example, that Mary Frances Berry, chairperson of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, declared "'I do not trust Louis Farrakhan or Benjamin Chavis to lead us to the Promised Land'" (White, 1995, October 23, p.37). I thus contend that by proposing a plan to help the

country's most storied civil rights organization avoid financial collapse, Farrakhan once again implicitly voices a desire to increase his legitimacy with a more mainstream audience; just the opposite of what he explicitly argues in his address.

A touch of conservativism

Farrakhan further establishes his legitimacy by referring to unreproachable, uncontroversial beliefs and practices of the Nation of Islam. Because components of the ideology of the Nation of Islam have been favorably compared with mainstream conservativism (see below), I suggest Farrakhan refers to some of these universally accepted tenets to bolster his public persona and expand the limits of his legitimacy.

As discussed in chapter one, the Nation of Islam adheres to a strict set of beliefs, beliefs that are uncompromisable, rooted in frugality and asceticism, committed to the family, and dedicated to a Puritan work ethic, a capitalistic and entrepreneurial spirit, and religious teachings. It is logical to conclude, then, although contrary to what Farrakhan would likely want to hear, that the NOI preaches values shared by the GOP, the party responsible for writing what Farrakhan has termed the "contract *on* black and poor America" (the GOP refers to the

document as the Contract *with* America) (Minerbrook, 1995,

October 16, p.60). Hugh Price, president of the National

Urban League, echoed this contention when he compared the

Million Man March to the GOP-mantra of "family-values": "'I

think this may have been the largest family-values rally in

the history of America'" (Lacayo, 1995, October 30, p.34).

Don Terry (1995, October 15) of <u>The New York Times</u> reached a

similar conclusion: "In many ways, Mr. Farrakhan is a

conservative, and on the surface, at least, some of his

rally's themes echo those heard at Republican gatherings:

God, loyalty, family, discipline" (p.3). Former Nation of

Islam member Salim Muwakkil concurs:

> If it were not for his expressions of anti-Semitism,
>
> Minister Farrakhan would be the candidate of the Newt
>
> Gingriches, because he is basically talking their talk.
>
> It's the same message that the church is trying to
>
> sell, but the young aren't listening to the church.
>
> They are listening to Farrakhan (Terry, 1995,
>
> October 15, p.3).

Farrakhan discusses other conservative staples while

conspicuously omitting tenets of the NOI less palatable to

his non-traditional audience (e.g. separation of the races).

For instance, he mentions a non-government-initiated,

grassroots plan to rebuild African American communities:

> All we gotta do is go back home and turn our

> communities into productive places. All we gotta do
> is go back home and make our communities a decent
> and safe place to live. . . . start dotting the Black
> community with businesses, opening up factories,
> challenging ourselves to be better than what we are
> (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, pp.22-23).

He even advocates blacks' involvement in mainstream
politics, a practice from which the Nation of Islam has
historically distanced itself. He admonishes "eight
million, eligible but unregistered brothers and sisters" to
register to vote (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.24). It does
not matter, according to Farrakhan, whether one registers as
a Republican, Democrat, or an independent, but only whether
blacks vote for those candidates who "speak to our agenda"
(Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.24). Thus, when combined,
these conservative appeals reflect Farrakhan's desire to
legitimize himself to the largest number of African
Americans possible. Incorporating these conservative
appeals is a wise decision because the numbers of black
Republicans, according to Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel
West (1996, April 5), are on the rise (p.B7).

Making amends with the women in the audience

As previously noted, a significant portion of the
public was in disfavor of Farrakhan's decision to exclude

women from the march. Accordingly, consistent with his overall effort to silence his critics and establish legitimacy, Farrakhan thanked black women throughout the course of the address for their involvement in organizing the march (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.9). Furthermore, inconsistent with the roles and duties prescribed to the female members of the Nation of Islam (Lincoln, 1973), Farrakhan invited several black women to speak, including poet Maya Angelou, civil rights movement instigator Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X widow Dr. Betty Shabazz (Jet, 1995, October 30, pp.6-9). These are significant moves by Farrakhan because of the criticism he has received for being patriarchal and for asking women to watch the march from home. John Henrik Clarke, for example, emeritus professor of black and Puerto Rican studies at Hunter College in New York, claimed the exclusion of women ignored the crucial role black women have played in securing freedom for all Americans (Minerbrook, 1995, October 16, p.60). Extolling women and their role in the march, then, can be seen as an attempt by Farrakhan to change the perception others have of his attitudes about women. It is one more example of his effort to legitimize his reputation beyond his traditional audience.

An appeal for talks with the Jewish community

Perhaps the single, most frequent criticism of Farrakhan is his reputation for making anti-Semitic remarks. Therefore, in order to mend his tarnished reputation with the Jewish community and increase his legitimacy as a potential leader of all African Americans, Farrakhan appeals to Jews in his address:

> I don't like this squabble with the members of the Jewish community. . . . perhaps in light of what we see today, maybe it's time to sit down and talk. . . .
>
> The question is: if the dialogue is proper then we might be able to end the pain. And ending the pain may be good for both and ultimately good for the nation (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.25).

Although he does not accept culpability for anti-Semitic statements attributed to him, the mere acknowledgement of a rift between Farrakhan and the Jewish community implies at least a shred of culpability on the part of Farrakhan. If nothing else, Farrakhan opens the door for negotiations. With a total of approximately three million audience members -- 800,000 in the capital city and 2.2 million watching on television -- his request for dialogue is a powerful statement: it beckons a response from the Jewish community. As such, this overture reflects an effort to increase his legitimacy.

Thanks to Dr. Betty Shabazz, wife of Malcolm X

Farrakhan also extends an olive branch to Dr. Betty
Shabazz, the widowed spouse of Malcolm X. Because of his
alleged involvement in the assassination of Malcolm X, a
firestorm of controversy has circled around Farrakhan for
thirty years. Earlier in the year when Quibilah Shabazz,
the daughter of Malcolm X, was indicted on charges of
conspiracy to murder Farrakhan, the controversy surrounding
Malcolm's death reignited. It was therefore a significant
move on the part of Farrakhan to invite Betty Shabazz to
speak during the Million Man March and to acknowledge her
presence during his address:

> I thank Dr. Betty Shabazz who came in the name of her
> husband and I thank God for allowing the negative thing
> to be turned into a positive that she and I might start
> the process of reconciling 30-year-old differences
> (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.27).

Just as he did with Jews, Farrakhan tacitly accepts
responsibility for the rift between him and Malcolm's family
and thereby signals a desire to be received favorably by a
larger audience than he was before the march.

A comparison to Malcolm X and Martin Luther King

Farrakhan further attempts to legitimize himself
through a comparison to Malcolm X and Martin Luther King:

Now, Martin Luther King, Jr. was probably the most

patriotic American. . . . And because he pointed out

what was wrong, he was ill-spoken of, vilified,

maligned, hated, and eventually, murdered. . . .

Brother Malcolm had that same road to travel.

He pointed out what was wrong in the society and he had

to suffer for pointing out what was wrong and he

ultimately died on that altar for pointing out what was

wrong (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.14).

This comparison serves three purposes in legitimizing

Farrakhan. First, it associates him with two greatly

admired, loved, and respected men, men who were held in

high-esteem for their selfless commitment to equal rights.

Because Farrakhan attempts to legitimize himself as a

respected force in the black community -- a leader who can

be regarded as a champion of equal rights for all African

Americans -- drawing connections between himself and more

popular, favorably regarded figures increases his chances of

being legitimized.

Second, the comparison burnishes his image because he

has previously attacked the ideology of King and assailed

the character of Malcolm X. With King, the ideology

championed by Farrakhan and embodied in the Nation of Islam

has often stood in direct opposition to King's advocacy of

non-violent disobedience and inclusion of non-minorities in

the struggle for racial equality. With Malcolm X, Farrakhan has been charged with calling him a "'cowardly hypocritical dog' who 'is worthy of death'" (Cone, 1993, p.40), thus inviting allegations he was responsible for Malcolm's assassination. In short, by implicitly renouncing his previous character attacks of these men, Farrakhan demonstrates his efforts to forge an alliance with the masses who favorably regard King and Malcolm X.

The third and final benefit of the comparison is his ability to portray himself as a victim. The following passage demonstrates how Farrakhan presents himself as the victim of forces much grander in power than he:

> When you're dealing with forces which have become entrenched in their evil, intractable and unyielding their power produces an arrogance. And their arrogance produces a blindness. And out of that evil state of mind, they will do all manner of evil to the person who points out their wrong. Even though you're doing good for them by pointing out where America went wrong (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.14).

Farrakhan, as he sees it, then, is a victim of evil forces. Just like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, Farrakhan is being ridiculed for doing what is right. He is a martyr, a man unwilling to compromise his unpopular beliefs. Like King and Malcolm, he would have us believe he is ultimately

willing to sacrifice his life for what is right. If the
audience believes this comparison, the broad-based
legitimacy he is attempting to establish may increase.

Farrakhan's Increased Legitimacy

An analysis of polling data gathered shortly after the
Million Man March lends credence to the argument that an
implicit goal of Louis Farrakhan's keynote address was to
increase his legitimacy with an audience larger than the one
he is typically associated. The Gallup Poll Monthly
resoundingly supports this conclusion: "In the wake of the
. . . 'Million Man March,' the principal organizer -- Louis
Farrakhan -- has gained ground as a major leader in the
black community" (1995, November).

The poll, conducted October 19-22, 1995, just after the
Million Man March, indicates a marked increase in black
Americans' views toward Farrakhan. Fifty percent of African
Americans said Farrakhan represents their views well, up
from 33 percent when the same question was asked August 23-
24, 1994. Twelve percent of the 321 respondents also
indicated they felt Louis Farrakhan "is the *most* important
national leader in the black community today" (1995,
November p.21), second to only Jesse Jackson and a nine
percent increase from August 23-25, 1993, when the question
was last asked. But one only has to compare polls of

Farrakhan taken immediately following the march to those

taken ten days before the march to notice an improvement in

Farrakhan's appeal. Compared to the October 4 and 5, 1995

TIME/CNN poll, for example, which found only 33 percent of

blacks who believed Farrakhan was a positive force in the

black community (Pooley, 1995, October 23, p.36), the post-

march poll taken by Gallup signals a convincing jump in

Farrakhan's legitimacy to 50 percent.

Similarly, the November issue of The Gallup Poll

Monthly reported 56 percent of blacks believed limiting the

march to black men was the right thing to do, and 38 percent

believed it was the wrong thing to do (1995, November,

p.22). This represents a significant shift in opinion from

the TIME/CNN poll taken before the march in which 20 percent

of blacks were in favor of limiting the march to black men

while 70 percent were opposed to doing so. It would seem,

then, that his appeals to women had a positive effect.

Praising women for their role in organizing the march and

defending his decision of the importance for black men to

convene independent of women achieved a significant shift in

public opinion.

Newsmagazine and newspaper articles further indicate a

favorable response to Farrakhan and the march from the black

community. The October 30, 1995 issue of Jet, for instance,

claimed "The Million Man March struck the nation's capital

with the velocity of a hurricane, routing the GOP-controlled

Congress from its budget-slashing work, frightening

thousands of Whites from commuting to government posts, and

virtually shutting the most important city on earth" (p.7).

Heeding Farrakhan's admonitions to go "back home to do

something about what's going on in our lives and in our

communities" (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p.15), African

Americans joined organizations and vowed to be more

responsible. Retired police lieutenant Philip Banks, Jr.

and his three sons, for example, focused on registering

blacks to vote. Boxer Maurice Gray stepped up efforts to

steer young blacks from the perils of drugs (Smolowe, 1995,

October 30, pp.43-50). One hundred phone calls busied the

Atlanta branch of the Southern Christian Leadership

Conference, where it normally takes three months to get 20

new members. And in Detroit, 15 high school students who

attended the march made a pledge to raise money for the

United Negro College Fund, to attend college, to respect

women, and to act more responsibly at home (Beck, 1995,

October 30, p.39).

Although these data do not prove my contention that an

implicit goal of Farrakhan's Million Man March address was

to increase his legitimacy to a more diverse range of

African Americans, they do lend support. Contrary to what

Farrakhan expressed to his audience -- "I don't need to be

validated, I don't need to be in any mainstream" -- this is just what he desired: to gain legitimacy as a nationally respected leader among African Americans.

Given Farrakhan's harsh characterization of white audience members, however, it is not surprising whites were less favorable toward Farrakhan than blacks after the march. New York Times editorialist A.M. Rosenthal, for example, blasted Farrakhan for being a proponent of "political separation, racial separation, emotional separation, religious separation, separation today, separation tomorrow, separation forever" (1995, October 17, p.A15). Another New York Times editorial charged Farrakhan with delivering a "rambling, self-obsessed" speech, "more interested in continuing his personal negotiations with the press and the Jewish community over his past racist statements than in answering the expectations that drew such a large and earnest crowd to the Mall" (1995, October 17, p.A14). Louis Rich stated there is one opinion that unites all white Americans: "Louis Farrakhan is a hate-filled demagogue with a divisive, separatist ideology and an appalling record of racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and homophobia (1995, October 18, p.A23). In his October 23, 1995 article, Eric Pooley of Time concluded "a nation that cannot or will not deal with the issue of race risks letting the dialogue be managed by a demagogue" (p.36). Finally, House majority leader Newt

Gingrich lamented that "if the pain level is great enough
for him to be a leader, then we all have a lot bigger
challenge ahead" (Holmes, 1995, October 18, p.B9).

Opinion polls support the commentary directed at
Farrakhan. According to an October 18-19, 1995 TIME/CNN
poll of 502 white Americans, 48 percent believed the
description "Farrakhan is a bigot and a racist" applied to
Farrakhan whereas only 12 percent believed it did not; only
12 percent believed the description "Farrakhan speaks the
truth" applied while 43 percent believed it did not; and 12
percent believed the statement "Farrakhan is a good role
model for black youth" applied and 52 percent believed it
did not (Monroe, 1995, October 30, p.52). Thus, contrary to
the manner in which African Americans received Farrakhan
after the march, whites were resoundingly disapproving.

It should be noted, however, whites' disapproval of
Farrakhan is not a result of Farrakhan's neglect of them as
audience members. Although a count of the number of whites
who tuned in to Farrakhan's address is unknown, it is clear
from his address Farrakhan knew many would be watching.
Accordingly, he directs statements to whites throughout his
address. President Clinton and his address at the
University of Texas-Austin earlier in the day, for example,
is mentioned: "We are a wounded people but we're being
healed, but President Clinton, America is also

wounded. . . . And we can't gloss it over with nice speeches, my dear, Mr. President" (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, p. 16). Elsewhere, he speaks directly to whites watching his address on television:

> The real evil in America is the idea that undergirds
> the set up of the western world. And that idea is
> called White supremacy.
>
> Now wait, wait, wait. Before you get angry.
> Those of you listening by television. You don't even
> know why you behave the way you behave. . . .
>
> White supremacy is the enemy of both White people
> and Black people because the idea of White supremacy
> means you should rule because you're White, that makes
> you sick. And you've produced a sick society and a
> sick world (Madhubuti & Karenga, 1996, pp.20-21).

Based on these statements, whites' disapproval of Farrakhan is not surprising.

In short, Farrakhan capitalized on the uniqueness of the rhetorical situation to broaden his base of support with African Americans. Because his implicit goal was to increase his legitimacy with blacks, not whites, the post-march disapproval by whites is unlikely to adversely affect him. In fact, the negative spin he put on the character of whites throughout his Million Man March address speaks to his apathy toward their opinions of him. To Farrakhan, the

vilification of whites was another weapon in his arsenal to
increase his legitimacy with blacks.

Summary

Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March address represents
a successful attempt to increase his legitimacy with African
Americans beyond his traditional circle of appeal. He
increases his legitimacy by defending attacks on his
character and by portraying himself as a messenger of
unpopular truths. He further legitimizes himself by
building alliances with the NAACP and other organizations
working for the improvement of African American communities,
by appealing to conservative values of the Nation of Islam,
by making amends with women, by appealing for talks with the
Jewish community, and by comparing himself to Martin Luther
King and Malcolm X. Support for my conclusion that
Farrakhan was successful in building his legitimacy with the
African American community can be found by comparing public
opinion polls taken before and after the Million Man March.

CHAPTER FOUR   CONCLUSION

Sharing with others the topic of my master's thesis,
"I'm studying Louis Farrakhan and his Million Man March
address," often elicited a roll of the eyes, an audible
groan, or a raise of the brow and tuck of the chin. Others,
perhaps to avoid insult or confrontation, responded
neutrally: "Sounds interesting." It was.

More importantly, however, study of Louis Farrakhan's
discourse contributes to the understanding of America's
intractable problem of race. Because so many people listen
to what Farrakhan says (or what is reported he says) and
hold an opinion of him -- favorable or unfavorable --
analyzing his discourse is highly useful in the quest to
understand why he is appealing to some yet so repugnant to
others. A close textual analysis of his rhetoric as
performed in this study increases the understanding of how
race can be discussed in America.

In reflecting upon the study's two research questions,
"How did the rhetorical situation determine what Louis
Farrakhan did and did not say during his Million Man March
address on October 16, 1995?" and "How can race in America
be discussed?" several conclusions can be reached. Foremost
is the conclusion that race cannot be discussed similarly
with different audiences. Farrakhan recognizes this

conclusion by honoring the limitations of the rhetorical situation at the Million Man March. Because he desired to increase his legitimacy with the African American community beyond his traditional appeal, his praise of highly-respected organizations such as the NAACP, the Urban League, and the SCLC, as well as women, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X, served to reach this goal. However, because he did not desire to increase his legitimacy with whites, attacks of their character were not inappropriate. In fact, these attacks may have bolstered his image with blacks. Public opinion polls taken before and after the march support this contention.

Moving beyond the rhetorical situation, there is a trade-off that comes with Farrakhan's increased legitimacy within the black community and negative reputation within the white community: pessimism about the prospect of improved race relations. This is true for both whites and blacks, but whites appear even less optimistic in the wake of the Million Man March. The Gallup Poll Monthly reported in November 1995, for example, that 61 percent of blacks believed the march would help race relations and 19 percent believed it would hurt race relations (p.23). In comparison, 40 percent of whites believed the march would help race relations and 37 percent believed it would hurt race relations (The Gallup Poll Monthly, 1995, November,

p.23). The prospect of improved race relations for whites
is so bleak, The New York Times columnist Lance Morrow
stated,

>On respectable op-ed pages, writers have been
>suggesting that we might as well consider breaking off
>part of the U.S. to form a separate Republic of African
>America. The arrangement would confirm a secession
>that has already occurred in millions of minds all over
>the country. The attitude is that it was a horrible
>marriage from the start and has long since dissolved in
>chronic dysfunction, occasional riot and permanent
>mutual contempt. Why keep the ugly, abusive charade
>going? (1995, October 30).

It is possible, then, well-educated, formerly anti-
segregationist whites are contemplating the workability of
one of the Nation of Islam's most discredited propositions:
separation of the races. Imagining a more pessimistic view
of race relations is difficult.

Based on this rhetorical analysis, it is further
concluded Farrakhan is unlikely to be received by blacks and
whites as a nationally respected leader of race relations.
In order for blacks and whites to constructively discuss the
issues plaguing their relations, a leader willing and able
to appeal to the fears, anger, and frustration of both races
must step forward. If, however, a leader seeks to establish

legitimacy with the African American community, Farrakhan's Million Man March address may be a model to follow. While he did not win resounding approval of all African Americans as a result of his address, he did increase the number of blacks who hold a favorable opinion toward him. Had his history prior to the march not been so negative, it is possible the appeals he used to broaden his legitimacy would have been even more persuasive.

For the purposes of developing rhetorical theory, this analysis of Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March address can be linked to previous studies. As noted in the review of literature (chapter one), Farrakhan has been labeled a demagogue -- one who is associated with employing "highly suspect means in the pursuit of equally suspect ends" (Goldzwig, 1989, p.202) -- by communication scholars Gaber (1986) and Goldzwig (1989). This study supports such a characterization by citing Farrakhan's name-calling and other *ad hominem* attacks on whites, but with a caveat articulated by Goldzwig (1989): demagoguery can transcend "'name calling'" and egoism if used as "part of an overall strategy of agitation aimed at the attainment of certain social ends" (p.204). This, of course, begs the question, was the Farrakhan-led Million Man March, advertised as an opportunity to display black unity and to commit to the values of family, community, religion, and respect, a front

for Farrakhan's selfish interest and personal gain, or was it an attempt to transcend the "egoism" to which Goldzwig refers?

On a more conclusive note, this study affirms Goldzwig's (1989) statement that "the legitimation of a particular leader and his or her representative subculture may, as a matter of course if not intentional design, demand what many term demagogy" (p.211). Thus, rather than being irrational or unethical, Farrakhan's use of strategies such as vilification and polarization in his Million Man March address represent not only an attempt to attack the behavior of whites, but to align blacks with his ideology. This is certainly one of the more interesting phenomena to emerge from an analysis of Farrakhan's address. Because Farrakhan's Million Man March audience was larger and more diverse than his traditional audience, a deviation from the strategies he typically employs when speaking were expected. There were differences, as discussed in chapter three when it was stated Farrakhan appealed to Jews, women, conservativism, and "mainstream" African American organizations, but not to the extent anticipated. For example, Goldzwig (1989), in his analysis of Farrakhan's rhetoric, discovered Farrakhan's discourse establishes his credibility and religious vision, ridicules whites and blacks, polarizes audience members, and conveys theories of

conspiracy. His Million Man March address does these same things. This means Farrakhan's appeal may continue to grow should more African Americans listen to his speeches through unfiltered sources. In other words, because strategies employed in his Million Man March address are similar to those used in his previous rhetorical efforts, he may strike a chord with a larger sector of the African American community than is typically associated with him. However, given an overwhelming majority of whites find Farrakhan and his methods of appeal repugnant, the gap between blacks and whites is unlikely to close should his legitimacy among blacks continue to increase.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

A strength of this rhetorical analysis is its balancing of the two cultural boundaries. By examining both white and black America's responses to Farrakhan and the Million Man March, it was possible to draw conclusions as to the efficacy of Farrakhan's audience appeals.

At the same time, however, a more comprehensive review of the African American press would have been useful for incorporation into the discussion of chapter three. There is a noticeable difference between the coverage of what Farrakhan called the "mass media" and the black press. Whereas the "mass media" were predominately negative toward

Farrakhan and the march, <u>Jet</u>, the only periodical from the black press examined, was extremely positive. For example, the two articles written about Farrakhan and the march during the time period examined did not report the commentary of African American officials who declined to attend the march in protest of its leadership. Additional information from the black press would have added perspective and perhaps reconciled some of the inconsistencies reported between the "mass media" and <u>Jet</u>.

A more inclusive analysis of the black press, for example, may have supported my conclusion that Farrakhan's statement about the media is untrue:

> We thank all of the Black newspapers, radio stations, commentators, disc jockey's, who really talked up the Million Man March. The mass media did not get involved until the last minute and it seemed as though they got involved with another agenda in mind.

Based on the information available to me, Farrakhan's charge is unwarranted. Contrary to what he said, <u>Jet</u> covered the Million Man March in only two issues during the seven week period examined. Of the two issues, its most cursory coverage was in the October 16 publication *prior* to the march, dedicating only two pages to the event. Clearly, then, its pre-march coverage was very limited and certainly no greater than the coverage of the march in the

newsmagazines of the "mass media" examined for this study.
Time, for instance, covered the event in three of its issues
during the examined time frame (October 16, 23rd, and 30th),
including one in the period before the march. U.S. News &
World Report, just like Jet, covered the march in two
issues, one on October 16 and the other on October 30, and
Newsweek published articles in its October 9, 23rd, and 30th
issues. Therefore, although this review of the persuasive
field is limited in scope, especially in its analysis of the
African American media, it does bring Farrakhan's claim into
question. A more thorough review of the black press would
have helped to eliminate such ambiguity.

A second strength of this study is its justification
for the arguments made. Although rhetorical analysis of
Farrakhan's address is subject to individual interpretation,
this study, due in large part to the specificity of Hart's
critical model, was heavily grounded in the text of
Farrakhan's discourse; any preconceived interpretations
were unable to withstand a careful scrutiny of the text. In
short, the grounded theory approach to research was well
demonstrated in this study.

Having said that, another problem encountered in this
study resulted from an application of Hart's critical
probes. Six close textual analyses (one for each of Hart's
six elements of the rhetorical situation) of Farrakhan's two

hour and twenty seven minute address generated a tremendous
amount of data. Although a thorough understanding of the
address and its effect on the situation's multiple elements
was secured through such an in-depth method, interpreting
and narrowing the data for the development of an argument
were very challenging.

Finally, this study answered the research questions
delineated in the prospectus. A concern in the nascent
stages of this study was that an analysis of one address
would not permit conclusions to be drawn about the second
research question: How can race in America be discussed?
Examination of the persuasive field and cultural boundary in
combination with a close textual analysis of Farrakhan's
address ensured the answering of *both* questions.

Future Study

This study simultaneously contributes to the body of
communication literature and an understanding of race
relations in the United States. It accomplishes this by
arguing that if a rhetorical situation presents a highly
unusual mix of situational elements -- a very large,
racially diverse audience; a setting with tremendous
historical significance and symbolism; a volatile, divisive
topic (race); a saturated persuasive field; and a speaker
with a nationally recognized personality -- one can realize

personal benefits not afforded in other rhetorical contexts. The Million Man March, for example, with its unique and complex interaction of the elements of setting, audience, speaker, persuasive field, and topic, allowed Farrakhan to increase his legitimacy with an audience much larger than the one with which he is traditionally associated. Furthermore, the study argues race relations are unlikely to improve if persons who employ the rhetorical strategies Farrakhan does are favorably received by a large populace of one race and not the other.

These conclusions warrant further inquiry. First, research exploring why African Americans' opinions of Farrakhan improved would be worthwhile so as to identify why attitude change toward Farrakhan occurred after the Million Man March. Second, because Farrakhan is unfavorably regarded by a majority of whites and a significant number of blacks -- because of what he says -- it would be worthwhile to study the rhetoric of individuals (should they exist) toward whom both blacks and whites hold a favorable opinion. Of particular interest should be these peoples' discussions of race. Somewhat similarly, an interesting avenue of exploration would be research into the rhetorical strategies of vilification, polarization, threats, obscenity, and mythication, strategies employed by Farrakhan at one time or another (Goldzwig, 1989). Questions to consider should

include: are these strategies used by other rhetors (black
or white), and if so, with what effect? and are these
strategies only tolerable when directed at whites as opposed
to minority groups? Finally, it would be useful to compare
what Farrakhan has said in his addresses with what is
reported in the "mass media" and the black press. Of
particular interest would be whether Farrakhan's claims that
the media have distorted and decontextualized his message
are credible or not. Due to their lack of availability, one
of the most difficult challenges in such an endeavor would
be locating full text of Farrakhan's addresses.

Summary

The conclusions drawn from this study are not very
optimistic. While Farrakhan's increased legitimacy within
the African American community speaks to his ability to
appeal to some blacks, the persisting intraracial and
interracial division toward Farrakhan and other national
figures speaks to a lack of widely-respected leadership on
matters of race. According to Time, for example, 51 percent
of whites would have voted for Colin Powell had he run as
the Republican candidate for President, while only 27
percent of blacks would have voted for him (Stengel, 1995,
October 16, p.70). Newsweek claimed this is due to blacks'
reluctance to endorse a candidate toward whom whites are so

fond (Waldman, Samuels, Smith, & Beals, 1995, October 2,
p.42). In <u>The Future of the Race</u>, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.
and Cornel West (1996, April 5) echo the need for leaders,
particularly within the black community, capable of
transcending the manner in which race is presently discussed
(p.B7). In short, then, the strategies Farrakhan employed
to increase his legitimacy beyond his African American
audience of traditional appeal likely served a greater
benefit to Farrakhan than to interracial harmony. The
prospect of improved race relations remains bleak until a
leader -- black or white -- is willing and able to speak
directly to the fears, frustrations, and anger of a large
body of black and white Americans.

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NOTES

1. To date, Lincoln's (1973) account of the NOI is the most comprehensive and widely-cited work of scholarship on the organization. Cone (1993) called it "the authoritative text on the movement" (p.50).

2. W.D. Farad has also been referred to as Master Wali Farrad Muhammad and Wallace Fard.

3. "Perhaps the nearest parallel to the Black Muslim Movement was the Garvey movement of the post-World War I era" (Lincoln, 1973, p.10).

4. On the international scene, the Black Muslims identify themselves with the branch of Islam known as Sunni Muslim (Battle, 1988, p.38), one of the two major branches of Islam (to be distinguished from Shiite) (p.41).

5. Disbanded by Wallace Muhammad (Mamimya, 1982, p.144), the FOI was resurrected by Farrakhan after he assumed leadership in 1978 (Smith, 1990, p.126). Under Farrakhan, the FOI has been the source of praise and ridicule: praise because of its successful efforts to eliminate "crime and drugs in communities where nothing else works," and ridicule because

of its occasional disregard of civil liberties (Henry, 1994, p.23).

6. The "final call," according to Mamiya (1982), "is a call to black people to return to Allah as incarnated in Master Farrad and his Apostle Elijah Muhammad" (p.141). According to _Business Week_ magazine, the biweekly newspaper has a circulation of 600,000 (1995, March 13, p.40).

7. Rhetorical status is defined as "the range of influence available to individuals and groups through symbols within particular social standings and situations" (Logue & Garner, 1988, p.2).

8. According to Aaron D. Gresson, consensus creating is "'the process of forming socially shared (as opposed to individually held) views of reality'. . . . Consensus breaking is occasioned by (1) willingness to entertain 'tabooed' thoughts in group situations, and (2) carrying such thoughts into the macrogroup'. . . . Consensus renegotiation begins when there is an attempt at reconciling majority and minority epistemological frames of reference" (Goldzwig, 1989, p.210).

9. With rare exception, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King are the foci of inquiry in analyses of black rhetoricians. Those receiving scant treatment include Stokely Carmichael (a distant third), Marcus Garvey, H. Rap Brown, and Louis Farrakhan, all noticeably Black Power advocates or militant spokespersons.

10. Contrary to what the October 15 issue of The New York Times and the October 16 issue of Time reported, Jet claimed the march was supported by the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention (1995, October 9, p.6).

11. Farrakhan's statements lend credence to The New York Times (1995, October 15) and Time (1995, October 16) who claimed the Million Man March was not supported by the Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC). Perhaps unwittingly to Farrakhan, his statements cast doubt on the journalistic integrity of Jet which claimed the PNBC and NBC endorsed the march (1995, October 9, p.6).