

FIGURES OF SPEECH

BY

JOHN SCHRAM

PRESENTED TO THE CHIT CHAT CLUB

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

APRIL 12, 2010

FIGURES OF SPEECH--- CHIT CHAT APRIL 2010

SOMETIME IN THE FALL OF 2007, EARLY IN THE PRIMARY CAMPAIGN FOR THE DEMOCRATIC NOMINATION AND WELL BEFORE THEN SENATOR BARACK OBAMA WAS WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF HILLARY CLINTON, I WAS STANDING IN A HOME IN PACIFIC HEIGHTS LISTENING TO THE SENATOR THANK SOME OF US FOR THE EARLY WORK WE HAD DONE ON THE CAMPAIGN. AS HE FINISHED HIS OFF THE CUFF SPEECH, FROM OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE ROOM, WE BOTH HEADED TO THE DESSERT TABLE AND AS I REMEMBER THE CHOREOGRAPHED DANCE STEPS- EACH OF US EYEING THE LAST SLICE OF CAKE. -- THINKING - I DON'T CARE IF HE IS GOING TO BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT-- I ASSURED HIM THAT WEDGE OF CAKE WAS MINE! A BIT OF AN ICY STARE, FOLLOWED BY A BIT OF A WRY SMILE CAME MY WAY. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, SMALL TALK CAN BE DIFFICULT SO I SAID SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT THAT YOUR -2004 CONVENTION SPEECH ABOUT HALF BLUE STATES AND HALF RED IS REMINISCENT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S 'HOUSE DIVIDED SPEECH' IN WHICH LINCOLN STATES, "A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND." "I BELIEVE A GOVERNMENT CANNOT ENDURE PERMANENTLY HALF SLAVE AND HALF FREE." TO MY SURPRISE SENATOR OBAMA BEGAN TO RECITE THE LINCOLN SPEECH WORD FOR WORD AND USED NO CLIFF NOTES. IT WAS SOMEWHAT LIKE JUDGE NOONAN'S ABILITY TO QUOTE POETRY ---WHEN RESPONDING TO A GIVEN CHIT CHAT PAPER!

WITH THE TITLE OF TONIGHTS PAPER, FIGURES OF SPEECH, MY INTENTION IS TO SHOW THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESIDENT'S OBAMA AND LINCOLN WITH REGARDS TO THE CRAFTING OF ORAL AND WRITTEN PRESENTATIONS WITH EMPHASIS ON OBAMA'S ATTACHMENT TO SOME OF LINCOLN'S MESSAGES .

IN THE PAST TWO YEARS MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF OBAMA'S CONNECTION TO LINCOLN: HIS JANUARY 2007 DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY SPEECH ON THE STEPS OF THE OLD COURTHOUSE IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS; HIS CABINET PICKS ECHOING LINCOLN'S CABINET- HIGHLIGHTED IN DORIS KEARNS GOODWIN'S WELL RECEIVED BOOK, "TEAM OF RIVALS," AS WELL AS SNIPPETS LIFTED FROM LINCOLN'S WRITTEN AND SPOKEN WORDS WHICH ARE FOUND THROUGHOUT MANY OF OBAMA'S RECENT SPEECHES. I BEGAN TO COMPARE THE PROSE OF THESE TWO MEN BECAUSE PROSE IS ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS FOR WHICH BOTH MEN ARE KNOWN. I THOUGHT ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES IN THEIR PERSONAL AND POLITICAL UPBRINGING AND HOW IT INFLUENCED THE STRUCTURE, VOCABULARY, DELIVERY, STYLE AND CADENCE OF THEIR WRITTEN AND SPOKEN WORKS. IN LINCOLN'S CASE, SINCE WE DO NOT HAVE AN AUDIO RECORD OF HIS WORKS, WE HAVE TO RELY ON COMMENTS OF OTHERS WITH REGARD TO HIS TONAL QUALITIES. WE ARE TOLD THAT LINCOLN HAD A RELATIVELY HIGH-PITCHED VOICE - DIFFERING FROM PRESIDENT OBAMA'S LOWER ONE. LINCOLN'S DISTINCT MID-WESTERN TWANG AND

HIS USE OF COLLOQUIALISMS AND UNGRAMMATICAL TERMS SUCH AS
“HE DON’T” DUMBFUNDED MANY IN THE EASTERN AUDIENCES.-
ALTHOUGH THESE OCURRED LESS OFTEN AS HIS CAREER PROGRESSED.

LINCOLN DID NOT CHANGE HIS METHOD OF DELIVERY BASED ON THE
MAKE UP OF HIS AUDIENCE. HE MAY HAVE CHANGED THE MESSAGE
BASED ON LOCALITY, BUT THE DELIVERY DID NOT VARY.

DURING THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATES, DOUGLAS DERIDED LINCOLN
FOR DELIVERING ONE MESSAGE IN NORTHERN ILLINOIS, AND ANOTHER IN
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS – ESPECIALLY WHEN DISCUSSING THE RIGHTS OF THE
NEGRO. IT IS MY BELIEF LINCOLN CONSIDERED BOTH THE READERS OF
THE PRINTED PAGE AS WELL AS THE LISTENERS IN THE AUDIENCE WHEN
HE SPOKE.. HE KNEW THAT THE DEBATES WOULD BE WIDELY PUBLISHED
AND HE EXPECTED THE DEBATES TO BE HIS ENTRÉE TO THE NATIONAL
VOTING PUBLIC, WHO, AT THAT TIME, WERE UNAWARE OF HIS STANDS ON
CURRENT ISSUES. HIS WRITING SKILLS WERE HIS POWER POINTS OF THE
MID 19TH CENTURY. HE KNEW NEWSPAPERS WERE THE VEHICLES TO GET
HIS MESSAGE ACROSS AND HE CRAFTED HIS SPEECHES WITH THIS IN
MIND. A PRESIDENT IS SHAPED BY THE MEDIA, AND IF HE IS GOOD, HE
SHAPES HIS COMMUNICATION TO FIT THE ENVIRONMENT. BOTH OBAMA
AND LINCOLN BELIEVED THAT STRONG ORAL DELIVERIES HELPED
CONTROL THE PRESS. LINCOLN LIVED IN THE AGE OF PRINT. ORATORY

WAS IMPORTANT POLITICAL ENTERTAINMENT, BUT WITH NO BROADCASTING, HIS WORDS REACHED LARGE AUDIENCES OUTSIDE THE IMMEDIATE AREA THROUGH THE PRINTED WORD. THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE LINCOLN –DOUGLAS DEBATES PUBLISHED IN NUMEROUS FORMS, HAS BEEN USED IN ENGLISH CLASSES TO ILLUSTRATE LINCOLN’S STYLE AND AS A MODEL FOR DEBATERS.

LINCOLN DID NOT HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF AMPLIFICATION- OR A TELEPROMPTER AND IN MANY CASES, DELIVERED FROM MEMORY. HIS GREATEST SPEECHES WERE NOT ENHANCED BY MECHANICAL DEVICES. IT WAS RHYTHM AND POETRY!! RHYTHM AND POETRY WERE THE STRENGTHS OF THE LINCOLN DELIVERANCE. EIGHTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO IS NOT AS MEMORABLE AS “FOUR SCORE AND SEVEN YEARS AGO!” WE CANNOT DEDICATE, WE CANNOT CONSECRATE,-- WE CANNOT HALLOW THIS GROUND:”-- “WITH MALICE TOWARDS NONE WITH CHARITY FOR ALL.” SIMPLE LINES, BUT THOSE OF YOU IN THIS AUDIENCE CAN IDENTIFY THE POET! HE WAS NOT ABOVE USING METAPHORS: “THIS NATION BROUGHT FORTH- CONCEIVED -----METAPHORIC FIGURES OF BIRTH! LINCOLN HAD TO CARRY THE DAY WITH HIS WORDS AND IDEAS. HE PUT INTO POWERFUL LANGUAGE THE NUB OF THE MATTER OVER SLAVERY AND SECESSION AS WELL AS THE MORAL LEADERSHIP IN THE NATION-WITH SIMPLE PHRASES – “THIS LAST BEST HOPE OF EARTH.”

SENATOR OBAMA, DURING BOTH THE PRIMARY AND THEN THE GENERAL CAMPAIGN- CRAFTED HIS DELIVERY TO FIT THE CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC MAKE- UP OF HIS CROWD. HIS DELIVERY AND USAGE OF WORDS DURING THE SOUTH CAROLINA PRIMARY WERE TAILORED TO THE LARGE MIDDLE CLASS AFRICAN AMERICAN AUDIENCES IN ATTENDANCE. THE MESSAGES IN HIS SEVERAL PRIMARY SPEECHES WERE THE SAME FROM PLACE TO PLACE BUT OBAMA INSERTED WORDS AND INFLECTIONS USED IN EVERYDAY CONVERSATIONS IN THE LOCALITY IN WHICH HE WAS SPEAKING. GERUNDS DISAPPEARED IN THE SOUTH AND THE MIDDLE WEST HEARD THE WORD "FOLKS" TIME AND TIME AGAIN. AT UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL SETTINGS, WHERE MOSTLY YOUNG PEOPLE WERE IN ATTENDANCE, SENATOR OBAMA WOULD USE THE TERM 'SHOUT OUT' WHEN HE WANTED TO POINT OUT SOMEONE IN THE AUDIENCE OR ON THE PODIUM AND USED AS A CLOSE- THE CHANT- "YES WE CAN." FEISTINESS COMES THROUGH WITH THE YOUNG CROWDS- HIS RESERVED SELF IS EVIDENT WHEN SPEAKING TO LARGELY OLDER AUDIENCES. HE IS AN EXPERT AT CONTROLLING THE TEMPO.

LEADING UP TO HIS ELECTION, OBAMA, LIKE LINCOLN, MEMORIZED MANY OF HIS SPEECHES. SINCE BECOMING PRESIDENT, HE USES A TELEPROMPTER, ALTHOUGH I, FOR ONE, FEEL HE DID A MUCH BETTER JOB ON THE STUMP WHEN HE DID NOT USE ONE. REMEMBER, DURING THE

CAMPAIGN MOST OF THOSE STUMP SPEECHES WERE DELIVERED TWO OR THREE TIMES A DAY AND THE TELEPROMPTER JUST WAS NOT NECESSARY. ONCE HE ASSUMED THE PRESIDENCY, THE DELIVERED SPEECH, FOR THE MOST PART IS A ONE-TIME EVENT. OF COURSE, THE SUBJECT MATTER, BE IT HEALTH CARE OR JOBS MAY BE THE SAME, BUT HE CANNOT GIVE A 'CANNED' VERSION AS HE WAS ACCUSTOMED TO DOING IN THE RUN UP TO THE ELECTION.

IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT LINCOLN HAD ONLY ONE YEAR OF FORMAL SCHOOLING IN A ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE PROBABLY SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SECOND AND SIXTH GRADE. WITH THAT SAID WE ALSO KNOW THAT HE WAS A VORACIOUS READER AND WAS LARGELY SELF TAUGHT. HIS READINGS INCLUDED THE BIBLE AND SHAKESPEARE AND SPRINKLED THROUGH-OUT HIS WRITINGS ARE REFERENCES TAKEN FROM THESE WORKS. IN PREPARING THIS PAPER I MUST GIVE CREDIT TO CLARK MASER WHO, LATE LAST YEAR, FORWARDED TO ME A NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ABOUT BOTH LINCOLN'S AND OBAMA'S USAGE OF SHAKESPEARE. AS MR. OBAMA NOTED, IN HIS REMARKS AT THE REOPENING OF FORD'S THEATER, LINCOLN WAS A LIFELONG BARDOLATER AND SERIAL SHAKESPEARE QUOTER. LINCOLN REGARDED SHAKESPEARE AS A PASTOR WITH WHOM HE SHARED CONFIDENCES AND FROM WHOM HE SOUGHT COMFORT. ---AN ORACLE TO BE CONSULTED FOR WISDOM AND A FRIEND. HE KEPT A 'COMPLETE WORKS' CLOSE AT

HAND IN THE WHITE HOUSE. SITTING FOR AN OFFICIAL PORTRAIT, LINCOLN FOUGHT THE TEDIUM WITH SPONTANEOUS RECITATION OF THE OPENING SOLILOQUY FROM RICHARD THE THIRD. HE ALSO HAD A RUNNING COMMENTARY ON HOW HE BELIEVED MOST ACTORS PLAYING THE ROLE BOTCHED IT. HE KNEW MUCH OF HAMLET BY HEART AND THOUGHT THE SOLILOQUY BY CLAUDIUS --“O, MY OFFENSE IS RANK”—SURPASSED THAT COMMENCING WITH “TO BE OR NOT TO BE.”

A LITTLE BIT OF DIGRESSION HERE: LINCOLN WAS NOT THE ONLY PRESIDENT WHO LEANED ON SHAKESPEARE FOR HELP. JOHN ADAMS AND THOMAS JEFFERSON REVERED SHAKESPEARE SO MUCH THAT THEY MADE A PILGRIMAGE TO HIS HOUSE IN STRATFORD –UPON-AVON IN 1786. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS WAS A SERIOUS SHAKESPEARE LOVER AS WELL, AND IS THE ONLY PRESIDENT TO HAVE PUBLISHED A VOLUME OF CRITICISM ON SHAKESPEARE. GARFIELD READ SHAKESPEARE TO HIS CHILDREN. KENNEDY HOSTED THE FIRST SHAKESPEAREAN PERFORMANCES IN THE EXECUTIVE MANSION. MILLARD FILLMORE- YES EVEN FILLMORE- READ SHAKESPERE TO FACTORY WORKERS IN BUFFALO.

OBAMA SEEMS TO WANT TO JOIN THE RANKS OF THESE FORMER PRESIDENTS. IT IS KNOWN THAT THE HEAVIER WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

ARE AMONG HIS FAVORITES. IN HIS INAUGURAL ADDRESS, HE RECITES
“THIS WINTER OF OUR HARDSHIP-- CLOSE TO RICHARDS THE THIRD’S
“WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT.”

OBAMA’S EDUCATION WAS QUITE A BIT DIFFERENT FROM LINCOLN’S. HE
HAD A MIX OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN HAWAII-, A FOUR-YEAR EXPOSURE TO
AN INDONESIAN PRIVATE SCHOOL THAT INCLUDED BOTH WESTERN AND
MUSLIM CURRICULUM. HIS UNIVERSITY TRAINING INCLUDED
OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE ON THE WEST COAST, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
AND FINALLY HARVARD LAW SCHOOL WHERE – IT IS WELL KNOWN, HE
BECAME THE FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN PRESIDENT OF THE HARVARD
LAW REVIEW. OBAMA, LIKE LINCOLN, RETURNS TO SHAKESPEARE- THE
BIBLE AND ADDITIONALLY, QUOTES FROM LINCOLN AS WELL AS
SEVERAL PREVIOUS PRESIDENTS- SPECIFICALLY BOTH ROOSEVELTS-
WILSON – TRUMAN AND REAGAN.

BOTH LINCOLN AND OBAMA WERE REMARKABLE CREATORS OF
DELIVERED LANGUAGE. ALTHOUGH COMPETENT WORDSMITHS THEY
BOTH WERE QUICK TO QUOTE OTHERS WHO WERE AS ADEPT AT
CREATING VERBAL AND OR WRITTEN PROSE AS THEY.

OBAMA HAS LIFTED WHOLE SECTIONS OF LINCOLN’S PROSE, AND
SIMILARLY, LINCOLN- IN ONE OF HIS FIRST APPEARANCES ON THE

NATIONAL STAGE, IN 1852 AT A EULOGY FOR HENRY CLAY, READ FROM A PUBLIC JOURNAL OPPOSING CLAY, BECAUSE AS LINCOLN STATES, “HE COULD NOT, IN ANY LANGUAGE OF MY OWN, SO WELL EXPRESS MY THOUGHTS.”

THE OBAMA STUMP SPEECHES HIGHLIGHTED THE IDEA OF HOPE –A REFERENCE TO HIS BOOK –“THE AUDACITY OF HOPE”- HE TRANSLATES “HOPE” INTO BELIEF OF THE UNSEEN WHICH COULD BE DELUSIONAL OR VISIONARY. I RESEARCHED THE WORD HOPE THROUGH AN ONLINE ETYMOLOGY DICTIONARY. THE WORD ORIGINATED IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS AS THE DEFINITION OF FAITH;-- “THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR, THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN.” OBAMA HAD BORROWED THE PHRASE TO EXPLAIN THE UNIQUELY AMERICAN NATURE OF AMBITION AND IDEALISM OR THE AUDACITY OF HOPE, AS HE PUT IT IN HIS BREAKTHROUGH SPEECH AT THE BOSTON DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION IN 2004.. BUT BY THE TIME OBAMA GOT TO THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PRIMARY IN 2008 , THE ONCE RICH, ONCE RESONANT PHRASE WAS REDUCED NOT TO AN ARGUMENT FOR AMERICAN IDEALS OR RELIGIOUS FAITH, BUT SIMPLY BECAME HIS OWN CAMPAIGN .

<<<FIERCE URGENCY OF NOW --AUDACITY-WRONG SIDE OF HISTORY-PONY UP>>>

LINCOLN DID NOT HAVE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM EITHER THE PRESS OR AUDIENCE BUT NEITHER DID HE HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF PHOTO OPS. OBAMA HAS BEEN FACED WITH THE Q.AND A. FROM THE BEGINNING OF HIS CAMPAIGN AND, THEREFORE, HAS TO BE PREPARED WITH SET ANSWERS- AGAIN TAILORED TO THE GEOGRAPHIC OR CULTURAL AUDIENCE. IT IS A SHAME OBAMA HAS TO STAY ON MESSAGE BECAUSE HE DEPRIVES HIS AUDIENCE OF HIS CRITICAL THINKING HIS MIND IS RAZOR SHARP AND THE AUDIENCE OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO EXPERIENCE HIS METHOD OF CRITICAL THINKING. HOWEVER, JUST A BIT OF DEVIATION CAN LEAD TO DISASTER. FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE I KNOW HOW A SLIP OF THE TONGUE CAN THREATEN PRESENT DAY CAMPAIGNS.

NORMALLY, THE SUCCESS OF A SPEECH IS INFLUENCED BY THE SPEAKER'S VOICE AND BODY LANGUAGE. LINCOLN WAS NOT A PHYSICALLY ATTRACTIVE PERSON. EXTREMELY TALL FOR HIS TIME- WE MIGHT SAY GANGLY- HE REFERRED TO HIMSELF AS HAVING A "POOR-LEAN-LANK FACE." IN LINCOLN'S COOPER UNION SPEECH IN FEB 1860 AN EYEWITNESS THAT EVENING SAID," WHEN LINCOLN ROSE TO SPEAK, I WAS GREATLY DISAPPOINTED. HE WAS TALL, TALL-OH HOW TALL AND SO ANGULAR AND AWKWARD THAT FOR AN INSTANT A FEELING OF PITY FOR AN UNGAINLY A MAN." HOWEVER, ONCE LINCOLN WARMED UP, HIS FACE LIGHTED UP AS WITH AN INWARD FIRE:

“THE WHOLE MAN WAS TRANSFIGURED. I FORGOT HIS CLOTHES, HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE, AND HIS INDIVIDUAL PECULIARITIES. PERSONALLY FORGETTING MYSELF, I WAS ON MY FEET LIKE THE REST, YELLING LIKE A WILD INDIAN, CHEERING THIS WONDERFUL MAN.”

IT IS SAID THAT JOHN F. KENNEDY BENEFITED FROM HIS PLATFORM PRESENCE, HIS POISE, PERSONALITY, GOOD LOOKS- AND STRONG VOICE. WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYANT MOVED AUDIENCES NOT ONLY WITH HIS LANGUAGE, BUT ALSO WITH THE SKILL OF HIS MOVEMENTS AND GESTURES. THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA- MORE SO DURING HIS RUN -UP TO THE PRESIDENCY THAN SINCE HIS INAUGURATION. OBAMA IS TALL- --REED THIN, AND CARRIES HIMSELF LIKE AN ATHLETE IN HIS MID 40'S. WHEN INTRODUCED TO A LARGE AUDIENCE , WE SEE HIM CHARGE UP THE STEPS TO THE LECTERN-AS THE AUDIENCE GREET'S HIM, HE WAVES HIS ARMS TO QUIET THE CROWD AND LAUNCHES INTO HIS OPENING. HIS THANKS TO LOCAL DIGNITARIES MAY BE MUNDANE , BUT WHEN HE LAUNCHES INTO THE GUTS OF THE SPEECH HIS PHYSICAL APPEARANCE, YOUTHFUL LOOK, BODY LANGUAGE ON STAGE, EVEN HIS ATTIRE IS TAILORED TO HIS AUDIENCE. ROLLED UP SLEEVES ARE EVIDENT AT UNIVERSITY VENUES AND OTHER CASUALSETTINGS- --WHILE FORMAL COAT AND TIE APPEAR AT BUSINESS GATHERINGS.

DURING PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE THERE SEEMED TO BE AN EFFORT TO CURTAIL HIS OPENNESS AND SPONTANEITY. 'MAKE HIM MORE PRESIDENTIAL HAD BEEN THE CALL-,AND IN SOME PRECINCTS THIS HAS TRANSLATED INTO LETHARGY, STIFFNESS AND LACK OF BOLDNESS. HOWEVER, WITHIN THE PAST SIX WEEKS, WE HAVE SEEN A RETURN TO A MORE SPONTANEOUS NATURAL PERSON FINALLY REALIZING THAT MORE THAN ANY U.S. PRESIDENT, "THE SPEECH" IS THE PRIMARY VEHICLE OF OBAMAS POLITICS.

HAVING FAILED SOMEWHAT IN HIS FIRST YEAR TO WORK WELL WITH THE CONGRESSIONAL BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT, OBAMA HAS TAKEN A LEAF FROM FDR'S STRATEGY OF CIRCUMVENTING THE CONGRESS AND APPEALING DIRECTLY TO THE CITIZENS WHO ELECTED HIM. HE HAS RETURNED TO THE STUMP- AND IS NOW MAKING APPEALS DIRECTLY TO THE POPULACE. RECENTLY IN ST. LOUIS WHEN MAKING ONE OF HIS FINAL PITCHES FOR HEALTH CARE- OBAMA ROLLED UP HIS SLEEVES, LEANED OVER THE LECTERN, AND WENT ON THE ATTACK. HE SPOKE WITH EVIDENT ANGER ABOUT "POLITICAL GAMESMANSHIP IN WASHINGTON". THE WASHINGTON POST SAID-"STRIPPING OFF HIS SUIT JACKET AND PUSHING UP HIS SLEEVES, WITHIN MINUTES OF ENTERING A HIGH SCHOOL GYM"- OF COURSE THIS IS THE WAY I REMEMBER HIM IN HIS SUCCESSFUL

PRIMARY APPEARANCES. HE HAS RETURNED TO ONE OF HIS TRADE MARKS OF SHOUTING OUT A LINE AND THEN HAVING THE AUDIENCE REPEAT IT AND HE WOULD ASK FOR THE SHOUT BACK SEVERAL TIMES.

IN AN ARTICLE ON THE OPINION PAGE OF THE WSJ- A PAGE I NORMALLY READ EARLY IN THE MORNING IN ORDER TO GET MY --:WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT: JUICES GOING, ----DANIEL HENNINGER COMMENTED ON OBAMA'S SPEECHES BY SAYING "WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND POINT OF OBAMA'S SPEECHES? ONE ANSWER-OFFERED BY STUDENTS OF TALK FROM ARISTOTLE TO ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD-IS OBVIOUS. THE PURPOSE OF THE RHETORICIAN'S ART IS TO PERSUADE. OTHERS SUCH AS JOHN LOCKE, WATCHING DEMOCRACIES ADVANCE, HAD A DARKER VIEW. LOCKE SAID "RHETORIC IS AN INSTRUMENT OF ERROR AND DECEIT." TWO VERY DIFFERENT APPROACHES. AGAIN, A PERSONAL OPINION, BUT I BELIEVE PRESIDENT OBAMA HAS CHOSEN THE FORMER ROAD!- THE ART OF PERSUASION!!!

ALTHOUGH WE KNOW LINCOLN WAS NOT A CHURCH GOING PERSON- HE OFTEN QUOTED THE BIBLE. HERE IS THE ENDING OF HIS SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS: - "YET IF GOD WILLS THAT THE (WAR) CONTINUE UNTIL ALL THE EARTH PILED THE BONDSMAN'S TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS OF UNREQUITED TOIL SHALL BE SUNK, AND UNTIL EVERY

DROP OF BLOOD DRAWN WITH THE LASH SHALL BE PAID BY ANOTHER DRAWN WITH THE SWORD” AS WAS SAID THREE THOUSAND YEARS AGO, SO STILL IT MUST BE SAID-‘THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ALTOGETHER.’ WITH MALICE TOWARDS NONE; WITH CHARITY FOR ALL;, WITH FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT, AS GOD GIVES US TO SEE THE RIGHT..”

OBAMA’S SPEECHES ALSO INCLUDE REFERENCES TO RELIGION, BUT UNLIKE LINCOLN, HIS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS MULTI CULTURAL. HIS EARLY SCHOOLING IN INDONESIA INCLUDED A LOOSE SMATTERING OF MUSLIM TEACHINGS AND HE ADMITTED THAT HE DID NOT BECOME A PRACTICING CHRISTIAN UNTIL HIS LATE TWENTIES- EARLY THIRTIES. SPRINKLED THROUGHOUT HIS SPEECHES ARE REFERENCES TO THE BIBLE, BUT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WORDS, ARE THE MESSAGES THAT HE CRAFTS WHICH ARE INSPIRED NOT ONLY BY THE BIBLE BUT ALSO BY MORE RECENT CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS. HE LIFTS WHOLE PHRASES FROM DR; MARTIN LUTHER KING AND IN 2007 HE SPOKE ABOUT THE WAY REINHOLD NIEBUHR FORMED HIS THINKING: “I ALWAYS TAKE AWAY THE COMPELLING IDEA THAT THERE’S SERIOUS EVIL IN THE WORLD AND HARDSHIP AND PAIN. “WE SHOULD BE HUMBLE AND MODEST IN OUR BELIEF THINKING WE CAN ELIMINATE THOSE THINGS. BUT WE SHOULDN’T USE THAT AS AN EXCUSE FOR CYNICISM AND INACTION.” IN HIS SPEECHES AT WEST POINT AND OSLO, OBAMA MIXES THE

INTERNATIONALIST GOOD FIGHT WITH THEOLOGY. HE TALKED ABOUT THE “CORE STRUGGLE OF HUMAN NATURE BETWEEN LOVE AND EVIL. AND THE NEED TO BALANCE MORAL OBLIGATION SO AS TO CHAMPION FREEDOM.

OBAMA FREQUENTLY USES THE WORD SOUL-AND I DO NOT MEAN IN THE VERNACULAR OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC- HE USES IT WITH AN ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONNOTATION. IN SEVERAL INSTANCES HE HAS USED THE QUOTE ‘A VICTORY FOR THE AMERICAN SOUL.’ IN HIS CLOSING ARGUMENT FOR HEALTH REFORM, HE APPEALS TO OUR BETTER ANGELS- URGING POLITICIANS TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT- EVEN IF IT HURTS THEIR CAREERS.

“EVERY SO OFTEN THERE COMES A MOMENT WHERE YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO VINDICATE ALL OF THOSE BEST HOPES THAT YOU HAD ABOUT YOURSELF- “

HOW IMPORTANT WERE –ARE WHAT WE MIGHT CALL TODAY SPEAKING GIGS --TO THE ASCENDANCY OF BOTH PRESIDENT’S POLITICAL CAREERS. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE 1858 / LINCOLN –DOUGLAS DEBATES ELEVATED LINCOLN TO NATIONAL STATUS- AS MANY OF YOU MAY REMEMBER IN ONE OF MY PREVIOUS PAPERS – LINCOLN HAD PLANNED PRIOR TO THE SEVEN DEBATES WITH JUDGE DOUGLAS, TO HAVE THEM PRINTED, PUBLISHED, THEN DISTRIBUTED TO MUCH OF THE VOTING

PUBLIC IN THE EAST WHERE HE WAS NOT WELL KNOWN. BARACK OBAMA'S ASCENDANCY TO NATIONAL LEVEL RECOGNITION, WITHOUT QUESTION, CAME FROM HIS AFOREMENTIONED CAPTIVATING 2004 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION SPEECH - WHAT WE NOW REFER TO AS THE HALF RED AND HALF BLUE SPEECH. NEITHER MAN WOULD HAVE BEEN ELEVATED TO NATIONAL FAME WITHOUT THESE HISTORIC EVENTS.

JOHN F. KENNEDY'S SPEECHWRITER, TED SORENSON, HAS SAID THAT LINCOLN AVAILED HIMSELF TO THE BEST WORDSMITH OF THEM ALL-- HIMSELF! IN 1961, WHEN KENNEDY ASKED SORENSON TO REVIEW ALL OF THE PREVIOUS INAUGURAL ADDRESSES GIVEN BY KENNEDY'S PREDECESSORS, SORENSON SAID HE GLEANED MORE OUT OF 10 SENTENCES FROM THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS THAN ANY INAUGURAL ADDRESSES OTHER THAN OF FDR'S FIRST INAUGURAL. LINCOLN WAS A SUPERB WRITER AND NEEDED NO WHITE HOUSE SPEECHWRITER -A NECESSITY IN TODAY'S WORLD. SORENSON SAID "THAT OTHER THAN LINCOLN JEFFERSON AND MAYBE TEDDY ROOSEVELT NONE OF THE OTHER PRESIDENTS COULD HAVE MADE AN OUTSIDE LIVING AS A SPEECHWRITER." LINCOLN WROTE ALL OF HIS SPEECHES, IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND LETTERS BY HAND. HE READ HIS DRAFTS OF HIS IMPORTANT WORKS OUT LOUD TO HIS CABINET AND HIS TWO PERSONAL SECRETARIES, JOHN NICOLAY AND JOHN HAY. IN THE EARLY PART OF HIS FIRST TERM, HE ASKED HIS TEAM FOR SUGGESTIONS TO INCORPORATE

INTO THE PROPOSED DELIVERIES, BUT LINCOLN QUICKLY REALIZED THAT HE WAS THE MASTER OF PROSE WITHIN HIS ADMINISTRATION. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS CAN BE FOUND IN HIS PREPARATION FOR HIS FIRST INAUGURAL. WILLIAM SEWARD, WHO HAD BEEN LINCOLN'S CHIEF RIVAL FOR THE PRESIDENCY, WAS CHOSEN SECRETARY OF STATE IN LINCOLN'S CABINET (THINK OBAMA AND HILLARY CLINTON) SEWARD WANTED LINCOLN TO END THE INAUGURAL SPEECH AS FOLLOWS. "THE MYSTIC CHORDS WHICH PROCEEDING FROM SO MANY BATTLE FIELDS AND SO MANY PATRIOT GRAVES, PASS THROUGH ALL THE HEARTS IN THIS BROAD CONTINENT OF OURS YET AGAIN HARMONIZE IN THEIR ANCIENT MUSIC WHEN BREATHED UPON BY THE GUARDIAN ANGELS OF THE NATION." LINCOLN'S OWN PEN CHANGED THIS INTO: 'THE MYSTIC CHORDS OF MEMORY STRETCHING FROM EVERY BATTLEFIELD AND PATRIOTS GRAVE TO EVERY LIVING HEART AND HEARTHSTONE ALL OVER THIS BROAD LAND, WILL YET SWELL THE CHORUS OF THE UNION, THEN AGAIN TOUCHED, AS SURELY THEY WILL BE, BY THE BETTER ANGELS FOR OUR NATION.

BUT IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT MANY SITTING PRESIDENTS TRY TO TIE THEMSELVES TO PREVIOUS OCCUPANTS IN THE WHITE HOUSE, BY QUOTING THEM OR WRAPPING THEMSELVES AROUND MUTUALLY TROUBLING ISSUES FACED BY THEIR HISTORICAL PREDECESSORS. THEY SEEM TO USE IT AS A CUSHION OF AUTHENTICITY. BUT I SUSPECT THEY ALSO USE IT FOR POLITICAL GAIN. PAUL GREENBERG- THE EDITORIAL

PAGE EDITOR OF THE ARKANSAS GAZETTE, MAKES THE CASE FOR THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESIDENT OBAMA AND PRESIDENT JEFFERSON INCLUDING THEIR SIMILARITIES. GREENBERG SAYS, "THERE IS THE SAME GAP BETWEEN IDEALISTIC ORATORY AND PEDESTRIAN LEGISLATION-THE SAME OVER-ALL SENSATION OF DRIFT UNDER HAZY CLOUDS OF PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC." HE THEN EQUATES JEFFERSON WITH OBAMA IN SAYING –IT IS THOMAS JEFFERSON, SLAVEHOLDER AND BELIEVER THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, WITH HIS ABILITY TO ARTICULATE A WHOLE ARRAY OF EQUAL BUT OPPOSITE IDEAS. GREENBERG HAS THE SAME FEELING ABOUT OBAMA. – BOTH MR. JEFFERSON AND MR. OBAMA HAVE SOMETHING ELSE IN COMMON: THE PROFOUND DISTRUST THEY INSPIRE IN THEIR HARSHER CRITICS, WHO ARE CONVINCED EACH REPRESENTS THE GRAVEST DANGER TO THE REPUBLIC. .

IT IS INTERESTING TO WATCH OBAMA COMPARE HIS PROBLEMS TO THE TIMES OF FDR- THE AGGRESSIVENESS OF TEDDY ROOSEVELT, THE ERA OF CHANGE WITH RONALD REAGAN AND OF COURSE THE AURA OF JFK. GEORGE W. BUSH DID THE SAME –HIS FAVORITES WERE REAGAN-AND TRUMAN, BUT LEFT OUT HIS FATHER. THE PASSAGE OF TIME CHANGES THE LIST OF WHO YOU WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH. GRANT WAS THE MOST ADMIRER MAN IN OUR COUNTRY EVEN

AFTER HIS DISASTROUS PRESIDENCY. HIS IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS ALWAYS ALLUDED TO GRANT. TODAY YOU WOULD RUN AWAY FROM ANY COMPARISON TO HIM. WITH TRUMAN THE REVERSE IS TRUE. MUCH ADULATION DID NOT SET IN UNTIL AFTER HIS DEMISE. BOTH EISENHOWER AND JFK DISTANCED THEMSELVES FROM TRUMAN BUT MOST RECENT CONTENDERS FOR THE PRESIDENCY, BOTH PARTIES INCLUDED, TRY TO EMBELLISH THEIR IMAGE OF TOUGHNESS BY SAYING "I AM LIKE HARRY TRUMAN. THE BUCK STOPS HERE! TALK ABOUT AUDACITY!

REGARDLESS OF PARTY RETIRED PRESIDENTS SEEM TO FIND A RESPECT FOR PREVIOUS OCCUPANTS OF THE WHITE HOUSE. RECENTLY WE HAVE SEEN GEORGE H.W. BUSH AND BILL CLINTON TEAM UP FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS. THE SAME HELD TRUE FOR CARTER AND FORD. NOT LONG AGO, MICHELLE OBAMA GAVE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION FIGURES A PRIVATE TOUR OF THE WHITE HOUSE. THEY STOPPED BY THE LINCOLN ROOM AND TOOK BUT ONE STEP INSIDE. EVERYTHING LOOKED THE SAME FROM WHEN THE LINCOLN'S OCCUPIED IT IN THE 1860'S. MICHELLE SPOKE OF IT IN A TONE OF REVERENCE. : WE DON'T ALLOW GUESTS IN THIS ROOM ANYMORE.." "THIS IS WHERE THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION WAS SIGNED. A TRUE COPY OF IT IS HERE ON THE DESK. HE SIGNED IT -ABRAHAM LINCOLN." THE REAGAN HANDS WERE MOVED AND CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD.

IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT MOST PRESIDENTS ENDEAVOR TO SHOW THEIR COMPASSIONATE SIDE BY ALIGNING THEMSELVES WITH THE HURT OF THEIR COMMON MAN.” SOME ARE SUCCESSFUL AT THIS AND SOME JUST PRETEND AND CANNOT PULL IT OFF. RECENTLY, PRESIDENT OBAMA, DURING A SPEECH IN OHIO, REFERRED TO ONE OF ITS CITIZENS BY SAYING “I AM HERE FOR NOTOMA CANFIELD.”“NOTOMA CANFIELD IS LIKE MOST OF US –SHE WORKS HARD AND TRIES TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND HAS BATTLED BACK FROM CANCER.’ HE GOES ON TO SAY-- BECAUSE OF PREVIOUS BOUTS WITH CANCER THE INSURANCE COMPANIES KEPT RAISING HER RATES TO THE POINT WHERE CANFIELD COULD NO LONGER AFFORD INSURANCE AND HAD TO CANCEL HER POLICY. THE CANCER HAS RETURNED AND AS OBAMA SAYS SHE LIES IN THE HOSPITAL NOT KNOWING HOW SHE WILL COVER HER BILLS. THIS IS WHY I AM STILL IN THE FIGHT, THE PRESIDENT SAID. – HE HARKENED BACK TO THE FIGHT HIS MOTHER HAD AT THE END OF HER LIFE- REMEMBERING HER CALLS TO THE INSURANCE COMPANY AS SHE WAS LAYING IN THE HOSPITAL. “THIS IS WHY I AM HERE. I AM HERE FOR MY MOTHER AND NOTOMA CANFIELD.” SOMEONE FROM THE CROWD YELLED OUT- “WE NEED COURAGE.” IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO MOVE THE CROWD AND HE DID. IT WAS SHOWN TIME AND TIME AGAIN ON THE NIGHTLY NEWS AND THE ABILITY OF OBAMA TO SHOW COMPASSION WITH THE POPULACE WAS PRONOUNCED A SUCCESS.

LINCOLN DID NOT HAVE THE NIGHTLY NEWS, BUT HE DID HAVE THOSE AGE-OLD DISSEMINATORS OF INFORMATION – THE NEWSPAPERS. LET ME READ TO YOU A LETTER THAT LINCOLN WROTE TO A MRS. BIXBY. IT WAS RE PRINTED IN MUCH OF THE NORTHERN NEWS MEDIA. THESE WERE LINCOLN’S WORDS- WITH NO HELP FROM A CADRE OF SPEECHWRITERS. AND I QUOTE-

“ I HAVE BEEN SHOWN IN THE FILES OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT THAT YOU ARE THE MOTHER OF FIVE SONS WHO HAVE DIED IN THE FILED OF BATTLE.

I FEEL HOW WEAK MUST BE ANY WORD OF MINE WHICH SHOULD ATTEMPT TO BEGUILE YOU FROM THE GRIEF SO OVERWHELMING.

I PRAY THAT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER MAY ASSUAGE THE ANGUISH OF YOUR BEREAVEMENT, AND LEAVE YOU ONLY THE CHERISHED MEMORY

OF THE LOVED LOST, AND THE SOLEMN PRIDE THAT MUST BE YOURS TO HAVE LAID SO COSTLY A SACRIFICE UPON THE ALTER OF FREEDOM.

YOURS VERY SINCERELY AND RESPECTFULLY,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

IN THE OPENING OF THIS PAPER I MENTIONED THAT I HAD A DESSERT TRAY DUEL WITH SENATOR OBAMA IN A PACIFIC HEIGHTS HOME. ON APRIL 5, 2007, IN A DIFFERENT SAN FRANCISCO HOME-- CROWDED INTENDED TO HOLD 200 PEOPLE-BUT NOW JAMMED WITH CLOSE TO 400, SENATOR BARACK OBAMA, AFTER 15 GRUELING MONTHS ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL, AND IN HIS THIRD SPEECH OF AN EXHAUSTING DAY IN THE BAY AREA WAS ASKED THE FOLLOWING SOFT BALL QUESTION: "SOME OF US ARE GOING TO PENNSYLVANIA NEXT WEEK TO WORK FOR YOU IN THE PRIMARIES. WE HAVE WORKED FOR YOU HERE IN CALIFORNIA AND SOME OF US IN CHICAGO. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO FIND WHEN GOING DOOR TO DOOR FOR YOU THERE?" THE QUESTION WAS ASKED WITH THE IMPLICIT THINKING THAT IT WOULD ENTICE SOME OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CROWDED ROOM TO VOLUNTEER FOR THE PRIMARY THE FOLLOWING WEEK IN PENNSYLVANIA. BUT AS WE ALL KNOW -NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED! OBAMA ANSWERED THIS QUESTION OF THE NIGHT AS FOLLOWS: QUOTE! "YOU GO INTO THESE SMALL TOWNS IN PENNSYLVANIA AND LIKE A LOT OF SMALL TOWNS IN THE MIDWEST, THE JOBS HAVE BEEN GONE NOW FOR 25 YEARS AND NOTHING'S REPLACED THEM. AND THEY (THE JOBS) FELL THROUGH THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION.. EVERY PRESIDENT VOWED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT BUT NEVER DID." AND NOW WHAT ALL BLOGGERS AND POLITICAL OPPONENTS REMEMBER

ABOUT THE ANSWER AND WHAT THEY ONLY WANT TO REMEMBER -- -
AND I QUOTE, "YOU WILL MEET BITTER PEOPLE IN SMALL TOWNS --
CLINGING TO GUNS AND RELIGION." THIS STATEMENT HAS TAKEN ON A
LIFE ITS OWN. FEW PAID ATTENTION TO THE FIRST PART OF HIS ANSWER
AND FEW ARE WILLING TO ADMIT -THAT NIGHT HE SPOKE THE TRUTH -

THEY WOULD MUCH RATHER CONCENTRATE ON THE GUNS AND RELIGION
SOUND BITE--AND BECAUSE OF THIS -IN HINDSIGHT I REGRET THAT I HAD
THE AUDACITY TO DIRECT THAT QUESTION TO MR.OBAMA.