



# We Are Coming: The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women

*Shirley Wilson Logan*

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Shirley Wilson Logan analyzes the distinctive rhetorical features in the persuasive discourse of nineteenth-century black women, concentrating on the public discourse of club and church women from 1880 until 1900.

Logan develops each chapter in this illustrated study around a feature of public address as best exemplified in the oratory of a particular woman speaker of the era. She analyzes not only speeches but also editorials, essays, and letters.

Logan first focuses on the prophetic oratory of Maria Stewart, the first American-born black woman to speak publicly. Turning to Frances Harper, she considers speeches that argue for common interests between divergent communities. And she demonstrates that central to the antilynching rhetoric of Ida Wells is the concept of "presence," or the tactic of enhancing certain selected elements of the presentation.

In her discussion of Fannie Barrier Williams and Anna Cooper, Logan shows that when speaking to white club women and black clergymen, both Williams and Cooper employ what Kenneth Burke called identification. To analyze the rhetoric of Victoria Matthews, she applies Carolyn Miller's modification of Lloyd Bitzer's concept of the rhetorical situation.

Logan also examines the discourse of women associated with the black Baptist women's movement and those participating in college-affiliated conferences.

The book includes an appendix with little-known speeches and essays by Anna Julia Cooper, Selena Sloan Butler, Lucy Wilmot Smith, Mary V. Cook, Adella Hunt Logan, Victoria Earle Matthews, Lucy C. Laney, and Georgia Swift King.



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