



The Teleological Discourse of Barack Obama

Richard W. Leeman

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The Teleological Discourse of Barack Obama, by Richard Leeman, provides an in-depth analysis of President Barack Obama's speeches and writings to explain the power of the 44th president's speaking. This book argues that, from his earliest writings through his latest presidential speeches, Obama has described the world through a teleological lens.

Teleology is the philosophy of discovering in the essential nature of humans or countries the *telos*, or ideal, towards which one should progress. Obama consistently portrays freedom and equality as essential to human nature and the American spirit. Understanding his discourse as teleological helps explain the inspirational and philosophical nature of his rhetoric, as well as his famous patience, perceiving progress where others become frustrated. Teleological discourse is ancient, with its roots in philosophies such as Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics and Christian theology, and its handprints evident in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. In order to discover the roots of Obama's teleological perspective, Leeman also examines the speeches of presidents Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Ronald Reagan, as well as the civil rights discourse of Martin Luther King, Jr., Frederick Douglass, and W. E. B. Du Bois. Although the roots of his teleological discourse run deep, President Obama's particular use of the philosophy is very modern. *The Teleological Discourse of Barack Obama* is an essential contribution to the study of American politics and political rhetoric.

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