

Question 2

Suggested time—40 minutes.

(This question counts for one-third of the total essay section score.)

The passage below is the opening to a speech made in 1960 by American journalist and politician Clare Boothe Luce to journalists at the Women’s National Press Club. In this speech, Luce went on to criticize the tendency of the American press to sacrifice journalistic integrity in favor of the perceived public demand for sensationalist stories. Read the passage carefully. Then, in a well-developed essay, analyze *how* Luce uses this introduction to prepare the audience for her message. Support your analysis of her rhetoric with specific references to the text.

I am happy and flattered to be a guest of honor on this always exciting and challenging occasion. But looking over this audience tonight, I am less happy than you might think and more challenged than you could know. I stand here at this rostrum invited to throw rocks at you. You have asked *me* to tell *you* what’s wrong with *you*—the American press. The subject not only is of great national significance but also has, one should say, infinite possibilities—and infinite perils to the rock thrower.

For the banquet speaker who criticizes the weaknesses and pretensions, or exposes the follies and sins, of his listeners—even at their invitation—does not generally evoke an enthusiastic—no less a friendly—response. The delicate art of giving an audience hell is always one best left to the Billy Grahams and the Bishop Sheens.*

But you are an audience of journalists. There is no audience anywhere who should be more bored—indeed, more revolted—by a speaker who tried to fawn on it, butter it up, exaggerate its virtues, play down its faults, and who would more quickly see through any attempt to do so. I ask you only to remember that I am not a volunteer for this subject tonight. You asked for it!

For what is good journalism all about? On a working, finite level it is the effort to achieve illuminating candor in print and to strip away cant. It is the effort to do this not only in matters of state, diplomacy, and politics but also in every smaller aspect of life that touches the public interest or engages proper public curiosity. It is the effort to explain everything from a summit conference to why

the moon looks larger coming over the horizon than it does when it has fully risen in the heavens. It is the effort, too, to describe the lives of men—and women—big and small, close at hand or thousands of miles away, familiar in their behavior or unfamiliar in their idiosyncrasies. It is—to use the big word—the pursuit of and the effort to state the truth.

No audience knows better than an audience of journalists that the pursuit of the truth, and the articulation of it, is the most delicate, hazardous, exacting, and *inexact* of tasks. Consequently, no audience is more forgiving (I hope) to the speaker who fails or stumbles in his own pursuit of it. The only failure this audience could never excuse in any speaker would be the failure to try to tell the truth, as he sees it, about his subject.

In my perilous but earnest effort to do so here tonight, I must begin by saying that if there is much that is wrong with the American press, there is also much that is right with it.

I know, then, that you will bear with me, much as it may go against your professional grain, if I ask you to accept some of the good with the bad—even though it may not make such good copy for your newspapers.

For the plain fact is that the U. S. daily press today is not inspiring good; it is just far and away the best press in the world.

* Billy Graham, an American Christian evangelist, and Fulton John Sheen, an American Catholic archbishop, both became renowned for their religious oratory. Their speeches were widely broadcast on radio and television.

Name:

What is the Rhetorical Situation?

Directions: For each question, give your response and support your response with at least 1 example from the text.

What is said (message):

Who is saying it (speaker):

Under what circumstances? (occasion/context):

Who is listening (audience):

Why is it being said or what does the speaker want from his/her audience (purpose):

How it is being said (tone, style, appeals):