

America the beautiful in the words of john f kennedy



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

As Lyndon B Johnson once put it, “ he enhanced respect, in ourselves and in each other, for individual excellence, and he heightened our determination to elevate the quality of American life” (qtd. in Kennedy 9). So it is only fitting that John F. Kennedy author the book titled America the Beautiful.

Drawing from his own intelligence, faith in history, and faith in God, Kennedy describes the responsibility of Americans to reach a greater level of civilization by respecting the nation’s glorious and bountiful lands, her people’s arts and her people’s sense of self dignity.

The book is divided into three sections, “ Man and the Land”, “ Man and the Arts”, and “ Man and His Dignity”. This division simplifies Kennedy’s reasoning behind his devotion to America and his insistence that America has the ability to thrive as the best nation on Earth.

The underlying theme of the book is that Americans need to work hard and work together to achieve world renown as a nation of strength and intelligence. Only by conserving the bounty of the lands, studying the history of forefathers, and respecting each other regardless of race or gender, can this be accomplished.

John F. Kennedy is an intelligent man, and this is widely exhibited when he supports his own ideals with references to great men in history. When explaining the land’s resources and her beauty he reminds the Americans to whom this book was written of Robert Malthus’ intellectual conclusion that man will eventually use up all of the land’s available resources resulting in starvation and misery and poverty.

But Kennedy renounces this theory, explaining that with the “ scientific and social wisdom” (Kennedy 39), the American people can overcome this logical exhaustion of the world’s natural resources.

To further support his idea on the importance of conservationism, Kennedy reminds the Americans that her honorable President Theodore Roosevelt once said that “ it was the moral obligation of a society in order to preserve that society to maintain its natural endowment” (Kennedy 22).

When discussing the arts, Kennedy was referring to the intelligence of man and the means by which man uses art to express this intelligence. He further maintained that the knowledge and understanding of man’s history was imperative to bettering America and resisting a repetition of mistakes.

In this case he quoted the honorable Thomas Jefferson reminding us that he “ once said that if you expect a people to be ignorant and free you expect what never was and never will be” (Kennedy 46). In other words, with knowledge comes freedom. And without knowledge, freedom could never be.

In support of his reasoning that man’s dignity or sense of spirituality and respect for each other is necessary to achieve freedom, Kennedy quotes Thomas Paine saying that “ the cause of all mankind is the cause of America” (Kennedy 39).

But Kennedy rearranges that quote, explaining that “ the cause of America is the cause of all mankind” (Kennedy 39). Kennedy’s reversal of the quote is that the human spirit and dignity should expand globally in order for America to maintain her state of freedom.

Through extensive quotes and great excerpts of his own speeches, this book explains why Americans need to take responsibility for land, arts, and dignity. Kennedy connects his reference to the importance of the arts by citing examples of great poets and writers throughout the book to support his way of thinking.

With quotes from Robert Frost, one of his most favored poets of the 1960s, the great Revolutionary writer, Thomas Paine, the respected writer William Faulkner, and even quotes from Henry David Thoreau, Kennedy sustains his convictions upon the American people.

Kennedy was a persuasive and influential writer himself. Many of his speeches moved the American people to rally behind his efforts to build a better and much admired country. When speaking of the conservation of the land he made such statements as “ the earth can be an abundant mother, if we use her with skill and wisdom....” (Kennedy 18) and “ our primary task now is to increase our understanding of our environment.... for this nation’s great resource is as elastic and productive as our ingenuity can make it” (Kennedy 24).

When speaking of the importance of knowledge and the arts, he said “ genius can speak at any time, and the entire world will hear it and listen” (Kennedy 62) and “ the life of the arts is a test of the quality of a nation’s civilization” (Kennedy 58). By consistently referring to the past and to the actions of our forefathers, he supports his idea that historical awareness is detrimental to the freedom of a country and the resistance to repeating mistakes.

When alluding to the dignity of man, Kennedy makes it clear through his speeches that by dignity he means the spirituality of man and respect for fellow man.