Examples of different sorts of discourses: a handout

1

When you buy a box of Ritz crackers, on the back of the box, they have all these suggestions as to what to put on top of the Ritz. “Try it with turkey and cheese. Try it with peanut butter.” But I like crackers man, that’s why I bought it, ’cause I like crackers! I don’t see a suggestion to put a Ritz on top of a Ritz. I didn’t buy them because they’re little edible plates! You’ve got no faith in the product itself.

2

In a sense we’ve come to our nation’s capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the “unalienable Rights” of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked “insufficient funds.”

3

The Sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. ‘Tis not the affair of a City, a County, a Province, or a Kingdom; but of a Continent — of at least one-eighth part of the habitable Globe. ‘Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end of time, by the proceedings now. Now is the seed-time of Continental union, faith and honour. The least fracture now will be like a name engraved with the point of a pin on the tender rind of a young oak; the wound would enlarge with the tree, and posterity read in it full grown characters.

4

In the meantime, things are getting more and more wonderful here. I think, Kitty, that true love may be developing in the Annex. All those jokes about marrying Peter if we stayed here long enough weren’t so silly after all. Not that I’m thinking of marrying him, mind you. I don’t even know what he’ll be like when he grows up. Or if we’ll even love each other enough to get married.