

Sitthiphol Yuwanaboon

Dr. Daren Borg

English 101

9 March 2020

The Black Moral Obligation: Rhetorical Strategies  
in Dr. King's Social Action: "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

More than centuries, the people were victims of social inequality with an unjust law. Mainly black and colored were enslaved with no progression to live with a better life. It was times that people despise one another with no boundary and regulation. Social actions were going on in the states by activists who tried to protect the life of all people. One activist named Martin Luther King, who wrote the article: "Letter from Birmingham Jail," published in 1963 in New York, NY. Dr. King was the person who encouraged and gave hope for the African American to end segregation in the south. Dr. King uses the emotional language (pathos), logos (logical reasoning), credibility (ethos), and appealing languages to advocate the motivation of anti-racism peacefully to all people; thus, using the peace demonstrations were an effective way to support the civil right movement in the United States.

Martin Luther uses the strategies of civil disobedience to fight against the odd (white moderate), and he uses the alliteration/repetition to ensure the information he states, are at the hand of all people who opposed the racism. He repeats, "I have hoped" (King 261) for so many times because he wants to ensure the white moderate would understand the rage of being considered as a second class. Instead of free man, He wants all the people to realize that society has to change in direction, which serves the purposes and privileges of all people under the constitution

(the freedom and liberty). The letter used to serve the purpose of direct action as a peaceful demonstration and to avoid critics from the opposite side. Segregation distorted people's "soul and damages the personality" (King 261); Thus, the law should uplift those conditions and protect the right of the people. Dr. King was in jail in Alabama and wrote the letter to clarify the ambiguities of the real purpose of direct action. So there might be the misconception of doing a demonstration in the public since the outsider would not understand who fight with the public agent (polices) might be the riots and the big problem of progression; in results, the people would understand more about the ambiguity of the issues.

He uses human intuition to classify for what is right and wrong, which builds the credibility of his letter to be more powerful and changes the perspectives of people around the country. By using how most people would feel and fall in the same place of his aspects; He did the right amount of being a leader to advocate the people to fight for the liberty and good sakes of his people. His audience was everyone, and he tried to encourage equality among Americans. Now social justice becomes the prominent point of the arguments of all people in the world. He referred to so many great people who disobeyed the unjust law and proved they are right. He states, "Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application." (King 260), so the law is corrupted by its uses. Everyone had the same privilege and rights, but the group that enforced the rules to people was unjust (by de facto). Spiritually most people accept how Martin Luther King refers things in general because he is the true lover who gives ideas to his people with real honor and sacrifice.

"Letter from Birmingham" can situate the attitudes of an author being serious and emotional to the inequality of all people. The black community considered inferior and ignorant by white American society. The attitude of a person being jail is radical and emotional because the

treatment they get is unforgettable such as food and people. The person will disclose everything that he or she feels in prison due to no ways out the cycle of degeneration. The person would be the most trustful person on Earth because the person changes insult into power and show other people that he is earnest and let the action speak on its own that he does a good thing. He states that “you warmly commend the Birmingham police force for keeping order and preventing violence; If you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent nogoers, their ugly and inhumane treatment of negroes” (King 267) because he felt the society had to change by not ignoring the minority group of people

King had the experience of being mistreated as an African American, and those people had less chance to succeed in the white community. The law states that everyone creates equal, but since day one of forming the colony, the minorities were in control of white people. We were dictated by named civilized people on Earth who were the most cleverness and experienced with tons of philological reason. Why have people despised one another? It may be a human instinct that creates the selfishness on the mind of the person. We might have wrong definitions for what is right in society because of the ethnocentrism of a race who generate the facts curly. Dr. King wrote with his discomfort and uncivilized regulations people have to follow and tried to arrange the society. He is the messenger of the god who helps the world become the better place and uplift the social equality to all people. Without everyone else, a great consequence would not happen.

Dr. King applied so many logical reasons by using the terminologies to define the conditions in society. He is a thinker who can persuade the people, and He is definite and diligent for what he says, and that is the most important quality of the great leader. People will look up the definite person and not diverge for what he or she is doing. We need those qualities

in nowadays; basically, it is the most satisfying thing on Earth. He uses the high degree of language, and he conveys the information to other people with earnest with varieties of types of information such as word of god, Christianity, Jewish, and the past stubborn people. He is knowledgeable with integrity and precise with cruelty. The human is not an animal, and we have to percept that we can think and feel the passion for what is legit to society.

The social movement that Dr. King did in Alabama determined the civil movement in the United States. It was an injustice that countered the lives of African Americans, and we had to use civil disobedience to encounter social justice in society. Hence, people demonstrated and practiced peacefully against the segregation in the south of the United States. The message of Dr. King was gradually plaguing the functionality of American society, which makes a great contribution to the world.

The language he uses is full of potential energy and begging the people to conjugate social justice with the people. This letter has been published and read by so many institutions such as academia, professors, activists, social entrepreneur, etc. His essay carried the influential argument of the modern world with the breakthrough of classes in the American Society. It was the latest social movement that happened in the United States with great results in equality for all people. All people are preserved with privilege with freedom and liberty to pursue the happiness of our life.

Dr. Martin Luther King uses logos, pathos, ethos, and appealing language as the strategies which make the society become uniform and firm with a graceful people. By using so many terminologies and examples to classify the power and cohesiveness of the letter, he made a significant contribution to social justice and inequality between the people in the United States as a whole. He demolished the segregation gradually, and the people would have understood him

till today. It was “unwise and untimely...” (King 254) for him, but it was the time for the people to understand what the real peace in the society is. The phrase is carried out and used in the best movie in the world (highest revenues) until today, and it never fades away from peoples’ minds of his subconscious to the society and his people. It was time for people to know who he was.

Work Cited Page

King, Martin Luther. "Letter from Birmingham Jail." *A World of Ideas: Essential Reading for College Writers Tenth Edition*, Published by Lee A. Jacobus, 2017, pp. 252-270