

Rhetoric analysis of the speech by Emmeline Pankhurst titled "Freedom or Death."

In the course of historical evolution, citizens have become more involved in political and social decisions through revolutions that at times are inevitable. Social groups or sections of the public that feel oppressed have resulted in riots, petitions, demonstrations, rallies, strikes, political coups and in most cases civil wars. They are ways that the oppressed people find to assert their influence and fight for their rights (Phillips, 10). The civil leaders use speeches to inspire, persuade, educate, and convince the audience of the importance of the change that they sort. The speech by Emmeline Pankhurst titled "Freedom or Death" is a classical example of a persuasive speech given by a leader in the struggle for social change in the era of women suffrage in England. Pankhurst delivered the speech in 1913 at Hartford Connecticut to raise awareness of the women suffrage movement in Britain and to persuade others to join her in the struggle. She traveled to America to deliver the speech to explain the course of action that the movement had taken and to counter the false information that the media had given the public regarding the movement. She sorts to persuade the public to join the struggle and widely promote it in America as well. She delivered the speech during a fundraising tour to support the suffrage movement in Britain. The audience comprised of a mix of people ranging from politicians, women, men, Americans, English people, legislators, civil society leaders among others.

Pankhurst's purpose of the speech was to persuade people to join her in the battle of women for their place in society. She took the initiative to explain the aggressive approach that women had adopted during the suffrage. The paper below is a rhetoric analysis of the speech that is a classic example of a persuasive speech.

In the speech, she appeals to the audience with Logos. She makes some logical appeals by stating the facts about votes. Logically, having the power to vote is the one way that every citizen can control or rather has the legislature have his or her interests at heart. In the speech she says, "...it is clear to the meanest intelligence that if you have not got the vote, you must either submit to laws just or unjust, the administration just or unjust." The vote is the one card that an individual holds against those that govern them and hence can hold them accountable, (Pankhurst). Therefore, having women not voting is like denying them an opportunity to control their destiny or course of life. It also means that they have to comply with all the laws made without revolting since their voices cannot be heard. It is a form of suppression to the demands and needs of the women through denying them a means to assert themselves. She uses the logical appeal to indicate the reason women are reverting to more aggressive methods of demanding for their rights. The appeal is effective since it makes sense in that, if women are denied a fundamental right to vote, they are denied control of their legislature, their country, and ultimately their lives and that is the inequality they so badly wanted to fight through the suffrage (Pankhurst).

Pankhurst also uses Ethos appeal to persuade the audience by giving her a background of her experience in having to deal with the inequality against women. She refers to herself as a soldier who has temporarily left the field to convey the message to the audience. She goes ahead

to remind them that she is standing there yet she holds no value according to the laws of her government (Pankhurst). She uses the personal touch to increase her credibility and capture the attention of the audience and hence puts the statements at the start of the speech. She can capture the attention of the audience and hence take them systematically to persuade them to join her course or support women suffrage. By depicting herself as not just a leader but as a woman that had gone through the inequality gives her the credibility to talk about the issues since she appeals to the audience as giving a first-hand documentation of the plight of women. Pankhurst's involvement in the in the women suffrage movement and being one of the founders of the movement also increases her credibility to speak on the issue. She was famous for her strong political opinions and also as being a relentless feminist since 1903 and was also a founder of the 'Women's Social and the Political Union' that makes her appeal to the audience as being vast and informed on the plight of women (Bartley, 20). Moreover, she had witnessed and experienced the pain of a mother after her daughter was arrested and insulted for protesting in a political meeting (Bartley, 21). She had, therefore, experienced the real brutality of women inequality and it is this that utterly validates her speech and made her more convincing and persuasive as she could relate to the issue that she was addressing.

Pankhurst further uses pathetic appeals to evoke emotions, win the approval, and persuade the audience on the issue that she addressed on women suffrage. She uses a clear example of two babies. One baby that would kick and cry making the mother and the people around uncomfortable until it is fed. The other child that remains silent and calm is not fed but wait until the mother is ready to feed it at her convenience. She uses the example to pull the emotions of the audience. She adds some sentimental value to her point to get them to relate to it. The audience despite their gender should relate to the situation and hence she can easily be able

to make them see the point that the women were trying to make (Boland). She wanted to justify the aggressive nature that the suffrage had taken. By talking to a baby that is impatient, kicks, and disturbs everyone until the mother feeds it. She is trying to appeal to the audience to understand why women could not sit back and wait for their rights any longer. They wanted to make noise and force the men and those in power to hear them. According to her, sitting back and waiting for change was no longer an option since that time may just take too long or it may never come. Just as the mother does not feed the baby, that does not disturb until she is ready. All the while, the calm baby was suffering in hunger. She also wants the audience to relate with the feelings and the emotions of the women because of postpone justice to them.

One key rhetorical device that she uses in the speech is rhetorical questions. After reminding the audience of the situation that suffrage women had created with the authorities, she goes ahead to ask, "Now, I ask you, if women can do that, is there any limit to what we can do except the limit we put on ourselves?" The question had an obvious answer after she detailed the extent to which the women ingenuity had caused problems for the authorities. The device is very effective in convincing the audience because, it make them ton reflect and think of the message that she was trying to convey.

The speech also has used literary devices like allusion when she refers to a case in a family set up where two babies are hungry and need to be fed (Boland). She uses the allusion to offer the audience a mental illustration of how things are in society. She uses the example of the baby that keeps calm till fed at mothers convenience and the other that disturbs the pace of the home until she is fed immediately. It enables the audience to get a better tune of what she was saying. She also uses personification when she gives human characteristics to a plant. She says,

“It had suffered” to make the uproar that woman were engaging in destruction of property sound justifiable.

She also uses metaphors where she states that one cannot make omelets without breaking any eggs. She was trying to emphasize that change would not happen until they fought for it and in the struggle there has to be something that will damage. A price had to be paid for there to be the much-needed change in society.

In conclusion, Pankhurst's "Freedom or Death" speech is a model example of a good persuasive speech. She takes advantage of various devices such as metaphors, repetition, allusion, and other rhetorical devices to pass the message to the audience. Her use of the appeals was also a classic way of winning the confidence, attention and ultimately persuades the audience to buy into her message.

Works cited

Bartley, Paula. *Emmeline Pankhurst*. London: [Routledge](#), 2002. Pp. 1-100

Boland, Lauren. 'Emmeline Pankhurst's "Freedom Or Death" Speech'. *Prezi* (2013): n. pag. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.

Pankhurst, Emmeline. 'Freedom Or Death - Part 1'. *the Guardian*. N.p., 2007. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.

Phillips, Melanie. *The Ascent of Woman: A History of the Suffragette Movement and the Ideas Behind It*. London: Abacus, 2004. Pp. 1-10

Property of:

<https://mypaperhub.com/>

801 North 34th Street, 3rd floor

Seattle, WA 98103

DISCLAIMER

This Sample paper should be used with proper reference