

AN ANALYSIS OF THE TWO SPEECHES DELIVERED BY MARTIN LUTHER KING

Mirhat Aliu

Department of English Language and Literature

State University of Tetova

E-mail: mirhat.aliu123@hotmail.com

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to make an analysis of the two greatest speeches delivered by Martin Luther King, such as: "I have a Dream" and "I've been to the Mountaintop." The reason why we chose to analyze these two speeches is to see what message King wanted to deliver to the society living in that time, which we all know that it was segregated. Due to the fact that he was an Afro-American, not all the people liked him, and this shows that America was pro-racist oriented and America people exposed themselves as bewildered human race. But the oppressor couldn't stop these mass marches and large gatherings because this civil rights movement of people just wanted to show peacefully to the government that they were verily barbarized and oppressed and thus appeared someone, a leader, who nonviolently and with peaceful political rally wanted to better the lives of his people by trying to stop this injustice or discrimination which was constantly done to them. As one conclusion we can say that although Martin Luther King sacrificed himself losing his life, yet he became a world's symbol of peace and freedom.

Keywords: Segregation, Bewilderment, Rally, Tension, Peace, Harmony, Freedom etc.

Introduction

So, as we know the topic that is addressed in this paper is "*An analysis of the two speeches delivered by Martin Luther King.*" In this paper the purpose is to clarify or to do an analyze of the two great speeches delivered by Martin Luther King, which means that these two great speeches have been and are still today as the two greatest speeches, delivered by the King.

The speech "*I have a Dream*" delivered on the steps at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington on August 28, 1963 remains an example as one of the best speech in America History, which means that the speech defines the moment of the America Civil Rights Movement. Also, the other speech "*I've been to the Mountaintop*" which is the popular name of the last speech delivered by the King, spoken on April 3, 1968 at the Mason Temple lead to the gradual acceptance of African Americans in what was

during that time in all white society, and where on the following day Martin Luther King was assassinated.

From all of this what I've mention, I just wanted to say that in following, I'll try to make a comprehensive analysis of these two speeches delivered by King, and that to find out how King makes his speeches incredible, where people can learn many things from these two magnificent speeches which I believe that can affect positively in our goals.

An analysis of the speech "I have a dream"

One of the most important speeches in the history of America is the speech "*I have a Dream*" delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, on August 28, 1963 with more than 200,000 people during the March. The speech he gave that day is one of the best known in American history, and the speech marked the beginning of a new era in the black history. Things have changed a lot, since Martin Luther King spoke before the masses, but the fight he started has not been over yet. The African Americans are still fighting for an equal status. But, however King made them to find logic in unity and togetherness.

When People remember the speech "**I have a dream**", as it has come to be known, they recall King's message about the civil rights. But perhaps the reason it is so memorable because King was a master of literary and rhetorical devices and his word choice matched the strength of his message. So, with other words we can say that he was thinking of a bright future where the Whites and the African Americans could share space in the same society, to set up equality between the black and white people in America, and finally to build a stronger nation free of discrimination.

If millions became the followers of Martin Luther King and joined him in the war, then the reason was his rhetoric in which they could see *inspiration* and *hope*. Here we've got a rhetoric analysis of the speech that focuses on the three elements: *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* to analyze where the charm and power of his speech lie.

Ethos

Martin Luther King started the speech with the line "*I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.*" His happiness is the reflection of the strength that comes from being the leader of the masses lends him and the logic for which he is standing there is freedom. After these lines he shifts the focus to the history of America and the foundation of the nation. And after five years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the *Emancipation Proclamation*. This momentous decree came as a

great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. So, this is the *ethos* of the speech, he refers to the history of America to Lincoln to establish credibility. He also refers to the historical events of the signing of emancipation, of the goodwill that Lincoln's action meant. In the later parts of speech, he refers to the founding fathers of the America nation and then tries to establish the credibility of his point by speaking of their actions and intentions, and the concluding part of *ethos* is to mention that the *Constitution* and the *Declaration of Independence* are documents of historical importance that refers for establishing credibility.

Pathos

Then we have the *pathos* part of the speech. *"Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice, now is the time lift our nation from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood, so now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children."* King was a non-violent and yet fiery leader who spoke with passion. Through his words he was trying to ignite the passion within his audience and that they could bring the long cherished dream of equality true. The attempt of African American people takes a whole hearted step towards of freedom from racial injustice. *"And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual."* These words are emotionally charged, and King it's not trying to incite people for violence or destruction, but he is speaking for the determination in the hearts of the African Americans and their never say die attitude which makes them unstoppable. He is asking the entire nation to take the issue of racial equality seriously. These words are bound to touch any African American deeply at the core of his heart. In this way, King uses pathos in his speech to energize his audience and to churn their emotions.

However, the entire speech till the end is loaded with '*pathos*'. There are several lines which are only meant to ignite hope in people's hearts and to bond with their emotions.

"I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice."

Logos

Well, King's speech has a super mix of all the three appeals, *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos*. His logic is strong and he clarifies it at several points.

"I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations, some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells and some of you have come from areas where your quest — quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality".

His audience is mainly made of African American people who have suffered at the hand of the system and his logic lies with racial equality. And short we can say that with the speech *"I have a Dream"*, we can understand that one day in Alabama little black boys and black girls can be able to join hand with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

The speech "I've been to the Mountaintop"

During the 1960s, the fight for racial equality began to really pick up speed. During this time **racism** was a growing problem that was creating uproars through hate crimes, and violent protests. On April 3, 1968 in Memphis Tennessee, Martin Luther King gave a moving speech about the unfortunate reality of society, he was able to convey his powerful message of peace by using metaphors and different analogies that people could easily relate to *"I've Been to the Mountaintop"*, the speech lead to the gradual acceptance of African Americans in what was during that time in all white society, but it gave new freedoms to those who were once discriminated against.

Upon starting his speech, Martin Luther King immediately dives into the issues that he planes on addressing, he also explain his picture-perfect America by using metaphors such as;

"I would take my mental fight by Egypt and I would watch God's children in their magnificent trek from the dark of Egypt through, or rather across the Red Sea, through the wilderness and toward the promise land."

Martin Luther King wants to convey that he has strong hope for America to change their prejudicial ways, he also believes that with the help of everyone in their local communities, we can all come together to obtain equality for all races. He uses his own life experiences in order to get on a more personal level with his audience, he discusses visions of what an ideal America used to look like, *"I can remember when Negroes were just going around as Ralph has said, so often, scratching where they, didn't itch and laughing when they were not tickled."*

Martin Luther King strives to portray the poster image for social equality in society by mentioning such things such as: *"We are saying, we are saying that we are God's children, and that we are God's children, we don't have to live like we are forced to live."*

And from all what we've mention something about the speech "*I've been to the Mountaintop*", as a conclusion we can say that the speech is effective in the sense that King was able to grab the audiences' attention by using everyday scenarios as well as in depth metaphors in order to get his message across. His powerful words led to increase of freedoms for the African Americans community and tolerance for all Americans. And Dr. King's outstanding public speaking ability and nonviolent people has influenced the US to celebrate the difference in humanity.

Conclusion

So, as the concluding part we can say that from all of this what we've mention, there is the need where I should say that by this two greatest speeches, we can learn that Martin Luther King stood faithful and that he motivates people to seek their rights. Also, by this two speeches such as; "*I have a Dream*" and "*I've been to the Mountaintop*", we can learn that he talked something about some of his goals for the America country, the King was and is a great inspiration to many people and he is one of the most important historical figures at this point in time to the US country. His demonstration and speech proved the nation that people would no longer tolerate senseless, racial and injustice. Many people were motivated by this two speeches, they were motivated to stand up and fight for their rights, so King made people to realize how bad the discrimination in US was, and as for my thought people really can understand many things by these two great speeches, where people can see *hope* and *inspiration* in these two speeches.

And in order not to expand more this paper, as a concluding sentence it's important to mention that Martin Luther King was assassinated on April 4, 1968 by James Earl Ray. And between the 7.00 p. m, Martin Luther King was pronounced dead.

References

<https://e-hausaufgaben.de/Klausuren/D2913-Analysis-of-Martin-Luther-Kings-speech-I-Have-a-Dream.php>.
<http://blog.flocabulary.com/i-have-a-dream-speech-analysis-lesson-plan/>.
<https://www.presentationmagazine.com/analysis-of-martin-luther-kings-i-have-a-dream-speech-8059.htm>.
<https://www.cheshnotes.com/2017/06/rhetorical-analysis-dream-speech/>.
<https://www.fastcompany.com/3040976/what-made-i-have-a-dream-such-a-perfect-speech>.