Your Name

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Title: Letter from a Birmingham Jail

The “*Letter from Birmingham Jail*” was written by the renowned activist, Martin Luther King Jr. In the United States, segregation remained a way of life until 1960. The letter was written on April 16, 1963, and it serves as one of the most important civil rights documents (Tiefenbrun, 225). The letter was a way of non-violent resistance to systemized racism, and it was written during the Birmingham campaign of 1963. This document aimed at protecting the African Americans against the discriminatory policies. The letter addressed eight clergymen expressed allegations against King’s methods, besides, it also addressed white moderates and the devout population emphasizing that people have all the rights to speak up against the unjust laws and policies.

The letter itself provides a summary of the struggle for equality in the US and further advanced the struggles of the civil rights movement. It is a beautifully written treatise concerning why injustice must be met head-on and not delayed until some unidentified time. His quote “Injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere" is memorable, and strengthened his main concerns (*Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.], 4*). This letter does much to explain King's noble nonviolent movement which accomplished much in the 60s and how you could stand up for justice and still love your country. In order to support his arguments, throughout the letter, King employs the reasoning techniques and rhetorical modes, to establish his credibility as a reliable person, while highlighting the struggles of African-Americans and defending the cause of immediate actions to fight (Leff, 255).

The efficacy and effectiveness of text are enhanced by the use of different rhetorical appeals. First of all, King builds his own credibility before presenting the arguments. He mentions himself as “The President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference”. He also establishes his claims based on moral truths, in the face of his secular critics. He began his argument with, “I say this as a minister of the gospel”, to show that he is an insider (*Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.]*). In addition, King uses the appeal of logic in the arguments and counterarguments, besides deconstructing all the points made by the clergymen and refuting them one by one. An example of this is visible when he counters an argument declaring him extremist, “Was not Jesus an extremist for Love, Was not Amos an Extremist of justice?”. In addition, he builds an argument that why constructive non-violent tension is necessary to uplift people from the filth of racism, prejudice, and discrimination? (*Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.]*).

Most of the people will also agree to the text of the letter because King has also used the appeal of pathos to stir up emotions amid readers. In addition, the African-Americans facing injustice and discernment would agree to the injustices, trials, and tribulations faced by the Blacks in the US. Every reader would have agreed to the arguments made by text, since it gave an illustration to pain and injustice faced by the African-Americans when he makes an emotional question, “Daddy, why white people treat colored people so mean?” (*Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.], 11*). It appeals to the values of justice, racial equality and a society free of segregation. In the letter, King’s major claim is regarding the unjust nature of segregation and emphasizes that this practice must be eradicated by those who at least consider it wrong. He also backed his claims by making a reference to the Bible, Socrates, and T.S Eliot and to the martyrs of the Holocaust. Furthermore, in order to enhance the effectiveness of his letter, he also anticipated the counterarguments and catered to them. In addition to that, the tone and style of language are to soften the arguments. Phrases like, "you may think," enhanced the persuasion of speech by keeping it very soft and light.

Overall, I believe King was successful in presenting his arguments, responding to the allegations on him alongside supporting the need for the non-violent protest to build a society free of segregation. The time in which Kling wrote the letter served the purpose and uplifted the civil rights movement. It used powerful examples, and logical arguments to convey the meaning to the audience. The letter succeeds in its purpose to declare discrimination as an unjust event and creates a significant impact on readers due to powerful reasoning combined with rhetorical modes.

**Works Cited**

Leff, Michael. “Rhetoric and Dialectic in Martin Luther King’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail.’” *Anyone Who Has a View*, Springer, 2003, pp. 255–68.

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