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Rhetorical Analysis: The Letter from Birmingham Jail

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Martin Luther King, the author of "The Letter from a Birmingham Jail," attempts to discuss the history of racial prejudice in the country through his literary works. The literature work aimed to address an end to racial injustice that had prevailed in the region. The Letter from a Birmingham Jail is a literature work that displays Martin Luther's mastery of literature and art skills. The letter was addressed to the clergymen who allegedly criticized Luther's visit and stay in Birmingham. The letter to the clergymen addressed racial injustice presented through the clergymen's unjust propositions and accusations of control of the law. The letter further discussed the indecency of racial inequality while justifying King's civil disobedience. The clergymen viewed racial inequality as controlled by the law administrators only. From the clergymen's standpoint, racial discrimination was not to be intervened by the King and his accolades.

On the contrary, the King intervened by writing the letter and propagating nonviolent campaigns; hence the clergymen men viewed him to be disobedient against the law. King presented his arguments regarding social injustice and racial discrimination through facts derived from his first-hand knowledge about the issue (Pierre-Louis 8). King was an African American

who had witnessed injustices in society and was subconsciously subjected to jail for participating in black movements against the injustice of black culture. In his pursuit of social justice in society, King uses literal rhetorical moves to address the letter to the audience.

Similar to prominent authors, Luther displays his mastery of writing skills through the broad application of rhetorical language, historical analogies, and literal analogies throughout the letter. The letter uses rhetorical moves such as logos, ethos, pathos, and Christian imagery to appeal to his audience. Rhetorical devices in the letter present the author's facts and arguments firmly and irrefutably, ensuring a coherent and cognitive reaction to his audience (Leff & Ebony 38). Moreover, the presentation of his arguments and facts logically ensures the readers get a clear insight into the major issue of social injustice. The rhetorical moves by the King in the letter help convey a compelling message and invokes varying emotions in the readers through the use of words to address social injustice.

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Throughout the letter, the reader can identify the rhetorical moves utilized by King. For instance, the King widely uses logos to present information through a logical flow of facts. King denotes factual reasons for his presence in Birmingham. King does not sugarcoat the reality and presents it as it is by talking about his first-hand experiences in Birmingham. In his text, ".So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties her..." (Par.2). King employs logos in this text to tell the audience his that he, in fact, had business in Birmingham and his presence there was because he was invited together with his group. He clearly says that his presence is not a coincidence; it is a fact that his presence there was because of his business ties. The King informs the reader that he did have business in Birmingham, which he addresses to the clergymen. Another element of logos is an enumeration that King uses to support his arguments by illustrating the important elements of a nonviolent





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