

Rhetorical analysis of an argument essay sample



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“ The one issue upon which there seems to be most uncertainty and disagreement exists in the moral side of the subject of Birth Control.”(Margaret Sanger) Margaret Sanger is an American birth control activist, sex educator, and nurse. She is the author of The Morality of birth Control, a speech that was delivered on November 18, 1921 in New York. This speech was given at a time when the church forbids birth control and women were made to focus on having babies and being housewives. Sanger explicitly persuaded an audience of her colleagues, theologians, scientists, and the people. She accomplished this with the use of rhetorical devices such as, parallelism, pathos, ad hominem, false dilemma, exemplum, and ad populum.

Sanger states, “ When one speaks of moral, one refers to the human conduct.” The Birth Control Movement of America believes that the more intelligent a person is the more morality they possess. “ There is a direct connection with morality and brain development”. (Margaret Sanger) The use of parallelism certainly appeals to her audience of highly educated individuals.

“ We know that every advance that woman has made in the last half century has been made with opposition, all of which has been based upon the grounds of immorality.”(Margaret Sanger) Women of this era were told they would become immoral if they chose to pursue education or work outside the home. The use of pathos is clearly at work here.

Sanger believes the only place women were allowed to meet with members of the opposite sex was in church.(Margaret Sanger) Sanger uses ad

hominem when she boldly attacks the church claiming it only wants to keep women ignorant and in fear in order to maintain their morals. She asks the church to accept the birth control movements' way of "the morality of knowledge" and let the women have a right to choose.

"It is not only inevitable, but it is right to control the size of the family for by this control and adjustment we can raise the level and standards of the human race." (Margaret Sanger) This false dilemma persuades the audience rally with her and not against her. Because everyone wants to do what is right and raise the standards of the human race.

Sanger states, "Society is divided into three groups. Group one is intelligent and wealthy who only have children when they desire. Group two are intelligent and responsible who desire to control their family size, but are not knowledgeable about how to accomplish it. The third group are irresponsible, reckless, feeble-minded and of pauper element." The authors' use of exemplum speaks to her audience by giving examples of each group in society.

The poor people are not intelligent therefore, they are immoral and if they procreate "they will lower the standards of civilization and make for race deterioration." (Margaret Sanger) "There is no doubt in the minds of all thinking people that procreation of this group must be stopped." (Margaret Sanger) This device of ad populum is used to ask the audience to accept this statement on the basis of shared values with the author and nothing else.

The goals of this persuasive birth control argument is to rally the audience to become birth control advocates and agree to give birth control information

directly to mothers. It is evident the birth control movement wanted to limit the procreation of society's poor people. Both of these were accomplished with her assistance in the invention of the birth control pill and her establishment of Planned Parenthood. (The Pill) Margaret Sanger was persistent in her life long crusade to advocate for birth control. Her speech on this matter was a huge stepping stone in the area of a woman's right to choose when to have children.

Works Cited

"The Pill." PBS. PBS, 1999-2001. Web. 02 July 2012. .