

Benjamin banneker analysis

Law, Justice



Benjamin Banneker Analysis At the turn of the 18th century, forces secreted by British colonization imposed an evident state of corruption in the United States, leaving an indelible scar upon our nation. Thomas Jefferson, who proclaimed his advocacy toward equality, seemed to stray from the intent of abolishing inequality between man. Benjamin Banneker, who validates his intellect through his evident knowledge of Jefferson's motives, dedicates a letter in regards to questioning Thomas Jefferson's role as Secretary of State, in a dire attempt to uphold justice in the name of his father, who suffered a life as a slave.

As the letter unfolds, the author implements a critical use of rhetorical strategies that inflict a sensation of guilt upon Jefferson, portraying him as an immoral man, due to his lack of attention to civil rights. As Banneker's letter unfolds, his selection of detail allows him to remind Jefferson of his prior imprisonment by cleverly referring to the British Colonization of America, as "tyranny of the British Crown" (Line 2), emphasizing their imperialistic ideals.

In paragraph 2, the author's intellect of Jefferson's proclaimed motives is evidently demonstrated as he cites his infamous passage from the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." (Lines 21-25) By deliberately addressing Jefferson's own beliefs, Banneker is able to successfully inflict guilt upon Jefferson, forcing him to realize his personal immorality.

As evidenced by the essay, Banneker repeatedly utilizes the term “ sir” in each paragraph when addressing Jefferson. Banneker’s intention revolves around establishing a distinct sensation of ethical appeal, and accurately demonstrates Banneker’s respect for Jefferson, despite his inner resentment. By referring to Thomas Jefferson as “ sir”, Banneker decreases the harshness of his delivery, thus preventing Jefferson from deeming his proposal as immature, and actually acknowledging his claim.

His strategy not only portrays him as a respectful man, but allows for smooth communication. Emotional appeal, a primary strategy instilled throughout Banneker’s notation, is first utilized in paragraph 1, in an attempt to exert guilt and eerie memories from Jefferson’s past. The author finalizes paragraph 1 by implying Thomas Jefferson’s ungratefulness to his liberation from England by stating that Thomas Jefferson is lucky to have been set free, as opposed to the circumstance several Americans are dealt.

In paragraph 3, the use of Pathos is depicted when he accuses Jefferson of being merciless toward slaves, despite his downfall in his previous years. He not only blames Jefferson for the detainment of these vulnerable and innocent slaves, but also points out his ideals and deems him as “ pitiable”. (Line 30) In a fierce attempt to validate his claim concerning Jefferson’s act of fraud, Banneker uses a unique form of paradox, represented in the third paragraph of his letter.

Although Thomas Jefferson was generally portrayed as a sane man, the author utilizes loaded words in order to properly depict Jefferson’s form of hypocrisy. Likewise, he initiates his argument by reciting the basic morals that Jefferson lives to defend, such as equality and advocacy against

impartial distribution of rights. Moreover, the recognition is reverted, placing the blame on the issue of slavery toward the Secretary of State. The author demonstrates a steadfast tenacity toward proving Jefferson immoral, and accuses him of being a criminal. ...that you should at the same time counteract his mercies in detaining by fraud and violence...my brethren under groaning captivity...you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act..." (Lines 36-39) Jefferson's reaction is expected to be in awe and particularly remorseful, as Banneker successfully proves Jefferson of being unlawful. Benjamin Banneker, a prodigy in astronomy, mathematics, surveys, and above all - rhetoric, instills his resentment toward Thomas Jefferson's ignorance to the enslaved African American population.

Maintaining the sole purpose of bringing justice to his father and prisoner's pasts, Banneker utilizes strategic rhetorical strategies that are ultimately notes in order to spark action in the nation's dwindling society. His letter is utilized not only to represent Banneker's true opinion of Jefferson, but deliberately writes a respectful letter to Jefferson in the hopes of allowing Jefferson to acknowledge his faults. The author successfully delivers his proposal, instilling hope in our nation that change is, in fact, a possibility.