

Assessment of the usage of figures of speech in the letter, by abigail adams

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Abigail Adams writes to her son in order to reinforce his determination. She uses metaphor to assert that he must stay open and educated at all times in order to become successful. She also uses hypothetical question in order to assert that he must persevere through hardship, as hardship is what builds great character. She then appeals to kairos in describing the state of the country to show that, with the idea of hardship forging character, John has a unique opportunity to forge his own greatness.

First, Adams employs metaphor in order to convince her son that he must remain open to new ideas in order to better himself. When writing to her son, Abigail Adams writes of an anecdote which she had read of, which, “ compares a judicious traveller to a river, that increases its stream the further it flows from its source; or to certain springs, which... improve their qualities as they pass along”(Adam). In this quote, Abigail Adams cites an anecdote to compare a wise man to a stream. A stream’s flow gains strength as it rushes away from its source. Its waters become enriched with taste and quality as it passes by minerals in the banks. Adams uses this to convey to her son that he must be like a stream at all times. He must keep his mind open to new ideas, expose himself to new experiences, and venture out far beyond his roots. Through this, Abigail claims that her son will become a wiser, more prudent man. Thus, Adams uses metaphor in order to convey to her son that the path to prudence lies in new experiences.

Also, Adams poses a hypothetical question in order to assert to her son that character is forged in hardship and adversity. In her letter, Adams brings up a famous greek philosopher in order to prove a point, asking, “ Would Cicero have shone so distinguished an orator if he had not been roused, kindled, <https://assignbuster.com/assessment-of-the-usage-of-figures-of-speech-in-the-letter-by-abigail-adams/>

and inflamed by the tyranny of Catiline, Verres, and Mark Anthony?”(Adams). Here, Abigail Adams mentions the great greek orator Cicero, and argues that he became so influential and prominent because of the circumstances he lived in. The hardship and crimes surrounding him served only to amplify his abilities as a thinker and a writer. The posing of this question was designed to make her son ponder how Cicero became so great, and connect his greatness to the calamities which he witnessed. Thus, Adam poses a hypothetical question to introduce the idea that adversity leads to great character.

Additionally, Abigail Adams appeals to kairos in order to convince her son that the time is ripe for him to forge his own character. In her letter, she says, “ Yet it is your lot, my son, to be an eyewitness of these calamities in your own native land...”(Adams). Abigail mentions calamities to refer to the american revolution raging in America at the time. She used this to make her son realize that the time in which he lives in is the opportune time for him to make a name for himself. After being exposed to the idea of hardship building character, this realization causes him to see that he must take advantage of this time. Thus, Adams uses kairos to cause her son to take advantage of the opportunity presented to him.

In conclusion, Abigail Adams uses metaphor, hypothetical question, and kairos to prepare him to open his mind and take advantage of the catastrophic state of the country in order to achieve his own greatness.