

Rhetorical Analysis of Elizabeth's "Speech to the Troops at Tilbury"

Desires of greed, wealth, and power embedded into the world's political figures have led to warfare and conflict among countries and people throughout the course of human existence. In times of war, a country requires strong and capable leaders to see them through difficult times. In 1588, Queen Elizabeth I of England gave a motivational speech to her troops using the rhetorical devices diction, imagery, and sentence structure to motivate her subjects positively and to instill the fear of the pending invasion in their minds. **THESIS**

The queen uses positive diction, sentence structure, and imagery in her effort to motivate her people to defend their country from their Spanish invaders. She uses diction to praise and motivate her subjects. **The queen refers to her people as "faithful" and "loving," praising their "loyalty" and "goodwill."** These positive words allow her subjects to see her as a caring, kind leader whose praise urges them to fight for their country. **She also uses the words "noble" and "worthy" to describe her people's task of protecting their country against invasion.** The use of such praising words makes her people more intimately connected with the entire situation, and it will instill a sense of duty in them to protect their kingdom. Along with this complimentary diction, she utilizes fierce and harsh diction to describe the enemy with words such as, "treachery," "blood," "dishonor," "foul," and "scorn." **She makes her audience confident of victory under her rule and instruction by stating that she is willing to live or die amongst her subjects.** The citizens are to feel that they are entitled to fight alongside their queen, as she further claims that England will shortly have victory over their enemies.

Queen Elizabeth's most effective literary device is imagery. **She inserts phrases such as "in the midst and heat of the battle," and "my blood, even in the dust: I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king..."** to make the battle seem extremely harsh on the country, and the toil that it was taking on the queen herself. Elizabeth inserts her own authority and power over the country and its militia through her imagery, portraying herself as a fragile woman who has been hardened in the course of the war for her nation. She also asserts her position as their leader when she says, **"I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field."**

Elizabeth further reiterates her power and the nation's ability and its encouragement to fight in the war using parallel structure and repetition to embed her ideas in her subjects' hearts. **"I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues"** she states, reassuring her troops by her assertive tone. The queen states that they are assured a victory because they must fight against the enemies of God, the Kingdom, and the people. The repetition of the queen's need for bravery during this time of war continually reminds the nation of Elizabeth's devotion to the cause.

The queen's use of the aforementioned rhetorical devices allow the citizens of the kingdom that will soon be invaded, to achieve a sense of self among the country and its security, acknowledging that they need to be involved and be brave and stand by their troops and their queen in their time of dismay.

Green = evidence

Yellow = commentary