

Pericles' Funeral Oration Response

Posted on September 22, 2018

Introduction

Pericles Funeral Oration was developed to promote Athens and its war heroes. Pericles had a firm belief in his people and in their capabilities to fight any adversity. The goal that Pericles achieved through this speech was to make the people feel proud to be Athenians. Athenians had a great sense of admiration for the war heroes; they were categorized as heroes of the country, and they were regarded as the highest members of society. The funeral oration was made in order to pay tribute to the fallen soldiers who had died in the Peloponnesian War, trying to defend Athens (James A. Mackin Jr, pp. 251-262). Due to this ultimate dedication and sacrifice of these war heroes, Athens has become what it is today.

Discussion

Pericles truly believed in the citizens of Athens, and he considered them to be the best when it comes to sacrifice and determination. Pericles also told its citizens that their ancestors deserved huge praise because they lived in a free state (James A. Mackin Jr, pp. 251-262). These ancestors had to lose a whole lot in order to give us what we have today in the form of Athens. On the other hand, Pericles also wanted the people of Athens to believe in themselves, and they should know that they have done something substantial because of their own ability and not because of their ancestors (Shawna, Ritchie, pp. 7-13). Pericles believed that love for a country will always encourage its soldiers to fight for their homeland. Pericles wanted the people to recognize the fact that everyone was proud to be part of Athens and that the soldiers of Athens would protect their country, no matter what.

The primary theme of this speech is centred around the fallen Athenian soldiers during the Peloponnesian War. In his speech, Pericles shares many distinctive abilities of the People of Athens, redefining a lot of customary Greek virtues in a new light. The initial theme of the speech was to honour the war heroes (Pressfield, Steven, N.p.). The speech emphasized the role of war heroes and motivated soldiers, saying that dying in the line of duty to protect the property and citizens of the city is considered the most courageous way a man can hope to die. Pericles also emphasized that if a soldier dies during the protection of his city, his death won't go in vain as people will always remember his sacrifice, and he will always be remembered as a lucky person who died as a 'hero.'

The ultimate focus of Pericles in this speech is that the people of Athens should be capable enough to put away their trivial issues, and instead, they should be able to struggle for the greater good of Athens. People of Athens should believe that If they are united, then no one will be able to defeat them, despite how powerful and strong they are (Pressfield, Steven. N.p.). The people of Athens

should follow all the rules and regulations and obey the public administrators in every way possible, which would make them more disciplined. According to Pericles, By following principles of democracy, Athenians have become the ideal of the Greek world.

Pericles also talks about the uniqueness of Athens and how its government system is based upon the principles of democracy. According to Pericles, Athenian democracy is a system of government where men rule on the basis of merit only rather than on wealth or class. In Athens, any man can be allowed to rule as long as he has the required capability. People are not discriminated against based on wealth, caste, and race in Athens. Pericles describes how, in Athens, men are free to do or say anything without fear of judgment as long as they follow the basic rules and regulations (Bryan, Lindemberger. N.p.). Pericles also praises the justice system in Athens, giving equal rights to all under the law. Pericles recognizes that democracy is the best form of government, and in his view, Athens has adopted democracy in its finest form, making it superior to all of the other states.

Conclusions

After critically analyzing Pericles' Funeral Oration Response, I came to the conclusion that the primary thinking for the speech was due to the catastrophic deaths of soldiers, however, the content within the Funeral oration was very revealing and powerful. Generally, I do not believe everything about Athens that Pericles has to say. I think he intentionally made an emotional speech to boost the morale of his soldiers so that they would be keenly invested in fighting a war and winning it. Pericle used this funeral oration to start a fire inside the hearts of his soldiers so that they would want to take revenge on their fallen soldiers and keep on fighting the war. Pericles' oration response was more of a political move rather than an event of honouring the fallen soldiers of Athens. One thing I do believe from Pericles' speech is how he described democracy in Athens, according to him democracy in Athens was made in order to favour the general public. I agree with Pericles that democracy and a proper justice system are the ultimate form of government and a way to progress even further.

Works Cited

James A. Mackin Jr, Schismogenesis and Community: Pericles' Funeral Oration: Quarterly Journal of Speech: Vol. 77, No 3. (2009) pp. 251-262

Shawna, Ritchie: POLITICAL MYTH AND ACTION IN PERICLES' FUNERAL ORATION. Vol. 8 (2008) pp. 7-13

Pressfield, Steven: War Stories: Pericles' Funeral Oration. Stevenpressfield.com. (2011). N. p.

Bryan Lindemberger: Pericles Funeral Oration Analysis. Bryanberg.net. (2006). N. p.