

Racism, Feminism, and Rhetoric in Ain't I a Woman

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The literary work of "Ain't I a Woman" by Sojourner Truth, through her speech, was of high significance; she highlighted the injustice and racism that black women and the black community were facing in mid-19th century America. She used a rhetoric style to deliver his message to the masses. Also, from her personal experience, Sojourner used personal experiences to add weight to his viewpoint to get the attention of the public. She brought metaphoric questions in her content to refute the counter-narrative of gender inequality. She also produced reference from bible throughout her message to engage Christian listeners, the salient features of the literary speech were a strong message, truthfulness, and her passion. Sojourner was an African American lady who gave a memorable speech in Ohio in the year 1851 at a women's convention. While sharing her personal story, she expressed her ordeal as a woman and, on top of that, as a black woman in that day's society. She drew the attention of ladies who were going through discrimination in their daily lives. *"Truth" attempted to make women realize the effects of hypocrisy, racial injustice, and slavery in the context of feminism that were prevalent in the society of that era.*

About Hypocrisy, she pointed out the double standards of the men in society who often used to say that women need to be helped in carriages; they need to be lifted over. She narrated her personal experiences by saying that no one helped her in mud puddles, no one gave me a place, and no one consoled me. She also pointed out a man in the crowd and said how the men treat their women. She successfully portrayed herself as a victim and described the victimization of the other women. The tragedy of a black woman at the time was that no one was willing to perform courtesies for her; she was always deemed as a slave or an unwanted thing in society. She repeated what she had gone through, and throughout her speech, she laid great emphasis on the discriminatory behavior of the community, which was creating a massive sense of deprivation in black people and women of that time. She explained the fierce hypocrisy of society at that time. The whole community was suffering from the hypocrisy of inequality.

Racial injustice-There was massive discrimination between white and black, men and women, these words by truth served as an emotional incitement among the audience, they started to realize social injustice and the overall victimization. Not only did she expose hypocrisy in her message, but the whole speech urged people to take action against all such exploitation. By emphasizing the presence of hypocrisy in society, "Truth" asked the audience to analyze injustice in their lives and think about how they want to change it. She attempted to invoke the emotions of the audience to get their attention. Also, she wanted the audience to equate their condition to hers so that they all can collectively rise to all the social injustice and inequality.

The rhetorical question that she posed, “Ain’t I a woman?” demonstrated her proud expression of self-belief, the strength of the woman, and her willingness to achieve the rights that she deserved, made a great impression on the audience, especially on women. The questions that she raised were powerful, and she poetically repeated them to make the overall speech look like a high literary work. She depicted her equality with men by describing her hard work and efforts in the barns and the way she plowed; she further added that with this hard work, no man should head me as I am no lesser than them (Truth). Again, she made a claim, “Ain’t I a woman,” she continued to build this argument rhythmically as this was the central theme of her speech and objective. While reading her statement, one feels that throughout the address, her passion and level of energy grew, and she was continually attempting to transfer his energy and passion level to the audience so that they could fully understand her viewpoint and stand firm for their rights.

Slavery- Towards the end of her speech, she expressed her grief by explaining the hardships and miseries she endured as a slave. She declared she gave birth to thirteen children and saw almost all of them being sold off into slavery while expressing that she broke into tears. She vividly highlighted the effects of violence and its traumatic effects. Most of the women in the audience were mothers. So, she was attempting to make them realize how it feels as a mother if someone takes away their children (Brah et al.). She gave an example of the holy figure of all the Christians, who is the first lady on the earth “Eve”. She said we all should derive strength from them. Finally, she presented the solution by conveying the message of unity among women. She stressed that if all women work collectively, then together, they can all achieve what they are looking for, i.e., equality, justice, and freedom. Overall, “Ain’t I a Woman” contains a powerful message against hypocrisy, racial injustice, and gender inequality. The speech was a combination of Sojourner Truth’s personal experiences and emotions. She proposed unity for all the women as a solution to all such miseries. Her repetitive question, “Ain’t I a woman?” poetically and rhythmically made a significant impact on the audience, and even today, her message seems reliable and valid.

Works Cited

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