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# Rhetorical Analysis Of The Drum Major Instinct By Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s "The Drum Major Instinct" speech was a sermon that was told at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia on February 4, 1968. During the time of the Civil Rights Movement Martin Luther King Jr. was a strong supporter in the Movement. Dr. King's speeches are known for his way with words and the central claim beyond them. Analyzing Dr. King's speech "The Drum Major Instinct" for the central claim and rhetorical appeal helps the reader understand Dr. King's writing in greater detail. In Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "The Drum Major Instinct" he develops his claim using rhetorical appeals by explaining how a large ego causes prejudice because, of praise, superiority, and fractions in a congregation.

Firstly, a large ego can lead to prejudice by praise. According to the speech, Dr. King says "you like to be praised. Everybody likes it, as a matter of fact". He starts by stating facts that people want and like to be praised. He uses the facts to start explaining what causes a large ego to start. Dr. King goes further in his speech saying that "the most damaging aspect of it. What ego does to the personality." and he tells "If it isn't harnessed, you will end up day in and day out trying to deal with your ego problem by boasting". Dr. King tells that people will boast about something so they will be praised. Now he starts to explain how praise turns to ego and ego into boasting how you are the best at something. The evidence backs up Dr. King's claim that too much ego leads to prejudice from praise.

Secondly, ego causes prejudice from superiority. He states, "Do you know that a lot of the race problem grows out of the drum major instinct" and that it is the "need that some people have to feel superior". He tells the question to allow those listening to pause then explain that the instinct cause people to feel superior. In this quote he says that from the ego turns to the problem of superiority. He goes even further to say, "A need that some people have to feel that they are first, and to feel that there white skin ordained them to be first". The quote tells that whites feel superior because, they want to be first and feel that being white means they are superior. The text tells that from a large ego causes prejudice is from the drum major instinct makes them want to be first. This evidence furthers Dr. King's claim that a large ego leads to prejudice because, of superiority.

Finally, a large ego causes prejudice from fraction in a congregation. In the speech Dr. King says in jail he asked, "how much the white jailers were earning" and tells "They ought to be marching with us. You're just as poor as Negroes". The text tells that even with prejudice against blacks some white people are being paid as much as blacks. The quote shows that

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there is more than prejudice against blacks but other whites. He goes on saying, “You are put in the position of supporting your oppressor, because through prejudice and blindness, you fail to see that the same forces that oppress Negroes in American society oppress poor white people”. The quote furthers the fact of the ideas of prejudice against other ethnic groups there is still prejudice among whites. The quote tells that among a congregation of whites they use the same prejudice in society for poor white people. The evidence further supports Dr. King's claim that too much ego leads to prejudice by fraction in a congregation.

In the speech, “The Drum Major Instinct” Martin Luther King Jr. claims that praise, superiority, and fraction in a congregation is caused by too much ego that leads to prejudice. Praise, is something everyone likes but it can grow from a large ego to prejudice. The drum major instinct causes “people have to feel that they are first” or that they have superiority. A large ego leads to prejudice is explained when a congregation turns on itself into fractions. Dr. King was an advocate for equality for everyone and some of today's problems are still about prejudice. Also one should always learn from the past so history's mistakes won't happen again.

## Works Cited

1. King, Martin L. 'Sermon.' 4 Feb. 1968, Atlanta, docs.google.com/document/d/1RnZbJgJ2cIO7gY9raPeDTGnvb493RDkhZIFWPIsJqYs/edit.

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