

Wangari Maathai Nobel Lecture

The first African woman to receive a PhD, and win the Nobel Peace Prize, Wangari Maathai. has led her organization, The Green Belt Movement (GBM), in planting more than 30 million trees across Africa, while also providing over 100,000 jobs, mostly to women. Her Nobel Peace Prize, the first ever awarded for environmental activism, marks recognition of the Nobel committee of the interrelationship of democracy and peace with issues of environmental sustainability.

Identifying Rhetorical Strategies

1. Giving a speech after receiving an award is a unique opportunity, especially when the award is arguably the world's most prestigious i.e. The Nobel Peace Prize. As you read through and listen to her speech, note the means of persuasion she employs; also, note her description of the interrelationship of the environment, government, education, culture, and a sustainable future.
2. In order to start and sustain such an enormous environmental campaign, Maathai and the GBM engaged in thousands of acts of persuasion and communication. What do you find to be the most compelling and persuasive parts of this speech?
3. Aristotle described two kinds of ethos: extrinsic—what the audience knows about you prior to speaking e.g. you've just won the Nobel Peace Prize; intrinsic—the credibility you establish within a rhetorical situation. How does Maathai use both?
4. Maathai states "historically our people have been persuaded to believe that because they are poor, they lack not only capital, but also knowledge and skills to address their challenges. Instead they are conditioned to believe that solutions to their problems must come from 'outside'." How did she address this problem?
5. Maathai uses narrative at various points in her speech. Why is this effective? Where else do you find examples of narrative being used as a means of persuasion?
6. What other means of persuasion does Maathai use?
7. Oftentimes we must address more than one audience in a particular piece of writing or speech. What audiences does Maathai seem to be addressing? What is your evidence?
8. The achievements of this African woman are truly remarkable. What other examples of successful activism related to sustainability can you find? Find instances of their communications and analyze them for their persuasive elements. Does their rhetoric match reality? In what ways does Wangari Maathai persuade you?

GROUP WORK: With a partner, answer the preceding questions using the assertion evidence style of powerpoint slide. You may use multiple slides to answer a question.

Understanding Key Terms

Knowing the definitions of the following terms will help you to understand this article. Definitions for these terms can be found online at <http://www.websters.com> or by typing definition [word] in Google.

- Biodiversity
- Mottainai
- Culture
- Governance
- Deforestation

