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The University of Southern Mississippi

A Rhetorical Criticism of Anti-ERA Cartoons

by

Josie Burks

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Science
in the Department of Communication Studies

May 2014

Approved by

Wendy Atkins-Sayre, Ph.D., Thesis Adviser
Associate Professor of Communication Studies

Charles Tardy, Ph.D., Chair
Department of Communication Studies

David R. Davies, Ph.D., Dean
Honors College

Abstract

Over the course of American history many battles have been fought to ensure that equality was extended to the citizens of the United States. With momentum from the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, a bill was introduced to Congress in 1923 that sought to ensure equality for the women of the nation, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Though this bill was later reworded and reintroduced in every subsequent session of Congress, it would not be until 1972 that the bill would become a household name. This thesis analyzes the rhetorical elements that are at play within a selection of anti-Equal Rights Amendment cartoons. The cartoons selected represent a general sampling of anti-ERA cartoons. The anti-ERA placed the individuals in the cartoons in hyperbolic situations and juxtaposed those individuals to the traditional roles that the movement cherished as the ideal way of life for Americans. This thesis argues that the rhetorical elements of identification, juxtaposition and humor theories, and hyperbole and fear appeals drove the selected political cartoons in a direction that would allow the anti-ERA movement to persuade males to vote against ratification of the proposed amendment.

Keywords: anti-ERA, rhetoric, rhetor, identification, juxtaposition, hyperbole, fear Appeals

DEDICATION

The University of Southern Mississippi Speaking Center Staff

Thank you for all of the support that you all have provided me during the writing of this thesis. I know you all will be glad to no longer hear about anti-ERA and these cartoons!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take a moment to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Wendy Atkins-Sayre. Without her support over the past four years as my boss at the Southern Miss Speaking Center and the past two years as my thesis advisor, this project would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my department advisor, Dr. John Meyer. Without his continual encouragement throughout the past four years at Southern Miss I would not have transformed into the student that I have become.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ERA	Equal Rights Amendment
STOP ERA	Stop Taking Our Privileges Equal Rights Amendment

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of American history there have been many battles fought to ensure that equality was extended to the citizens of the United States. With momentum from the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, a bill was introduced to Congress in 1923 that sought to ensure equality for the women of the nation. The bill stated, "Men and Women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and in every place subject to its jurisdiction. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation" (Stetson, 1997, p. 29). Though this bill, aptly titled the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), was later reworded and reintroduced in every subsequent session of Congress. It was not until 1972 that the bill became a household name, however.

As with any controversy there were supporters and opponents of the bill. Conservative activist, Phyllis Schlafly, led the opposition against the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Schlafly's appearance exuded the aura of a typical American housewife. She appeared to be the type of individual that would be found baking cookies for her children and keeping house for an adoring husband. This appearance allowed her to attract the support of multitudes of American housewives. These women organized an auxiliary group to oppose the ERA. The group's use of grass roots efforts included witnessing to potential supporters, writing campaign letters, baking goods and delivering them to legislators while decked in cute dresses and frilly aprons. These tactics allowed the group to personalize their quest to defeat the ERA. Though these were the usual

rhetorical mediums used by the anti-Equal Rights Amendment (anti-ERA) activists, movement activists also employed the use of cartoons.

This thesis analyzes the rhetorical elements that are at play within a selection of anti-ERA cartoons. The cartoons selected represent a general sampling of anti-ERA cartoons. Cartoons used for this analysis were obtained through a collection from Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University and from the book, *Best Editorial Cartoons of 1972: A Pictorial History of the Year* (Brooks, 1973). Each cartoon was published in various newspapers across the United States. For this analysis, seven cartoons were used. Each cartoon-depicted scenes reflecting different scenarios that the anti-ERA movement argued would become commonplace if the ERA were to become a constitutional amendment. The cartoons used everyday people in order to allow a larger audience to identify with the messages that anti-ERA was promoting. The anti-ERA movement used cartoons to place individuals in hyperbolic situations and juxtapose those individuals to the traditional roles that the movement cherished as the ideal way of American life. Though it is blatantly apparent that the anti-ERA tried to protect their ideal way of life, the appeal that the anti-ERA made for the support of men is less apparent. This can be seen through the choices of scenes that the anti-ERA chose to use in the cartoons. Scenes in the cartoons included: an Archie Bunker look-a-like, two military mom cartoons, a wedding, a football team, rapists in public bathrooms, and a woman doing archaic manual labor.

This thesis argues that the rhetorical elements of identification, juxtaposition, and hyperbole and fear appeals, along with incongruity and superiority humor theories, drove the selected political cartoons in a direction that would allow the anti-ERA to appeal the

male populace to vote against ratification of the proposed amendment.   This paper includes a historical context, literature review, theoretical framework and an analysis of the rhetorical elements at play within the anti-ERA cartoons.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Equal Rights Amendment was initially introduced in 1923. Three years earlier, the United States granted women the right to vote through the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. At this time, the woman's suffrage movement was at the height of its momentum. After gaining the right to vote for women, new bills were introduced in hopes of obtaining labor and equality rights for women.

Alice Paul played a large role in the woman's suffrage movement. A Quaker by birth, Paul traveled to England to help with the British suffrage movement. After her stint in England, she returned to the United States in 1910 to speak to American suffrage groups and to complete her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania (Flexner & Fitzpatrick, 1996). This began her involvement with the American suffrage movement. Paul would go on to join forces with other such notable suffrage activists as Lucy Burns to gain woman's suffrage in the United States. The group that the two activists formed would become known as the National Woman's Party.

Alice Paul drafted the ERA at the National Woman's Party Convention in Seneca Falls, New York in July of 1923 (Becker, 1981). The Bill set forth the right for men and women to be equal under United States jurisdiction (Stetson, 1997). After the initial proposal of the bill, it was reintroduced in each consecutive Congress. During World War II, the House Judiciary Committee required new wording of the bill. With help from Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, the resulting bill read:

> Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

> The Congress shall have the powers to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.
>
> This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification (Stetson, 1997)

This wording would remain throughout the many years that the ERA was reintroduced to Congress. The bill would continue to be re-introduced until 1972.

Fast forward to the Civil Rights Movement. This social movement centered on gaining rights for oppressed races and social groups. From this movement, the second wave feminist movement was born. The second wave feminist movement began around 1960 (Wood, 2013). After working alongside men in the field during the Civil Rights Movement, women saw that there was a need to fight for their equality. A battle had been waged to ensure that those of different races were granted equality, but women were still treated as unequal to men. Notable leaders of this movement included Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan (Rosen, 2006). During the second wave, an interest in the Equal Rights Amendment was re-ignited. When the ERA was initially reintroduced to Congress, it was met with very little opposition. It passed both the House and the Senate overwhelmingly. Though the bill was passed in Congress, a seven-year deadline for its ratification was added as a stipulation to the bill (Rawalt, 1994). This deadline was extended for an additional three years in 1979. The only thing standing between the ERA becoming a constitutional amendment was ratification of the bill by the required number of states. At first, this would seem to be an easy task. The task, however, became increasingly difficult when an unlikely nemesis entered the ring to thwart the ERA's chances of ratification.

Phyllis Schlafly, at first glance, appeared to be the typical housewife of the 1970s. Perfect grooming and a stereotypical family complemented the picture that Schlafly presented to the world. Behind this façade lay a formidable enemy. Schlafly was born in St. Louis in 1924 to a devout Catholic family (Farber, 2010). Schlafly would go on to put herself through college while working at an ammunition factory during WWII. After working her way through college, she married and started a family while attending law school (Time, 1978). Her husband, Fred Schlafly, was a highly successful attorney who was plugged into the national conservative political scene (Farber, 2010). The Schlaflys first made a name for themselves during the McCarthy era due to their anticommunist stand point. From this, Schlafly went on to become the number one opponent of the ERA.

The supporters of Schlafly's Stop Taking Our Privileges ERA (STOP ERA) movement viewed supporters of the ERA in a negative light. STOP ERA's opposition toward the supporters of the amendment is manifested through the stereotyping of those supporters. The stereotype that STOP ERA chose to use was that of a group of enraged misfits bent on changing laws to their benefit in order to make others suffer. Solomon (1983) stated, "the supporters of the ERA are political and social deviates, bent on subverting the best interests of most Americans" (p. 112). In order to better identify who these "social deviates" were, the STOP ERA needed specific groups of individuals that they could include in this characterization in order to add concreteness to their stereotype. Groups such as "Libbers" (or those fighting for women's rights), lesbians, and "dead-beat men" were the main groups that the STOP ERA stereotyped as supporters of the movement (Solomon, 1976). STOP ERA also targeted executive and professional

women due to the group's view that these individuals were out of touch with the average workingwoman (Foss, 1979). Libbers were seen as breaking away from the traditional role of women because they were not content to stay at home and be a housewife. Lesbians were viewed as masculine women with psychological defects. These individuals were also seen as wanting to force their lifestyle on others and have that lifestyle deemed acceptable by the masses (Foss, 1979). Dead-beat men were viewed either as gay or trying to dodge familial responsibilities, or cowards avoiding completing military service (Solomon, 1983). By stereotyping the supporters of the ERA as deviants or misfits, the opposition could promote the idea that these individuals supported the ERA was because they were not normal. Thereby, if someone were to side with the supporters, she would be running the risk of placing herself in the same ranks as the individuals who were stereotyped as deviants.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to better understand the STOP ERA movement and how rhetoric functioned throughout this movement, this section reviews related literature. There are very few researchers who have studied the area of rhetoric and the anti-ERA movement, let alone rhetoric and cartoons from the movement. Consequently, the field of available literature is relatively small, however. There are two researchers who have written on rhetoric and the anti-ERA. This literature review examines the four articles written by those researchers. By examining the literature, the rhetoric of STOP ERA could be broken into two broad categories. The first category examines how the STOP ERA presented the movement itself and its supporters. Subcategories included: the divine design idea, nonverbal actions, and placing women on a figurative pedestal. The second category represented how STOP ERA presented its opposition. Subcategories included: ERA as over expansion of the federal government, opposition as anomalies, negative mother archetype, and opposition as being un-American. Descriptions of these subcategories appear in the following paragraphs.

Devine Design

STOP ERA presented the idea of divine design through their rhetoric. The society that STOP ERA wished to protect was one that revolved around biology, God, and traditions (Solomon, 1983). In this capacity, they argued, men and women are designed by God to carry out different roles in life. The first divine design mentioned is that of women being able to carry children. The fact that women, and not men, can give birth and nurse children indicates, according to STOP ERA, that women should be cast in the

role of mother. By being cast in the role of mother, women, therefore, become responsible for the care of the aforementioned child.

From the biological role of mother, the role of spouse is next examined. Societal traditions played a vital role in furthering the idea of divinely mandated roles (Solomon, 1983). The STOP ERA movement believed God created man and woman to be together as a unit. The norm in American culture was for man and woman to marry; the husband would become the breadwinner and the wife would take care of the home and children. American society had promoted women embracing the role of wife and mother throughout the course of history. By having a society that embraced those roles associated with divine design, STOP ERA had, in their eyes, the ideal society.

The use of divine design rhetoric created four bases for a supporter's identification (Solomon, 1983). First, a sense of destiny and uniqueness was seen. This allows a woman to accept the role of wife or mother as having a divine plan brought to life within her. Second, continuity across time was established. Solomon (1983) stated, "The order antedates the present moment and is part of a long historical pageant" (p. 114) Women should be able to see themselves as part of a long-standing tradition involving the proper roles women should play. Third, divine design included the idea that most women would not benefit from the ERA, and the society it would create would not be beneficial. This argument resonated with STOP ERA supporters and unified the group. Finally, the vision of stability and structure in relationships in society was created. Solomon (1983) later stated, "With the acceptance of the roles designated by God and biology, all parties combine to form a stable unit able to provide emotional and physical sustenance for all members, particularly the children" (p.115).

Solomon (1983) argued that STOP ERA characterized its members as embodying the archetype of the mother. In the role of mother, an individual presents the "light" and what is good (Solomon, 1979). This can be seen through the divine design argument. STOP ERA presented women as being uniquely designed to be caring; the role of mother that the group assigned to women is seen as being a mandate from God, set forth when he created man and woman.

Nonverbal Actions

Schlafly's STOP ERA movement did not rely solely on verbal rhetoric in order to persuade their audience to support the cause (Solomon, 1987). Instead, they used nonverbal tactics to enhance their verbal rhetoric. STOP ERA employed the use of buttons, banners, feminine dress, baked goods, and an extensive letter writing campaign (Solomon, 1987). Buttons and banners were a fairly traditional nonverbal ploy. The feminine dress and baked goods, however, were not as commonplace. STOP ERA viewed the amendment as an affront to femininity. To drive this point home with the legislators they encountered while picketing capitals, they dressed in checked dresses, frilly aprons, and had immaculate hair and makeup. This attire was in great contrast to the ERA supporters who embraced a more modern style. Supporters chose to wear pants and other garments that were not traditionally viewed as being appropriate feminine dress during that time. The attire, coupled with the baked goods that opponents were armed with, screamed femininity and support of traditional women's roles. This nonverbal action was unique to this movement, due to the fact that most protestors at a state capital did not use a housewife persona to gain support for their issue. By using this nonverbal action, STOP ERA gave a personal touch to their persuasion.

A large portion of the nonverbal actions STOP ERA took was through the form of a massive letter writing campaign (Foss, 1979). Through the use of the letter writing campaign, STOP ERA could involve women who were staying home and fulfilling the role that STOP ERA supported. As Foss (1979) writes, "The opponent's reality depends on the home; thus they employ tactics to oppose the ERA that can be engaged in while remaining in the home" (p. 283). By including these women, STOP ERA enacted a massive letter writing campaign that inundated legislatures with mail pleading for them to vote no on this amendment.

The Figurative Pedestal

STOP ERA viewed the home as the ideal environment for a woman. If a woman was successful in this environment, STOP ERA believed she should be placed on a figurative pedestal. STOP ERA saw their supporters as being dependent on men and in need of their protection (Foss, 1979). STOP ERA pushed the idea that women, due to being dependent and needing protection, should not work outside of the home. By staying home to take care of the household chores, familial duties, and serving the husband, a woman deserved to be taken care of by her husband. Through the completion of her duties, a woman should be viewed as having a fulfilling role in society and therefore should be placed on a figurative pedestal by her adoring husband. Solomon (1979) writes, "The comparison of women's legal and social status to a pedestal evoked the image of uniqueness and great worth while suggesting an aloofness and protection from the concerns of more mundane existence". The use of the figurative pedestal allowed STOP ERA to promote the idea that women should be treated like queens in

their home. If the ERA were to pass, there would be no guarantee of the continuance of the treatment that they were used to receiving from their husbands and families.

Over Expansion of Federal Government

STOP ERA viewed the passage of the ERA as a threat of over expansion of the federal government, and questioned the speedy manner in which the amendment was ratified and sent to the individual states for their votes. Anti-ERA supporters saw the ERA's second section, which allowed Congress to enforce the amendment, as an expansion of the federal government's power (Solomon, 1987). This fear of the federal government's expansion gave more fuel to the opposition's fire. Foss (1979) writes, "ERA opponents specifically detail customs and institutions they are fighting to maintain: the family, marriage, financial support of women by men, chivalry, and religious practices that designate certain restricted roles from women" (p.283). STOP ERA was effectively able to instill fear and anger in its audience by specifically explaining the groups and traditions that would be affected by the government expansion.

Echoing the divine design concept, STOP ERA saw the government as having a set order in which it was designed to operate, much in the same way there was an order for men and women. STOP ERA rhetoric depicts the order of the federal government as over powering that of the state government by the passage of the ERA (Solomon, 1983). No longer would the states be able to decide what was best for their people. Instead, the bureaucrats in Washington would be in charge of making the decisions on how individuals lived their daily lives. STOP ERA believed that it was best to let the states decide how to govern their people.

STOP ERA also felt that the United States Congress had been too speedy in their ratification of the bill. The belief that the old was better than the new drove STOP ERA's commitment to tradition. This commitment to tradition led STOP ERA to believe that sufficient considerations had not gone into the ratification process (Foss, 1979). STOP ERA, harkening back to the traditions they found so important, felt that running the bill through Congress so quickly did not leave room for the bill to be properly examined.

ERA Supporters as Anomalies

The opposition toward the ERA viewed supporters of the amendment as anomalies that threatened their traditional way of life. Supporters were a threat to STOP ERA due to the fact that the new world that they envisioned, through the passage of the ERA, would be a perversion of the current world that the opposition saw as being in a healthy order. STOP ERA portrayed the perversion of their "perfect world" through the juxtaposition of STOP ERA to the supporters of the ERA. The ideas of order, normality, and stability were juxtaposed with disruption, anomaly, and chaos of the ERA (Solomon, 1983).

Solomon (1983) illustrates this point through a list of juxtaposed elements. First, natural, God-given sex roles are contrasted to confused, perverted sex roles. Family versus anti-family follows on the list of juxtaposed items. Next, protected benevolent legislation, special privileges, and privacy are contrasted to "mandated equality," loss of special privileges, and loss of privacy. Finally, balance of power is contrasted with expanded federal government (Solomon, 1979). If the supporters were to have their amendment placed into law, life as the opposition knew it would cease to exist, according to the opposition. The supporters, because they believed in the amendment, were a direct

threat. By portraying the supporters as anomalies that threatened the already established norms of society, STOP ERA could effectively pit two groups of women against each other.

Negative Archetype of Mother

STOP ERA and Phyllis Schlafly also used the archetype of the mother to promote the opposition's agenda. In order to effectively use this archetype, they associated the supporters of the ERA with embodying the negative archetype of the mother. Within this realm, supporters were associated with dark and evil. As Solomon (1979) depicts, "much like the minions of Satan deplored in sermons, they hope to tempt or lure women from the victorious path". The minions included the previously mentioned groups: "libbers", lesbians, "dead-beat men", and professional women (Foss, 1979; Solomon, 1983). Through the embodiment of the negative mother archetype, the supporters became the villain in the STOP ERA fairy tale. By connecting these individuals to the actions that they deemed atrocious, STOP ERA could promote their opposition as the good path to follow. Also, having cast these groups in a negative light, STOP ERA could showcase the positive qualities that a woman who opposed the ERA contained.

ERA Supporters as Un-American

Finally, supporters were accused of being un-American. Phyllis Schlafly was an ardent anti-communist. Her disdain for communism bled into the STOP ERA message. Schlafly viewed the ERA as being a communist piece of legislation, even though the American Communist Party did not support the amendment (Foss, 1979). Schlafly and STOP ERA labeled the supporters of the ERA communists (Solomon, 1979). This association, therefore, made ERA supporters un-American. In order to be an

"American," one should not support the ERA. Instead, he or she should oppose the ERA in order to ensure the values and traditions that helped to build the country.

Overall, STOP ERA used a variety of approaches to construct the movement's rhetoric. The distinct division of rhetoric used for the movement and that which was used for the opposition showed the positive and negative sides of STOP ERA. By using this division, STOP ERA effectively persuaded the audience to support their movement, and ultimately defeat the ERA.

After reviewing the available literature pertaining to the anti-ERA and rhetoric, it became evident that there was a specific area of research that was missing. This area was that of how the anti-ERA interacted with and impacted male voters. Acknowledging this deficit in the literature, this analysis hopes to add to this area by providing research on how the anti-ERA shaped their rhetoric to appeal to male voters through the use of the selected cartoons.

CHAPTER IV

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

After reviewing the related literature, it is now important to understand the rhetorical theories that will be employed in order to rhetorically analyze the selected cartoons. This is best accomplished through a careful examination of the selected rhetorical concepts. Included in this analysis are: identification, juxtaposition, gender roles, hyperbole and fear appeals, vivid imagery, and humor theories. Each of these concepts brings specific understanding to how rhetoric functions within each of the selected cartoons.

Identification

Identification allows the audience to connect with the rhetor due to perceived commonalities they share in regards to the rhetorical text. Burke (1969) stated

> Here are ambiguities of substance. In being identified with B, A is 'substantially one' with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another (p. 21).

This definition explains how identification brings individuals together. Even though individuals share common threads and can identify with one another, they are ultimately unique individuals. The similarities these individuals share range from the concrete to the abstract. Humans are constantly at odds with one another (Burke, 1969). Such controversy creates identification as humans create alliances with likeminded individuals to promote their own side of a controversy. There would be no need for a rhetor to promote identification amongst individuals if humans were in a constant state of unity.

How does a rhetor go about creating identification amongst the target audience? Burke (1969) suggested, "you persuade a man only in so far as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your own way with his" (p. 55). In this sense, persuasion occurs when the audience member feels that he or she shares a common thread of connection with the rhetor. That common thread of connection allows the audience member to see that the rhetor is essentially one in the same with the audience member due to their commonalities. This allows the rhetor to effectively persuade an audience that there is merit in the rhetorical text. This is due to the fact that the text creates identification between the rhetor and the audience, making the rhetor worthy of the audience's attention and consideration.

Juxtaposition

A device often used in rhetoric is juxtaposition. Edwards (2004) explains juxtaposition through the use of a cartoon depicting the iconic picture of John F. Kennedy, Jr. saluting his father's funeral procession to a cartoon of JFK saluting his son from the heavens. Juxtaposition takes two separate entities and compares them in one setting. The replaying of historical visual images connects two and juxtaposes them, allowing a side-by-side examination (Edwards, 2004). By using juxtaposition, a viewer can make a decision based on facts from the past and the present in the same moment. A cartoon is meant to be persuasive, thus it requires the cartoonist to think on a rhetorical level. Cartoonists act rhetorically when they promote particular political ideas or events (Edwards, 2004). Cartoons provide the reader with a clear idea of what the cartoonist is trying to accomplish rhetorically. A political cartoon's success hinges on the cartoonist's ability to effectively convey a rhetorical action through the scene depicted within the

cartoon. Exaggeration involved with caricatures allows for unambiguous messages that will further the success of the rhetoric included in a cartoon (Blair, 2004).

Gender Roles

In American culture there are certain characteristics that are associated with masculine and feminine gender roles. Masculine gender roles require a man to be successful, confident and assertive. Wood (2013) stated, "men are still regarded as the primary breadwinners for families" (p. 57). In this capacity, it is the responsibility of the man to procure a job to provide for his family. The husband's ability to support his family shows that he is not weak. Weakness is associated with femininity. By showing that they possess power and esteem, men's masculinity is viewed in higher regard, therefore, proving they are successful.

Contrary to the expectations associated with masculine gender roles are those of feminine gender roles. Women are expected to be caretakers who are quiet, helpful, and unobtrusive (Wood, 2013). These expectations of feminine gender roles enable women to view full time work as an option. In essence, the stereotypical view of women as staying at home, raising a family, and taking care of her husband applies to the expected feminine gender role. Women, in essence, should attend to the needs of others before their own.

Hyperbole and Fear Appeals

Hyperbole is a dramatic effect that is often used to further the effectiveness of fear appeals. Each of the scenes depicted in the selected cartoons depicts an event that is extremely dramatic. These events are best defined as hyperbole. Hyperbole requires over exaggeration for dramatic effect (Jasinski, 2001). The over exaggeration that is

involved presents scenarios in which an average situation has been dramatized to emphasize a pertinent belief that the rhetor wishes to share with his or her audience. Hyperbole is used to enhance fear appeals that are present in the scenarios depicted in the cartoons.

Fear appeals are often used to scare an audience into adopting the proposition that the rhetor is supporting. The fear appeal takes the form of an "if –then" statement (Beebe, Beebe, & Ivy, 2010). Through this arrangement, the rhetor proposes the following: if the audience member does not do what the rhetor proposes, then the audience member will have to suffer the consequences that come with the alternate to the proposition. The events are over dramatized through the use of hyperbole in order to show how dire the consequences would be if the audience did not accept the rhetor's position.

Humor Theories

Humor theories play a role in understanding the humor in political cartoons. Two specific humor theories that play a vital role in this process are the superiority and incongruity theories. According to Morreall (1983), the superiority theory occurs when one party finds humor in being superior to another party. This makes the superiority theory a very primal theory. It is human nature to laugh at the misfortunes of others. The incongruity theory takes a different approach to humor. Morreall explains the incongruity theory as humor that occurs when something is unexpected, unusual, or a violation of a norm. When someone finds humor in a situation that they believe violates the norm of that particular situation, the incongruity theory is at play. These humor theories explain the ways in which people find editorial cartoons funny.

Vivid Imagery

By using vivid images that create believability within the audience, a rhetor can begin to connect with his or her audience that will in turn elicit an emotional response. By eliciting this emotional response, the audience's reaction will result in a higher degree of persuasion (Hill, 2004). The higher degree of persuasion that is garnered through the use of vivid imagery allows the rhetor's position to become stronger. By making the position stronger, comprehension by the audience will also be increased. Through this use of vividness, rhetors can further the potential for their audience to fully comprehend the meaning of a rhetorical act.

Visual communication allows for more forceful communication (Blair, 2004). By using this argument, rhetors can make their point with the specified degree of force that they desire for their visual image. These same visual images allow an audience to create the thoughts and feelings that they deem appropriate to the image. However, this does not mean that the audience will interpret the image in the way in which the rhetor intended. Narratives that are formed from visual images can change one's attitudes. Someone's personal opinions will more than likely always effect how that person views a particular image.

By using the previously mentioned rhetorical theories, an analysis of the selected cartoons will be created. These theories are each present within the selection of the cartoons and provide a deeper explanation of how rhetoric functions within the cartoons. Through the use of these theories, specific evidence of how the anti-ERA shaped their rhetoric in order to appeal to male voters.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an analysis of anti-ERA movement cartoons. The anti-ERA movement used cartoons to persuade the male populace to vote against ratification of the proposed amendment. The anti-ERA successfully accomplished their appeal to male voters by (1) creating identification between male voters and the characters within the cartoons, (2) juxtaposing traditional male gender roles to those of traditional females, and (3) creating fear appeals by placing the characters of the cartoons in hyperbolic situations that pose a threat to traditional male/female gender roles.

Identification Between Male Voters and Cartoon Characters

The anti-ERA movement sought to create identification between male voters and the characters that were present within their cartoons. This identification was accomplished by presenting commonalities between male voters and the cartoon characters. In order to illustrate the commonalities between the groups, the anti-ERA movement's cartoon characters spoke the same language as the target audience.

For persuasion to properly operate and create identification, a rhetor must be able to speak the language of her audience (Burke, 1969). In other words, the rhetor should use language that the audience speaks in their daily lives. In the case of cartoons, the depicted scenes must represent situations that an audience member might encounter on a daily basis. Images reflect the ideas and values of their creators and of society (Edwards & Winkler, 1997). This is enhanced when cartoons employ vivid imagery in order to create the scenes that are prevalent in an individual's daily lives. The vivid images are used to enhance viewers' identification with the cartoon characters. Political cartoons are

a medium through which many people will formulate their beliefs on popular issues; therefore, the cultural references used in a cartoon must be easy to understand. If the cartoon is too hard to understand, a large portion of the public will not understand the cartoon or its rhetoric.

Anti-ERA accomplished identification by selecting scenes that men would encounter in their daily lives. Of the selected cartoons, the Archie Bunker look-a-like, best exemplifies the rhetor's use of the audience's language (Figure 1). In this cartoon, a man that resembles Archie Bunker, a famous character in the 1970s television sitcom 'All in the Family', stands dumbfounded with a cigar hanging lazily from his mouth. Archie holds the handle of a vacuum cleaner with a bow that says "To Dad." His other hand is placed, matter of factly, on his hip. The woman who inhabits his recliner motivates the dumfounded look. The woman, wearing a housecoat and feather slippers, sits sprawled in Archie's recliner, daintily drinking a cup of tea and reading the newspaper. The front page of the paper reads, "Equal Rights Amendment Signed By Half The States." The newspaper hides the woman's face.

Figure 1: Cartoon of Archie Bunker Look-a-Like (Brooks, 1973).

This cartoon speaks the language of the male audience that was targeted by STOP ERA due to the fact that he was a character that males could identify with. Archie Bunker worked a 9-5 union job, had a nagging wife, and was a “man’s man”. This character was someone who spoke the stereotypical language of men. Male voters might identify with Archie Bunker due to his stereotypical male qualities.

Commonalities must be present in order for identification to occur between an audience and a rhetor. The Archie Bunker look-a-like cartoon presents the target audience with many commonalities to which they can identify. He faced the perceived stereotypical problems that every working class man faced. These commonalities allowed the male audience to identify with him. By identifying themselves with the

Archie Bunker character, they could envision themselves being placed in the same situation if the ERA was to become law.

The anti-ERA movement also presented commonalities among women to persuade male voters. The cartoons present women in questionable roles. If a man were to support the ERA the cartoonist posited the women in their lives could be subjected to the same detrimental circumstances that female characters find themselves in throughout these cartoons. An example of this is a cartoon that depicts a rapist in the public bathroom and another that shows a woman who is subjected to performing archaic manual labor.

In the cartoon depicting a rapist (Figure Two), an attractive and shapely woman in a short, floral dress grips her handbag as she stands shaking next to the entrance to what was once the women's restroom. The "ladies" sign marking the door has another sign haphazardly thrown over it that reads "Persons." Pushing the door open is a grungy, bird beaked man whose beer gut hangs over the top of his pants while his anchor tattoo peeks out from under his unwashed undershirt. Across the man's shirt is written "rapist." The man eyes a sign hanging over the door that says "restrooms." The caption on the cartoon reads, "Now *this* is really progress!"

Figure 2: Cartoon of Rapist in Public Restroom (Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University, 1974).

The cartoon of the woman that is subjected to archaic manual labor (Figure Three) presents a hunched, bird-beaked woman with dark circles encasing her eyes, wearing a short skirt over her scrawny legs and giant feet. She is carrying one cinder block on her right shoulder and two under her left. While this beastly figure is forced to carry the disproportionate weight, a bald, fat, middle-aged man watches leisurely, and takes note of her progress. The caption at the bottom of the cartoon reads, “Let’s keep that stock moving Ms. Jones…”

Figure 3: Cartoon of Woman Doing Archaic Manual Labor (Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University, 1974).

Each of these cartoons presents a woman being subjected to horrendous situations. The women in each of these cartoons can be identified with a wife, mother, sister, girlfriend, friend, etc. Drawing on the "man as protector" ideal, the men can identify with the women who are depicted in the cartoons with a woman that plays a role in his life. Ideally, the man would not want to subject the women in his life to the same horrendous situations as the women in the cartoons. Men are persuaded to oppose the ERA in order to prevent this situation from occurring.

Identification allows an audience member to place his or herself in the same situation the rhetor presents. It can be seen that speaking the audience's language and creating apparent commonalities between the rhetor and the audience accomplish identification. By creating identification between the cartoon characters and the male

audience, the anti-ERA movement was able introduce additional rhetorical strategies that would enhance the persuasion of their argument.

Juxtaposition of Gender Roles

The anti-ERA movement juxtaposed traditional male gender roles to those of traditional female roles throughout the collection of cartoons. Male gender roles require that men be successful, confident, and assertive while women are expected to be quiet, helpful, and unobtrusive (Wood, 2013). Juxtaposition of traditional male gender roles to traditional female roles is, however, often seen through a reversal of roles in the anti-ERA movement's cartoons. By juxtaposing gender roles in these cartoons, the anti-ERA campaign brought to light the idea that men would have to share being the dominant sex with women if the ERA were to pass.

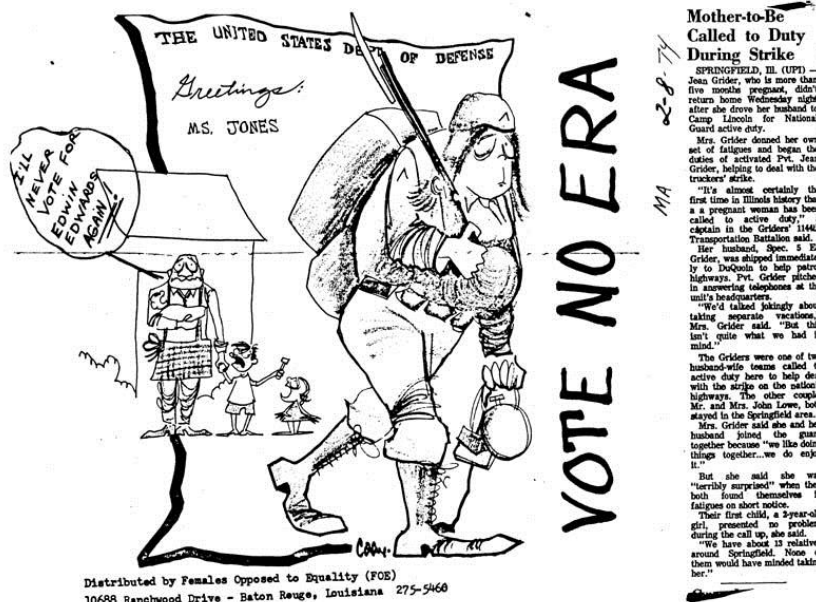
These cartoons, and the ones used for identification, show men in a feminine gender role and, to an extent, show women in a masculine role. Though the wife in the Archie Bunker look-a-like cartoon is clad in traditional female attire, her physical stance of being sprawled in a recliner is reminiscent of masculine body language. By juxtaposing the two roles, the anti-ERA campaign was able to frame the ERA as a threat to traditional gender roles. If the ERA were passed, men stood a chance of being relegated to the second-class status that women held for so long. The chance of this happening was a chance that no blue-blooded American male would want to take.

Why was juxtaposition effective in these cartoons? The types of humor that were at play within the juxtaposed characters influenced the effectiveness of this rhetorical strategy. Morreall (1983) brings to light the idea of incongruity and superiority humor theories. Incongruity theory operates on the idea that elements of a particular situation do

not align, thus making it incongruous and, ultimately, making it a humorous situation due to the incongruities. Superiority theory operates on the idea that humor is found in a situation when a dominant force out-maneuvers or out-wits a less capable opponent.

Each of the following cartoons operated under the incongruity theory. Every cartoon analyzed presented a scene in which the characters, usually a man and woman, were placed in circumstances that would be atypical of their traditional gender roles. This incongruity served as a shock factor that would force men to examine how their lives would or could be changed by the passage of the ERA. Incongruity is best illustrated through the military mom cartoon (Figure Four). In this cartoon, a severely depressed woman with a masculine physique is clad in military fatigues, harnessed with a backpack and rifle, looking longingly over her shoulder as she walks away from her family and home. She holds a canteen and purse in her left hand as she slowly and begrudgingly begins her journey. In the background, her bewildered husband stands in front of their home dressed in a frilly apron and holding a screaming infant in one arm and the hand of an irate toddler in the other. Another toddler stands wailing next to her brother. Looming in the background of this cartoon is a letter from the United States Department of Defense that states, “Greetings Ms. Jones.”

Figure 4: Cartoon of Military Mom (Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University, 1974).



Mother-to-Be Called to Duty During Strike

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (UPI) — Jean Grider, who is more than five months pregnant, didn't return home Wednesday night after she drove her husband to Camp Lincoln for National Guard active duty.

Mrs. Grider donned her own set of fatigues and began the duties of activated Pvt. Jean Grider, helping to deal with the truckers' strike.

"It's almost certainly the first time in Illinois history that a a pregnant woman has been called to active duty," a captain in the Griders' 1144th Transportation Battalion said.

Her husband, Spec. 5 Ed Grider, was shipped immediately to DuQuoin to help patrol highways. Pvt. Grider pitched in answering telephones at the unit's headquarters.

"We'd talked jokingly about taking separate vacations," Mrs. Grider said. "But this isn't quite what we had in mind."

The Griders were one of two husband-wife teams called to active duty here to help deal with the strike on the nation's highways. The other couple, Mr. and Mrs. John Lowe, both stayed in the Springfield area.

Mrs. Grider said she and her husband joined the guard together because "we like doing things together...we do enjoy it."

But she said she was "terribly surprised" when they both found themselves in fatigues on short notice.

Their first child, a 2-year-old girl, presented no problem during the call up, she said.

"We have about 13 relatives around Springfield. None of them would have minded taking her."

There are several levels of juxtaposition at play within this cartoon that are ultimately responsible for the cartoon falling under the incongruity theory of humor. The most obvious level is the juxtaposition of the role of mother to father. According to traditional gender roles, men are supposed to provide financially for and protect the family, while women are supposed to take care of and nurture the family. In this scenario, those gender roles are turned upside down. The mother is being sent off to war and the father is left at home to care for the kids. The incongruity in this cartoon causes the situation to be humorous. Humor, however, brings to light a possible reality. According to the anti-ERA campaign, men and women effectively would be forced to switch roles if the ERA passed. Using incongruity and juxtaposition, the ERA campaign created a possible negative result that resonated with the male voting audience and swayed their support for anti-ERA.

Though incongruity theory played a large role in the humor that was evident in STOP ERA's cartoons, superiority theory also played an important role in the cartoons. Superiority theory can be seen through the scenes in which men are mocking the women who have been cast in masculine roles. An example of superiority humor is depicted in the wedding cartoon (Figure Five). This cartoon portrays women as taking on the masculine role in a relationship. The hand of a giant woman clutches the arm of a bent, elderly man. Blonde shoulder length hair, donned with a flower, frames her man-like face. A smug grin is plastered on her face. The couple is clad in matching tuxedos with pinstriped pants. A man in the audience smiles at the couple. With his back to the cartoon, a priest stands holding a bible. The caption reads, "Do you, John, promise to love, honor, and obey the Equal-Rights Amendment?"

Figure 5: Cartoon of Wedding (Brooks, 1973). (Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University, 1974).

At first glance, superiority theory is not an overarching theme in this cartoon. After closer inspection, one can infer that the audience member is designed to show men that they would no longer garner the role of the perceived superior gender if the ERA passed. In this situation, juxtaposition shows the superiority of the masculine woman to that of the frail, old man. This comparison allowed the anti-ERA movement to play on the males' egos. The anti-ERA campaign presented the idea that males should support their movement or face the same predicament as the husband to be in the cartoon.

Juxtaposition played a vital role in the rhetorical success of anti-ERA movement's cartoons. The ability to create cartoons that embraced the humor theories of incongruity and superiority enhanced anti-ERA's ability to persuade their targeted audience to

support their cause. By juxtaposing the traditional roles of males and females, the movement could successfully showcase the negative aspects that would be produced from the passage of the ERA and, ultimately, how gender roles would be forever changed due to its passage.

Creating Fear Appeals Through the Use of Hyperbole

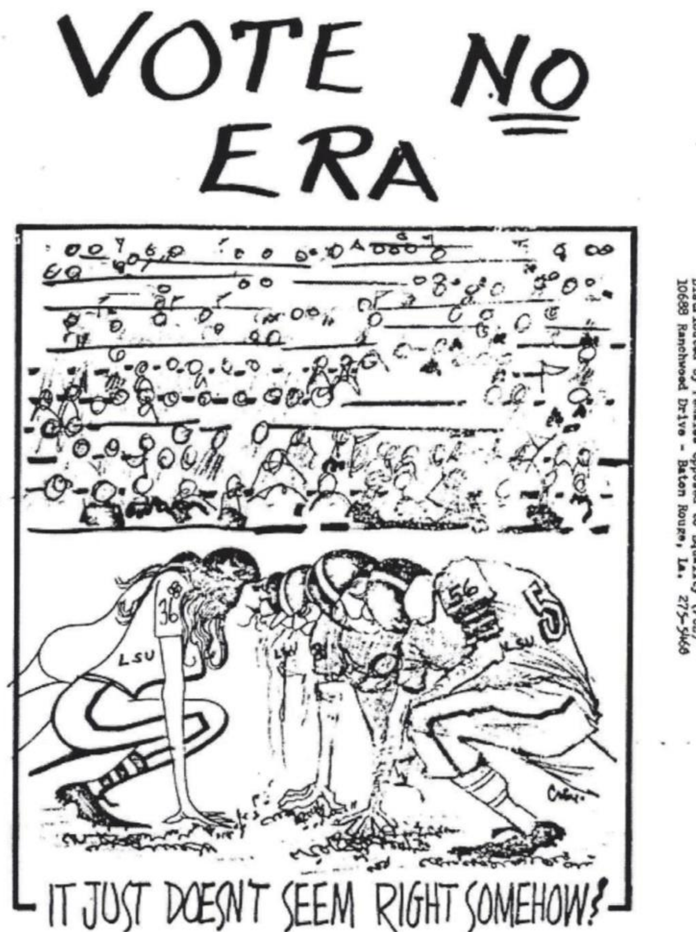
Identification and juxtaposition alone were not the only rhetorical measures at play within anti-ERA's cartoons. To enhance the persuasiveness of the cartoons, anti-ERA cartoonists used hyperbole and fear appeals to illustrate the ERA's threat to traditional gender roles and the institutions associated with those gender roles.

As previously mentioned, traditional gender roles forced women and men into designated roles in which they were not expected to deviate. With the passage of the ERA, women would be able to cross into roles that were traditionally considered masculine. The anti-ERA saw this as an opportunity to create fear appeals toward men in regards to traditional gender roles and institutions that were historically male. Fear appeals were accomplished through the use of hyperbolic situations. Though all of the cartoons analyzed for this paper embody hyperbole and fear appeals, a cartoon involving the Louisiana State University football team best embodies these characteristics (Figure Six).

When most imagine Louisiana State University's football team, an image of tough, muscular men comes to mind. In this anti-ERA cartoon, the masculine players have been replaced with curvaceous women. Dainty women, complete with flowing hair, eye shadow, and lipstick, wear uniforms with flowers over their numbers and stand at the line of scrimmage against a typical team of masculine men. The players directly in front

of the main woman depicted in the cartoon appear to be looking at each other in a state of utter confusion. The female player, however, has a soft smile and appears to be intently concentrating on her part in the game. At the bottom of the cartoon, a caption reads, "It just doesn't seem right somehow!"

Figure 6. Cartoon of Louisiana State University Football Team



Football is an All American male sport. By placing a woman in the role of football player, the anti-ERA creates a fear appeal that threatens the very existence of the sport that American males hold dear. This hyperbolic situation provides a concrete example of how this "male" institution would be effected by the ERA's passage. The

confusion of the players toward the women suggests that the male audience should also be confused by their presence, thus reducing support for the ERA.

Another historically male institution that the anti-ERA chose to target its cartoons was the military. The cartoon puts forth the idea that this historically male institution, if the ERA were passed, would be forced to let women into its ranks. The anti-ERA created a fear appeal toward its male voting audience through the use of an extremely hyperbolic image involving a woman as a soldier (Figure Seven). The cartoon in which this woman appears depicts a sassy, middle-aged housewife clad in military fatigues outside of a pup tent. She defiantly points at her tent as she bossily yells at her parrot nosed commanding officer that holds a rifle in one hand and sports two belts of ammunition across his back. The caption reads, "*ME*, sleep in that thing...On the ground...With all the creepy-crawlies?"

Figure 7: Cartoon of Military Mom #2 (Brooks, 1973).

Everything about the woman used for this cartoon screams hyperbole. The woman's appearance and even her complaint of not wanting to sleep in a pup tent are overdone. She is the stereotypical housewife whose only concern is her appearance. By choosing to use this type of character in this cartoon, the anti-ERA shows men that the ERA threatens the military allowing women into its ranks and, therefore, weakening its integrity. This would be pertinent to the male audience due to the recent Vietnam conflict. The anti-ERA's fear appeal attempted to persuade male voters that the ERA was a threat not only to the historically male institution of the military, but also national security as a whole.

Hyperbole and fear appeals allowed the anti-ERA campaign to present their targeted audience of male voters with highly rhetorical scenes that would persuade them to support the movement's cause. Without the use of hyperbole, the cartoons would not have been as rhetorically. The use of hyperbole coupled with the use of fear appeals allowed for an effective persuasive message.

The anti-ERA movement's use of political cartoons created a unique appeal toward male voters. This appeal was created through the use of identification, juxtaposition, and fear appeals through hyperbolic situations. By using these specific rhetorical strategies the anti-ERA movement could show the necessity of voting against the ERA to potential male voters.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Though the ERA might have enabled the United States to secure equality of the sexes had it passed, the efforts of the anti-ERA movement successfully blocked this effort. The anti-ERA movement, through the leadership of Phyllis Schlafly, created a movement that drew from the support of an unlikely source. This unlikely source was the average American housewife. By garnering the support of these women, the movement gained a support base whose strength in numbers enabled them to heavily lobby against the ERA's ratification throughout the individual states. Though women played a vital role in the support base of the anti-ERA movement, the movement specifically sought the support of men through the use of these cartoons. The movement's solicitation of male support was quite overt. By choosing scenes in the movement's cartoons that would appeal to male voters, the anti-ERA could draw on male voters in order to increase the chances of the ERA being defeated. The anti-ERA's ability to draw male voters into their support ranks consequently played a large role in the defeat of the ERA.

The anti-ERA movement cartoons created an effective rhetorical message through the use of identification, juxtaposition and humor theories, and hyperbole and fear appeals in their cartoons. These cartoons attempted to persuade the audience to vote against the ERA. Through the use of rhetoric in cartoons such as these and grassroots efforts of the anti-ERA supporters, the ERA did not become a constitutional amendment. By choosing rhetorical strategies that enabled a male voter to envision himself in the same situation as the cartoon characters, the anti-ERA could create a stronger persuasive appeal. This strong persuasive appeal enabled the anti-ERA to threaten the way of life

that was held dearly by American males thus creating a need to defeat this supposed evil enemy.

This analysis adds to the field of rhetoric by supplementing the extremely narrow base of available literature. The narrowness of availability consequently leaves researchers with limited resources when delving into this topic. Through the argument that the anti-ERA targeted men through the use of this selection of cartons, a new argument is introduced that could be added to the existing research in this area. This argument also allows future researchers to broaden the scope of how rhetoric functions not only within this particular set of anti-ERA cartoons, but in the movement as a whole. Instead of studying only how anti-ERA rhetoric impacted women, shows how the movement used some of the same rhetorical means to persuade men to support the men. This carry over provides a deeper understanding of the movement's rhetoric.

Not only does this research add to the literature involving rhetoric and the anti-ERA movement, but it also adds to the areas of social movement studies and gender studies within the field of rhetoric. By studying the anti-ERA movement through a communication lens, we see not just how communication functioned within this particular movement, but also how communication functions more broadly throughout social movements. Though the specific characters and examples that were employed by the anti-ERA movement in the selected cartoons seemed specific to the movement, the rhetorical means that were at work within the cartoons were indicative of a broader spectrum. The issues that were showcased in the anti-ERA cartoons were issues that were being discussed, debated, and fought over by groups active on both the sides of the women's movement. In order to effectively persuade individuals to support a particular

side, specific rhetorical means had to be employed in order to effectively convey a message. By studying how rhetoric functioned within the anti-ERA movement, a deeper understanding of how social movements in general shape their movement's rhetoric in order to draw support for their cause.

Much in the same way that the anti-ERA movement provides the field of communication studies with a deeper understanding of how rhetoric functions within social movements, this criticism also provides a deeper understanding of historical gender roles and how they are communicated. Each cartoon provides excellent examples of how gender roles were communicated during the time of the second wave feminist movement. Though these cartoons support an anti-feminist standpoint, they effectively show how the public viewed gender roles during this time period.

The analysis also brings to light additional areas that could be further researched. The most obvious of these research areas is the analysis of the cartoons in order to see how the anti-ERA campaign targeted female voters through the use of political cartoons. There are arguments that can be made about the anti-ERA movement targeting female voters throughout this selection of cartoons. Another area for further research would be the comparison of the rhetorical devices used throughout the cartoons and the rhetorical devices the anti-ERA used in their grassroots campaigns. The anti-ERA movement employed other rhetorical strategies such as letter writing, bread making, and cake delivering to legislators. A comparison of these rhetorical acts to those of the cartoons would provide a broader examination of how rhetoric affected the defeat of the ERA.

Though the anti-ERA movement is a relatively overlooked and forgotten movement, it offers great insight into how rhetoric can persuade an audience to support a

certain cause. The movement's use of cartoons that employed identification, juxtaposition, and hyperbole and fear appeals, along with incongruity and superiority humor theories, allowed the anti-ERA to target male voters. By targeting men, anti-ERA gained a larger support base that would ultimately enable them to block ratification of the amendment. This shows that rhetoric, in the hands of a capable craftsman, has the ability to shape the pages of history, whether that is for the benefit or detriment of society.

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