

ABSTRACT

REBELLIOUS REVELRY: THE RHETORICAL FUNCTIONS OF ANNA HOWARD SHAW'S HUMOR

The Reverend Dr. Anna Howard Shaw is historically remembered as a charismatic and talented platform speaker for the suffrage cause. One of the rhetorical forms that Shaw favored, namely, a distinctly clever use of humor, has been overlooked by historical, rhetorical, and humor scholars alike. In order to attend to this scholarly gap, this study utilizes Burke's comic and burlesque rhetorical frames to examine instances of humor in the extant suffrage texts of Anna Howard Shaw. Shaw's integration of both comic and burlesque humor enabled her to maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages inherent in each frame individually. Specifically, the combination of these two frames of reference allowed Shaw to push for both social reform and revolution, portray characteristics of both a militant and moderate leader, and appeal to both internal and external audiences.

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