



Rhetorical Analysis Essay

“Checkers” Speech: Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Introduction

Whereas majority have held the most authoritative political designation of the head of state on American's soil, just a few men have been remembered long enough, and Richard Nixon is not an exemption. That is, as time passes by, many of these personalities, who were not lucky enough, have been forgotten, but not Nixon who was conceivably the most detested president to hold office in the U.S. As a brilliant man, Nixon was precisely conscious of what to utter to them people so as to appeal to them, much of which can be perceived from one of his famous speeches, the “Checkers.” Therefore, following the accusations that he was accepting bribes and using the secret fund to finance his personal expenditures, Nixon boldly uses television to communicate directly to American folks with a critical intention of proving himself innocent and promoting his presidential hopeful (Peters and Woolley n.p.). Simply put, while Nixon's speech may be displaying many tactics, such as culture, structure, and appropriate tonal choice, it is apparent that this former president effectively uses rhetorical strategies, such pathos, ethos, and logos to persuade his audiences so as to gain courtesy and establish his reasoning.

Firstly, Nixon utilized ethos as a rhetorical trick to convince American people. For example, when Nixon uses the opening statement, “I come before you tonight as a candidate for the Vice Presidency and as a man whose honesty and integrity has been questioned” (Nixon par. 1), he shapes his credibility and personality. Moreover, he straight away sets the anticipation of the remainder of the presentation. Consequently, when Nixon use the statement, “It is an audit made by Price Waterhouse and Co. firm, and the legal opinion by Gibson, Dunn, and Crutcher, lawyers in Los Angeles. The biggest law firm, and incidentally, one of the best ones in Los Angeles” (Nixon

par. 15), he creates the bona fides of both the legal as well as the accounting entities that he had requested to review the authenticity of the fund. Besides, Nixon creates his own cred as a man with a humble background who toiled hard enough to pay for his expenses through college and got engaged to a great woman before serving his nation in the Second World War. He says, “Let me tell you that my service record was not a particularly unusual one. I went to the South Pacific. I guess I am entitled to a couple of battle stars. I got a couple of letters of commendation, but I was just there when the bombs were falling” (Nixon par. 20). He then challenges his audiences by asking them if it would be possible for him to cheat the good folks of his nation even after putting himself in the path of harm for the same country. Therefore, he maintains that no money offered to him was used to satisfy his personal needs, and neither was it secretly handled, and most importantly, there were no special favors extended to the providers following their contributions.

Secondly, Nixon significantly uses pathos as a rhetorical device in his speech to appeal to the emotions of his audience. Undeniably, He makes his audience comprehend why he spent the funds and clarified that his use of the money was motivated only by his desire to benefit the people. Furthermore, Nixon uses the anecdote about a “little cocker spaniel dog” (Nixon par. 26) offered to him by a supporter to appeal on the strings of folks’ emotions. He says, “A man down in Texas heard Pat on the radio mention that our two youngsters would like to have a dog, and, believe it or not, the day we left on this campaign trip we got a message from Union Station in Baltimore, saying they had a package for us” (Nixon par. 26). His children called the dog “Checkers,” and when he articulates that his family will keep the dog despite what people say, he establishes himself as a man of great character, which makes Americans love the personality that he is. Thus, this story is perhaps the sturdiest argument that Nixon offers to the public for his credibility, thereby explaining why the speech was titled, 'Checkers.'

Finally, the last device that Nixon utilizes is logos. Here, he makes an inquiry from the people in an effort to get their point of what is worth spending public funds on. When Nixon utters

the statement, “The taxpayers should not be required to finance items which are not official business but which are primarily political business” (Nixon par. 8), he offers a motivation that not only supports his cause but also benefits the people. Besides, he goes an extra mile to disclose to the people the much he receives for being a senator, an amount that is tiny. Notably, he uses this story to make himself be perceived in the same sense as any other average individual and drives the notion that he has the common taxpayers’ best interest at heart. As a result, this statement gets American people contemplating concerning what they really desire from their elected leaders. He immediately assures them of how safe they are in his hands, thereby answering the significant questions raised in the people’s minds. Thus, to pull peoples’ feelings into play, Nixon uses facts that are capable of luring the attention of its audiences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, many issues were addressed with a chief motive of presenting a detailed rhetorical analysis of Richard Nixon’s speech Checkers; however, a few issues did stand out, and they include the following. Firstly, to win over his viewers, Nixon did an implausible work by ensuring that all the three rhetoric devices are fully utilized. Secondly, the use of logos, pathos, and ethos in Nixon’s speech did miracles to get himself clean of the allegations and consequently afforded him the great following he secured. Finally, by directly addressing the people, Nixon neither ignored nor denied some of the crimes he did commit, which aided him to gain the backing of the majority of the Americans. Therefore, Nixon’s extensive support was not something that happened by chance, but it rather worked out by building a credibility that has been doubted, thereby managing to create trust amid himself and millions U.S. citizens who had the privilege of watching his speech.

Works Cited

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