

Crafting a Speech Analyzing Sarah Palin's Speech

Introduction

Respected Sir, and fellow students, it is a pleasure to stand before you and elucidate, what I infer, the speech, delivered by Gov. Sarah Palin, at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul on September 3, 2008, was of blatant aggression on the opposition Democrats formed around rhetorical situations. Given the privilege of becoming the vice president of the country, Sarah Palin was only too happy to accept her nomination, and the speech she gave on that day was marred by controversies and savage mockery of the opposition. The occasion was to commemorate her surprise choice and acceptance as the Republican candidate for the post of Vice President.

For the best part of the first 13 minutes of her 36-minute speech, Ms. Palin focused her attention in talking about her family and self. The Convention hall was filled to the brim, and the audience; a mixture of young and old, cheered every statement she made in defense of Senator McCain and her being the **right choice** for the highest office in the country. There were young school and college-going kids, businessmen and office-goers, and a majority of women, with whom she was able to connect well. She used her simple middle-class upbringing to relate with the audience, for which she got a standing ovation. There were also old men and women in the audience as well. It was on expected lines that Ms. Palin would go all out to win the hearts of the electorate, and this she did with conviction at the Convention. However, while attacking the opposition to garner votes for Senator McCain and her, Ms. Palin drew on a number of rhetorical situations to keep her audience amused and attentive.

In saying "I was just your **average hockey mom**," which made the campaign and media frame her as a "hockey mom," Ms. Palin was able to appeal to the diverse audience within the hall, who saw her as their messiah; the true representative of their concern. She won a round of applause as women, men, and children, because of her way of convincing them that she, like them, was a person with maternal values, and working-class appeal. Her candidature itself brought a refreshing change to the Republican Party. The comparatively young and attractive looks, to match her contagious smile, "evoked a sense of femininity and motherhood that was instantly recognizable to American women voters," says Beail (2012).

On the subject of oil and gas exploration, when the opposition continued to say that drilling would not solve all of America's energy problems, Ms. Palin said, "take it from a gal who knows the North Slope of Alaska: we've got lots of both." This can be interpreted as Ms. Palin's rebuke of President Obama, who despite occupying the highest office of the country, didn't know much about his own country, and that, if required, could learn a great deal from her. In criticising President Obama's over-dependence on oil and gas from abroad, she stated that Americans were being **led to self-destruction**, as countries that America was dependent on for oil and gas could stop supplies abruptly, bringing the economy to a standstill. For example, what if in Saudi Arabia, the Abqaiq facility is attacked by terrorists, or Venezuela, which might shut its explorations or supplies, and Iran, which could cut off a fifth of the world's energy supplies, stops supplies coming into America? There would be widespread panic and Americans would be forced to buy oil and gas at much higher prices.

Another point that assumes rhetorical proportions is when, **she counters the Democrats view** that she wasn't qualified or experienced enough to run for the vice presidency. She says:

"Before I became governor of the great state of Alaska, I was mayor of my hometown ... I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a "community organizer," except that you have actual responsibilities"

She counters her detractors by saying that, she had enough and more experience as a public administrator before becoming the governor of Alaska. It was only through her **hard work** that she was able to reach such heights. Therefore, even if her detractors thought that her job was similar to that of a community organizer, she had the experience to have run a public office most competently, and unlike the majority of Democrats who sat in Senate, hers was a job filled with responsibilities. It was her perseverance and hard work for her community that she was there. As her speech progressed, Ms. Palin could be seen increasing and intensifying her attack on the opposition. At times she was blunt, and on most occasions, she was sarcastic in her attack. On President Obama, Ms. Palin said that:

"And there is much to like and admire about our opponent ... this is a man who has authored two memoirs but not a single major law or even a reform, not even in the state senate"

For a person of his stature, and a person known to have written a number of memoirs, it was hard to believe that this person, who through his dramatic speeches won a number of followers, couldn't even introduce a major law or a reform at a state senate level.

She was equally effective in bringing the audience to their feet when she praised the courage and determination of people like Tom Moe of Lancaster, Ohio, and John McCain. In a scathe attack on Harry Reid, Ms. Palin, who called him a "current-do nothing" Senate, said:

"When McCain shuffled back from torturous interrogations ... My fellow Americans, she ended, that is the kind of man America needs to see us through the next four years."

As Burmila and Ryan, (2013) in Reconsidering the "Palin Effect" in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election, say, "Sarah Palin effectively polarized the electorate in the 2008 presidential election to the extent that she generated **enough media attention** that popularized her. She was recipient of undue praise and criticism beyond her stature, and this did impact the outcome of the election more than her predecessors could."

Conclusion

Sarah Palin was one of the most controversial stalwarts of the Republican candidates seeking to become the vice president of the United States. Her speech at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul on September 3, 2008, was filled with blatant aggression against the Democrats. She was able to get the audience on their feet with her veiled attacks on the opposition using rhetorical situations, and was at her wittiest when she spoke on terrorism and drilling for gas and oil.

Works Cited

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