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SPCH275: Public Speaking

The Speech that Made Obama President Critique

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Presentation available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFPwDe22CoY

**Introduction**

It’s amazing how one speech can be so powerful that it can unite the entire Democratic Party, clearing the way for progress and a better tomorrow. The presentation is very effective at highlighting all the strong points of President Obamas 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. It does this by giving you a brief over view of why Barack Obama is so good at what he does and then it shows clips of those very qualities displayed in the speech. His comments stir everyone’s emotions and make for a compelling message that propelled him to the presidency.

**Invention**

The source used for the presentation was great because of how effective and energetic President Obama was at the time of the speech. I don’t think Barrack Obama had to do much research for this speech, felt it was more from the heart than anything. This could mean he is either great at making a well-researched speech look effortless or truly lived the experience that brought him to these beliefs. He supports this by talking about situations that aren’t his family’s problems yet still matter deeply to him, like the kid on south side of Chicago who can’t read or the senior citizen that can’t afford her medical care. You could tell he cared about what he was saying and seemed to motivate everyone there to join him in the pursuit of unity and mutual support. He repeatedly said phrases like “we are all connected” or “we are one America” to pull everyone into the fold. After all this was Barack Obama’s main focus and everyone clearly understood and supported that.

**Arrangement**

There are two different introductions to this speech. Firstly there is the presentations small overview of Barack Obama which tries to grab your attention by telling you he was relatively unknown at the start of the speech, hinting that he is made something because of what Obama said. This makes it more likely that the viewer will pay attention and notice what is going on, it also gives a frame of reference that allows you to understand how important this speech was. Then it switches to Barack giving the opening lines. And he says “let’s face it, my presence on this stage is pretty unlikely” and instantly these lines are a little off putting, you can see the crowd quiet down waiting to see where he goes with it. He then shares a few stories that connect him with the hard working American who struggled to make this country great. Then he brings everyone back to a joyous connected feeling by stating that, “in no other country on earth is my story even possible”. It’s clear at this point that his message is one of unity and acceptance. The speech continued on in this matter using repetition to re-enforce the idea that we are all together in this and can make a difference not just for ourselves but everyone. Obama has lots of energy that he uses just right. You can see him calming the crowd down with the language he used so that they won’t miss a valid point and then brings the excitement right back up. This seems to have great effect at making his statements hit home. Phrases like “Politics of anything goes” are a great use of strong language that catches the listener attention and gives them something to rally against. For his conclusion Obama goes over the idea that we are all united and starts to give examples of Americans all over that he still has hope for, all the while building in intensity. This leads to his standing ovation at the end.

**Style**

Barack Obama used very clear easy to understand language the entire time. You could tell everything in the speech was geared towards bringing everyone together despite their differences. So he didn’t use any language that would leave someone feeling excluded. I don’t think he used any technical terminology that needed explaining. And since this presentation of the speech was just the highlights and not the whole thing it would be hard for me to pick out and judge any negative aspects of the speech. But from the excitement of the spectators at the end of the speech I’m going to guess it didn’t go on to long or take a tangent that derailed his momentum. Statements like, “Politics of Sinicism or politics of hope” are very vivid and give such a great contrast between the two sides. This makes it hard not to support his cause. Barack Obama didn’t use any visual aids in his presentation, but he used his body language and movement to help enforce what he was saying.

**Delivery**

You can clearly tell that Obama is reading from a teleprompter for some of it, but he does make an effort to scan the room and make eye contact with the audience, especially when he seems to be speaking from the heart. This makes the eye contact even more effective. It seems like he has practiced his speech a few times but I don’t feel it is memorized because he looks to the teleprompter when he is saying something specific in the beginning. By the end of the presentation it seems like he is reading less and less from the teleprompter. Obama doesn’t seem to be nervous at all and uses the energy of the convention to his benefit. He was very expressive and brought the tempo up and back down several times throughout the speech depending on what effect he was going for. He also adjusted his volume which seemed to have a direct effect on the crowd’s response. I didn’t notice any word cluttering or problems with saying things. Obama was definitely in control of his body and gestures. He was clearly enthusiastic about the speech and the hope of a better America for us all.

**Conclusion**

I would have to say he did a great job of delivering this speech and making everyone feel included regardless of differences. And this was one of his greatest strengths throughout his presidency, unifying a much divided nation. Granted the unifying wasn’t all good, for example the Tea Party unified against him in some of the most ridiculous ways. But almost everyone else seemed to hear what the President was saying and understand the need for us to move forward together as one nation working toward a goal. And because of this speech and his message Obama was catapulted into the lime light and later won the presidency.