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Analysis of Rhetorical Appeals in Michelle Obama's Speech

Rhetorical analysis is a dissection of how viable an essay, speech, or text is in conveying its purpose. Rhetorical appeals are ways of communication applied to a text in order to sway someone's opinion toward a topic or issue. The three main appeals are logical appeals, emotional appeals, and appeals that provide credibility. Michelle Obama presented a speech in New Hampshire in response to Donald Trump's new found video on the way he treated a woman. Her main purposes were to endorse Hillary Clinton as the best candidate for President, and to promote hopes, dreams, dignity, and respect in women. Though many will argue that Obama's purposes were not based on rhetoric, I will demonstrate that she was able to clearly identify her purposes using many rhetorical appeals to effectively instill her opinion.

Obama's first purpose was to endorse Hillary Clinton as the best candidate for President in this upcoming election. To start this process off, in the beginning of her speech, Obama recognized and thanked current well-known politicians in New Hampshire. These people included a governor and his executive council, and New Hampshire's "next U.S. senator, Maggie Hassan [...], Congresswoman Annie McKlane Kuster, who's a dear, dear friend[...] and [their] candidate for governor, Colin Van Ostern" (1). The mention of Obama's amazing and fabulous friends with political power and ties, prove and credit that Obama, herself, is a viable source. Obama also applies an emotional appeal in her speech. Obama mentions "we" teach our kids that when you hit challenges in life, you don't give up, you stick with it. Well during her four years

as Secretary of State alone, Hillary has faced her share of challenges. She's traveled to 112 countries, negotiated a ceasefire, a peace agreement, [and] a release of dissidents. [...] Hillary Clinton has never quit on anything in her life" (4). This statement emotionally appeals to Americans. In most cases, I have found that Americans are proud of their heritage and have nationalism towards their country and those who serve them. When Obama talks about the service that Hillary Clinton has done for our country, Americans reflect on their history and their pride and confidence becomes associated with Hillary Clinton. This demonstrates that Hillary is a proud American showing that if she were elected President, she would never give up. The mentioning of Obama's influential government leaders increases her credibility which is applying a rhetorical appeal. When Obama logically and emotionally connects nationalism and pride, she applies another rhetorical appeal. Both rhetorical appeals endorse Clinton as the best candidate and her choice for President.

Obama's second purpose was to promote hopes, dreams, dignity, and respect in the women of America and show young girls across the States that they are empowered and should be respected. She explains that Hillary's opponent has stated things about women that should never have been said. These remarks are so repulsive and disrespectful, that she refuses to even quote or mention them. She states that these remarks are "intolerable. And it doesn't matter what party you belong to -- Democrat, Republican, independent -- no woman deserves to be treated this way. None of us deserves this kind of abuse" (3). The mention of abuse and direct regard to the intolerability to allow these remarks to continue to put down the women in America throughout this speech, demonstrates that this type of misconduct is unusual to anyone's standards, regardless of party and that women should never be suppressed to this verbal misuse. In response and to counter the remarks said by Donald Trump, Obama devotes a portion of her

speech to empowering these women. She talks about Clinton's achievements as a woman including "her college and law degrees, advocating for kids with disabilities, fighting for children's health care and First Lady, [and] affordable child care in the Senate" (4). This shows how much women can do in the world. Her method of explaining why Trump is wrong and then explaining how things should be appeals to logical aspects of her audience. Applying a logical flaw in Donald Trump's thinking, demonstrates that Clinton is the better candidate for President "[a]nd, yes, she happens to be a woman" (4).

Michelle Obama applies multiple forms of persuasion in order to get her purposes across. Obama's main purposes are to endorse Hillary Clinton and to uphold women in the highest regards. Obama recalls that "Hillary has been successful in every role, gaining more experience and exposure to the presidency than any candidate in our lifetime - more than Barack, more than Bill. And, yes, she happens to be a woman" (4). This quote demonstrates, not just one of her purposes, but both of them. Obama is very effective in conveying her purposes because she uses rhetorical appeals to entice the audience of the people of New Hampshire, and she is repetitive in a manner that isn't annoying or compromising and helps to drill her position. Obama was able to inspire her audience and rally them up to step forward and make a stand on the issues surrounding the disrespect of women and to vote for Hillary to prevent her opponent from winning the office.