

Harvey Milk was the first openly gay American to be elected into a public office; I will be providing an analytical perspective of how Milk accurately utilizes appeal, situation, and device to his advantage within The Hope Speech. Before moving any further in viewage, it is important to give proper credit of character to Milk. Yes, he was the first openly gay American to be elected into a public office in the United States...but he was also a boy who grew up in a middle class family tied to jewish and lithuanian heritage. Harvey lived his life involved: he was a veteran, business owner, teacher, Broadway performer, and college graduate. Harvey was elected to the San Francisco board of supervisors in the year 1977 and during his short time on the board before his untimely murder....he fought anti-gay legislation in the state, as well as promoting the sentiment that education and empowerment are the keys to LGBTQ+ visibility. The primary objective of The Hope Speech was to encourage young queer people to work in governmental bodies and positions while being visibly out about their sexuality. The version of the speech that I will be looking at was the one Milk delivered to a large crowd at city hall celebrating California Gay Freedom Day on June 25th 1978. (Milk 2).

The realm of verbal analysis requires a certain element of rhetorical competency, the term rhetoric roughly translates back to persuasion - the ability to persuade an individual based on a variety of elements vaguely distinguished by the three primary categories present in the opening statement. The first aforementioned of the three categories of rhetorical analysis is the category of rhetorical appeals. A communicable persuasion begins first with an appeal to logic, emotions, and trust & values[these 3 are Greek in origin and are displayed correspondingly as logos, pathos, and ethos]. Once again, The Hope Speech is a title coined for a verbal speech by Milk, who harnesses elements of all three appeals within his words. In order to understand what such appeals may manifest as, I will begin with an example of the appeal to trust & values...which Milk opens the speech with, being, "My name is Harvey Milk and I'm here to recruit you." (Milk 2) - this is a direct admission of authority as recruitment implies a position of power which is

synonymous with credibility; as many people value a credible person, additionally, the contrast of direct honesty in the statement where the novelty of recruitment is often implied adds to the public's perception of him being a trustworthy speaker.

Now, let us transition to the emotional appeal displayed by Milk; to start, he isn't shy to the prospect of evoking personal connotation in order to persuade an audience to connect with the sentiment of his perspective. What would an example of this be? Well, he opens with a longer formed joke directly after his recruitment introduction. The set up mirrors lines you might have heard in a dive bar decades ago, the one that follows the '3 different types of dudes walking into a place together' spiel...however in Milk's version, he utilizes the setup to display disparity in local politics perpetrated by then-mayor Daley of San Francisco. A listener would reasonably assume that the joke is over after he states the line, "So they did it the democratic way and voted. And Daley won, seven to two." (Milk 2). However this is merely half of the joke; it then progresses into a gay rights joke, the set up in the second half of this joke being that California local singer/hack Anita Bryant claimed that in her spiritual talks with God He had told her that the drought was due to the gay people...Milk monologue-style replies to Bryant's take, saying that, "I got sworn in-it started to rain again-it's been raining since then-the only way to stop it is to do a recall petition." (Milk 2) This two piece segment referencing politics as well as homosexuality displays Milk attempting to connect to the receiving audience via the rhetorical appeal to emotion: appealing to those who feel manipulated by the San Francisco government, appealing to those who feel that their homosexuality is unjustly referenced as a cause of natural disparity in the eyes of God by local gossiping housewives. 1978 exists in space where heterosexuality is the primary ideology and any person that does not openly and wholeheartedly subscribe to it will potentially face deadly levels of prejudice, so Milk is quite sly with his delivery of this jest bit...as he is actively

admitting his homosexuality with discretion through the device of humor. Humor aids in connecting a person to their ingroup and expelling a person from their outgroup, ingroups and outgroups can exist on a general level to refer to who you do and do not want to appeal to, however historically both terms are connected with the search and discovery of queer community.

The third of the rhetorical appeals is known as the appeal to logic; within the realm of logical appeals, Milk effortlessly incorporates cause and effect language to display concerns at the time surrounding the South African border remaining open for American tourists to pass through due to unsound governmental foundations by means of the consulate system as opposed to a diplomatic bureau, stating, "In the city of San Francisco, if everyone of 51 percent of that city were to go to South Africa, they would be treated as second-class citizens." (Milk 3). Utilizing a number..that 51 percent in this case, gives the listener a metric comparison to relate to in the connection between the local region of San Fran and South Africa - which results in a sound logical rhetorical appeal.

Regarding the second primary category of rhetorical analysis: rhetorical situation - which exists to highlight various aspects that provide contextual markers as to why an individual presents their given communication. There are 7 aspects in total of the rhetorical situation - because Milk was a politician I believe it's fitting to focus on the exigence and purpose of The Hope Speech. First, Milk's exigence...his problem, being one of seven elements of the situation which prompts a communication, was that there was a lack of LGBTQ+ visibility in government positions at that point in history, he would certainly know, since he was the first. Milk does a fine job of identifying the statement of the problem when saying, "For invisible we [LGBTQ+ community] remain in limbo - a myth, a person with no parents, no brothers, no sisters, no friends who are straight, no important positions of employment." (Milk 4). The problem of misrepresentation and underrepresentation creates hidden and

unhidden disparities that bleed out into other fields of being; because every type of community deserves a voice and when a community lacks a voice it additionally lacks necessary autonomy - a structure requires presence in order to create movement.

The third element of Milk's rhetorical situation - the purpose providing the solution to the problem of the sheer lack of queer visibility is stated as, "So if there is a message I have to give, it is that i've found one overriding thing about my personal election, it's the fact that if a gay person can be elected its a green light." (Milk 5). The tone here is figurative, however the communication is that the problem of a deficit is solved by an influx, a spark, a starting point; which Milk alludes to being a part of in terms of his presence in office as an out queer person at that point in the 1970s. It is as if Milk is saying the LGBTQ+ community officially has a ball in government relations and now the task at hand is to get the ball rolling and growing in size in order to create social change and safety backed by representation.

The third major category surrounding rhetorical analysis is known to be rhetorical devices. Put directly, these are figures of speech intended to enhance a given narrative piece and communication. Certain rhetorical figures are aimed at different genres of communication such as poetry, prose, song, or public speaking measures - commonalities surrounding these forms of communication are metaphor, allegory, and alliteration, the list of rhetorical figures is incredibly expansive. In terms of The Hope Speech, I believe Milk excels at implementing parallelism in his speech - many expressions, opening statements, and describing words are repeated throughout certain paragraphs and clauses; this is done to emphasize certain points, more specifically, what points of a message are of high priority to retain. As Milk speaks of what type of gay leaders must be elected as queer representation trudges forward, "They must not be content to sit in the back of the bus." (Milk 4) - then goes on to start the immediate next three sentences with the same phrase of 'they must'

which directly results in a greater level of understanding for the reader due to the clausal congruence.

Additionally, Milk utilizes humor within his language, much of humor can be deduced through vocal inflections in addition to actual sentence structure which implies a socially understandable attempt at communicating something comical. Milk's tone is bright, sounding almost as if he has a quip on the tip of his tongue at all times - however this doesn't take away from the baseline note of the dialect representing itself as sharp. When speaking of the value of queer representation, Milk speaks of members of communities that have lost hope, that have been shouldered out of social structures by being a minority in the eyes of the majority and by being a piece of a group that's been classified as 'other' - to drive this point home: "I personally will never forget that people are more important than buildings." (Milk 4). It could be argued that this is more of a sarcastic expression; however given the political climate of the 1970s I believe it was genuinely uncommon that gay people were widely valued past the lens of objectification in the eyes of public establishment, to the extent that stating this was closer to a revolutionary notion. The element of sarcasm implies that a jab is center to the topic within the greater point of emphasis, however Milk's emphasis within the paragraph revolves around empowerment as opposed to slander, which is a practically relevant piece to the device of humor. Plus Milk utilizes humor within his Anita Bryant story earlier in the piece.

In closing, I believe that The Hope Speech by Harvey Milk is a prime example of excellent rhetorical execution in terms of appeal, situation, and device as it holds its own in terms of originality as well as impact, presented by my analysis of the piece.