

## **Short Seminar Paper**

Rhetoric is implemented in our lives daily. Whether it is integrated in conversation, propaganda, or even television, persuasive techniques are implemented in every aspect of our days. These persuasive techniques ultimately aim to shift our established consciousness and edit the way we perceive life as a whole.

Rhetoric is the core of our thought processes. This means that without rhetoric affecting our lives, we as individual human beings would struggle to make decisions and essentially guide ourselves through life. For instance, imagine that two presidential candidates were presented to us. No data, history, or any specifics were provided upon the candidates. It is our goal to choose the best candidate possible. This renders itself impossible to make an educated guess because we are simply not educated upon the subject matter. Therefore, our results of achieving success is a fifty fifty chance. However, with the implementation of rhetoric our opinions begin to shift and we mold our own beliefs. It is important to understand that these beliefs are not simply constructed through one interaction with rhetoric. Instead, rhetoric has been presented to us throughout our life, and we can attribute our political positions, religious beliefs, and things alike to rhetoric.

There are different rhetorical environments that we engage in in a manner of different ways. Each rhetorical situation provides us with information and structures to establish our foundational beliefs upon. A rhetorical situation entails the context of a persuasive action towards a targeted audience usually intertwined with social issues and other indeterminate areas. Although politics has always been an important part in social functioning, the recent officers that make up our democratic government present a large field of rhetoric in their everyday speeches,

comments, and even tweets. The president, Donald Trump, engages implements rhetoric in daily public announcements. Most of these revolve around his word choice when speaking on immigration. Through his labeling of Mexican Americans as rapists and illegal, this rhetoric can be abused by various groups including white supremacists. Understanding how our political beliefs are formed is essential to developing a society where dialectic conversations overpower rhetorical ones. The first place to look when we are urged to discover the foundation of political beliefs, are the various news channels. To reveal the effects of rhetoric on political orientation and belief, we will analyze the most well known conservative news channel (fox news), vs one of the most well known democratic news channels (CNN). After analyzation of the content they deliver to their viewers, a demographic of political affiliation regarding each of these news channel's audiences will be reviewed.

Fox news released a video in the year of 2015 leading to the presidential election of Donald Trump. This video was labeled "5 worst examples of media bias in 2015". All five examples provided in this documentary were given and stated by democratic and liberal viewers. However, when observing the published "5 worst examples of media bias in 2015", it is simply a compilation of quotes that is showing support for President Barak Obama. For instance, number 5 was quoted in an article by Dick Meyers, "Americans are lucky to have Barrack Obama as President and we should wake up and appreciate it while we can" (National News Partner, 2015). Fox news declared this as media bias since they truly believed that this article was not inclusive of the weaknesses of former President Obama. However, the fact that fox news is belittling the support of the president (democratic), is simply media bias in itself. This portrayal of numerous quotes supporting our left winged president (at the time) have no illustration of media bias in any

slight manner. It is mostly common to show support for the president of the nation in which we reside. Therefore, presenting this quotation as a regards for media bias, present the networks urge to belittle democratic views and drive the rhetoric in republican discourse. Fox has also been criticized for their bias reporting of Barrack Obama's statements (AllSides 2018). Fox News had reported bias by declaring that Obama Care is giving our tax money to illegal immigrants. This was early in the running for candidacy and created rhetoric against the president. If information like this was presented on a liberal network like CNN, viewers would be disturbed by the lack of support shown by their social peers. However, when it is presented on Fox, it strengthens the association with right wing tendencies, and increases the viewership of conservatives contributing as the rhetorical audience.

On the other hand, CNN is known for displaying similar bias, but in a leftward direction. According to *AllSides*, CNN has fallen into publishing "opinion-level" content that is portrayed as objective and factual based (AllSides, 2018). CNN used to be recorded as a central bias, with tendencies to lean both directions in varying circumstances. However, as the presidential election of 2016 came to take place, the well known media broadcast has shifted left. Much of the rhetoric that they convey is idealized as factual but is ultimately centralized upon a liberal bias. For instance, in a newscast posted on November 2, 2018, CNN labeled the title of the broadcast "Trump's objectives are obvious and ugly". The episode begins with Chris Cuomo stating that "the president is trying to start a massive uprising that is built upon fear and hatred upon minority groups". Although Trump has never truly proclaimed this intent, it is recognized that the President's rhetoric and phrasing can have an influence on varying groups of people. However, when claims like this are presented as factual-based, it affects the beliefs and opinions of the audience

of the broadcast. However, the audience has already been exposed to countless amounts of rhetoric in the past. If this past rhetoric they are exposed to associates with liberal tendencies, then they will accept statements like these made from Chris Cuomo. However, if the past rhetoric is correlated with Republican concepts, the present rhetoric will be questioned. Ultimately, this means that both political parties tend to watch their biased media channel. This eliminates the opportunity for a dialectic conversation. Let's delve deeper into the subject by analyzing the demographics of each news broadcasting's audience.

A poll was created about how trustworthy Americans were of the various news channels they watch (Washington Post, 2017). Three political groups were identified before their vote was casted. For CNN, those consistent with liberal views stated that it is a very trusted place that does not implement any media bias. However, when conservatives took the poll, they claimed that CNN was far more "distrusted than trusted". When we move onto observe the ratings of Fox news, the opposite trend occurs. Consistent liberals claimed that Fox news was very biased in the rightward direction. A score of negative ten considered the media to be very liberal, while a score of positive ten displayed conservative views. Fox News scored a 4 according to democrats and a 1 according to republicans. When observing the conservative views on Fox, they claimed it was one of the most trusted networks. CNN scored a negative 5 according to republicans, while only a negative 1 according to the liberal audience. This is a large discrepancy between these polls. This discrepancy can be attributed to the concept of rhetorical discourse. After affiliating oneself with a certain political discourse, any rhetoric outside of that discourse is seemed to be invalid.

In order to facilitate dialectic in political conversation, only factual news should be presented. Opinion based documentaries and shows should be labeled opinion and should also provide counter opinion links that one can access. This will allow the audience to pursue their own views without the biased information consistently being presented as factual.

With these considerations in mind it is easy to see how closed minded our society can be. This closed-mindedness is emphasized through bias media and sustained by rhetoric. However, if we attempt to implement dialectic instead of rhetoric, problem solving and understanding of one another will be much more achievable. With the embracement of false rhetoric that is established upon opinion, society will constantly struggle to view the situation as a whole. Being misinformed and persuaded one way or another through rhetoric is harmful to the well being of our country.

## **References**

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