

Paweł GIWOJNO
University of Wrocław
pawel.giwojno@gmail.com

RONALD REAGAN AS A PUBLIC SPEAKER: IN SEARCH OF THE ARISTOTELIAN RULES OF RHETORIC IN SELECTED ADDRESSES DELIVERED BY THE 40TH US PRESIDENT

Abstract: The main aim of this paper is to investigate the rhetorical style of Ronald Reagan (1911–2004), both as a President of the United States and as a public speaker. This study is focused on two elements, namely the range of rhetorical devices selected by President Reagan in his selected speeches, as well as a proposed explanation of the use of such devices in the context of a speaker–audience interaction. The latter part of this analysis is centered on the concept of the three persuasive appeals initially defined by Aristotle. In the first part of this paper the concept of the three persuasive appeals (the Aristotelian triangle) is presented and its particular elements explained. Directly afterwards, some theoretical frameworks for the use of linking devices are established. After the theoretical section, three selected Ronald Reagan speeches are analyzed. The focus is on the use of rhetorical devices in the given addresses. Finally, a research conclusion is included with an intention to identify the strategies and the style used by President Reagan in his interaction with the audience. This analysis may be of some help in order to understand how a speaker can powerfully influence listeners by using rhetorical tools.

Key words: Aristotle, Ronald Reagan, rhetoric, speech

Introduction

This paper refers to the concept of rhetoric in selected speeches delivered by Ronald Reagan (1911–2004), the former President of the United States. First of all, an introduction to rhetoric is presented. In addition, the three persuasive appeals of rhetoric (also known as the Aristotelian Triangle) are examined and the concept of rhetorical devices explained. Directly afterwards, some selected examples of Ronald Reagan’s rhetoric are studied. At the beginning of this section, a brief

outline of the President's style of speaking is presented. Afterwards, three selected speeches delivered by President Reagan are analyzed together with a brief introduction to them. Finally, some research conclusions are drawn.

The subject matter of this paper is based on an analysis of some examples of the speeches delivered during Ronald Reagan's presidency. The main objective is to identify some strategies and rhetorical devices used by the President, while also making an attempt to assess the impact of the speeches on their audience and present the speaker–audience interaction within the theoretical concept of the three Aristotelian persuasive appeals.

The research perspective is centered around the analysis of selected speeches on the basis of the rules of rhetoric. The rhetorical perspective of the research may be defined as an attempt to reveal the mutual interactions between the author (President Ronald Reagan) the characteristic elements of his speeches, and the recipients of these presidential addresses.

The implemented methodology is based on an in-depth analysis of the selected speeches. The main aim is to reveal some elements of Reagan's specific style, the figures of speech used, along with the facts and people the President referred to in the speeches. Moreover, the elements which may be defined as *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* of the speeches are also broadly analyzed. The selection was based on the criterion of further references in the media to Reagan's legacy. From this point of view, there are three significant speeches which have become landmarks of his presidency, while some terms coined by the President are still in use, not only in political discourse but also in many other contexts, including pop culture.

The research material used for this analysis consists of selected speeches delivered by President Reagan at the time of his presidency and includes: *Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals* (1983a), delivered on 8 March 1983 in Orlando, Florida, often referred to as the *Evil Empire* speech; a presidential address commonly referred to as the *Star Wars* speech (1983b), presented on 23 March 1983, dedicated to promoting a new defensive strategy known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI); and *Remarks at the Brandenburg Gate* (1987), which was delivered on 12 June 1987 and was connected with a presidential visit to the Federal Republic of Germany and with the intention of demonstrating the President's determination to reunite the two German states and dismantle the Eastern Bloc.

On the notion of rhetoric

Rhetoric is inseparably connected with human communities. People gather together and enter into mutual relationships that exert an influence on each other. Such an impact is possible thanks to the appropriate use of words which may be seen in terms of their quality, as well as a means of expression of cultural or

political values. This is basically the main role of rhetoric which “[...] is not a *substance* in the logical sense, though it does seem [...] that there is something found in nature that either resembles rhetoric or possibly constitutes the starting point from which it has culturally evolved” (Kennedy 1992:1).

One of the explications of the term *rhetoric*, supported by Isidore of Seville, combines its origins with ancient Greece, more precisely with the phrase “fluency of speech” ([560–636] 2006: 69). Moreover, as ancient Greece is seen as the cradle of many philosophical ideas, rhetoric is a tool used to effectively present particular opinions or justify individual views. Such a role for rhetoric may be proved by the following example:

[at one of the meetings] Plato had defined Man as an animal, biped and featherless, and was applauded. Diogenes plucked a fowl and brought it into the lecture-room with the words, “Here is Plato’s man.” (Diogenes Laërtius VI: 41)

These words indicate that rhetoric is an extremely useful tool in public activity, frequently at the service of outstanding politicians or mighty individuals in their attempts to persuade an audience. Furthermore, the link between rhetoric and its role in a political theatre is highly regarded and appreciated. Therefore, a good orator has to present himself as a good man and simultaneously be skilled in speaking (Isidore of Seville [560–636] 2006: 69).

On the three persuasive appeals of rhetoric

The idea of the three persuasive appeals of rhetoric is believed to have been originally created by Aristotle, who distinguishes three elements which shall be taken into account in the process of delivering speeches. Namely, these elements are identified as: **logos** (a part of speech based on logical arguments); **ethos** (the element of the credibility of the speaker); and **pathos** (reference to emotions) (Keith 2008: 7). In other words, these three dimensions coexist in every speech and taken together are fundamental for the further effects of the delivered speech, basically the impact on the listeners. It may be stated that “[t]his division is critical, as it shows beyond any doubts that Aristotle does not confine the art of rhetoric to logical argumentation alone” (Domaradzki 2010: 42). On the contrary, all three elements play their role, creating a kind of a triangle or a framework for every public speech. Therefore, it shall be said that “[...] persuasive speech must present the right impression of the speaker’s character, work on the audience’s emotions and prove the truth of the statement made” (Triadafilopoulos 1999: 745). These three elements are “[...] like old, precious gems. The way gems can be incorporated in any jewelry to add more beauty so as to these three appeals of persuasion can be used in any field of language to

introduce more credence to the expressions” (Murthy 2014: 250). In other words, Aristotle’s concept of the three persuasive appeals is unique due to the fact that the ancient thinker formulates rules which are both highly universal and fully applicable in present times.

Selected figures of speech

Figures of speech may be defined in accordance with various criteria. The term refers to a selection of words which create a specific impact on the audience. There is, of course, a much more profound explanation for the use of such linguistic devices:

It is fair enough to regard figures of speech as the ‘graces of language,’ as the ‘dressing of thoughts,’ as ‘embellishments,’ for indeed they do ‘decorate’ our prose and give it ‘style,’ [...]. But it would be a mistake to regard embellishment as the chief or sole function of figures. The classical rhetoricians certainly did not look upon them as decorative devices primarily (Corbett [1998] 2004: 142).

This opinion presented above proves that there are at least two levels of discussing and analyzing figures of speech. On the one hand, it is possible to perceive these elements as a kind of “decoration”. In this view, figures of speech are used to satisfy the artistic pleasure of the listener and to fulfill one’s aesthetic desire. On the other hand, the functions of the analyzed tools are more numerous. As it has been observed:

We will use the term ‘figures of speech’ as a generic term for any artful deviations from the ordinary mode of speaking or writing. But we will divide the figures of speech into two main groups – the schemes and the tropes. A scheme [...] involves a deviation from the ordinary pattern or arrangement of words. A trope [...] involves a deviation from the ordinary and principal signification of a word (Lanham [1998] 2004: 191).

According to the above-presented view, there are two main types of rhetorical devices in connection with their linguistic analysis. Figures of speech can be either schemes or tropes. The main difference between these two groups is significant and at the same time extremely subtle. A scheme is based on an interference between words so that the typical order of the words is changed. This means that instead of one predictable utterance, the outcome is more segmented and surprising for the audience. A trope is based on some changes in the meaning of words. The typical structure or word order is maintained, although the interpretation of a particular word is altered. The audience have to reinterpret the significance of the words. Selected figures of speech are indicated in the following sections of the analysis.

On the rhetoric of Ronald Reagan

The aim of this section is to examine selected extracts from Ronald Reagan's speeches delivered during his presidency. In an attempt to deal with this challenge, the background of this presidency is initially presented. In addition, a brief justification for the implemented methodology, as well as the historical and sociological context of Reagan's speeches are also included.

Subsequently, selected sections of Reagan's speeches are examined in chronological order. An effort is made to find references between the subject matter of the speech and the circumstances under which the speech was delivered. Also, an in-depth analysis of the language used in the speeches is conducted with reference to the research questions, namely: why particular figures of speech were used; what was the impact of the speech; what kinds of texts were borrowed in selected speeches; and how the overall performance may be evaluated. In addition, one of the most important elements of this analysis refers to the identification of the three rhetorical appeals as well as their significance within the interaction between the speaker and the audience under particular circumstances. Finally, a conclusion is drawn in which a brief outline of Ronald Reagan's rhetoric is presented.

Ronald Reagan against the background of selected historical events

When Ronald Reagan became the President of the United States in 1981, America and the whole world had experienced several years of so-called *détente*, a policy which was expected to bring more stability and security in international affairs. However, these hopes had faded gradually and the election of a new President was a chance to redefine the USA's place in the world, as well as the concept of American supremacy. In this context: "Reagan was as skilful a politician as the nation had seen for many years, and one of its sharpest grand strategists ever. His strength lay in his ability to see beyond complexity to simplicity. And what he saw was simply this: that because *détente* perpetuated – and had been meant to perpetuate – the Cold War, only killing *détente* could end the Cold War" (Gaddis 2005: 131). According to the above-presented view, Reagan was multit talented; thanks to his experience and the various stages of his career as an actor and a politician, he was exceptionally prepared to carry the burden of responsibility. What is more, he could monitor political issues from a different perspective – not only as a professional politician, but also by sharing some points of view created by the media and in line with his own experience.

This new approach is seen also in Reagan's rhetoric. This is because of his exceptional mix of skills, abilities, personality and life experience (Kramer 1999: 42). It may be concluded that such a combination was fundamental for the public

perception of the new administration. Ronald Reagan, prior to his political career, had gained substantial media experience in particular, as a radio commentator and a Hollywood star. One objective assessment may be that his professional skills proved to be a great asset in Reagan's political career. In addition, as a member of the Republican Party, he presented himself as a man with a conservative approach, able to combine both pragmatism and principles and, at the same time, able to remain authentic (Rowland, 2011: 43).

Another important element of the personality of President Ronald Reagan is that he was a gifted writer, eager to prepare his own speeches independently and, whenever this proved impossible, tried to add some personal thoughts (Rowland 2011: 41). In addition, in his dialogue with the public, and also with policymakers, Reagan frequently used his acting talents (Gaddis 2005: 119). An exemplification of this was his meeting in Reykjavik in 1984 with Mikhail Gorbachev (Rowland, 2011: 26). Indeed, Gorbachev is believed to have been completely spellbound by the President. Reagan was also optimistic and confident in the strength of democracy and capitalism (Rowland 2011: 19). What is more, Reagan believed that ultimately Western ideas would prevail. This is why he propelled the fight against communism in many places around the world with an intention to speed up what seemed to be inevitable: the collapse of the Soviet system – the main objective of his policy. Finally, the President displayed a perfect mixture of principles in general and pragmatism in terms of performance. This was misleading, therefore, for some of his critics, who, while assessing Reagan's speeches, observed that “[m]uch political rhetoric falls into a grey area from a fact checker's point of view. Exaggeration, spin and artful insinuation are much more common in political sins than outright falsehood” (Dobbs 2012: 8). This is why, thanks to his rhetoric and acquired skills, Reagan was able to implement practical tools to achieve defined aims (Rowland 2011: 1).

All the elements of Ronald Reagan's personality were consolidated by his knowledge of life as an actor and an experienced speaker. This leads to the conclusion that presidential public speeches exerted an impact on the audience basically by “[...] the transformational power of his rhetoric” (Rowland 2011: 1). This power was so important that even today many people have come under Reagan's influence and admire his legacy wholeheartedly.

The Evil Empire speech¹

This speech was delivered by President Ronald Reagan on 8 March 1983 in Orlando, Florida, during the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals. It was a special moment in the history of the USA. Many years

¹ Unless stated otherwise, all quotations in this section come from Reagan (1983a).

previously, American policy had been based on dealing with the menace of communism by mutual agreement. Such a policy had staunch supporters but also an increasing number of opponents. Reagan and his new administration were strongly against the previous policy – this is why they created their own which was based on two vital elements, namely: negotiations and, simultaneously, an attempt to build up America's own potential, especially in military technology, in order to gain substantial predominance in terms of military and economic competition with the Soviet Union.

It was also a time of significant change within the USA. More and more voices were being raised in favor of multicultural differences and respect for a new type of society. This was, not surprisingly, quite against the principles of President Reagan and a large number of American's conservatives, traditionally supporting the Republican Party. Probably, one of these groups was his audience for this particular speech – the most prominent figures of the Evangelical Church in the United States. Moreover, it is possible to discover a link between the international and internal areas in the *Evil Empire* speech.

The main aim of the Reagan's speech is to convince his audience to support a new policy (Nobrega, 2014: 172–173). To this aim, the President uses many different strategies, including the specific order of the speech, the rhetorical devices used and the quotes selected.

In the first section of the speech, Reagan endeavors to establish a bond between himself and the audience. He begins by thanking them for their invitation and strongly accentuates his gratitude for all the prayers offered for him. What is more, Reagan makes an allusion to Abraham Lincoln to show how important religion is in life. In addition, he cracks a joke about a politician ending up in heaven which may also be seen as a link between the church and politicians. This joke is based on anaphors and contains repetitions: “[a]nd he took [...] and the politician was a little worried [...] and he couldn't believe” [...] and he couldn't help [...]”. The joke is told in a simple and narrative style, with an intention to show a link between the President and all the people who believe in God and who may feel part of this community. In other words, this introduction is used to develop the *ethos* of the speaker.

In the next section, President Reagan speaks about some major internal challenges. He begins with three opinions formulated by several famous figures from American history, beginning with William Penn who stated: “[i]f we will not be governed by God, we must be governed by tyrants”. It is highly likely that Reagan uses the contrast which is expressed here to show the alternative, namely: a lack of religion leads to the collapse of the state. What is more, Reagan also quotes Thomas Jefferson who concluded: “[t]he God who gave us life, gave us liberty at the same time”. Two rhetorical elements may be observed here. First is an anaphor, namely the meaning is intended to stay longer in the memory of listeners by repeating it, as well as also these words being used to

shed light on the similarity between Reagan's concepts and the ideas of the Founding Fathers. Furthermore, there is the opinion of George Washington who observed that: "[...] of all dispositions and habits which lead to a political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports". This statement also contains an alliteration: "political prosperity" to accentuate that religion and morality are an essential part of prosperity in the world of politics. Finally, there is also an excerpt from the view of Alexis de Tocqueville, namely: "America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great". Although in this example there is an eponym – America – which means all the people living in the USA, there is also another anaphor: "America [...] ceases to be good [...] America will cease to be great" which is used to build a contrast.

All of these carefully selected excerpts are spoken one after another, which may strengthen the message and consolidate the impression that America is a great country, which is, in turn, connected with the "American dream" – a concept meaning "[...] to climb one's way to middle-class comfort" (Dermo 2014: 1). There is also a limitation put into this vision: prosperity is strongly based on religion and only together are such values truly great. It may also be stated that Reagan attempts to support his vision by showing similarities between his concept and that represented by the Founding Fathers. Both are based on traditional values and both believe in American greatness. Furthermore, having shown the similarity of the President with members of a religious society, Reagan tries to build a contrast in depicting his opponents. In his own words:

Now I don't have to tell you that this puts us in opposition to, or at least out of step with, a – a prevailing attitude of many who have turned to a modern day secularism, discarding the tried and time-tested values upon which our very civilization is based. No matter how well intentioned, their value system is radically different from that of most Americans.

This is a clear criticism towards the President's opponents who are against strong bonds between religion and politics. This may be understood as a rhetorical strategy which is implemented to reveal two parties: one, based on traditional values which is also modest and quiet and another, smaller but omnipresent group of opponents, who are a minority but try to dominate the social discourse. In addition, Reagan presents a tangible example referring to the discussion of abortion and showing how his administration supports traditional values. This whole excerpt is concluded with a series of rhetorical questions:

Is all of Judeo-Christian tradition wrong? Are we to believe that something so sacred can be looked upon as a purely physical thing with no potential for emotional and psychological harm? And isn't it the parents' right to give counsel and advice to keep their children from making mistakes that may affect their entire life.

The aim of these questions may be defined as an attempt to integrate the audience with the speaker and to show that the President shares the same values and ethical standards as his listeners. President Reagan's view seems to be that there is a unity between the government and conservative movements, as confirmed when the opponents are mentioned one more time: "[t]hey never intended to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself". In other words, this metaphor is used to put the stress on the unity of all Americans in their fight for promoting real values and against being enslaved by hostility.

In another section, Reagan presents his image of American society. He begins with the technique of apostrophe: "[y]ou may remember [...]" and refers to some historical events from the past to show the growth of anti-religious ideology. To keep his audience in uncertainty, Reagan states: "[o]nly last year a court permitted the death by starvation of a handicapped infant". This is a dramatic vision that strikes deep into the audience's conscience. Reagan, however, does not leave his listeners in desperation. A way out is shown in his beautiful metaphor: "[t]here is a great spiritual awakening in America, a removal of the traditional values that have been the bedrock of American's goodness and greatness". What is more, Reagan uses statistics to justify an opinion that vast majority of Americans trust in God and traditional values. This is a reference to *logos*.

This part of the speech is summarized by making strong references to history: showing how Americans, in coexistence with religion, have developed their state. Furthermore, Reagan adds: "[t]here is no room for racism, anti-Semitism or other forms of ethnic and racial hatred in this country". Reagan's vision is based on biblical references, plenty of metaphors and analogies. In particular, when the Bible is recalled: "[l]et justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream". Moreover, one can discover some biblical allusions in Reagan's view on relations between neighbors: "[t]hou shall love thy neighbor as thyself". This is a proof that in Reagan's rhetoric social life and religion are strongly connected. In the President's own words: "America has to keep alight the torch of freedom". This metaphor is also an introduction to the final section which is devoted to his new international policy.

It may be concluded that initially Reagan endeavors to break the ice with the audience and integrate the speaker and the listeners around common values. Another step is taken to show the plan for the future in order to finally eradicate the evil in the world. Again, Reagan begins with showing his position using anaphors: "[w]e will never compromise our principles and standards. We will never give away our freedom. We will never abandon our belief in God. And we will never stop searching for a genuine peace". The aim of this rhetorical strategy is to integrate the audience around unquestionably fundamental values. Furthermore, according to Reagan, the most dangerous policy is that of *détente*.

This is also a central point of Reagan's speech which is focused on revealing the epic struggle between good and evil.

Reagan uses two metaphors alluding to the Soviet Union which is depicted as: "[...] that totalitarian darkness" and in the statement: "[t]hey are the focus of evil in the modern world". Building a contrast between the two superpowers, Reagan quotes Clive Staples Lewis who stated: "[t]he greatest evil is not now done in those sordid 'dens of crime' that Dickens loved to paint. [...]. It is not done in concentration camps [...] and labor camps [...]. But it is conceived and ordered [...] in clean, carpeted, warmed, and well-lighted offices, by quiet men with white collars and cut fingernails and smooth-shaven cheeks who do not need to raise their voices". This excerpt is not only another example of intertextuality in Reagan's speeches, but also one which contains plenty of rhetorical devices. There is a contrast between what is believed to be evil and what actually is evil, according to the writer. At the same time, an asyndeton is employed to show, by listing many places together, the omnipresence of evil.

Furthermore, Reagan develops Lewis' statement by using an anaphor: "[...] because those quiet men do not raise their voices, because they sometimes speak in soothing tones [...] because [...] they are always making their final territorial demands". In addition, the President warns his audience by using a diacope: "[b]ut if history teaches anything, it teaches that [...]" – which is used to catch the audience's attention on an oxymoron referring to the wishful thinking which may lead to deprivation of freedom. At this point, Reagan comes to the most important section of his speech and shows his solution to the aforementioned problems by using an invocation, an anaphor and a diacope: "I urge you to speak out against those who would place the United States in a position of military and moral inferiority [...] I urge you to beware the temptation of pride – the temptation of blithely declaring yourselves above it all". Moreover, President Reagan calls for a fight against "[...] the evil empire" a famous metaphor which is identified with the Soviet Union.

This is the climax of the speech and it may be supposed that the audience is completely enchanted and devoted to their President who is aware of this enthusiasm in saying: "I ask you to [...] support for our efforts, this administration's efforts". In other words, everyone who supports freedom and righteousness has to support Reagan and his policy. To conclude, President Reagan mentions the words of Whittaker Chambers, a person highly respected by American conservatives as a fighter against communism. Furthermore, an excerpt from the Bible is quoted: "[y]e shall be as gods", alluding to communist ideology. This selection is significant, proving one more time that there is a link between conservatism, his own ideology, and religion. To conclude, President Reagan describes his plans for the future. A series of anaphors is used: "I believe we shall rise to the challenge. I believe that communism is another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written. I believe this because the source of our strength in the quest

for human freedom is not material, but spiritual. And because it knows no limitation". In this excerpt, Reagan also uses an asyndeton to show the misery of communist ideology, as well as a contrast to depict the fundamental conflict between two ideologies. This is a reference to *pathos*, aimed at instigating the audience's enthusiasm. Finally, the whole speech is closed by an apostrophe: "[y]es, change your world" which is used to encourage his listeners to further action.

To conclude, it is worth mentioning that the whole structure of this presidential address seems to have been carefully thought out. The speaker refers to the three persuasive appeals. At the beginning President Reagan creates a bond between himself and the audience. The next stage reveals perceived enemies, which may further strengthen the position of the speaker in the eyes of the listeners. Finally, presidential plans for the future are presented and the audience is encouraged to act. During the whole speech Reagan refers to the government, a strategy which may gain him more respect from the audience. What is more, the President effectively builds up the atmosphere of the whole speech, right up to the climax. This speech is likely to have made a strong impact on his audience.

The *Star Wars* speech²

The *Star Wars* speech was delivered by President Reagan on 23 March 1983 as a presidential address. The whole speech was dedicated to promote a new defensive strategy, known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), which was expected to prevent the threat of the Soviet Union conducting a nuclear attack on the United States (Reiss 1992: 1). Although Reagan did not mention the term *Star Wars* at all in the entire speech, his vision seems to have been connected with the famous George Lucas film of that name. What is more, the speech was delivered only two weeks after Reagan's celebrated *Evil Empire* speech, at a time when the media connected this term with the *Star Wars* film. It was observed that: "[t]his link encouraged the press and the public to see Reagan's future speech through the prism of 'Star Wars', which helps to explain why [...] people tried to make sense, or nonsense, of his announcement of a missile defense program with reference to the movie" (Krammer 1999: 44). In other words, Reagan's vision at that time perfectly suited the state of mind of the society, eager to see a connection between the SDI initiative and war in space depicted by the famous Hollywood production.

The speech begins with an apostrophe, namely: "[m]y fellow Americans". It shows that the speaker's intention is to build a sense of community with the listeners. In addition, the President directly moves on to the subject matter of the speech, namely the decision to initiate works on a new defensive strategy "[...] which offers

² Unless stated otherwise, all quotations in this section come from Reagan (1983b).

a new hope for our children in the 21st century”. This is a reference to the subtitle of the film *Star Wars* (Kramer 1999: 44). Therefore, it may be noticed that Reagan skillfully merges the subject of his speech with a pop cultural issue which was at the peak of its popularity at that time. Moreover, Reagan also refers to the cultural concept of “Manifest Destiny”, the idea that the USA is destined to expand constantly: once to the Wild West, and now into space (Rushing 1986: 415).

Directly afterwards a diacope is used: “[...] my best judgment and best understanding of the experts and specialists” to show that the decision has been broadly analyzed, as well as discussed with scientists and based on scientific proof. In the following sentences Reagan uses an asyndeton, depicting his idea as: “[...] careful, long-term [...] after too many years of neglect and mistakes”. All of these rhetorical devices are implemented to inspire confidence in his vision, as well as to show that the whole strategy is well thought out. However, presidential responsibility is shared with the audience, as expressed by words: “[...] the choice is up to the men and women you have elected to the Congress”. This is a pleonasm to declare that the basic responsibility belongs to all Americans. To conclude, the first section is focused on the audience. The subject matter is presented at the very beginning and both emotional references to the safety of subsequent generations, as well as expert voices in the field of technology are mentioned, thus alluding to *pathos* and *logos*.

In the following section, Reagan presents his enemies who are also a threat to America’s security. This is contrasted with the tremendous nuclear potential of the Soviet Union. The President begins with an antithesis: “[w]e maintain the peace through our strength; weakness only invites aggression” to show his criticism towards the US policy in the past. Moreover, Reagan focuses on an example: “[...] the Soviets [...] have enough [...] weapons to destroy virtually all of our missiles on the ground”. To extend the presented argumentation, Reagan mentions another example based on an antithesis: “[t]here was a time when we depended on coastal forts [...] this is a different world”. These words are used to build a contrast and to accentuate the huge discrepancy between past and present strategies.

In another section of the speech, the American and Russian military potential is compared to develop a feeling of uncertainty. The strategy used by the President is based on a series of examples, contrasts and antitheses: “[...] their missiles are much more powerful and accurate than they were several years ago and they continue to develop more, while ours are increasingly obsolete.” The set of arguments presented in these excerpts is significant. In the build-up of the speech, Reagan strengthens the feeling of fear and uncertainty. Moreover, the President skillfully develops *pathos* in the speech using vivid depictions of Soviet military bases. The stress is put on the scale of their military installations. The adjective in the superlative “the largest”; the repetition of “the acres and acres”; and the metaphor of “antenna fields” are used accordingly. Those words are selected by the speaker to emphasize the power of the Soviet Union. Directly

afterwards, some elements of *logos* are evoked. The President aims to confirm his own opinions by the evidence obtained from US security sources: “[t]hose pictures only tell a small part of the story. I wish I could show you more without compromising our most sensitive intelligence sources and methods”. This whole section is concluded by a series of rhetorical questions: “[w]ho is it intended for?” and “[w]ould the Soviet ever use their formidable military power? [...] can we afford to believe that they won’t?” which are not expected to be answered – the picture of the threat is overwhelmingly dominant.

In another section, Reagan presents himself as a supporter of peace whose sole intention is to avoid the risk of war. In addition, every element of the American military program is presented as if it was designed to promote peace, not war: “[e]very item in our defense program – our ships, our tanks, our planes, our funds for training and spare parts – is intended for one all-important purpose – to keep the peace”. The tendency to enumerate all the military devices in the form of polysyndeton is used to show the military power of the United States. At the end of this section, Reagan addresses the audience directly with the apostrophes: “[b]elieve me” and “[a]sk around today” to clearly show his solution: peace is in danger due to a lack of modern military equipment. One more time a contrast is used: “[w]e haven’t built a new long-range bomber for 21 years. Now, we’re building the B-1. We hadn’t launched one new strategic submarine for 17 years. Now, we’re building one Trident submarine a year” and an anaphor: “[w]e are rebuilding our Navy [...]. Our nation needs a superior Navy to support our military forces and vital interests overseas [...]. And we are building a real capability to assist our friends [...]”. What is more, a reference to national pride, which is connected with *pathos*, is made to encourage Americans to carry the burden of responsibility, even if it is sometimes demanding.

Finally, Reagan moves to the conclusion of the address. By alluding to history, the audience is warned against making mistakes. Reagan calls his listeners to action: “[i]t’s up to us in our time to choose and choose wisely”. A diacope is used, accompanied by several alliterations, including: “[f]ree people [...] must [...] through open debate and democratic means meet the challenge”. Such an intensity of rhetorical devices may be seen as a strategy for holding the attention of his listeners. After a long introduction, the President develops his vision of a policy which is based on the unprecedented development of brand new and technologically advanced weaponry. Reagan invites his audience to imagine the impact of the new strategy on national security using a series of rhetorical questions:

Wouldn’t it be better to save lives than to avenge them? Are we not capable of demonstrating our peaceful intentions by applying all our abilities and our ingenuity to achieving a truly lasting stability? I think we are – indeed, we must! [...] What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation [...] that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil [...] But isn’t it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war.

The whole excerpt may encourage one to action. Its powerful impact is based on contrast and, at the same time, positive emotions. This is a reference to *pathos* but also to *ethos*. Directly afterwards Reagan mentions: “America does possess – now – the technologies to attain very significant improvements in the effectiveness of our conventional, nonconventional forces”. This statement may be seen as a reference to *logos*. Consequently, all three Aristotelian rhetorical appeals are used to justify the new strategy. Finally, Reagan again calls his audience to action using an apostrophe: “[m]y fellow Americans”. It is worth noticing that the whole speech begins and ends in a framing device: by direct reference to the audience by the apostrophes.

In the “Star Wars” speech, Reagan reveals his intention to maintain a direct and vivid rapport with the audience. An attempt is made to integrate the President with the listeners and to show his aims in making America great. The feelings of fear and anger are skillfully introduced into the speech by a long list of contrasts between the United States’ weaknesses and the Soviet Union’s military might. Furthermore, Reagan presents his solutions. Historical examples are mentioned, as well as intelligence data. At the climax of the speech, the President refers to a number of rhetorical devices to create a powerful impact on the audience.

The Remarks at the Brandenburg Gate speech³

The *Remarks at the Brandenburg Gate* speech was delivered by President Ronald Reagan on 12 June 1987 in West Berlin. The speech was delivered in front of the Berlin Wall – one of the most spectacular symbols of the conflict between two ideologies: liberal democracy and communist. Not surprisingly, the Berlin Wall and the scars of the city form a central part of the speech, which is based on rhetorical frames which may be defined as a tool to “[...] classify, organize and interpret life experiences to make sense of them” (Goffman 1974: 56). In other words, Reagan speaks to the residents of Berlin to support them and to catalyze the process which seems to be, in the President’s view, inevitable, that is to announce the collapse of the Soviet System.

The speech begins with a reference to history in which Reagan mentions a memorable visit by President John Fitzgerald Kennedy to Berlin in 1963. In other words, President Reagan follows in the footsteps of his predecessor in the White House, while in the further sections of the speech the style and the rhetoric of the speaker are coherent with the famous speech delivered by President Kennedy in many points. Reagan appreciates the location he is in and its residents, listing, by the use of an anaphor, the significance of the city: “[...] we’re drawn here by other things as well; by the feeling of history [...] by the

³ Unless stated otherwise, all quotations in this section come from Reagan (1987).

beauty of the Grunewald and the Tiergarten [...] by your courage and determination". What is more, the President quotes the words of a German artist – Paul Linke (1844–1919) – who stated: "Ich habe noch einen Koffer in Berlin" [I still have a suitcase in Berlin] to express his sentiment towards the city.

Afterwards, Reagan depicts the current situation. His words are also addressed to the people from the other side of the Iron Curtain. To show the range of his audience, the President identifies the listeners by an anaphor: "[t]o those listening throughout Eastern Europe [...] [t]o those listening in East Berlin" and leads the speech to the key message for Berliners: "Es gibt nur ein Berlin" ["There is only one Berlin"]. The message is powerful. The speech is delivered in Berlin, with this location, as well as several sentences in German, affirming that Reagan's wish is to support the Berliners themselves. It is also a clear reference to John Fitzgerald Kennedy's address. It may suggest, in turn, that Reagan presents himself as a political heir to President Kennedy – a factor which develops *ethos* in the speech.

Furthermore, Reagan distinguishes between the Western sectors of Berlin and the other parts of Europe under communist domination, which are depicted by pleonasms and anaphors: "[...] those barriers cut across Germany in a gash of barbed wired, concrete, dog runs, and guard towers. [...] still a restriction on the right to travel, still an instrument to impose [...] the will of a totalitarian state". To conclude his observations, Reagan again uses an anaphor: "[...] every man is a German separated from his fellow men. Every man is a Berliner". This is a dramatic statement and also a reference to Kennedy's speech. While Kennedy had claimed twenty four years previously that he was a Berliner, Reagan stretches out that vision: not only is the President of the United States a Berliner, but also all the people of the world, who thus suffer severely because of the dramatic tearing apart of the city. In the initial section of the speech, Reagan refers to the words and actions of President Kennedy.

Shortly afterwards, Reagan alludes to history to show the greatness of the city and the current state of political affairs. Reagan repeats the phrase coined by West German president Richard von Weizsäcker: "[t]he German question is open as long as the Brandenburg Gate is closed" and adds: "[a]s long as this gate is closed, as long as this scar of a wall is permitted to stand, it is not the German question alone that remains open, but the question of freedom for all mankind". Rhetorically speaking, this is a sharp contrast based on antithesis. The problem of the Berlin Wall is no longer a German problem – it is, according to Reagan – the problem of all people. American support is mentioned, with its political intentions in 1947 being presented in the words of George Marshall, namely: "[o]ur policy is directed not against any country or doctrine, but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos". Furthermore, Reagan develops his thoughts by showing that the entire free world had been supported by this decision from 1947. This is a metaphor referring to democratic states which have gained

significantly thanks to this American strategy. Politicians in West Germany successfully used the aid provided and led the country to an economic miracle: “[t]he German leaders reduced tariffs, expanded free trade, lowered taxes”. This is another pleonasm to show the scope of actions undertaken to rebuild the country. It may also be seen as Reagan’s strategy to win the support of the audience. In such a sense, it is a reference to *ethos* and *pathos*.

The progress in the German economy is marked by contrast:

Where a city’s culture seemed to have been destroyed, today there are two great universities, orchestras and an opera, countless theatres and museums. Where there was want, today there’s abundance – food, clothing, automobiles [...]. From devastation, from utter ruin [...] rebuilt a city that once again ranks as one of the greatest on earth.

In the above-presented excerpt, several rhetorical devices may be found. First of all, contrast is used to show dynamic changes and development from the ruins of war into the thriving development of the post-war period. What is more, pleonasms are present in the speech to focus on the abundance of food and products delivered by the West German economy. The whole passage is concluded humorously with reference to: “Berliner Hertz, Berliner Humor, ja, und Berliner Schnauze [Berliner heart, Berliner humor, yes, and Berliner Schnauze]”. Using these German phrases has a deeper meaning as this sentence was interpreted by Berliners as a call for resistance (Ratnesar 2010: 147). In addition, it also shows a connection with John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s speech. Reagan again develops *ethos*.

What is more, the huge discrepancy between West Germany and the state of the Communistic Bloc is vividly depicted in a similar way. While referring to the latter, the President uses contrast and pleonasms: “[w]e see failure, technological backwardness, declining standards of healthy, even want of the most basic kind – too little food”. The vision is in sharp contrast to the cocky slogan coined several decades earlier by the former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894–1971), who had stated: “[w]e will bury you”. This reference to the past and the present situation is the key elements of contrast between the rich West and the collapsing East.

To conclude, Reagan uses rhetorical questions: “[a]re these the beginnings of profound changes in the Soviet state? [...]. Or are they token gestures [...] without changing it?” His intention may be to emphasize that the changes in the Soviet Union are unlikely. That is why the President moves on to the key section of his speech. There is only one possible gesture to prove Soviet goodwill: removing barriers and restoring freedom. This is why Reagan speaks directly to the Soviet leader: “General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity [...], if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” This is the central element of the speech. Reagan creates the contrast between the West and the East, between prosperity and hardship. This rhetorical strategy additionally supports the impact of Reagan’s words. Three times in the speech a declaration

is made, namely: if the Soviets want real changes, they are expected to prove it. Repetition adds some power and the speaker overwhelmingly dominates the audience. Reagan benefits efficiently from this opportunity and specifies the mission for the audience in another anaphor: “[w]e must resist Soviet expansion [...] we must maintain defense [...] we must strive to reduce arms on both sides”. The elements of *pathos* and *logos* are extremely powerful in the analyzed excerpt. Reagan seems to be aware of his impact on the audience, which is why he addresses the opponents of his policy: “[a]nd I invite those who protested then – I invite those who protest today [...] to mark this fact: Because we remained strong, the Soviets came back to the table. Because we remained strong [...] we have the possibility [...] of eliminating [...] an entire class of nuclear weapons”. In other words, Reagan justifies the policy of rapid military progress as a way toward complete victory over the communist threat.

The whole section served as an introduction to promoting the presidential project of the Strategic Defense Initiative. In the subsequent section, Reagan alludes to the general political situation and the progress of modern technology to support his policy. This section is devoted to *logos*. Furthermore, the President evokes a paradox using a diacope: “East and West do not mistrust each other because we are armed; we are armed because we mistrust each other” and the changes that had happened in previous decades: “[...] freedom was encircled [...] and today [...] freedom itself is transforming the globe”. The President shows the positive impact of freedom which seems to dominate the world expressing its power with an apostrophe: “[f]ree people of Berlin” and an anaphor: “[l]et us [...] usher in a new era [...], let us maintain and develop the ties [...] let us expand the vital air access to the city” to show the President’s commitment to his German allies. Reagan presents himself as a leader who can map out new directions for further development. Finally, Reagan speaks to the audience in the form of the following anaphor:

Certainly there’s a great deal to be said for your fortitude, for your defiant courage. [...]. But I believe that there is something deeper [...] that has seen the difficulties [...] but chose to accept them, that continues to build [...] that that refuses to release human energies [...] that speaks with a powerful voice of affirmation [...] that says ‘yes’ to the city, ‘yes’ to the future, ‘yes’ to freedom [...] that what keeps you in Berlin is love - love both profound and abiding.

The listeners are praised and presented as modern heroes. The contrast between the utmost value – love – and totalitarianism is introduced.

The whole speech may be divided into three main sections. In the introduction Reagan uses a broad range of rhetorical devices to create his image as a leader of the Western world. To achieve this goal the President refers to German and American authorities, including John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Paul Linke, Richard von Weizsäcker and George Marshall. He also makes an effort to use words and phrases in the German language. This is a strategy which is most likely intended to be used to show Reagan as a continuator of long traditions based on mutual

cooperation and understanding between the two nations concerned. In the second section of the speech, Reagan depicts problems which have their roots in the Soviet Union and its policy of expansion. The hiatus between the aggressive rhetoric of Soviet leaders and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc is described. At the same time, Reagan appeals to the audience to unite around common values. Furthermore, the President calls on one to accept the moral, military and economic victory of the West which is based on universal values.

In conclusion, the Berliners themselves are praised by the speaker. Further plans are outlined, with the President being presented as the leader of the international community. In the last part of the speech, *ethos* and *pathos* again seem to be dominant. It is also worth mentioning that throughout the whole speech some elements of *logos* may be found. In total, a broad scope of rhetorical strategies is used and the speech is perceived as one of the greatest delivered by Reagan during his presidency.

Conclusions

Ronald Reagan may be considered an excellent orator. Many elements seem to contribute to support this opinion, with his life experience, skills and abilities. Consequently, he appealed to his audiences. It seems that Reagan's speeches were thoroughly prepared: not only in the form of presented thoughts and words, but also in reference to appropriately selected quotations, already cited views and easily recognized phrases. Such elements are crucial for understanding Reagan's rhetorical style which is, briefly put, based on vivid and attractive language combined with interesting examples and borrowings from various authors.

The style of the rhetoric analyzed here is appealing mainly due to the dynamism of the speeches. All the particular elements are carefully arranged, composing a unique and sophisticated structure. Every excerpt interacts with that which preceded it, as well as that which follows it. The traditional forms of speeches are intertwined with the elements of American pop culture which seemed contemporary to the speaker, creating an enchanting mosaic for the audience. However, Reagan seems, in general, to be still under the dominance of the traditional style of the oratorical craft. A key proof is observed in the President's obedience to the ancient Aristotelian rules. In the speeches analyzed above, the speaker uses many rhetorical devices, the presence of which suggests his intention to influence the audience. To conclude, it may be stated that Reagan's rhetoric is an interesting and unique example of a classical style combined with a modern form. This may be the key reason why it still works and appeals to later generations of listeners.

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