

President lincolns second inaugural address

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The Second Inaugural is a sermon on the origins and paradoxes of the Civil War. Its central theme is that 'the Almighty has his own purposes.'" (Byrd) Therefore, the rhetorical and stylistic elements in the Second Inaugural Address by President Lincoln work together to make it persuasive and appealing to the listeners and he conveys the main themes of the address as a great poem or sermon.

Delivered on March 4, 1865, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address abounds in the use of the rhetorical and stylistic elements which catch the attention of the ears as well as the minds of the listeners. The rhetorical approach is effective and the President presents the challenges of the specific moment in the historical context. In a reflective analysis of the speech, one realizes that Lincoln effectively employs figurative language all through the speech to accentuate how much the nation focused on the war and this adds on to the persuasive nature of the speech. Thus, Lincoln expresses that he has "high hopes" for America's future and the expression "high" articulates the intensity of the President's hopes. There are several examples of the use of alliteration by Lincoln in the speech which catches the attention of the audience. In order to create rhythm in speech, Lincoln uses words that begin with the same letter or sound and the repeated use of the same sound 'in words such as 'directed', 'dreaded', 'delivered', 'devoted', 'destroy', 'dissolve', 'deprecated' and 'divide' illustrates this effective technique. Lincoln's rhetorical techniques catch the attention of the listeners and one notices that the speech moves in time from past to present to the future. The use of biblical allusions, along with devices such as alliteration and anaphora, enhances the charisma of the speech. " Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty

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years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'" (Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address)

Therefore, the use of various rhetorical and stylistic elements all through the speech makes it greatly appealing and the rhetorical devices disclose the character and create meaning to the listeners. Lincoln has been effective in expressing his precision and balance of mind through the grammatical parallelism and balance of the speech. There are also significant examples of the repeated use of antithesis in the Second Inaugural Address which reflect some of his basic themes. In short, President Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address is a spectacular example of how a powerful speech adorned with rhetorical and stylistic qualities can create a special effect on the audience.