

Charlie Chaplin – The Great Dictator

Youtube: The Greatest Speech Ever Made (posted by BlowOurMindsTV)

The video that accompanies this speech was created to appeal to the viewers' emotions; it is, therefore, strong on pathos.

The following is a dot-point analysis of the visual features of the text.

- It opens with direct film footage from the film 'The Great Dictator', with Charlie Chaplin in character, delivering the final address.
- The first non-film footage seen is direct newsreel footage of disaster areas, and people helping one another. By using newsreel, the composer is appealing to ethos – the credibility of the source is real, if it was on the news – we believe it.
- The close-up shots of babies, and contrast between the healthy, happy white babies, and the malnourished and poverty stricken black babies again plays to the audiences emotional response.
- This is then contrasted again with the images to match the words "hate and despise" being stock footage of Ku Klux Klan marches and segregation riots.
- There are then sweeping shots of natural wonders to depict beauty and freedom in the natural world. These include the waterfalls, snow-capped mountain peaks and the slow motion capture of a butterfly.
- Images of game show contestants is used to highlight the greed of man in a capitalist society, and these images are followed by images of war and destruction. The placement of these images suggests that this is a cause and effect relationship.
- Further contrast is established between the images of machinery and science against the images of humanity and human touch.
- Contrast and allusion is used with the images of Einstein and Ghandi, to suggest that humanity of more valuable than scientific cleverness.
- Newsreel footage showing people in despair leads into movie footage of men on a production line being dropped into a mincing machine.
- The clip is interspersed with footage from the original film, to draw specific attention to the point that Chaplin's character is making – "Do not despair!"
- Further historical, stock images depicting mass murder and segregation are shown to emphasise the mistakes of the past. These are contrasted with more images of natural beauty to show freedom and beauty of the natural world against the violence and brutality of mankind.
- Direct newsreel footage of Iraq and Berlin is used to show societies that have suffered under dictatorships.

- When Chaplin exclaims that soldiers are “treat you like cattle”, images of a slaughterhouse is shown. This depicts that not only are soldiers like cattle in that they are expected to follow unquestioningly, but also that they are only meat to keep the wheels of society turning. They are expendable.
 - Images of machinery driven by scythe shaped cogs is an allusion to the machine that is communism.
 - Political commentary is made by using the images of American Presidents to highlight the “brutes” who have come to power, the man who would “free themselves” – Clinton, the “dictator” – G.W Bush and the one who would fight – Obama. This provides a sense of hope for the future.
 - This sense of hope is further emphasised by the recurring images of natural beauty, the newsreel footage of the Berlin wall being torn down, and the images of science and space that are used to close the clip.
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- Soundtrack is an important device in this clip, the orchestral rising music adds to the emotive emphasis.
 - The vocal tone to Chaplin’s voice is also important as it rises in volume and in pace as the speech progresses. This adds to the emotive pitch of the speech.
 - The speech itself contains many rhetoric devices. Most notably: repetition, emotive language, contrast, antithesis, allusion, inclusive language, cumulation, parataxis and imperative commands.