Frederick Douglass and the Art of Persuasion

Ethos

Ethos names the persuasive appeal of one's character, especially how this character is established by means of the speech or discourse. Aristotle claimed that one needs to appear both knowledgeable about one's subject and benevolent. Cicero said that in classical oratory the initial portion of a speech (its [exordium](http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Canons/Arrangement/Exordium.htm) or introduction) was the place to establish one's credibility with the audience.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **ETHOS**

In Cicero's speech defending the poet Archias, he begins his speech by referring to his own expertise in oratory, for which he was famous in Rome. While lacking modesty, this tactic still established his ethos because the audience was forced to acknowledge that Cicero's public service gave him a certain right to speak, and his success in oratory gave him special authority to speak about another author. In effect, his entire speech is an attempt to increase the respectability of the ethos of literature, largely accomplished by tying it to Cicero's own, already established, public character.

Logos

Logos names the appeal to reason. Aristotle wished that all communication could be transacted only through this appeal, but given the weaknesses of humanity, he laments, we must resort to the use of the other two appeals. The Greek term *logos* is laden with many more meanings than simply "reason," and is in fact the term used for "oration."

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **LOGOS**

When Descartes said, "I think; therefore, I am," his statement reflected in its pure concision and simple logical arrangment the kind of thought and being he believed to be most real. He did not claim, as Pascal would later do, that our being has as much to do with feeling as it does thinking. Descartes here equates pure rationality and pure being, persuading us of the accuracy of this equation by the simplicity of his statement. There is no room for the clouds of emotion in this straightforward formula; it makes a purely logical appeal.

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| Pathos names the appeal to emotion. Cicero encouraged the use of pathos at the conclusion of an oration, but emotional appeals are of course more widely viable. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* contains a great deal of discussion of affecting the emotions, categorizing the kinds of responses of different demographic groups. Thus, we see the close relations between assessment of pathos and of [audience](http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/Encompassing%20Terms/audience.htm). Pathos is also the category by which we can understand the psychological aspects of rhetoric. Criticism of rhetoric tends to focus on the overemphasis of pathos, emotion, at the expense of logos, the message. |  |
| Sample Rhetorical Analysis: **PATHOS**  Antony, addressing the crowd after Caesar's murder in Shakespeare's play, manages to stir them up to anger against the conspirators by drawing upon their pity. He does this by calling their attention to each of Caesar's dagger wounds, accomplishing this pathetic appeal through vivid descriptions combined with allusions to the betrayal of friendship made by Brutus, who made "the most unkindest cut of all":  Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through; See what a rent the envious Casca made;  Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd, And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,  Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,  As rushing out of doors to be resolv'd If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no; For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel. Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him! This was the most unkindest cut of all; —Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* 3.2.174-183  Find an example of each persuasive technique through a passage citation. Write down the page, paragraph, actual passage (not less than 5 lines) and WHY this is an example of Douglass’s rhetoric. |  |

Pathos