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Modes of persuasion

The **modes of persuasion** or **rhetorical appeals** (Greek: *pisteis*) are strategies of rhetoric that classify the speaker's appeal to the audience. These include ethos, pathos, and logos.[1]

Contents

Ethos

Ethos (plural: *ethea*) is an appeal to the authority or credibility of the presenter. It is how well the presenter convinces the audience that the presenter is qualified to speak on the subject. This can be done by:

- Being a notable figure in the field in question, such as a college professor or an executive of a company whose business is related to the presenter's topic
- Demonstrating mastery of the terminology of the field
- Being introduced by or producing bona fides from other established authorities

Pathos

Pathos (plural: *pathea*) is an appeal to the audience's emotions. The terms *sympathy*, *pathetic*, and *empathy* are derived from it. It can be in the form of metaphor, simile, a passionate delivery, or even a simple claim that a matter is unjust. Pathos can be particularly powerful if used well, but most speeches do not solely rely on pathos. Pathos is most effective when the author or speaker demonstrates agreement with an underlying value of the reader or listener.

In addition, the speaker may use pathos and fear to sway the audience. Pathos may also include appeals to audience imagination and hopes; done when the speaker paints a scenario of positive future results of following the course of action proposed.

In some cases, downplaying the *ethos* can be done while emphasizing *pathos*, for example as William Jennings Bryan did in his Cross of Gold speech:

> I would be presumptuous, indeed, to present myself against the distinguished gentlemen to whom you have listened if this were but a measuring of ability; but this is not a contest among persons. The humblest citizen in all the land when clad in the armor of a righteous cause is stronger than all the whole hosts of error that they can bring. I come to speak to you in defense of a cause as holy as the cause of liberty—the cause of humanity.
>
> — William Jennings Bryan[2]

Logos

Logos (plural: *logoi*) is logical appeal or the simulation of it, and the term *logic* is derived from it. It is normally used to describe facts and figures that support the speaker's claims or thesis. Having a *logos* appeal also enhances *ethos* because information makes the speaker look knowledgeable and prepared to his or her audience. However, the data can be confusing and thus confuse the audience. Logos can also be misleading or inaccurate, however meaningful it may seem to the subject at hand. In some cases, inaccurate, falsified, or miscontextualized data can even be used to enact a pathos effect. Such is the case with casualty numbers, which, while not necessarily falsified, may include minor casualties (injuries) that are equated with deaths in the mind of an audience and therefore can evoke the same effect as a death toll.

Examples of use

These rhetorical strategies are often used in political thought, speeches, newspaper articles and even in marketing. In a given text (or speech), a variety of devices may be used in concert in order to better persuade audiences.[3]

References

1. Aristotle. "Rhetoric by Aristotle, trans. W. Rhys Roberts" (http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.1.i.html). *The Internet Classics Archive*.
2. Bryan, William (July 9, 1896). "Bryan's "Cross of Gold" Speech: Mesmerizing the Masses" (http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5354/). *History Matters*. Retrieved July 28, 2014.
3. Hartman, Anna E.; Coslor, Erica (2019). "Earning while giving: Rhetorical strategies for navigating multiple institutional logics in reproductive commodification". *Journal of Business Research*. **105**: 405–419. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.05.010 (https://doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.jbusres.2019.05.010). ISSN 0148-2963 (https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0148-2963).

External links

- "Aristotle's Rhetoric" (https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/) entry by Christof Rapp in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*