

Murder to Excellence by Jay-Z and Kanye West uses loads of pathos, ethos, and logos to get the message across. In the first verse, Jay-Z already uses pathos by stating “power to the people, when you see me, see you” which motivates his audience by acknowledging that his success is also their success. He shows that he is where is now because of them, which is very empowering to hear if you are a fan of his. In addition, as this song moves forward, you start to become aware of the deeper, darker meaning behind it. The first line that really jumped out at me (especially from a pathos perspective) was in Kanye’s first verse when he states, “I feel the pain in my city wherever I go. 314 soldiers died in Iraq, 509 died in Chicago.” This is a very effective way of emotionally impacting the audience by showing that the homicides in Chicago are on the same level, if not worse than the deaths going on overseas in war.

When it comes to ethos, one line stuck out to me in Jay-Z’s first verse of Excellence: “I dress in Dries, and other boutique stores in Paris.” Clearly he is establishing credibility by saying that he buys expensive clothes in Paris because he is well off. He goes on to also say “No cheap cologne... success never smelled so sweet” which supports the same narrative.

The strongest use of logos that I found in this song was in the same verse as the previous example: “Only spot a few Blacks the higher I go, uh. What's up to Will? Uh, shout out to O, uh. That ain't enough, we gonna need a million more.” I like this line because it’s straight to the point. Jay-Z starts to realize that the more successful he becomes, the less black people he sees. Clearly, this is an issue in society and the way Jay-Z ends it by saying “we gonna need a million more” which adds a great call to action to society as a whole.