

# Arrogance of power review essay sample

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William J. Fulbright, a democratic Senator from Arkansas, was Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1966 when *The Arrogance of Power* was published. In an excerpt from Fulbright's book, he analyzes the misguided thinking behind America's global interventionism and its delusion of righteous all-powerfulness. These symptoms are a confusion of power and virtue. Fulbright defines the arrogance of power as, " a psychological need that nations seem to have in order to prove that they are bigger, better, or stronger than other nations" (2). William J. Fulbright uses persuasive appeals in his well structured book, *The Arrogance of Power* to help convey his views on U. S. war strategies. From the introduction to the conclusion, Fulbright has great use of persuasive appeals. Most of his work uses pathos or emotional appeals. In the introduction he depicts America not as a country, but as a woman. By describing America as a person, the beginning hooks the readers by boasting about America, " America is the most fortunate of nations" (Fulbright 1). This is a great use of pathos to draw in an audience. Fulbright states, " We seem to feel somehow that because the hydrogen bomb has not killed us yet, it is never going to kill us" (2).

He is appealing to the reader's emotions by planting a seed of fear in their minds. Fulbright uses the survival of the human race to embark fear as well. " Man ... for the first time, is in a situation in which the survival of his species is in jeopardy," is one of many sentences aimed at the readers sentimental sides. This same root of fear is used throughout most of the essay and thus is quite helpful in swaying the reader. Often Fulbright reflects back on past situations that have occurred, such as the Holocaust and the Cuban Missile Affair. By doing so the reader is reminded of how they were affected by that

situation. Whether the reader was just a child watching the television and seeing their parents affected by it, or if the reader was a soldier fighting in the war and personally affected by the situation, everyone can connect to these situations which Fulbright brings up. In addition to his use of pathos, Fulbright also has an excellent use of logos and ethos throughout the piece.

Fulbright lays out facts that “ the law of averages has already been more than kind to us,” and “ sooner or later the law of averages will turn against us” (4). Fulbright educates the readers on theologians, behavioral scientists, and humanists, explaining in detail how these fields play a role in the behavior of nations. In pointing out these facts Fulbright is appealing to the reader’s logical sides. William J. Fulbright uses ethos by using other sources to help further his position. There is a Canadian psychiatrist, Brock Chisholm, and two prominent authors, Aldous Huxley and Mark Twain, quoted to help supplement the Senator’s point that “ a radical change in traditional behavior is required” (Fulbright 4). Given Fulbright’s position as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he himself is a very credible source. The reader is much more likely to agree with Senator Fulbright on issues rather than to agree with an average citizen.

Fulbright is very blunt and matter-of-fact during this piece which helped make his point. There is not a lot of fluff to read around. In part to great transitions the work has a logical order to it which seems to build everything up and then little by little shows the flaws and eventually tears it down wholly. Fulbright not only offers a caustic critique, but solutions to the problem as well. He not only puts culpability on everyone else for not taking action sooner, but he also places blame onto himself as well, showing his

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fairness and objectivity to the matter. He points out several ideas that that could be made by any on who is in opposition his work. Through his use of persuasive appeals and the structure of his work, Fulbright has made a very convincing argument. Fulbright is very successful in addressing his thoughts and concerns on U. S. war strategies as well as persuading his audience to agree with him. By the time one has finished reading it they will not be able to help, but to agree with most, if not all, of what Fulbright has written.