

# Rhetorical analysis of three academic articles essay



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They say that writers cannot be truly successful without really harnessing the art of rhetoric. This statement appears to be true after reading and analyzing three academic rhetoric articles of Paul Roberts, John Ashcroft, and Patricia Williams, which shall be analyzed under the following categories: (1) purpose, (2) ethos, (3) logos, (4) pathos, (5) context, (6) tone, (7) depth of research, (8) process, and (9) position of argument. Paul Roberts wrote the first academic article in March 6, 2004, when it was published in the Editorial section of the Los Angeles Times (Roberts 555).

Entitled ' Running Out of Oil—and Time', the purpose was to convince readers that it is high time we solve permanently the oil crisis around the world and not to be too slack in thinking that there is still much time left in solving out this issue. This is because, if this is not solved, then “ competition for remaining oil supplies would intensify, potentially leading to a new kind of political conflict: the energy war” (Roberts 556). Ethos is persuasion through the writer's (or speaker's) personality or character (Carl D. Perkins Foundation 2005).

In the article, this can be found right in the foreword, when the writer was introduced to readers as the main author of the book ' The End of Oil: On the End of a Perilous New World', which was published in 2004 (Roberts 555). He was presented as being preferred by the Common Dreams Organization, which usually selects celebrities that highly promote “ progressive visions for America's future” (Roberts 555). His use of language, on the other hand, reflects a fair-minded presentation that is highly restrained, fair-minded, and rightfully equipped. Logos is persuasion through the writer's (or speaker's) logical appeal (Carl D. Perkins Foundation 2005).

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In the article, this is being scattered all throughout the argument, when the writer uses logic reasoning in the form of theories, scientific assumptions, denotative reasons, historical analogies, factual data and statistics, as well as the use of quotations and informed opinions. For example, in paragraph 3 he states the following: “ Since 1900, world oil production... has risen in near-perfect step with world oil demand. Today, demand stands at about 29 billion barrels of oil a year, and so does production. By 2020, demand may well be 45 billion barrels a year...” (555). All throughout the article—from the first all the way to the last paragraph—Robert’s strength in successfully bringing up a persuasive argument has something to do with his elaborate use of the *logos*.

*Pathos* is persuasion through the writer’s (or speaker’s) appeal to the reader’s emotion or identity. In the article, this can be seen starting in the initial lines, when Robert uses the word ‘stranglehold’ to describe Saudi’s possession of the world economy. He uses arguments that touch the emotions of the readers (e. g.

, anger), such as when he states, “ Western analysts have long feared that the Saudis and other oil-state leaders are too corrupt, unstable and bankrupt to step up their oil production fast enough to meet surging world demand” (Roberts 557). This may be because anger is a strong element that can energize people into acting deliberately as one. The use of context reflects a world that is about to tip and fall over a cliff because of simple negligence. He uses a tone that appears to be fair and reasonable, at first, to his fellow citizens—the Western society; yet if analyzed accordingly, after taking into

consideration all views of all states and races, it is very evident that the article is highly biased, partial and inclined.

This sets the position of argument settled only on the Western societies alone, with the purpose of unifying the Western society for them to act against the crisis of oil depletion. As for the depth of research, on the other hand, this appears to be very accurate—although with a bit of denotative definitions and meanings to go with the tide of his basic argument. As a whole, Roberts was able to achieve his basic purposes by appealing to ethos, logos, and pathos... and carefully restructuring the type of argument that would blend with the type of readers that his article would most likely have. The second article, on the other hand, is a speech delivered to the Senate Committee by Attorney General John Ashcroft in December 6, 2001 (Ashcroft 484). The basic purpose was to bring a report on the incidents of the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001 as well as its aftermath some 87 days prior to the said attack (Ashcroft 484); as well as to get strong support from people inside and outside U.

S. A.. It states that America must not be complacent to the attacks of terrorism (Ashcroft 485), and that defending the nation is now the “ first and overriding priority” (Ashcroft 486) of the U. S.

Government. Ethos can be found in the identity of the speaker—having been delivered by Attorney General John Ashcroft himself, who was one of the leaders that took foremost priority over the fight against terrorism in 2001. This high status, as well as his huge precedence over the people, can also be found in some areas of the speech like, for example, when he stated that he

was “ in an airplane with several members of the Justice Department en route to Milwaukee” (Ashcroft 485) when the incident happened. This can also be seen when he stated, “[A]t the command of the President of the United States, I began to mobilize the resource of the Department of Justice toward one single, over-arching and over-riding objective: to save innocent lives from further acts of terrorism” (Ashcroft 485). Logos can be seen in areas where Ashcroft used numbers to signify how serious the state of terrorism in America is: “ 189 were dead at the Pentagon. Forty-four had crashed to the ground in Pennsylvania” (Ashcroft 485).

This can also be proven when Ashcroft used logic in stating premises that are the (only) available options for the nation to choose from: either to hope that it could never happen again or to fight back and summon all strengths (Ashcroft 485). He also used historical analogies, factual data and statistics, and some informed opinions, such as the statement that America has grown stronger in the face of terrorism (Ashcroft 485). Unlike Robert’s style of persuading the readers or listeners, though, Ashcroft’s style does not primarily land on using the logos manner of persuasion. Pathos is the basic element continuously seen in Ashcroft’s speech.

With the use of emotions (e. g. , anger, love for country and liberty), he incessantly touches the emotions of the readers by describing in detail significant incidents that happened in the past 87 days; by talking about freedom, strength, and liberty; and by encouraging people that America has, indeed, grown stronger (and safer) in the face of terrorism (Ashcroft 485).

Pathos is the most basic element used in Ashcroft’s style of persuasion. The context of Ashcroft’s speech delivers a state of national catastrophe, wherein <https://assignbuster.com/rhetorical-analysis-of-three-academic-articles-essay/>

terrorists that carry high-tech machines, gadgets, and devices are tragically attacking the country. Thus, the tone is highly appealing to those Americans who fight for truth and liberty.

There is not so much depth in the area of research, since the overall purpose—aside from bringing a report and acquiring stronger support—is focused mainly on sharing the speaker’s beliefs, opinions, and viewpoints. The speaker merely wanted to reach out to people and acquire stronger support and assistance. Thus, Ashcroft uses a process that is highly pathos in its content. Position of argument is, of course, biased. Finally, for the article written by Patricia Williams entitled ‘ To See Or Not To See’, the basic purpose is set on presenting an argument against the new policy set by the Boston Massachusetts Bay Transportation and the like: “ a ban on all digital cameras, cell phones with digital cameras and camcorders from all military compounds” (Williams 499). It states that these types of policies do not just irritate people—especially those whose nature, beliefs, looks, and culture appear to be rather different—but that it goes against the function of freedom for people of all races, colors, cultures, and norms.

The only appeal to ethos that is available in Williams’ article can be reflected in the introduction, wherein the author is said to have written the book ‘ Seeing a Colour-Blind Future: The Paradox of Race,’ which alone sets the tone on what type of author Williams is—one that highly presents political and social issues in everyday reality. When it comes to logos, however, this can be seen on the way the author uses denotative meanings and statements, such as the line: “[p]rivate security firms have cameras guarding every inch of work and shopping space” (Williams 499). Also, the <https://assignbuster.com/rhetorical-analysis-of-three-academic-articles-essay/>

use of historical analogies, factual data, as well as quotations is ever present in the article. As for the pathos, this is seen on the way Williams uses true-to-life incidents on how people in America—usually the colored and ‘brown’ people—have been suspiciously tried out by the authority (499).

Antiterrorism is said to have performed a “sneak and peak” (Williams 499) routine that is, in fact, irritating and almost agonizing. Williams appeals to the reader’s anger in trying to persuade that the antiterrorism acts are against liberty and human rights. This she has effectively done so, as she mentions the life of ‘ordinary Americans’ (praying to God, beating spouses, molesting children)... pertaining to the nature of the colored people. Context, on the other hand, shows one where policies create the pattern for people—instead of people creating the pattern for policies.

The tone is almost cold and aloof, while depth of research is shallow and deliberately one-sided. The term ‘rhetoric’ pertains to “the art of speaking or writing effectively” (Carl D. Perkins Foundation 2005). It is “a product and a process” (Ramage, Bean, and Johnson 3) that aims to persuade readers into accepting the stated case, definition, or justification. By using strong and convincing arguments, the writer is able to successfully deliver a proposition that constitutes an action too huge for people to dream of executing efficiently for a time.