

# Money and its role in atlas shrugged

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## **The Meaning of Money Rhetorical Analysis**

The Meaning of Money appeared in Ayn Rand's novel Atlas Shrugged and was given in the book by her character Francisco D'Anconia, the owner by inheritance of the world's largest copper mine. D'Anconia makes the speech during a party in the book while the conversation of money comes up, after one of the characters states in relation to Francisco, " You know, money is the root of all evil, and he's the typical product of money." Francisco then asks what the root of money is, leading to his overall point that money is not evil, and rather it is a tool of exchange between human beings that allows for peaceful interaction. Examples of rhetorical devices used throughout the speech are repetition, personification of money, a high amount of logos, and smaller amounts of pathos.

Francisco demonstrates repetition in the first paragraph after he explains his reasoning behind why money is not evil. He ends the paragraph by asking, " Is this what you consider evil?" He then rewords the same question at the end of five more paragraphs in the speech. One quote from the speech that provides more context of what Francisco is saying before repeating the question is, " Money is the product of virtue, but it will not give you virtue and it will not redeem your vices. Money will not give you the unearned, neither in matter nor in spirit. Is this the root of your hatred of money?" By repeating reworded versions of this question at the end of each point he makes, he influences the reader and the other characters in the book to question their current beliefs of money, and ask why they hold it to be evil, when it can be described as such a noble entity. This is an effective method

because in order to persuade a person of an opposing viewpoint, one first has to make them question their own beliefs by being aware of opposing positions. However, in the quote above, Francisco mentions virtue and that money and virtue are two sides of the same coin. By asking the question later in that paragraph, he is in a sense insulting the people listening to his speech, by implying that they are not men of virtue, and that is the reason they dislike money so strongly. That can be an ineffective technique because when a person is insulted, they tend to close their minds and ignore most evidence presented to them, out of fear that it questions their character. However, the fact still remains that if a person is secure enough to not feel attacked, the repetition of questions does cause them to rethink their beliefs, either aloud or silently in their minds.

Another technique utilized is personification, which is one of the more effective rhetorical devices used throughout the speech. Earlier in the speech, Francisco states, “ It [money] will take you wherever you wish, but it will not replace you as the driver.” Stating that money can “ take” a person somewhere, shows clear evidence of personification. Much like a car, money has the ability to go places and can take a person along with it. Those places may be easy to reach with little effort or help needed, and some may be difficult to reach, and without money, some places are almost impossible to reach. However, a person is needed to guide money in the right direction, otherwise it could potentially go astray and lead to undesirable results. Personifying money this way is an effective method because it immediately guides the reader’s thinking to a person driving a car, as a result, they

become able to understand the comparison without the need for further questioning.

The next example of personification lies farther ahead in the speech is when Francisco states, " Money is so noble a medium that it does not compete with guns and it does not make terms with brutality." By this, Francisco intends to say that in times where the means of trade is force, money does not linger, rather it vanishes to find more peaceful societies where trade is mutually agreed upon. This use of personification is effective because it strengthens the point that money is not evil, because it would rather abandon the brutal society in which it currently resides, rather than compete with force, which Francisco and the protagonists of the book consider to be evil. It also strengthens the point he makes more clear later in the speech, that the time to choose between peaceful human interaction and violence is limited, and if a choice is not made soon, and money is not seen as the noble means of trade it is, violence will ensue, and all deals will be conducted at the muzzle of a gun.

The Meaning of Money is driven highly by its logos. Given the point being made in the speech, it is proper that logos is the most prevalent of the three appeals. Without logos, the speech would be less effective in its claims, and would not be considered one of the most memorable moments of the book. One piece of text that provides a good example of the logos driven argument is when Francisco says, " When you accept money in payment for your effort, you do so only on the conviction that you will exchange it for the product of the effort of others." For one to understand this statement, they must think if

they wish understand what Francisco means. His statement means that when a person receives money from an exchange with another person, the reason to take the money is so that that person can later on exchange that money for something else. Both parties in a deal involving money are better off than they were before the trade. The only reason to give up the money is to receive something of more value to a person than the money, likewise, for a person to give up a product, they must value the other person's money more than the product. It is this type of profound, yet simple thinking that results from a logos driven argument, and drills the argument across that money is not evil, and a major reason why it not evil, is because it allows for both parties in a deal to benefit.

Another example of logos in the speech is in the sentence, “ If an heir is equal to his money, it serves him; if not, it destroys him. But you look on and you cry that money corrupted him. Did it? Or did he corrupt his money?” This sentence's meaning is that if a person has gained their wealth through inheritance and is just as virtuous and as noble the money they have inherited, they will do noble and virtuous things with the money, and it will take them where they wish. However, if a person is not noble and virtuous, they are not worthy of the money they have inherited, and the money will take the person to terrible places, not because that is the nature of money, but because it is the nature of the person in charge of the money. By asking the question, “ Or did he corrupt his money?” at the end of the statement, it leads the reader to think about both the statement itself, and the information Francisco has presented about money earlier in the speech. While a person

may not fully come to an agreement with the statements being made, if it causes thinking in the heads of people, it is effective.

While the logos in the argument helps to make it as strong as it is, pathos is also used effectively to persuade. Francisco said within the speech, “ Run for your life from any man who tells you that money is evil.” Francisco believes that money is the binding agent of a peaceful society, and without it, nations fall to violence. His statement about running for one’s life when a person says that money is evil creates a sense of fear for the person who has had their mind opened due to the content of the speech. By using the word “ life” he shows how dangerous he believes a man to be who does not approve of money and its nature.

Another pathos driven quote from the speech is directly at the end when Francisco says, “ Blood, whips and guns—or dollars. Take your choice—there is no other—and your time is running out.” Blood, whips and guns are all meant to be together, and are one choice, while the other choice is dollars. One of the choices is violent and instills fear into the reader or listener, while the other choice, dollars, is a far less violent option, and if one were persuaded by the previous arguments, then he or she would see it as the better option. By also stating that there is no other choice, that refutes the question of other alternatives before it has the chance to be asked. The whole quote creates a sense of urgency with the way it is wrapped up. “ Your time is running out” makes the reader aware that the time to make a decision is now, and if procrastination is used as an option, it will be too late.

This method, while not as effective as logos, can be used to scare readers into the beliefs of the speech.

The Meaning of Money is both effective in spreading its message, while also being persuasive. It uses repetition to drill elements into the reader's head, personification to create a more simplistic image, logos to appeal to more open minded readers, and a bit of pathos to scare some readers by creating a sense of urgency. All of these elements along with other elements the speech contains come together to form an effective speech with the point of proving that money is not the root of all evil. Rather it is a tool that does not corrupt people, instead, people corrupt it.