



A STUDY ON ARISTOTLE'S RHETORIC

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ABSTRACT

It is the speech that makes humans different from other creatures in the Nature. It is the speech that keeps our society function smoothly. Whether it is a speech, a narration, an instruction, a teaching or mere conversation we use words. Mere words spilled out of our lips may not be effective but they can be made effectually powerful with the help of Aristotle's three persuasive appeals of Rhetoric. They are Logos, Ethos and Pathos. Aristotle proclaimed that with a right ratio of these three appeals a speech can be intensified and made as powerful as a missile. In this paper I would like to throw some light on the effectiveness of the three appeals of Rhetoric to improvise the art of using words that can leave a positive impact on the minds of audience. A Rhetorical Approach to our speech would modulate our ways of communication and give us fruitful results in convincing the audience. Aristotle's Rhetorical appeals are profoundly influential in making the audience to realize the facts of TRUTH.

Key Words : Rhetoric, Logos, Ethos, Pathos

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INTRODUCTION

Language choice of the speaker affects the response of the audience, because a speech is not mere collection of words, but it is the combination of various elements such as, right words with right expression at right time, vocal techniques, body language, facial expressions etc. According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle, the art of using language effectively to persuade the audience that the ideas of the speaker are valid, is Rhetoric. Rhetorical theories of communication have been effectively used in all fields ever since ancient Greece. They are still being applied today in

communication of various fields such as, Science, Public Speaking, Industrial Communication, Global Communication, Marketing etc. Aristotle has contributed a lot to bring on the positive aspects of the theories of Rhetoric. According to him, the effective persuasion is possible with three APPEALS. The speaker should be able to create logical reasoning, with his character & personality and to extrapolate the feelings and emotions of the audience while formulating his speech. subsequently the speaker would definitely bring the right impact on the audience. It is believed generally that. Rhetoric is the art of mere persuasion but according

to Aristotle it is an effectual tool to establish what is just and true. Several times it happens to be for the speaker to convince his audience the values of his arguments in spite of his full knowledge on the subject (Art & Sciences). He cannot leave the audience in doubt and especially in such cases it is essential that the speaker should establish credibility in the minds of the audience with his disposition and reasoning.

In his treatise on Rhetoric (360 B C – 334 B C), Aristotle defined Rhetoric as an act of observing systematically, the available means of persuasion in any given case. According to him (The Art of Rhetoric) Rhetoric deals with situations and circumstances with concrete background. Winetrowd says that Rhetoric impinges on all areas of human concern and it plays a large part in every method of learning and teaching as well. In his book Rhetoric, Aristotle expressed that Rhetoric is a tool of knowledge which can be applicable to any subject, from any universality of its basics to organized concepts. He recommended three important appeals of persuasion in the application of Rhetoric. In this present paper, I would like to throw some light on these three appeals of persuasion i.e. Logos (Logical appeal), Pathos (Emotions of the audience) & Ethos (Character of the speaker). Though each of these three appeals are separate, but can be combined judiciously to elicit maximum response from the audience.

OBJECTIVES:

I believe that the three persuasive appeals of Rhetoric are like old precious gems. The way gems can be incorporated in any jewelry to add more beauty so as these three appeals of Persuasion can be used in any field of language to induce more credence to the expressions. Through this paper I would like to evaluate these three appeals of Rhetoric.

Rhetoric is the art of using language with persuasion effect. It doesn't mean to influence the audience with powerful words and expressions, but it aims to improve the facility of speakers and writers who try to inform, persuade and motivate the audience in specific situations. It provides heuristics for understanding, discovering and developing arguments for particular situations.

Why Rhetoric?

Firstly, it is a tool to pursue the cause of justice and the TRUTH. For this we can take the examples of the speeches of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther king and Nelson Mandela, who always tried to pursue their followers to realize the TRUTH and they were successful in their attempts. Their speeches have the perfect combination of all the three appeals of persuasion.

Secondly, Rhetoric can be used to pursue the masses. It is not possible to persuade all human beings by means of logical or scientific approach. They need to be persuaded with more subtle ways. For this Oprah Gail Winfrey's Talk Shows and Aamir's show of Satyamev Jayate are good examples for the excessive application of Pathos as well as Ethos along with Logos.

Thirdly, Rhetoric is the most used tool to argue from both sides of an issue. This is a way to train people to identify the problem and be able to find solution as well. At debates and group discussions Rhetoric acts like a brilliant tool of judgment.

Lastly, Rhetoric can be used as a shield against verbal attacks. The present day politicians' speeches on TV are good examples for this.

Logos, Ethos and Pathos are the intrinsic parts of Aristotle's Rhetoric. An ideal speech will be one with perfect and effective implementation of these three appeals of Rhetoric with a genuine ratio.

Logos is related to the logic and reason in the message of the speaker. Ethos is related to the credibility of the speaker.

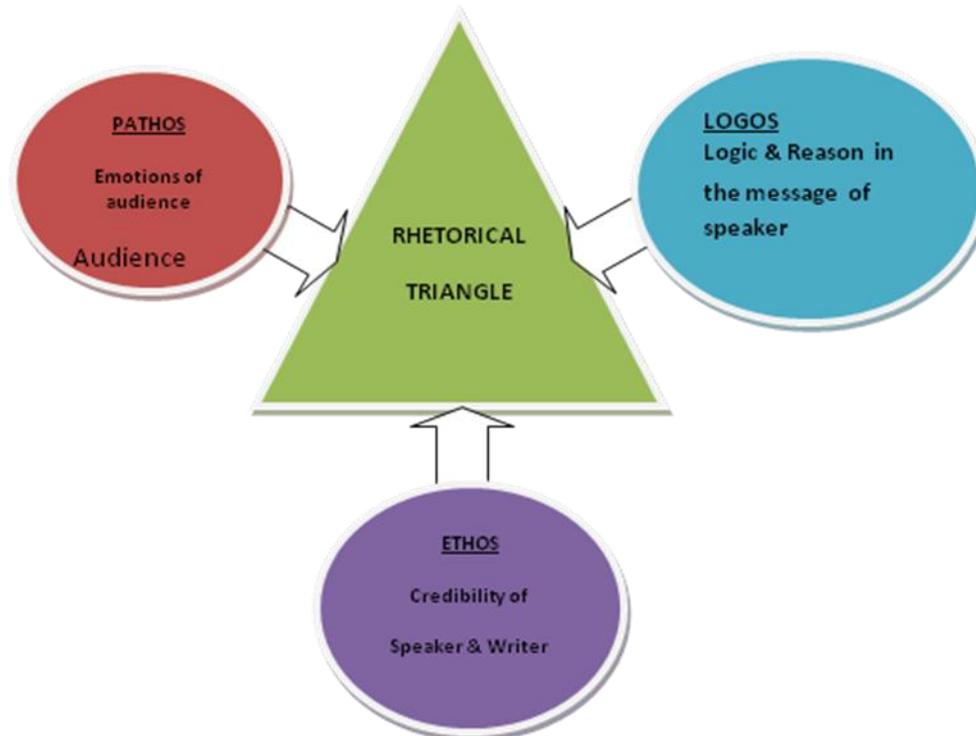
LOGOS: The English word Logic is derived from the Greek word Logos which means thoughts with reasoning actions. If a statement attempts to persuade the audiences with a reasonable claim and offering a proof in support of his statement then we can say that the statement is a logical argument. Logos has a broader idea than formal logic. Logos refers to any appeal to intellectual reason, based on logical conclusions. These conclusions come from assumptions derived from a collection of solid facts and statistical data. Though every argument depends more on Ethos (Character of the speaker) and Pathos (Emotions of the audience) but the academic discourses rely only on Logos. The argument that is constructed on the basis of the

Logos would bring long lasting impact on the memories of the audience as they provide statistical data which appeals directly to the intellectual reasoning. The principles of Logos depend on the statements of evidences, through which accurate conclusions can be drawn. As a Rhetor, one should gather clear, effective and genuine reasoning of

evidence to put forth the logical arguments. The consistency of the information should get its support from facts, values, statistics, Mathematical calculations and objectives.

Let us learn more about these three persuasive appeals of Aristotle's Rhetoric.

The Three Pesuasive Appeals of Rhetoric



An example of an argument that relies on the appeal of Logos is "Traffic gridlock in Delhi and other Indian cities is extreme. The average speed of the vehicle inside many cities is less than 20 km per hour and a 10 km ride can take more than 30minutes due to the congested roads with heavy traffic. At such speed vehicles emit air pollutants 4 to 8 times more than the emission at less traffic. This leads to more consumption of carbon footprint fuel by the vehicles resulting to more air pollution. Construction of more flyovers and widening of present roads in Indian cities can be one of the remedies to reduce the risk of increasing air pollution at Indian cities" – Notice that the statement has used some specific numbers and they sound pretty logical to convince the audience about the facts of air pollution at Indian cities.

Logos is a tool used to convince the audience to realize the truth and even the audience can use the same tool to understand the hidden truth in the words of speaker.

The tools of Logos are not absolutely related to Logic and Reasoning. It is necessary to combine Pathos and Ethos with Logos otherwise it may be difficult for the speaker to go ahead with his argument. Hence it is the responsibility of the speaker to use the right combination of these three appeals to bring in the right impact on the audience. To support the view point of Rhetor, it is necessary to maintain the balance of facts, reasons, statistics, examples and authoritative statements. A Rhetor must recognize the right method of reasoning and its limitations of that method.

The logical approach can be categorized into two methods of reasoning. These methods run in two opposite directions.

- Deductive Reasoning
- Inductive Reasoning

Inductive Reasoning of Logos:

Inductive Reasoning proceeds from specific area to the general. It collects the data of information regarding observations in the form of premises. This method is future oriented. It uses leading or relative mathematical reasoning. It also uses historical, mythical and hypothetical examples to draw conclusions. The most commonly used form of inductive reasoning is that we draw a general conclusions about all collective evidences of observed phenomena.

For example,

All birds can fly.

A sparrow is a bird. Hence, sparrow can fly.

But what about a penguin and kiwi being birds which cannot fly. The logical conclusion of the above statement is not entirely correct.

We use inductive reasoning many times but we must acknowledge its limitations because most of the time the inductive reasoning does not depend upon the comprehensive evidences. Its conclusion is only a prediction or an assumption. We cannot be right always with this method.

Deductive Reasoning: This method of logic is a three part deductive frame work in which the conclusion proceeds from the first two premises. Deductive Logic is a scheme of a formal argument consisting of a major and minor premises and a conclusion. It moves from general to specific area of premises. Deductive Logic is one that has a conclusion follows from the premises. To draw an acceptable conclusion with verity it is important to find out the source of its premises. The conclusion of a valid deductive argument cannot be proved wrong unless its premises is proved wrong. The truth and falsehood are dependent upon the verity of the premises. This method is past or present oriented. Its premises are already tested and through which a specific conclusions can be extracted about the past or present.

Whether that may be inductive logic or deductive logic, both need faith. An inductive logic needs faith

in its conclusions and a deductive logic needs faith in its premises. According to Aristotle Logical Appeal an important device to reach scientific conclusions. It can be universally accepted that Logos acts like a key to create a communication channel between the Rhetor and his audience. With the help of Logos one can mould their side of argument with unified, sufficient, and accurate reasons to arrive at the Truth which can convince the audience to believe what the Rhetor has said.

ETHOS: In The Rhetoric, Aristotle defines Ethos as “an ability for doing good”. Ethos is a critical element without which Rhetoric would not be functional. According to Aristotle, Ethos is defined as the credibility that the author establishes with his audience. It is a Greek word from which the English term ethic is derived. The meaning of Ethos here is different from our understanding of the word Ethical. Ethos is the audience perception of the speaker’s credibility and authority over the subject he is speaking. When a speaker presents his thoughts in front of the audience they would definitely think that- why should they believe him? The credibility of the speaker towards the audience can be acquired through his Personality, Character, Intelligence, Virtue, Good will, Being Just, Sensitive etc.

Intelligence can be acquired with subject knowledge. Right presentation of the subject includes the perfect combination of common sense and convincing ability.

The speaker becomes believable by confessing his beliefs, Values, Priorities in connection with the subject. Good will can be achieved by projecting speakers concern and respect for the views and emotions of the audience on that particular subject. Personality and Character go hand in hand and they have to be groomed well. It is said that Personality and Character of the speaker are nothing but the right amalgamation of the above said elements of the credibility.

Ethos has two factors

- Indigenous Factor
- Adventitious Factor

Indigenous factor includes the speaking & writing skills and Physical appearance of the Rhetor which are naturally inherited. These are the qualities

transmitted genetically. Even the natural inborn qualities also need to be nurtured well otherwise the Rhetor may fail to use them in an appropriate manner.

Adventitious factor includes those elements which can be developed with effort such as Education, Knowledge & Wisdom, Character, Expertise, Virtue, Righteousness, Temperance, Prudence, Nobility, Courage etc. These qualities have to be spruced throughout the life.

Both these factors influence the credibility of the speaker in the perception of the audience. A right impact on the minds of the audience can undeniably be implied with the words mixed with the radiant personality of the speaker. Such words become invisible weapons that would mend the thinking process of the audience towards the truth. Good examples for such speakers are Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King. It was not their mere speech that influenced the people but it their magnificent character interfused with their words brought such stupendous change in the people of their counties that led them to fight for their liberty. That is the power of Ethos. It has to be developed by the speaker if he really wants to become a Rhetor. This Rhetorical appeal is effective not only in public speaking but also in every field where language is widely used to persuade people towards the truth.

The audience should realize that the speaker is presenting the truth but he is not trying to convince that what he believes is the truth. This is possible only if the speaker's words reflect his Ethos.

We have a historical icon who used Ethos in negative sense to bring on the revolutionary change in the minds of his countrymen. It is none other than Adolf Hitler. He with his bombastic expressions and charismatic personality influenced the minds of his people in such way that they did not even hesitate to slaughter the Jews brutally by believing his reasoning blindly. I strongly disagree with the statement that Hitler was a Rhetorician because a Rhetorician uses words to bring out the unbiased universal truth but Hitler failed in influencing his countrymen in righteous way.

Irrespective of eons and fields a speaker must imbibe the appeal of Ethos into his character while presenting his speech to bring on the right impact

on the minds of his audience. This second persuasive appeal of Rhetoric incorporates the positivity in the minds of the listeners and makes them to churn their ideas and ignites the truth in their hearts.

According to Aristotle, to groom a personality incorporated with the characteristics of ethos involves a continuous and lifelong efforts. Martin Luther King followed the doctrines preached by Mahatma Gandhi. He lived what he preached. His personality was curved by the universal ethics and morals. With persuasive appeal of Ethos, when he said – I Have a DREAM, It brought a phenomenal change in the minds of millions of Americans that led even to the amendment of their constitution. And that is the power of Aristotle's Ethos.

PATHOS:

The word Pathos is derived from the ancient word for suffering or experience. Pathos is also known as pathetic appeal but its meaning is different from our general understanding of the word Pathos. It describes the speaker's appeal to his audience's sense of emotions and their interests. It is the third persuasive appeal of Rhetoric. Pathos means appealing to the audience by arousing their emotions. With the help of Pathos the speaker can get connected emotionally with his audience. According to Aristotle, "A man is by nature a political animal not simply because he possesses reason but also because he experiences emotions." Emotions of the individuals effectively influence their thinking stream. When Swami Vivekananda addressed the audience at religious meet held in America – MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF AMERICA, he received a significant applause from them and people still remember him because of his words as well as his deeds. According to me his speech is one of the best examples for Pathos. Emotions are powerful motivators to stimulate the hearts and minds of individuals to accept the claims of the speaker. Richard M Weaver a modern Rhetorician, claimed that Pathos is a God's term as well as a Devil's term. This is because Pathos is an emotional appeal of persuasion and emotions can be positive as well as negative. If not used intelligently by the speaker, Pathos may bring ill impact on the minds of the audience. Hence Pathos is called a double edged

blade that has to be used with care. The very purpose of Pathos is to arouse either heed or disdain in the hearts of the audience according to the situation so that a profound influence can be ignited among the audience.

The basic goal of Pathos is to meet the speaker's message to the type of character and to the status of mind of the audience. The emotions of individuals would not change the essential facts, but it is just a personal appeal to the individuals who are judging the truth in a situation or in some circumstances. This is because the form of TRUTH is very subtle and it varies according to the situation. For example, if a strong rich man snatches the bread of other man just to show his strength, his act is judged as unlawful but if the same thing is done by a hungry poor man, it can be judged as a fair act. One's judgment varies according to his / her emotions during that particular situation. Hence it is necessary for the audience to get connected emotionally with the speaker so that they can experience the real facts of the truth as the way it is being experienced by the speaker. The positive results of Pathos depend on the emotional dispositions of the listeners because emotions have the power to influence the stream of thinking of the individuals. Therefore it is the virtuous responsibility of the speaker to generate positive and productive emotions in the hearts of the audience so that they can realize and experience the reality of truth the same way as the speaker does.

A Rhetorician should be aware of various types of emotions. His should know when and how to evoke the right emotion. Though Aristotle has divided various emotions into seven groups, I strongly believe that classifying the wide range of emotions is a bit Himalayan task. But According to me there are two types of emotions.

- Intrinsic Emotions or Natural Emotions
- Intricate Emotions or Complex Emotions

Intrinsic emotions are simple and in built. They can be very easily understood and realized, such as happiness & sadness, love & hate, amiable & hostile etc. But Intricate emotions are quite complicated and very difficult either to evoke or to understand, such as jubilant, grudge, ecstatic, terror, lust, optimism, pessimism, thrill, horror, violent, euphoric

etc. To stir up these emotions with the power of words means creating an invisible nuclear bomb in the minds of the listeners. If used with skill you can bring a phenomenal and productive change but if not a holocaust would occur. Hence the Rhetorician should play wisely and responsibly with this persuasive appeal.

But how to develop the skill of Pathos?

According to me there are some effective tools to improvise the wise & wide use of Pathos in public speaking.

- Choose the relevant topic and develop the points logically with suitable words and effective expressions.
- Incorporate examples and metaphors which will suit to the topic to evoke curiosity among the audience.
- Narrate stories related to the topic because stories induce profound influence on the minds of listeners.
- Add the spices of humor into your speech as it always gives a tinge spark to the listeners to get connected with the speaker.
- Among all the five sensory organs, eyes are considered to be more powerful because they bring potential influence directly on the minds and hearts, hence use visuals or images related to the topic to percolate the real emotions among the audience.
- Along with the above tools of Pathos, an effectual presentation of the whole is essential for a good speech. body language, facial expressions, hands movement, vocal techniques etc. will add a great lot to the speech and bring the right result.

According to Aristotle, a Rhetor should pursue the audience with Pathos with great care. If he is successful in his attempt, he won't find any passive listener among his audience and would definitely motivate them the way he wants so that they can realize the TRUTH.

CONCLUSION:

Aristotle's Rhetorical appeals are like old gems. They can be incorporated into any jewel and any time. The three persuasive appeals of Aristotle's Rhetoric can be applied in any field where language is used because of its versatility, provided it has to be

remembered that all the three appeals of Rhetoric (Logos, Ethos & Pathos) are equally important. The ideal ratio of all the three persuasive appeals of Rhetoric has to be employed according to the situation to make the audience realize the Truth. A person who uses these persuasive appeals for his selfish mottos and may succeed in achieving it, will remain as a mere speaker or a pursuer but not a RHETOR. This is because Aristotle says a Rhetor always finds the possibilities to convince his audience about the truth, nothing but TRUTH.

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