

WRIT6001: Week 2 Seminar

Rhetoric for editors: A critical vocabulary

Lesson outline

1. Rhetorical appeals and triangle
2. Activity 1
3. Genres/types and canons
4. Activity 2
5. TEA BREAK
6. Rhetoric and editing
7. Activity 3

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Rhetoric

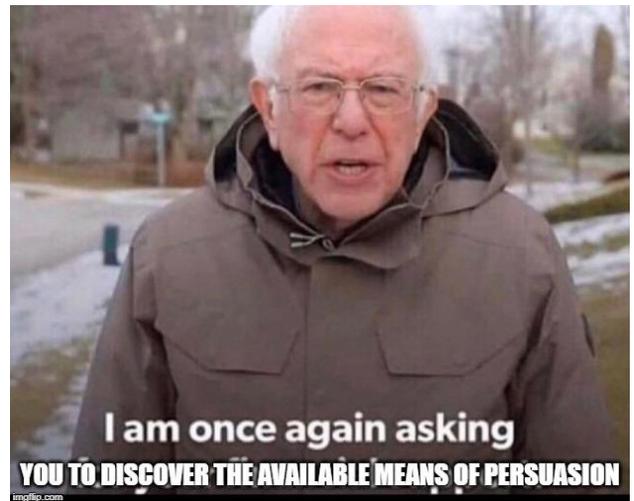
Aristotle, *Rhetoric* (4th Century BC)

The art of persuasion; originally applied to oratory and public address

Contemporary rhetoric has been more liberally applied as a model for explaining all human communication, and intellectual property

- That is, rhetoricians study communication as “influence” as well as “persuasion”

Other key writers: Cicero, Quintilian, and modern rhetoricians like Kenneth Burke and Chaïm Perelman



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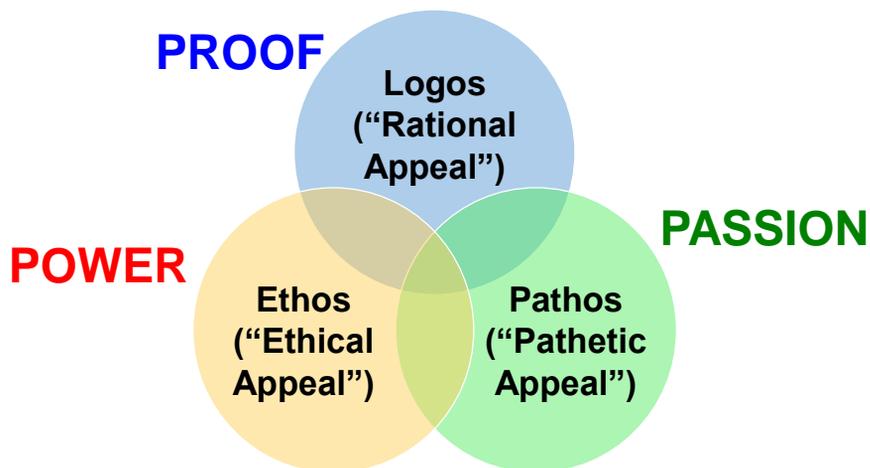
Means of persuasion

There are three means of persuasion, and they are the backbone of rhetoric:

- **PATHOS (appeal to emotion):**
 - emotive anecdote
 - emotive language
 - anything that inspires an emotion in your audience to persuasive ends
- **LOGOS (appeal to logic):**
 - causal argumentation
 - reasoning
- **ETHOS (your credibility):**
 - anything that demonstrates your character, knowledge, reliability, considerateness, reasonableness, strength of character, or any other quality people should listen to

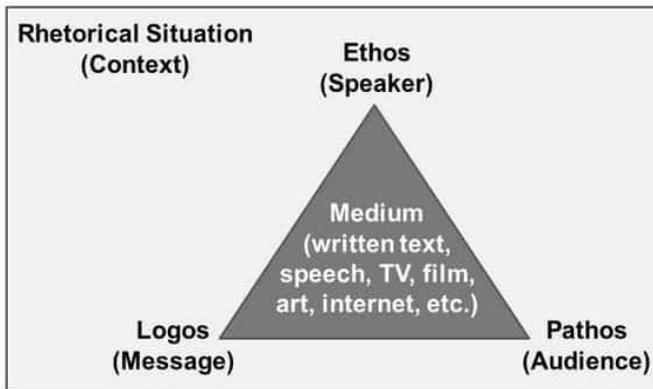
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How do we engage/persuade audiences?



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RHETORICAL TRIANGLE



The Rhetorical Triangle

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Activity 1: Appeals and situation

Locate examples of pathos, ethos and logos in the following excerpt (just the first page is fine).

https://www.bookbrowse.com/excerpts/index.cfm/book_number/1387/eats-shoots-and-leaves#excerpt

Consider the *rhetorical situation*, and decide if you feel it is correctly balanced between the three appeals to suit that situation. If not, what changes would you make?

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The Three Genres of Rhetoric

Sometimes called the three “species” of rhetoric:

- **DELIBERATIVE (the future):** *what should we do?*
 - e.g. political speeches
 - deciding what to do tonight
- **FORENSIC/JUDICIAL (the past):** *the meaning of past events*
 - e.g. court cases
 - writing history
 - causal arguments
- **EPIDEICTIC (the present):** *reflects/reinforces current values*
 - *(sometimes called “the art of praise and blame”)*
 - e.g. ceremonies
 - judgements of character
 - monuments

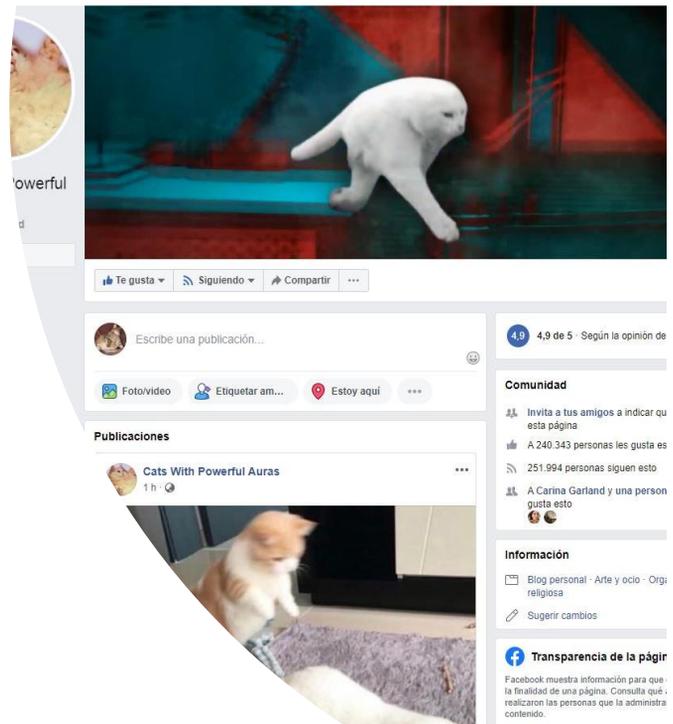
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Activity 2: Rhetorical genres

<https://www.facebook.com/powerfulcatgod/>

Write a short post on the discussion board responding to the following questions:

- What is the central idea, message or argument of Cats With Powerful Auras?
- To which of the three kinds of rhetoric does this page belong (deliberative, judicial, epideictic)?
- How would you measure the effects or effectiveness of a page like this one?



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Five canons of rhetoric

The rhetorical canons

These provide a practical guide and breakdown for both creating and editing a persuasive argument:

- **INVENTION:** what will you say?
- **ARRANGEMENT:** what order should it come in?
- **STYLE:** what kind of language will you use?
- **MEMORY:** how memorable is it (to you and your audience)
- **DELIVERY:** how will you present your argument?

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A rhetorical approach: using rhetorical concepts

5 canons of rhetoric	Current equivalent	<u>WRIT6001</u>
• Inventio—developing content.	Content	Select material (work with originators)
• Dispositio—arranging the text.	Structure	Organize points/findings
• Elocutio—setting the style.	Expression	Choose language
• Pronuntiatio—delivering a speech.	Design	Format/design
• Memoria—remembering the text.	Data storage	Tap into conventions

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More Useful Concepts in Rhetoric

- The “**rhetorical situation**” refers to the context in which the communication takes place.
 - Within the rhetorical situation, we might too refer to its “**kairos**,” which signifies the timing of a rhetorical intervention: is the time right for your message? Is there a best time for your message?
 - How is “kairos” useful for an editor?
- There is a difference between “**situated and invented ethos**.”
 - **Situated ethos**: when the audience knows the rhetor, they already have a reputation which informs their rhetorical acts
 - **Invented ethos**: this is what the rhetor does to build a reputation within their rhetorical acts
 - How might these concepts affect your decisions as an editor?
- An “**enthymeme**” is a rhetorical argument that is not explicitly stated, but inferred. Does the recipient help construct the meaning, or is it told to them? Enthymemes work on the power of suggestion.

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What does a rhetorical approach entail?

“...professional writers harnessing [a] rhetorical approach will focus on how effects are produced, what those effects are likely to be... and to what extent the effects intended by the writers can be supposed to match those desired, understood or interpretable by their potential readers” Anne Surma, 2006 p. 33

*For Surma, seeing public and professional writing in **rhetorical** terms necessitates an **ethical** (other-directed) and **imaginative** (future-directed) relationship to writing as ongoing, unfinished practice.*

This is a long way from a formulaic approach concerned only with ‘success’, though it still gives us a framework for thinking about how writing might be done better.

If we share this emphasis on relationships, the editor may be seen as representative of ‘future others’

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Rhetorical Theory and Editing

- What is your **rhetorical situation**, and what kind of rhetoric does it call for?
- Is the piece **overbalanced** toward one of the three rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos and logos)?
 - Remember that each rhetorical situation will call for a different balance
- Is the **primary purpose** deliberative, forensic, or epideictic? Where do the others support the primary purpose?
- Have you *reflexively* considered the canons of rhetoric? Have you considered how each changes the meaning: **invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery**?
- How does the visual rhetoric change the meaning of the text? (more on this in future lessons...)

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/27/what-are-super-spreaders-and-how-are-they-transmitting-coronavirus>

Read and evaluate the article “Super-spreaders” by answering Jarratt’s questions:

- Who speaks?
- To whom?
- About what?
- Within what context or situation?

In your opinion, does this piece achieve its purpose? Why/why not?

Imagine you are the Health Editor at *The Guardian*.

What advice would you give to the writer on how to improve this piece?

Activity 3: Rhetoric and editing