

A Study of Rhetorical Triangle in Malala Yousafzai's *I am Malala*

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Abstract

The paper attempts to study the strategic use of Aristotle's rhetorical theory, specifically focusing on ethos, pathos and logos in Malala Yousafzai's *I am Malala*. The memoir is an engaging and thought provoking read for readers everywhere since it covers universal themes of education, empowerment, resilience and social change besides focusing on the tale of a single person. The analysis explores Malala's establishment of credibility (ethos), emotional engagement (pathos), and logical argumentation (logos) within the narrative. Through Malala's inspiring story of bravery, empathy and reason, Aristotle's philosophy of ethos, pathos and logos finds deep application. The memoir acts as a call to action, encouraging readers to oppose injustice, defend human rights, and contribute to the creation of a more just and peaceful world.

The paper concludes asserting that Aristotle's principles of rhetoric are expressively apparent in Malala's memoir. These rhetorical devices are vital for effective communication as they enhance the pervasive power, clarity and emotional impact of language. The paper brings to limelight how Malala, the Nobel laureate skillfully employed the rhetorical devices particularly ethos, pathos and logos to communicate her message about education and women's rights. It reaches across the globe and inspires action and makes her autobiography a powerful and impactful piece of literature.

Keywords: Memoir, Rhetorical Triangle, ethos, pathos, logos, communication, human rights, social justice

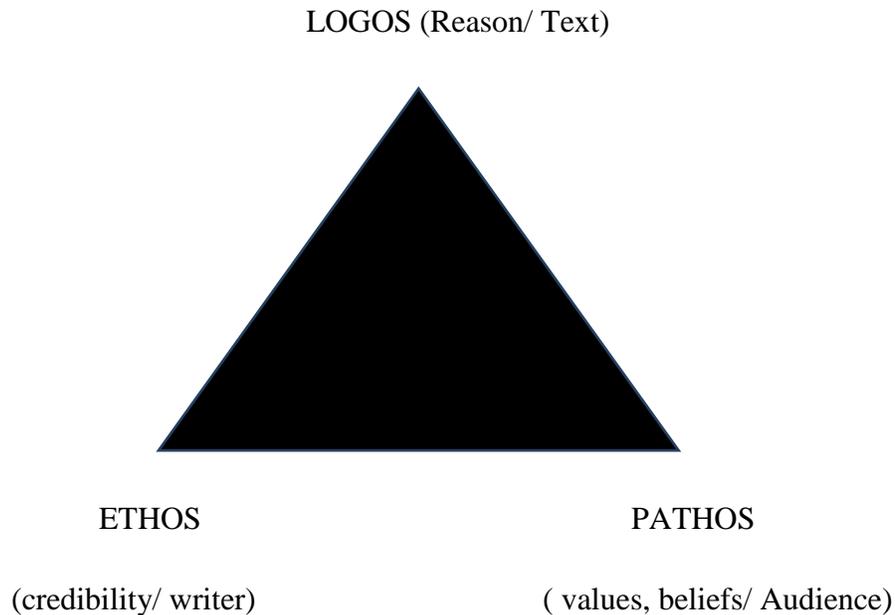
Rhetoric then may be defined as the faculty of discovering the possible means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever.

- (Aristotle 4)

Aristotle delineates “rhetoric as the ability to identify the many persuasive strategies” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). In his treatise *Rhetoric*, Aristotle examined the art of persuasion and determined that ethos, pathos, and logos are necessary elements of good communication (Aristotle 135). He stressed the significance of building rapport (ethos) with the audience, appealing to their feelings (pathos), and offering reasoned reasons (logos) to bolster one's claims. According to Aristotle, “A guy is a "sophist" not because of his abilities but because of his moral goals” (Aristotle 138).

Aristotle's rhetorical triangle serves as a strategic framework for persuasive communication, encompassing three key elements - ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos, the ethical appeal, focuses on establishing the speaker's credibility and authority by demonstrating expertise, integrity, and goodwill towards the audience. Pathos is the emotional appeal that aims to arouse empathy, sympathy, or other emotions in the audience by using brilliant language, storytelling, and imagery. Logos is the logical appeal which involves presenting reasoned arguments supported by evidence, facts, and logical reasoning to persuade the audience of the validity of the speaker's claims.

The rhetorical triangle is classically signified by an equilateral triangle, signifying that logos, ethos, and pathos should be balanced within a text. Ethos, pathos, and logos are placed at each corner of the rhetorical triangle, which was developed as a visual aid for conceptualizing these ideas. By taking into account how each component contributes to the overall efficacy of the message, this framework aids writers and speakers in analyzing and crafting persuasive messages. In *The Art of Rhetoric*, Aristotle clearly demonstrates that, “There are these three ways to influence someone. It is evident that the man who will be in charge of them needs to be able to: (1) reason logically; (2) comprehend human nature and goodness in all of its manifestations; and (3) comprehend emotions, or at least be able to identify them” (Aristotle 150).



Rhetoric and public speaking have benefited greatly from Aristotle's ideas into communication and persuasion; his rhetorical triangle is a useful tool for examining and comprehending persuasive language. Although Aristotle did not design the rhetorical triangle's graphic form, his examination of ethos, pathos, and logos set the stage for the development of the concept as a conceptual framework for rhetorical analysis. The two classes of ethos are personality and attitude. Aristotle explains that the speaker must not only see that the speech shall prove its point, or persuade, but also cultivate a particular character in himself and in the judge, as it is highly significant for persuasiveness. As a result, in order for the rhetoric to be convincing, the speaker must project a reliable public persona and use language choices that appropriately convey their position. "The speaker's personal character persuades us when the speech is delivered in a way that makes him seem credible." (Aristotle 47)

Many literary works and speeches serve as examples of the art of persuasion employing rhetorical devices that include appeals to logic, emotion and credibility. *A Modest Proposal* by Swift, *The Flea* by Donne, *To Kill a Mocking Bird* by Harper Lee are examples of art of

persuasion (Swift 15; Donne 22; Lee 84). The iconic speech of Martin Luther King Jr *I Have a Dream* utilizes powerful imagery, repetition and emotional appeals to audience to envision a better world. Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, Cicero's "In Catilinam" speeches and Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" speeches exemplify the use of ethos, pathos and logos to persuade the audience.

In the autobiography *I am Malala*, Malala Yousafzai establishes her credibility (ethos) as a voice for change, evokes emotional responses (pathos) to engage readers with her personal experiences and struggles, and uses logical reasoning (logos) in support of her arguments and influence her audience. Her story has inspired millions of people around the globe to support the cause of education for all and to advocate for gender equality. *I Am Malala* serves as a call to action for readers to become actively involved in promoting education, equality, and social justice. Malala's message resonates with readers of all ages, encouraging them to use their voices and talents to make a positive difference in the world.

Malala mobilizes support for her cause and spurs action by evoking empathy and compassion in her audience through her moving storytelling. Additionally, Malala's persuasive arguments and well-thought-out advocacy work demonstrate logos, the appeal to reason and logic. It considers the interplay and effectiveness of these appeals, as well as their influence on readers' perceptions and responses.

Logos is the thesis, and it is explicit and particular. The argument is backed up by solid arguments and reliable data in a logical way and well-reasoned order. She appeals to logic and reason, using facts, statistics and evidence to support her arguments for girls' education and women's rights. In her words, "Though we loved school, we hadn't realized how important education was until the Taliban tried to stop us. Going to School, reading and doing our homework wasn't just a way of passing time, it was our future" (Malala 137).

Malala brought life to the words of Ulysses and determined to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield. She states, "It seemed to me that everyone knows they will die one day. My feeling was nobody can stop death; it doesn't matter if it comes from a Talib or cancer. So I should do

whatever I want to do” (Malala 140). She embraces a proactive and determined approach to life, encouraging women to face challenges with courage and empower themselves.

Ethos signifies familiar location, tradition, or habit. Originally, this ethos was an appeal to the speaker's legitimacy or integrity. The audience or listeners may refer to it as the speaker's moral possession. The speaker uses ethos to persuade the audience that he or she is morally credible and possesses sound knowledge on the subject at hand. There are several ways to accomplish this, including appealing to the speaker's ethics or character, being a public figure with influence over the subject, or being a beneficiary of an interest in the subject matter. The level of trust that an audience has in a speaker is reflected in their level of ethics, which also indicates how trustworthy the speaker is to their audience.

In her memoir, Malala as a young Pakistani activist for girls' education briefs the difficulties she encountered and builds credibility. She gains the audience's trust and establishes herself as a reliable narrator by sharing her own hardships and victories. She emphasizes that she speaks for respectable Muslims and voices out for women's education. So points out to her father's words as, “I agree that female teachers should educate girls, but we need to educate our girls so they can become teachers” (Malala 97).

In rhetoric, another mode of persuasion is pathos. It refers to the use of emotional appeal to persuade an audience or evoke certain feelings. Pathos trusts on emotions such as pity, sympathy, anger, or joy to impact the audience's opinions and actions. It often involves storytelling, vivid language, and imagery to create a strong emotional connection with the audience. Malala explodes the life-force of women avowing that if people were silent nothing would change. She points out to the words of her father as, “No struggles can ever succeed without women participating side by side with men. There are two powers in the world: one is the sword and the other is the pen. There is a third power stronger than both, that of women” (Malala 98).

Malala articulates her father's core conviction that education is the core of a just and functional society. He identified ignorance not merely as a lack of knowledge, but as a dangerous

weakness that enables corruption and poor governance, making universal education a critical tool for empowerment and democratic accountability.

“He believed that lack of education was the root of all of Pakistan’s problems. Ignorance allowed politicians to fool people and bad administrators to be re-elected. He believed schooling should be available for all, rich and poor, boys and girls.” Malala advocates, “Let us pick up our books and our pens,” I said. “They are our most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.”(Malala 262)

The Nobel Laureate, Malala skillfully combined pathos, logos and ethos to communicate her message of activism, equality, and education. Malala gains the audience’s trust and respect by demonstrating her courage as an advocate for girl’s education through her personal experiences, which build credibility. Her emotive storytelling and vivid descriptions also evoke empathy and motivate action, forging a strong bond with readers. Malala appeals to the audience’s reason and intelligence by supporting her claims for social justice and educational rights with logical arguments and factual proofs. *I am Malala* clearly depicts the rhetorical triangle’s influential power in the art of persuasion.

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