

Pathos in Chapter 7 of The Great Gatsby

Zhou Xu

Soochow University, Suzhou, 215000, China

Abstract: Aristotle, renowned as one of the greatest rhetoricians, expounded on a novel means of persuasion named Pathos. This essay utilizes Pathos to examine Chapter 7 of The Great Gatsby, a literary work that vividly portrays the the new prosperity in the Roaring Twenties in America. The goal of this essay is to dissect the interactions of the main characters and explore how Pathos can evoke particular emotions.

Keywords: Pathos; The Great Gatsby; Narrative; Figure of speech; Delivery

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Objectives

In this paper, the focus is on identifying the methods of Pathos employed in Chapter 7 of The Great Gatsby and exploring how Pathos can shape a character. Tom's rhetoric is instrumental in transforming his wife's affection for another man into feelings of anger and hopelessness, which has broader implications for communication.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Definition of Pathos

Pathos is derived from the Greek word páthos, which means “experience,” “suffering,” or “emotion.” It is a component of the rhetoric triangle, of which the other two are ethos and logos. The Greek philosopher Aristotle introduced the concept of Pathos in his written work Rhetoric. According to Rhetoric, persuasion may come through the readers when the speech stirs their emotions.^[1] Another two writers describe Pathos as “Arguments that appeal to the emotions by painting vivid pictures and using honorific or pejorative language”.^[2]

2.2 Components of Pathos

In Rhetoric, Aristotle mentioned that “the man must be able to understand the emotions—that is, to name them and describe them, to know their causes and how they are excited”.^[3] In the phase of actualization, the strategies include the use of narratives (distinguishing be-

Table 1 Components of Pathos

Pathos	Orientation	the state of the emotion				
		the target				
		the grounds for the emotion				
	Actualisation	Narrative		True		
				Fiction		
		Figure of speech	Trope		Metaphor	
					Metonymy	
					Hyperbole	
			Scheme		Rhetorical Question	
					Climax	
					Repetition	
		Delivery	Oral		Voice	
					Countenance	
	Gesture					
Written			Punctuation			
			Text rendering			
			Image			

tween true stories and fictional tales), figures of speech (divided into tropes and schemes), and delivery methods. Delivery can be either oral, employing voice modulation, facial expressions, and gestures, or written, utilizing punctuation, text formatting, visuals, etc.^[4] This framework not only highlights the complexity of engaging with emotions in rhetoric but also offers a structured approach to mastering the art of Pathos.

2.3 Functions of Pathos

In Rhetoric, Aristotle concluded the advantage of Pathos: “Our judgments when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile. It is towards producing these effects, as we maintain that present-day writers on rhetoric direct the whole of the emotions. “It is of great magnitude that the speaker put the listener in the mode of emotion he has attempted to put on them, and when the specific emotion is aroused, the speech would be applauded more easily.

3. Analysis of The Great Gatsby Chapter 7

3.1 Description of the Chapter

In this chapter, four characters gather to pass the time on a sweltering summer day. Tom, the husband of the protagonist Daisy, is determined to expose the questionable methods through which Daisy's former lover, Gatsby, made an estimable fortune. Tom, a man of privilege, has long held a disdainful attitude towards Gatsby. Furthermore, in this chapter, he keenly observes that the two have recently reconnected and rekindled their romantic feelings. Tom has been outwardly courteous but insincere in his dealings with Gatsby; thus, it requires considerable effort on Tom's part to arouse Daisy's anger towards Gatsby.

3.2 Analysis Based on Pathos

3.2.1 Analysis Based on Narrative

A narrative is a discursive description of a real or imaginary event that has occurred, is occurring, or will occur^[5].

There is an example of Tom preparing Daisy for despair through narrative.

[1] “Biloxi?” He concentrated with an effort.

“I did not know him. He was a friend of Daisy's.”

“He was not.” she denied.

“I had never seen him before. He came down in the private car.” “Well, he said he knew you. He said he was raised in Louisville. Asa Bird brought him around at the last minute and asked if we had room for him.” Jordan smiled.

“He was probably bumming his way home. He told me he was president of your class at Yale.” Tom and I looked at each other blankly.

“Biloxi?”

“First place, we didn't have any president-.” Gatsby's foot beat a short, restless tattoo, and Tom eyed him suddenly.

During their conversation, they suddenly bring up a man and discuss how he deceives them into believing he is a distinguished guest. Upon further analysis, they conclude that he is posing as a student at Yale University. Meanwhile, Tom has taken steps to investigate Gatsby's background and has learned that he is not affiliated with Oxford. Both individuals have fabricated their own backgrounds. Another individual sought clarification on Gatsby's origins, and it was revealed that although he initially claimed to be from the Midwest, he later stated that he was from San Francisco in the West. These seemingly casual remarks foreshadow the later exposure of Gatsby's unethical actions and, to some extent, successfully arouse Daisy's disgust with such behavior.

[2] “Why? How could I possibly love him?”

“You never loved him.” She hesitated. Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she realized at last what she was doing and as though she had never, all along, intended to do anything at all.

However, it was done now. It was too late.

“I never loved him,” she said with perceptible reluctance.

“Not at Kapiolani?” demanded Tom suddenly.

“No.” From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot airwaves.

“Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl to keep your shoes dry?” There was a husky tenderness in his tone.

“Daisy?”

“Please don't.” Her voice was cold, but the rancor was gone from it. She looked at Gatsby.

By this point, Gatsby has successfully captivated Daisy's heart, and she has consistently maintained that she never loved Tom. However, Tom astutely reminds her by saying, “Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl to keep your shoes dry?” The Punch Bowl is in Honolulu, Hawaii, where they honeymooned. Through true narrative, Tom evokes Daisy's memories of their sweet days. Moreover, Daisy's friend Jordan previously recounted to Nick, the story's narrator, details of their honeymoon. It becomes apparent that Daisy was once deeply

in love with her husband, and that love still lingers within her. This statement is particularly effective because Daisy's tone lacks bitterness; she is moved. Tom has touched her heart once again.

3.2.2 Analysis Based on Figure of Speech

Tom pays much attention to the art of speaking, and he knows how to maximize Daisy's suspicion towards Gatsby.

Take the following sentences as an example.

[3] "He isn't causing a row." Daisy looked desperately from one to the other.

"You're causing a row. Please have a little self-control."

"Self-control!" Repeated Tom incredulously.

"I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that's the idea, you can count me out. Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white." Flushed with his impassioned gibberish, he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization.

"We're all white here," murmured Jordan.

"I know I'm not very popular. I don't give big parties. I suppose you've got to make your house into a pigsty in order to have any friends in the modern world. Angry as I was, as we all were, I was tempted to laugh whenever he opened his mouth. The transition from libertine to prig was so complete."

Both trope and scheme are visible in the paragraph.

In terms of trope, hyperbole and metaphor are evident. In a fit of anger, Tom exclaims, "Next, they will throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white." This hyperbole emphasizes the societal opposition to interracial marriage at the time, highlighting the vast difference in social status between Tom and Daisy. Additionally, Tom compares Gatsby's house to a pigsty, subtly criticizing Gatsby's behavior despite the acclaim for his extravagant parties.

In terms of scheme, consider the line: "'You are causing a row. Please have a little self-control.' 'Self-control!' Repeated Tom incredulously." Through repetition, Tom skillfully shifts the blame to Gatsby and effectively declares a "war" on him.

3.2.3 Analysis Based on Delivery

[4] Flushed with his impassioned gibberish, he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization.

After Tom's angry words rain down on everybody, he gets flushed. His angry countenance has scared the other people, and they dare not make their objections.

[5] "You have been seeing this fellow for five years?"

"Not seeing," said Gatsby.

No, we couldn't meet. But both of us loved each other all that time, old sport, and you didn't know. I used to laugh sometimes." but there was no laughter in his eyes." to think that you didn't know. "Oh, that's all." Tom tapped his thick fingers together like a clergyman and leaned back in his chair.

"You're crazy!" he exploded.

"I can't speak about what happened five years ago because I didn't know Daisy then, and I'll be damned if I see how you got within a mile of her unless you brought the groceries to the back door. But all the rest of that's a God damned lie. Daisy loved me when she married me, and she loves me now."

"No," said Gatsby, shaking his head.

"She does, though. The trouble is that sometimes she gets foolish ideas in her head and doesn't know what she's doing." He nodded sagely.

In this text, we can see how Tom achieves his goal. After knowing they have not met in these five years, he is obviously relieved and "tapping his thick fingers together like a clergyman and leaning back in his chair." This action suggests that he is not taking the situation seriously, indicating that Gatsby poses no significant threat to him. Furthermore, his "sage nod" reflects his confidence in their love, firmly believing that despite occasional reckless behavior, Daisy will always be there for him.

In addition, Tom's voice changes. After insulting Gatsby with the words "unless you brought the groceries to the back door," he "exploded." We need to recognize that, at this time, Tom is being upwind; and the amplified volume of his words conveys a sense of authority.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Major Findings

The essay has examined how Tom effectively stirs up Daisy's distress over Gatsby and fends off Gatsby's verbal assault using the method of

Pathos. This analysis considers narrative, figurative language, and delivery. Understanding Pathos is highly significant in our everyday lives.

4.2 Limitations

The author's limited access to resources may have restricted the comprehensiveness of the book, as they had only a few papers to refer to. Additionally, due to space constraints, the author focused on analyzing the chapter from the perspective of actualization, omitting the aspect of orientation. Both orientation and actualization are essential components of Pathos.

References

- [1] Ying Yuan. Readings in Western Rhetoric[M]. Suzhou: Soochow University Press. 2013, 47.
- [2] Crowley, D. Hawhee. Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students [M]. Boston: Pearson Education. 2012, 269.
- [3] Ying Yuan. Readings in Western Rhetoric[M]. Suzhou: Soochow University Press. 2013, 47.
- [4] Sisi Yu, Ying Yuan. A Systemic Approach to Pathos [J].Foreign Language and Literature Studies, 2017, 034(003);187-196.
- [5] Shenhav, S. R. Analyzing Social Narratives [M]. New York: Routledge. 2015, 12.