Stephen Antwi

Staniszewska- De Mott, Jadwiga

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Rhetorical Analysis of Emma Gonzales` Speech *We Call BS*

Emma Gonzales` *We Call BS* is among the most powerful speeches calling for stringent gun control. The speaker was a survivor of the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School fatal shooting. She addressed the National Rifle Association (NRA), government officials, gun attack victims, and the general public. The speech's purpose was to bring to the NRA and the government the perennial problem of gun violence in the US. Also, the speaker used the address to pay tribute to the victims of gun violence. She employed manuscript speaking as her delivery medium, as evidenced by the word-for-word restatement of her written speech. The speaker delivered this speech in Florida at a gun control protest. Gonzales effectively used ethos, pathos, logos, and Kairos to deliver an inspirational speech.

In her speech, *We Call BS,* Gonzales called upon the gun advocates to reconsider their stance on gun control. She called upon the government and NRA to enact stricter laws to govern, sell and use of firearms. Gonzales referred to the deadly Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, where seventeen students lost their lives. She blamed the lenient gun control laws in Florida that make it easy for the people to purchase and carry guns without licenses.

The first rhetorical tool Gonzales used successfully in her speech to persuade the audience is ethos – an appeal to the speaker's character. She successfully used ethos to create credibility so that her audience could trust her and accept her argument. First, Gonzales successfully employed ethos by identifying herself as a survivor of the horrendous school attack. Also, she showed that she is credible in speaking about the issue of gun control by noting that she is conversant with the United States law about guns because most of the time, she has been debating about guns. Moreover, Gonzales clearly explained her significant points and presented accurate information. Therefore, by Gonzales stating that she is a survivor of gun violence and demonstrating her knowledge of the United States gun law, she successfully used ethos.

The second rhetorical tool Gonzales used successfully in her speech is pathos – an appeal to emotions. An example of pathos in her speech is the repetitive phrase "We call BS." This repetition helps Gonzales appeal to the audience's emotions, making her audience care about what she says. For example, Gonzales uses repetition to make persuasive arguments in her concluding paragraph about the need to change gun control laws. The other example of pathos the speaker used is the narration of the interview she watched in the morning before attending the rally. She mentioned the interview to appeal to the emotions of adults on how they will feel if their children go through shooter drills.

The third rhetorical tool Gonzales used successfully in her speech is logos – an appeal to logic and reason. Gonzales supports her arguments concerning the need for the US to have stricter gun control laws using facts and logic. For instance, Gonzales mentions the shootingtracker.com website, which contains a database of the shootings in the United States but does not address the issue of gun violence. Also, Gonzales cites the examples of other nations like Australia, Japan, Canada, and the United Kingdom that have gun control laws. For instance, she notes that "Canada has had three and the UK had one, and they both introduced gun control" (1). The mention of these countries serves as evidence to back Gonzales` claims. The examples she cites are relevant to the context, and she clearly connects them to her arguments. Thus, Gonzales successfully employed logos to support her claims.

The fourth rhetorical device Gonzales successfully used in her speech is the Kairos. Gonzales made the speech at an appropriate time when the issue dominated the press. She also placed her thesis at the end of her speech, thereby ensuring that she kept her audience inclined to her speech. Furthermore, Gonzales effectively created a Kairotic appeal by offering her strongest points of evidence in the middle of her speech. Placing the strongest evidence in the middle allowed her to ensure that her intended audience was not lost. So, such timing was appropriate since she knew the evidence could have the greatest impact on her speech.

Concerning the language Gonzales used, it can be evidenced that she used inclusive language. Throughout her speech, the speaker used words like "us," "we," and "our" to unite the audience in speaking for stricter gun control laws. The speaker also maintained a stern tone in her speech to show the seriousness of the issue.

In conclusion, it is undeniable that Gonzales successfully used ethos, pathos, logos, and Kairos to persuade the audience. For example, she used ethos to establish credibility in speaking about gun control. Also, Gonzales utilized pathos to emotionally appeal to her audience, as evidenced in the phrase "We call BS." Likewise, Gonzales used facts and statistics to present accurate and convincing information about the need for the US to create stringent gun control laws. Accordingly, Gonzales tactfully managed to use rhetorical appeals to persuade her audience.

Work Cited

Gonzalez, Emma. "Florida student to NRA and Trump: 'We call BS'." *YouTube*, CNN, 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxD3o-9H1lY&t=2s.