



Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: English Group 1

(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: Logos assailed by Pathos: How does Wayne La Pierre's use of emotive language challenge Barack Obama's use of reasoning in the debate about gun control?

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Supervisor's report and declaration

The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters)

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

's interest in this essay topic grew out of her study of emotive language in media texts, part of a unit on the language of media violence in the Language and Literature SL course.

Finding secondary sources in print form was a challenge in Germany, so she had to order material from overseas, and use materials available online or through the school library.

counted the stylistic features used in each speech - the tables in the essay are the result of this activity. She also discussed attitudes towards gun control and the rhetoric used in political speeches with various American students to inform her awareness of cultural context.

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Assessment form (for examiner use only)

Achievement level

Criteria	Examiner 1		Examiner 2		Examiner 3	
	maximum		maximum		maximum	
A research question	2	2		2		
B introduction	2	2		2		
C investigation	3	4		4		
D knowledge and understanding	3	4		4		
E reasoned argument	4	4		4		
F analysis and evaluation	3	4		4		
G use of subject language	4	4		4		
H conclusion	2	2		2		
I formal presentation	3	4		4		
J abstract	0	2		2		
K holistic judgment	4	4		4		
Total out of 36	30					

Logos assailed by Pathos:
How does Wayne La Pierre's use of emotive language
challenge Barack Obama's use of reasoning in the debate
about gun control?

English Group 1

Supervisor:
Candidate Number:

Word Count: 3,958

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Introduction

This essay examines the question, 'Logos assailed by Pathos: How does Wayne La Pierre's use of emotive language challenge Barack Obama's use of reasoning in the debate about gun control?' The topic of gun control has been a strongly debated issue in the United States in the last years. It has recently re-emerged into the field of political interest since the tragic school shootings in the last year, such as the Sandy Hook school massacre, December 2012 during which twenty children and six educators were killed. Although there have been previous studies and analysis of Obama's rhetoric by for example Coe and Reitzes, there has been a lack of research on Wayne La Pierre's rhetoric. How it differs from Obama's and how this is significant in their approach to their target audience and goals makes the issue an area worthy of deeper investigation. The chosen research question allows exploring this issue on an objective level, analyzing the language techniques of both sides and how this reflects the gun issue as a whole in the US. Pro-gun control President Barack Obama and anti-gun control Wayne La Pierre, CEO of the NRA have ever since been struggling to maintain the majority of Americans on their side of the argument, this is evident through the use of their speeches and their different approaches to engage their audience. The used language in speeches is one of the main tools in persuading a population in a topic that affects a majority of the American Society. While La Pierre focuses on Pathos, the appeal to the audiences' emotion, Obama uses the approach of Logos, which is the appeal to reason. Both of these appeals are reflected in their speeches and relate to their goals and values in the debate.

Background Information

In order to understand the importance of the current gun issue in the United States, one needs to be able to understand the American Psyche, their national history and their laws. A part of the U.S. Constitution is the 2nd Amendment which states: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed"(US Const.). Although the language of this statement is unclear and could be interpreted in different ways, it gives Americans the freedom to believe that they are allowed to own guns by law. This argument is also used as the body of proof for gun owners and builds up the base for their discussion, reinforcing the complex position of guns in American society. "Guns are a powerful presence in American life -- and an equally potent symbol in the American psyche" journalist Pythia Peay claims. Guns have been present in American society for hundreds of years; it is part of the culture, family and political beliefs. Guns are a symbol that is linked to American values of freedom, individuality and liberty (Peay). These values are deeply rooted in American Society, which is the reason why politicians such as Obama are having difficulties in establishing stricter gun control laws. There seems to be a glorification of violence, which is enforced by guns in this society, creating a cycle of violence. These issues have been strongly debated over the last year, ever since the school massacre, and values are deeply embedded in the leader's use of language in their speeches.

Barack Obama's Speech – Press Conference December 19th 2012

Obama was one of the first politicians to deliver a speech directly following the Newtown massacre. It clearly reflects the goals of the White House after the tragedy and suggests future planning on the issue of gun control. Obama's main goal seems to bring change and awareness into a country that has a strong emotional attachment to their Constitution. As the president of the United States, it is his obligation to represent the majority of the country and take measures in not only the best interest of the nation's security, but also in the best interest of the vast majority of the American population. He has to express himself in an objective manner.

Obama uses the rhetorical style of Logos, the appeal to reason, to persuade his audience. The most commonly used rhetorical features in the speech are: alliteration, repetition, inclusive language and tricolon. Coe and Reitzens found that Obama's rhetorical approach and emphasis on certain topics is dependent on the speaking context such as poll position, state disposition or state competitiveness and usually consists of rhetorical themes such as policy appeals, morality appeals and factious appeals (Coe and Reitzes 394-396). Although they mention that there is also a strong focus on appeals of values, patriotism, religion and family in his rhetoric, the Press Conference shows fewer of these Pathos appeals and more Logos.

Table 1
Rate of stylistic features used by Obama in Press Conference

Alliteration	IIIIIIIIII
Repetition	IIIIIIII (IIIII ANAPHORA)
Rhetorical Questions	I
Pathos	IIIII
Inclusive Language	IIIIIIIIII
Tricolon (sentence structure)	IIIII (II Enumeration)
Dramatic Adjectives	III
Logos	III
Personification	I
Antithesis (Contrast)	IIIII

Tricolons are applied as a rhetorical tool that helps create rhythm and an emphasis on a certain point of focus. It gives the argument a shape and a focus on organization as well as an appeal to order, for example: "I will be putting forward very specific proposals. I will be talking about them in my State of the Union and we will be working with interested members of Congress to try to get something done". It is a good example of a tricolon due to the relation to context. Obama talks about his future plans for improvement, using a tricolon in this context gives the sentence a strong appeal to a plan which sounds more convincing to the audience.

Antithesis relies on the concept of: "to be or not to be". Instead of only giving one solution or one viewpoint of a concept, it gives two (Boundless). Obama used it when talking about the tragedy: "We may never know all the reasons why this tragedy happened. We do know that every day since, more Americans have died of gun

violence. We know such violence has terrible consequences for our society”. The beginning of the sentences “We may never know” and “We do know” show a contrast, a negative start following by a positive outcome. It shows a problem that is then followed by a solution. An antithesis allows Obama to show a conflict that follows with a possible solution in order to increase feelings of hope, unity and the search to a solution and give the audience a full view on the issue (Boundless). Antithesis is a commonly used feature in political speeches. Former president Kennedy said: “Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate” he makes his claim more memorable to the audience, while displaying his opinion on an issue (HubPages).

Repetition and Anaphora serve as tools of rhythm, memory and emphasis (Boundless). Both features make what is being said more memorable to the audience. Obama creates a strong emphasis on the phrase “A majority of Americans support...” by repeating it. “A majority of Americans support banning the sale of military-style assault weapons. A majority of Americans support banning the sale of high-capacity ammunition clips”. By using this he is trying to convince his audience that he represents the opinions of most Americans in the issue over gun control. He is emphasizing this point and making it more memorable to the audience by repeating it. It could be interpreted as Logos due to the factious appeal although it could also be seen as a tool to create national agreement or peer pressure, which could be considered Pathos.

“...Three days since we gathered as a nation to pray for the victims, and today a few more of the twenty small children and six educators who were taken from us will be laid to rest”, is the first phrase of Obama’s press conference speech. Although it includes elements of Pathos such as patriotism, it also has a link to Logos. Obama starts his speech with an appeal to facts and reasoning mixed with emotion in order to start the speech with a focus on the most recent occurring. By using inclusive language he creates a sense of national unity, showing that although there are people with different political persuasions, there are certain topics that one cannot but be objective about such as a mass shooting in a primary school.

An example of inclusive language applied in Obama’s speech is when he says: “And I would hope that our memories aren’t so short that what we saw in Newtown isn’t lingering with us, that we don’t remain passionate about it only a month later”, this is an example of the President using inclusive language to include the whole nation, not only a minority group, in his thoughts. It is certainly a plus point in contrast with La Pierre because while Obama represents the whole nation, La Pierre only represents the NRA, meaning that Obama has a bigger appeal to more people whereas La Pierre’s audience is more limited.

Figure 1 – Visual of President Obama at the Press Conference after the Sandy Hook shooting



The visual and sensory details of how a leader represents himself in speeches, is likely to have an impact on how well he is accepted by his target audience. Obama's speech took place in the White House to a limited amount of people: journalists. Behind Obama is a placed sign of the White House as well as the national flag and the flag of the White House (MacAskill). Showing these certain symbols of patriotism, power and national unity through identity when talking about a national crisis, widens the target audience to every citizen of the country. At the beginning of the speech, Obama was followed by vice president Joe Biden, who stood next to Obama until the Question and Answer session began. The fact that Biden accompanied Obama may show how several people are taking responsibility by demonstrating the seriousness and determination of attempting to find a solution to the issue. Together with the determination shown in the context of the speech and the visual that shows support and seriousness from the White House, Obama reflects a positive image to his target audience, supported by the tone addressed in his speech, which remains neutral and un-provocative.

Wayne La Pierre's Speech - CPAC NRA May 3rd 2013

When listening to La Pierre's speech, the applied tone grabs the audience's attention. The speech is very different from Obama's. Although the same issue is being discussed, the rhetorical approach is very different. La Pierre uses rhetorical devices that can be interpreted as having an emotional appeal to the audience. He uses inclusive language, the use of dramatic adjectives, rhetorical questions and repetition to persuade his audience in his struggle over gun control. As the CEO of the NRA, La Pierre only has limited power and influence over the American Population. He seems to try to win over the population by applying elements of Pathos in his speech that are based on national and patriotic values as well as individual rights, originating from the 2nd Amendment, values that seem to be a weak point in the American Psyche. By reflecting these values in his speech he focuses and relies more on Pathos than Logos

and in this way tries to win over the population by applying to values that are deeply enrooted in the countries' Psyche.

Table 2
Rate of stylistic features used by La Pierre in CPAC speech

Alliteration	IIIIIIII
Repetition	IIIIIIIIII
Rhetorical Questions	IIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
Pathos	IIIIII
Metaphors	
Inclusive Language	IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
Enumeration	IIII
Dramatic Adjectives	IIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
Contrast	II

Throughout La Pierre's speech, he continually repeats the word 'crazy' as well as 'insane'. Both of these words are dramatic adjectives; by constantly repeating the idea that the White House and anti-gun supporters are 'crazy' it creates a certain mindset in the listener. His supporters are most likely to agree while non-supporters are most likely to be offended. This use of adjectives creates a dramatic effect on the audience, having a strong appeal to the audience's emotions. The use of the word 'crazy' can also be considered as colloquial language, which distinguishes itself from Obama's use of diction and tone. The decision to apply colloquial language in his speech could be due to various reasons, one of them being the target group. The use of language in his speech is most likely to represent a common value or belief of a certain group in the population, in this case being pro-gun supporters. By calling his opposition crazy, La Pierre draws a clear line that separates the two sides. By the end of the speech one of the more enforced ideas in the audience will be the idea of the opposition being crazy.

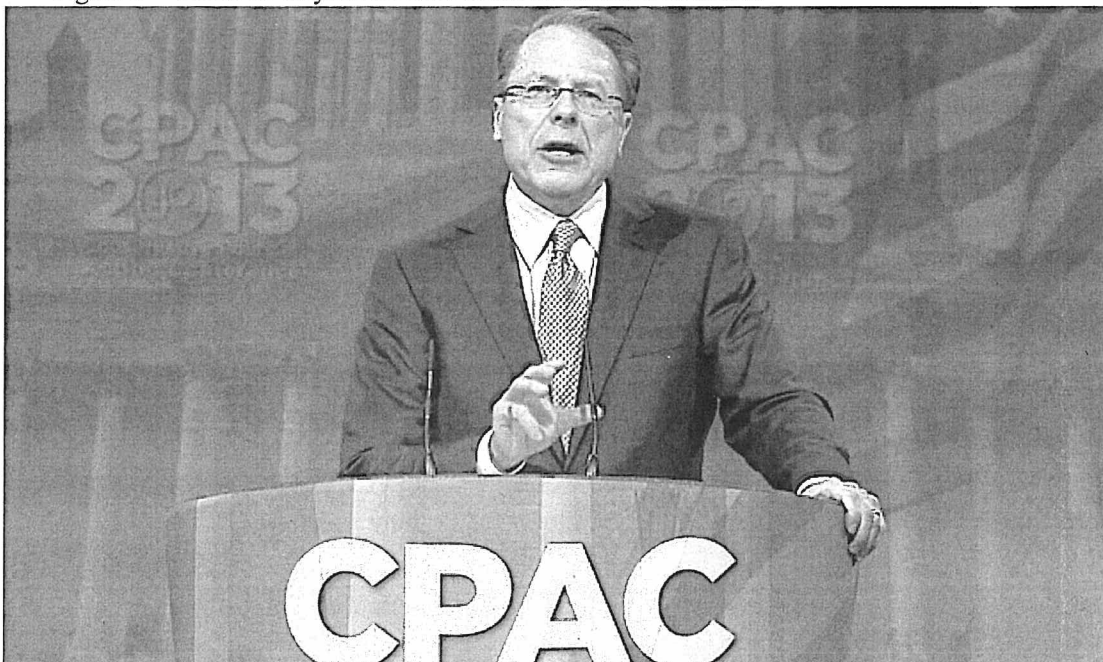
By having made this clear line between him and the opposition, La Pierre further enhances this separation through his sarcastic tone in his rhetorical questions. "And they call us crazy? They say we're the problem?" Not only does the rhetorical question strongly emphasize his point, it makes it more memorable to his audience creating a sense of acceptance and agreement. Rhetorical questions have a dramatic and persuasive effect on the audience, and Wayne La Pierre clearly and intentionally provokes his audience by constantly repeating this (Petty). The most frequent rhetorical feature in his speech is the rhetorical question, a permanent feature in his speech. "But the powerful elites, who will always have their own security, called our proposal absurd. You know what's really absurd? Not protecting our children at school." He includes the audience in his argument, by calling it 'our proposal', and again has a strong focus on Pathos by including dramatic adjectives and making references to child protection. "That's their answer?" asks La Pierre when talking about alternatives for protection recommended by the White House. The tone is rough

and sarcastic; creating a sense of humor under his supporters that pulls the opposing side into ridicule.

Repetition is a popular tool for political speeches; a famous example of it would be in Martin Luther King's speech 'I have a dream'. It enforces an idea and is memorable to the audience. The audience without any conscious effort remembers basic concepts of the speech through repetition. Repetition links to memorization (Boundless). When La Pierre uses repetition for the word 'crazy' it is evident that it is being used often to give the speech a certain atmosphere, tone and fluidity. What La Pierre does by using repetition in his speech, is build up tension. In his speech he repeats "we all" and "we want" stating the things that they want to change or not to change, he then continues with repeating "they would" in the next paragraph, showing that they believe that the 'others' should do something but are not, and finally another paragraph with only instructional language ending with the sentence "And for God's sake, leave the rest of us alone!" This shows how La Pierre uses repetition to build up an argument, to emphasize the goal of the speech, to give the speech a rising momentum and then coming back to the final point of the speech.

La Pierre uses the appeal to emotive language, called pathos, several times in the speech (Edlund). "There isn't a mom or a dad anywhere who wouldn't feel better seeing a police car in the parking lot when they drop their kids off at school" or "There's not a mom or a dad in America who wants to leave their child unprotected" he appeals to the audience's emotions by including the security of their children and the concept of family. By repeating this idea in his speech, it borders on manipulating the audience with things that are of sentimental value (Edlund). Noticeable is again the use of diction and colloquial language such as in the word 'mom', applying to his target group. By talking to the audience in terms of "our" and "we" La Pierre creates a personal bond between the audience and him, emphasizing partnership and unity while separating them from the opposition. "They know better than we do and if we dare disagree, they scorn us, demonize us and try to shut us up. We will not be demonized, we will not be silent" What is evident in this statement is the use of inclusive language as well as colloquial language, which could apply to his target audience.

Figure 2 – Visual of Wayne La Pierre at the CPAC 2013 in March



The visual image of Wayne La Pierre at the CPAC shows clear differences to the one of Obama. La Pierre's conference took place in Washington, D.C. Although both conference set place in the capital city, La Pierre's conference appeals to a far more limited target group. The visual shows that La Pierre represents conservative values and the NRA, however he does not represent the USA as a nation. There is no American flag in the background (Dalseide). By addressing the audience in a sarcastic and provocative tone when talking about the opposing side, La Pierre is limits his target audience to conservatives and gun-owners. His goal however, may not be to widen his target audience, but to tighten the unity amongst his followers. In this way, the tone and use of diction addressed help him to create a group identity that clearly draws a line between pro-gun control and anti-gun control supporters.

Compare and Contrast of Language Techniques

Obama and La Pierre have one main difference in their linguistic techniques, which is the use of Pathos and Logos. The applied rhetorical devices are based on these two different structures. While La Pierre uses rhetorical speeches such as repetition, rhetorical questions, dramatic adjectives and inclusive language which are all devices that focus on the emotive part of language, President Obama mostly uses devices that relate to the structure, organization and reason, such as alliteration, tricolon and antithesis. This is a main difference since it reflects the leader's values about the topic.

Another difference in their speeches is their popularity on the Internet. While La Pierre's speech is a bigger speech at the CPAC and is entirely focused on the gun issue, Obama's speech is a rather small press conference that focuses on several other topics such as health care, the economy, etc. By looking at the YouTube views on each video, one can see that La Pierre's speech seems to be more popular, having around 1.7 million views if taking all videos in account, while Obama's speech only having around 10,000 views. The statistics show a great difference in speech popularity, it is however questionable why this is so. This could be linked to the use of tone and diction in the speeches. The repetition of the word 'crazy' and the provocative tone in La Pierre's speech make it memorable to the audience, increasing the probability of other's showing interest in it. Obama, in contrast, remains a neutral tone, not having anything especially remarkable in his speech. This could explain the difference in popularity as well as the effect of La Pierre's persuasion on the general public.

However, they share certain devices in their speeches that are applied differently. Both leaders use inclusive language, however it seems as if their goals and reasons for this vary. By analyzing La Pierre's speech one notices that the main reason why inclusive language directly corresponds with the bond he is trying to create with the audience. Especially the use of 'us' enhances the idea that both the audience and him are fighting together. The separation of "them" and "us" in his speech is strong and reflects his values as well as the national values of anti-gun control believers. It reflects the admiration for the second amendment of the Constitution and symbolizes the separation of the government and the people. The

fact that Americans place so much value in individual freedom and liberty, and that these values are challenged by the government and new possible laws regarding gun control. On the other hand, Obama seems to be using the rhetorical device due to being the President and having to represent the whole country. Notably, both leaders use the same phrase “The vast majority of Americans agree...” showing that they believe that they are representing the majority of Americans, which could explain why they use inclusive language, to convince people of theirs as the better ideology.

Which style of rhetoric is more successful in persuading the audience?

How does this difference in rhetoric show who's leading the gun debate? By analyzing both speeches one can judge for themselves on which one would be more convincing and persuasive. Although this also has to do with previous beliefs and context, one notices that one style of rhetoric seems more appealing. The language is more daring, more direct and provocative, it catches one's attention immediately. That style of rhetoric would be the one of Pathos. Pathos appeals to the emotions, and although Obama also uses pathos several times in his speech, La Pierre's speech is based on the concept of Pathos. This is visible through his use of stylistic features, but also through the context that the speech is based on: individual rights and freedom. His speech appeals to national and patriotic values of the audience and the use of rhetoric in his speech enforces this. By focusing his speech on these commonly shared values in the USA, he manipulates his audience and using it in his favor.

On the other hand, Obama's speech is based on the concept of reason. One might believe that this side of the argument might be stronger, it appeals to reason, security and structure. However, Pathos is stronger in this sense, it relates to people's national rights, that not even the President of the United States can take away from them. This shows and reflects who is leading the gun debate. Ever since the Sandy Hook Shooting, Obama and the Democratic Party have been working to enforce stricter gun control laws, however this was unsuccessful. Change will only occur once the American psyche about guns changes, and their security becomes more important than their national values. Although Obama sets up a reasoned argument that relies on security and common sense, he will not easily be able to convince Americans to give up a constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

Conclusion

From the previous points made, one can say that Obama's and La Pierre's style and technique of speech are very different. This is due to the different goals and values that they embody. Saying who is most successful in their rhetoric and in persuading their audience differs on who is judging, however one can say that Pathos might be more powerful than Logos in winning over the audience's minds. This is evident from the close analysis of features in the two speeches and their purpose. Pathos appeals to one's emotions, and in this case, to the American nationalism which is an essential part in their Psyche.

Although Obama builds up a structured and logical argument that appeals to reason that tries to represent the majority of the country, it seems as if this argument is not as strong as Pathos in this case. A good way to persuade the audience and being able to take action would be through a combination of Pathos, Logos as well as Ethos, as Aristotle claimed (Edlund). Although this is a language issue, there are other reasons that could explain why Wayne La Pierre is leading the gun control debate. Political beliefs as well as the population's psyche that holds strong traditional values could be explanations for his leading position. The main point certainly lays in the Constitution, the fact that laws that have been around since the independence of the USA cannot be changed easily.

It is hard to bring change into a culture that relies so strongly on certain aspects of their Constitution and tradition. This shows a contrast, because although the leading political party in the United States is the Democratic Party, the wish for change is smaller than expected which reflects the values of the Republicans. This is a reflection of the deep American psyche about individual rights, traditions and freedom. These values are not likely to change in the near future, meaning that laws about gun control are also most likely not to change either.

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Note – Both tables originate from own investigation