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## Healing the Cartesian Split: Understanding and Renewing Pathos in Academic Writing

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Healing the Cartesian Split:  
Understanding and Renewing Pathos in Academic Writing

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
Brigham Young University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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## ABSTRACT

### Healing the Cartesian Split: Understanding and Renewing Pathos in Academic Writing

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There have always been rogues who dared to go against the traditional “intellectual” writing style of science and academia, a style that seems bent on transcending the “merely personal.” Those who take this risk are embracing the rhetorical tradition of pathos, one that goes as far back as Aristotle. Current academic trends support a genre devoid of pathos and lacking true ethos—a deviation from classic rhetoric, and one that supports the Cartesian split of mind-body dualism. Neurological studies done by Antonio Damasio and others suggest that a holistic view is a more accurate picture of how a human soul functions. Philosophy and psychology support this same perspective, proving that the opposite of logic is not emotion: the opposite of logic is illogic. By the same token, there are two types of emotion: reasonable emotion and unreasonable emotion, one good, the other bad. There are dangers when emotion is left on its own, but there are equal dangers when logic is left on its own; so it is crucial that the two be united. Changing the academic super-genre and inviting pathos back will require writers to pursue, to an extent, divergent thinking.

Keywords: emotion, pathos, reason, logic, academic writing, Cartesian split, *Phaedrus*, genre, Antonio Damasio, Daniel Kahneman, Robert Solomon, Amy Devitt

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HEALING THE CARTESIAN SPLIT:  
UNDERSTANDING AND RENEWING PATHOS IN ACADEMIC WRITING

Introduction

Jane Tompkins, in a classic piece called “Me and My Shadow,” boldly shares her belief that we should fight the traditional restrictions of academic writing—the ones that banished the emotional, personal dimension inherent in the art of rhetoric. The tradition, she says, has become the language of science and academia, an “intellectual” style built to transcend the “merely personal” (169). She rejects this framework, replacing it with the contrasting idea that language is a bridge between human beings—a means of personal connection, a method for conveying emotion. Her words are personal, inviting empathy through an appeal to pathos. At one point, she even switches to a more typical academic tone, creating a shocking contrast between the two and illustrating that acknowledging the humanness of writer and reader gives access to a fuller rhetoric.

There have always been rogues like Tompkins, but there seems to have been a growing trend of this personal style in the 1990s. A glance at the February 1992 edition of *College Composition and Communication* reveals striking examples, starting with editor Richard C. Gebhardt telling, from his own perspective, how “strongly-voiced submissions” and even those that take the “risky, self-exposing approach” (9) have affected the journal in recent years. His editorial stance is that “being short, lightly documented, or focused on the classroom does not make an article second class” (9). This more daring attitude, he says, was a response to what the academic readership wanted. Gebhardt’s piece is followed a speech, given by former CCCC chair Donald McQuade, in which he reviews the final hours of his mother’s life—not the usual academic fare, but his address is something that readers undeniably find value in. Article after article, this issue represents the trend of using a personal voice, a trend that continues in subsequent volumes for several years. It is a style clearly different from the procedurally sterile

and transcending-the-personal prose otherwise reigning in academia. For several years, this style seemed to be gaining ground, but now it has regressed, leaving academia again exalting logic and diminishing emotion, rather than seeing them as tools of the same trade. As Damasio says, “The Cartesian split pervades both reason and practice” (251). And he is right.

The Cartesian split represents a dualism—the separation of mind and body, a division that exalts the capacity of the mind by making the body’s world of feeling a source of illusion and untruth. But this split, strongly supported by the drive to be scientific, dissects the living human soul. The direct consequence is that authors write as if they and their readers are robotic and without feeling. My purpose in this article is to address this waning of pathos from a rhetorical standpoint. Lawrence Green, in the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, says that out of Aristotle’s three rhetorical pillars, pathos “has occasioned the greatest controversy” (554). I will use recent research on the emotions to validate the human and emotional connection between author and audience by inviting pathos back into academia as both a topic and method of discussion. My purpose is to heal the Cartesian split, reunifying logic with emotion, and, hopefully, changing the notion of what academic writing is or should be.

First, I will look at the roots of academic writing in the history of rhetoric—particularly at how pathos was part of rhetoric’s foundation and how it was exiled when logos became king, a coup that left the academic style with a lop-sided and only partially functioning rhetorical foundation. Next, I will examine how the disciplines of neurobiology and philosophy have recently offered solid justification for using pathos. Finally, I will venture brief thoughts on what this re-emergence of pathos implies must happen in the academic future.

### The Pathos in Classic Rhetoric

How we inherited a discourse devoid of emotion, lacking a critical dimension of authorship, and situated so squarely on logic alone is a tale that begins in ancient Greece. Even though Plato hints at the rhetorical importance of emotion in *Phaedrus*, in this and other

dialogs, instead of using rhetoric, Plato encourages and primarily uses dialectic, a conversational process for gathering human understanding by slowly eliminating misconceptions and illogic while progressing gradually toward a pure truth (Hauser 22-24). *Understanding* is at the core of dialectic—a journey toward truth and toward a fuller vision.

Aristotle, building on Plato's ideas, teaches that rhetoric is the counterpart to dialectic—a companion, a sibling—but not the same entity (133). And it is more than the sharing of information; as even Socrates says, "I boldly assert that mere knowledge of the truth will not give you the art of persuasion" (Plato 1265). In other words, rhetoric includes imparting understanding (logos), as dialectic does, but it adds persuading the audience to agreement and action through an artistic use of emotion. In dialectic, interlocutors may do as they will with the added truth—or they may do nothing at all. But in rhetoric, the listener should be moved to action—to *do*. And, according to Aristotle, it is primarily pathos that moves a listener. Also, rhetoric, while it is still the sharing of understanding, tends to be an expert opening the vision of crowds or a commoner rather than a dialog between experts. Finally, while dialectic seems concerned with what *is*, rhetoric seems concerned with what *might be*—it is inherently imaginative, dealing with possibilities and probabilities—with what is yet uncertain (Hauser 26).

Always practical, Aristotle gives an obvious reason for including pathos as one of the three pillars of rhetoric: "We do not render our judgments the same way when grieved as when delighted, or when friendly as when hostile" (138). In other words, because we are human, our judgment (our reasoning) depends on our emotional state. No matter how logical a speech may be, it is empty if the audience does not feel it (189-90). Aristotle values pathos as one of the three main kinds of "proof" in rhetoric. As evidence of his belief in such, he spends much of *On Rhetoric* "Book II" detailing the intricacies of emotion.

Despite its strong roots, pathos began to be cleaved from rhetoric, perhaps beginning when the Romans, around the time of Cicero, attempted to involve pathos too abundantly in their rhetoric—bringing crying orphans, scarred old warriors, and dead men's bones into the

court as means to persuade men and judges, creating an inartistic travesty instead of the real thing (Green 559). Despite the gimmickry of this pseudo-pathos, Cicero recognized its importance, suggesting that it be used only genuinely—that a rhetor should never attempt to make an audience feel an emotion that the rhetor did not sincerely feel too (560). Cicero also connected pathos with ethos, suggesting that an audience would willingly trust a rhetor who displayed an understanding of emotion (561)—in modern lingo, they would sympathize with a rhetor who had apparent emotional intelligence, meaning “the ability to display, read, evoke, and direct emotions” (Jackson 486). Along these same lines, in the 1500s, Daniele Barbaro divided emotions into two groups—those that promote good and those that promote bad—and he implored rhetors to use pathos for the former (Green 563). It is an interesting notion that some emotions might be right and others might be wrong because it applies judgments of quality to the nuances of pathos.

During the Renaissance, pathos was further degraded, in particular by Peter Ramus, who favored dialectic, hoping to define “a logical, scientific discourse, untainted by nonlogical appeals, that would win assent from the rational audience by virtue of rationality alone” (Bizzell et al. 53). A short time later, Descartes described his dualistic view, which put body *and brain* beneath, as mean material, and elevated the mind and consciousness above as the worthy master. Pathos became the target of distrust, seen “as the base impulses, desires, or feelings of the flesh... primitive... [and] based on deception” (Hauser 167). The trend moved academia “toward positivist formal logic, [with] pathos moving even farther away, to the point where rhetoric is popularly conceived as linguistic manipulation and emotional pandering” (567). But these sterile arguments customized for a theoretical audience that used solely logic were only perfect for “brains that do not exist” (Jackson 484), because no human being is actually like that. Nevertheless, in many ways, this split perspective permeates academic writing to this day, as we shall soon see.

### The Definition of Academic Writing

To proceed, we need to define the current state of academic writing. A useful definition comes from *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines* by Chris Thaiss and Terry Myers Zawacki, who look at academic writing and “alternative rhetorics.” They define the essence of *academic writing* across all disciplines, and, according to their definition, it has three criteria.

First, academic writing must include “clear evidence ... that the writer(s) have been persistent, open-minded, and disciplined in study” (5). This first criterion fits closely with Aristotle’s *ethos*—an appeal to the writer’s character and credibility. To create *ethos*, writers need to show they are informed and that they understand what has already been said in the conversation. They have to be fair-minded and unbiased, even admitting cons in their own argument and pros in their opposition’s—an ethical appeal that shows the writer is a good person. Interestingly, this criterion seems to suggest that the “evidence” of authorial persistence, open-mindedness, and discipline will show in the writing itself—in the content, perhaps, rather than in personal pronouns, narratives, or other stylistic elements.

Second, academic writing supports the “dominance of reason over emotion or sensual perception” (5). If we stretch this dimension to Aristotle’s model, one might call it *logos*. Essentially, this means a writer must use clear logic built stone upon stone, crafted with integrity, eliminating fallacies or illogic of any kind. But it is important to note the underlying, unstated assumption: Logic and emotion are two competing forces, and whenever one appears it is always at the expense of the other.

Third, for writing to be academic, it has to be targeted at an “imagined reader who is coolly rational, reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response” (7). This is surely the biggest stretch so far, but one could argue that this aligns with Aristotle’s *pathos*. However, instead of describing how the writer connects emotionally with the reader, it tells how the reader *does not connect* emotionally. It is, in short, an anti-*pathos*, suggesting the reader is without feeling. This third criterion, while slanted against emotion—focusing

exclusively on the reader's logic—does have two important qualities: (A) Academic writers should imagine a reader—that is, they are not casting their words into a void but are directing them toward a real human being; and (B), this reader is a person who values logic. The definition paints a picture of an audience, who, in addition to being un-Aristotelian emotionally, is one who thinks clearly, abstractly, and in complicated terms—a sophisticated reader, not crowds and not the common man. In short, it is the expert audience of dialectic.

Thaiss and Zawacki's academic writing includes logos, a type of ethos, and something standing in the place of pathos. On the other hand, the anti-pathos inadequately fills the position that pathos classically held. What's more, the credibility of academic writing is placed primarily in the topic, not in the voice or identity of the writer—after all, Aristotle called ethos the credibility *of the speaker*, not the credibility of the argument. In short, our modern academic writing is only the toppled ruins of classic rhetoric. Experts speaking with experts (as in the dialectic) as well as students grasping higher to reach an expert understanding are important forms of the “higher,” scholarly conversation; but when logic is left on its own, there are obvious shortcomings, including the way an audience tends to be treated coldly, distantly, and as if they are without feeling, again echoing the sound of the Cartesian split.

The investigation and expression of “alternative rhetorics” indicates that both professors and students sense shortcomings in the current model. As I will argue next, we ought to veer away from the current academic style, and we ought to embrace emotions once again, reuniting pathos with logos to create a more fully human ethos. The first of the arguments for this reunion comes from neuroscience.

#### The Holism which Refutes Descartes' Error

Neurobiologist Antonio R. Damasio, in his book *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, argues that emotions are an essential part of the human psyche. He describes the landmark case of Phineas Gage, a construction worker who in 1848 miraculously survived

having a four-foot metal rod blasted up through his cheek and out the top of his skull. Just as surprising as his survival and quick apparent recovery was that his mental facilities seemed to have remained intact. Yet despite the fact that he retained his speech and memory as well as the physical skills necessary to continue his job, time soon revealed to his family and friends that he was not the same Phineas Gage he used to be. The brain damage drastically altered his interpersonal skills as well as his ability to focus on long-term goals—in essence, it had disabled his capacity for emotional intelligence.

Damasio also cites examples from current research of patients with comparable (though less dramatic) injuries—each of whom seems to show the same lack of emotion. In each case, the patient continually pursues behaviors that are harmful both socially and personally. One of these, a patient called Elliot, passed every variety of test to prove his normalcy: the relations of means and ends, the awareness of options, the understanding of consequences, the making of moral judgments, and many more. He could discuss current events, politics, and economics with ease. Yet in spite of the data showing his acceptable functionality, Elliot, like Phineas Gage, proved unable to make choices in his own best interest both socially and personally—a very apparent loss of emotional intelligence.

After his brain injury, Elliot was unable to keep a job; employers saw him as unmotivated and lazy (34). He no longer knew how to value one priority over another: his only priority was whatever was immediately in front of him, which left him directionless and distracted (36). Previously a successful husband and father, he was divorced soon after the accident and increased in emotional distance from his family. He was able to relate the details of how his life had changed from before, yet he spoke about it coldly and distantly, as if he were talking about something disconnected from himself and anyone else. “The tragedy of this otherwise healthy and intelligent man was that he was neither stupid nor ignorant, and yet he acted often as if he were. The machinery for his decision making was so flawed that he could no longer be an effective social being” (38). Damasio speculates that “the cold-bloodedness of Elliot’s reasoning

prevented him from assigning different values to different options and made his decision-making landscape hopelessly flat” (51). For example,

At the end of one session, after he had produced an abundant quantity of options for action, all of which were valid and implementable, Elliot smiled, apparently satisfied with his rich imagination, but added: ‘And after all this, I still wouldn’t know what to do!’ (49)

Elliot was missing the emotional capacity to judge between bad, good, better, and best—he lacked the foundational premises on which to use his perfectly functioning logical skills. This is a point I want to emphasize: Even *perfect* logic has nowhere to stand if not on a value judgment—and a value judgment must be made through emotion. But emotion does not make this judgment alone; instead, it *cooperates* with sound reason. This distinction is important—emotion does not work before, after, or in spite of logic. It works together with it.

Sociopathy and psychopathy are also examples of what happens when feeling is diminished or absent, leaving logic to go on its own. People who have these disorders, Damasio says, are often highly intelligent. “The threshold at which their emotions kick in, when they do, is so high that they appear unflappable, and are, from their self reports, unfeeling and uncaring. They are the very picture of the cool head we were told to keep in order to do the right thing” (178). Damasio speculates that these diseases are likely linked to the same area of the brain that was missing and malfunctioning in both Gage and Elliot, showing again that a person with no emotions has nothing to guide the value judgments that distinguish quality and morality.

Throughout *Descartes’ Error*, Damasio works to unite body, brain, and mind into a single unit. Based on the case studies he presents, he says,

There appears to be a collection of systems in the human brain consistently dedicated to the goal-oriented thinking process we call reasoning, and to the response selection we call decision making, with a special emphasis on the

personal and social domain. This same collection of systems is also involved in emotion and feeling, and is partly dedicated to processing body signals. (70)

Thus neuroscience tracks emotions to the same sector of the brain that primarily manages decisions and reasoning. This knowledge goes contrary to the Cartesian split and the way the scientific community has viewed reason and emotion. Brain-damaged patients prove that the mind and consciousness are intertwined with the physical body and the feelings it produces.

As he connects body, brain, and mind into a whole, Damasio describes something he calls “somatic markers” (*somatic* being Greek for “bodily” and *marker* referring to the instance created in memory). Somatic markers occur when the body and brain together react in a fully physical way (e.g., a sensation of heat in the skin’s interior, or an unpleasant feeling in the gut) to an instance of pleasure or pain, creating a reference point in the mind that can be drawn on later in order to make a judgment. Often these somatic markers are not brought entirely into the consciousness; instead they become a “covert mechanism” that is “the source of what we call intuition, the mysterious mechanism by which we arrive at the solution of a problem *without* reasoning toward it” (188). Interestingly, and without going anywhere close to neurobiology, Malcolm Gladwell in his popular *Blink* approaches this same concept—proposing that the human mind has the ability to make sometimes surprisingly correct decisions without ever bringing them fully under the light of reason’s consciousness.

It is important to note, though, that in *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman, building on a series of psychological experiments, warns of the dangers of relying too readily and too uncritically on this same intuitive ability. But he does add this: “As cognitive scientists have emphasized in recent years, cognition is embodied; you think with your body, not only with your brain” (51), an undeniable linking of the two systems Descartes split so long ago. “An important advance is that emotion now looms much larger in our understanding of intuitive judgments and choices than it did in the past.... [It has been described as] the affect heuristic, where judgments and decisions are guided directly by feelings of liking and disliking, with little

deliberation or reasoning” (Kahneman 12). Although Kahneman urges caution in following feelings, he nevertheless acknowledges the powerful role they play in judgment.

These examples refute Descartes’ perspective that the physical body (and brain) and the metaphysical mind are entirely and distinctly separate. They argue that mind and body are not two separate systems, but a single whole, a unified gestalt, creating a synergistic sum much greater than the separate pieces could. Just as the mind and body are integrated and interdependent, so are reason and feeling. Separating the two might be a helpful way to frame the concepts, but it is not an accurate picture of how things really work. “The entire organism [is] an ensemble.... I am not saying that the mind is in the body. I am saying that the body contributes more than life support and modulatory effects to the brain. It contributes a *content* that is part and parcel of the workings of the normal mind” (Damasio 226). The case for holism rejects the sterile, scientific categorization and containment of parts. My argument is much the same. Science and art, logic and emotion, objectivity and subjectivity, *it* and *I*—these are each categorizations that emphasize separateness. When separate, these various pieces must be stacked into a hierarchy of some sort, which means one always has to go above or below another. I propose another view: not two entities—a metaphorical *it* and *I*—but a single, unified whole—*we*. Uniting subjects and objects, emotion and logic, shifts from a conflict of competing forces to the creation of a whole substance.

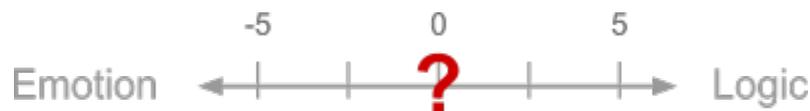
### The Reuniting of Pathos and Logos

To understand this holistic unity, it may help to retrace a few of our steps. In *Phaedrus*, Socrates gives, in an almost Dantean fashion, a grand metaphor of the ascension of souls. The symbolism is intriguing, and it pertains closely to my topic.

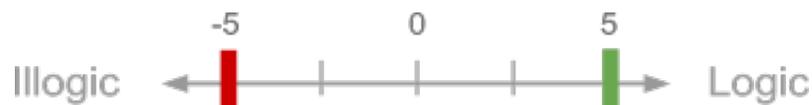
Socrates likens the soul to “a pair of winged horses and a charioteer” (Plato 994). The horse on the right is a brilliant white, a divine creature, temperate, and submissive to its master. The dark horse on the left is “the slave of pleasure” (848), “crooked” with bloodshot eyes—

unruly, headstrong, and deaf (1120), “giving all manner of trouble to his companion and the charioteer” (1130). Lastly, there is the charioteer himself, the one who commands these powerful animals. For now, I won’t explain what the two horses represent, but I will label the guiding charioteer as reason. Reason cannot ignore the unruly horse or leave it to follow its own will, focusing solely on the bright horse, for, as long as the team is divided, the chariot will inevitably be pulled down. Instead he must bring the unruly horse under submission till the two serve him as one—a team of horses. The metaphor becomes gruesome as it describes the charioteer straining the reins till he has covered the dark horse’s “tongue and jaws with blood, and force[d] his legs... [till] he is tamed and humbled, and follows the will of the charioteer” (1139). Once the horses are in harmony, they will lift the chariot, and united they will soar. One might jump to the conclusion that the dark horse represents emotion. Others, catching the theme of this article, might suspect it is not. Both would be right. But first, another point must be made.

The holistic way of thinking about the human psyche makes emotion a teammate of logic rather than a rival. But, as is clear, the pitting of logic against emotion—the Cartesian split—is a common way of conceptualizing these two. When followed, the split leaves a writer with the dilemma illustrated by this diagram—a light horse and a dark horse—where choosing one means eliminating the other:



But this is a false dilemma, an either-or fallacy that assumes the choice of one will cancel out the other. The fact is, the opposite of logic is not emotion. The opposite of logic is the lack of logic, or illogic:



Illogic comes in many varieties. Some are as simple as, “All roses are flowers. Some flowers fade quickly. Therefore some roses fade quickly,” a dubious syllogism which “a large majority of

college students endorse... as valid” (Kahneman 45). Or, illogic may be the leaving out of crucial facts. When asked, “How many murders occur in the state of Michigan in one year?” people venture much lower guesses than when asked the same question about Detroit (Kahneman 46). This is simply because the first question does not spark the recollection of stories of exceptionally high crime rates in one of Michigan’s largest cities.

Having given illogic its proper blame, we must not forget that certain emotions have been more than willing to help an illogical stance win a battle—supplying fuel and munitions and whatever other resources they could muster. For example, when asked to guess about the likelihood of causes of death, participants tend to grossly overestimate the more dramatic ones, an “availability bias” partially caused by the tendency to sensationalize: “Tornadoes were seen as more frequent killers than asthma, although the latter causes 20 times more deaths. Death by lightning was judged less likely than death from botulism even though it is 52 times more frequent” (Kahneman 138). Although logic and emotion may have colluded, in the end, illogic must be held responsible for its own actions, as logic’s real antagonist.

If we agree on this point, then emotion moves to a new position. Robert Solomon, in his *True to Our Feelings*, agrees with the holistic stance taken by Damasio’s neuroscience. Solomon, a philosopher, suggests that emotions are essential to ethics and to a person’s general well-being. “Emotions,” he says, “are more central to rationality than even reason and reasoning, for without them... reason has no point or focus” (5). Let me reiterate: They are “more central to rationality than even reason.” If this seems unreasonable, it is because the paradigm, for so long, has favored cold dialectic. But according to Solomon, when logic tries to stand on its own, it has no place to stand. He later says, compassion, an emotion, “provides... the basis of ethics. Not reason, not custom, but emotion” (63).

### The True Antagonist of Emotion

Ironically, moving emotion off the scale of logic separates the two—but I separate them only so I can show each has distinct attributes, its own strengths and weaknesses. Once emotion is separate from logic, it can be judged on its own scale. But there is still the glaring question of whether to forgive emotion for its war crimes—supplying resources to illogic during so many skirmishes over the centuries. To continue, we first have to distinguish exactly how emotion was offensive—or, more specifically, *which type* of emotion was involved.

Just as logic and illogic are two ends of the same spectrum, there are also two ends to the emotional spectrum. As Cicero and Barbaro suggested, positive emotion leads to positive, logical conclusions, while negative emotion does the opposite. Some people quickly latch on to this idea of good and bad emotions and agree that happiness is a good emotion and that anger is bad. This, however, is like saying that inductive logic is logical, but deductive logic is illogical. Obviously, each can be reasonable or unreasonable within its own sphere. Solomon looks at emotions in the same way. Instead of labeling certain emotions as good and others as bad, he says that each specific emotion can be good or bad in a given situation: Happiness can be good sometimes and bad at others, and so can anger. This framework is founded on Aristotle’s ideas, who suggested, “Righteous anger is anger that is... aimed at the right person, for the right reason, at the right time, in the right proportion” (Solomon 181)—or more succinctly, it has the right target, reason, timing, and quantity. An emotion can be right (one might say *reasonable*) in each of these qualities, and it can be wrong in each of them too. Rhetorically speaking, this means one must practice artistic decorum, an idea that brings us to a new scale, one that can be placed next to the scale of logic:



Unreasonable emotions—emotions that have the wrong target, reason, timing, or quantity—are the ones allied with illogic, and they are the ones that need to be tamed and mastered, so that

their old, unruly form is never seen in academic writing (or in the rest of life). And this now explains the metaphor of the winged horses: The right side of the two scales is bright and shining: sound logic and reasonable emotions. The left side of the two scales is twisted, dark and bloodshot: poor logic and unreasonable emotions. And it is the horse on the left that the charioteer, reason, must force to obey. Once mastered, the dark horse provides lift, the team unites, and the charioteer rises higher and higher.

Citing Walton's *The Place of Emotions in Argument*, Jackson explains the belief that "emotional appeals 'need to be evaluated by boundary conditions that rule them as fallacious in some cases' and, in other cases, irrelevant" (485). Like logic, emotion can be displayed at acceptable and unacceptable levels. But once the scales above have helped show the false dilemma of logic versus emotion, they should perhaps be discarded, since emotion, like logic, is an intricate subject that cannot be easily summarized by a binary system or linear scale. If, through the guidance of the charioteer, the target, reason, timing, and quantity of an emotion are aligned, the emotion will raise up reason. The point though is that, as with logic, the unacceptable should be shunned and the acceptable should be embraced.

As an example, one might look at the emotion of anger, which most people would assume to be a negative emotion. Solomon says that "anger is basically a judgment that one has been wronged or offended (18)... typically aimed at a person who has been offensive.... Anger is always about something" (19). And being about something, it has (or can have) logical reason behind it. That is, anger is not necessarily an unreasonable emotion. In fact, Solomon adds, "The inability to get angry is a vice just as getting angry too easily is..." (13). In other words, it is a bad thing to feel the wrong emotions, but it is also a bad thing to not feel the right emotions. This applies to each emotion: love, contentment, sadness, grief—and even apathy, the un-emotion. Each can be reasonable or unreasonable.

What I have argued up to this point supports the widely accepted premise that illogic and unreasonable emotion should never be a part of academic writing. But it expands this idea so

good logic and reasonable emotions are both positive qualities that belong in academic writing. In short, people are convinced by *poor logic* all the time. But the fact that some are scammed does not mean we should stop using logical appeals in our rhetoric. By the same token, even though emotions are often used in unethical and unreasonable ways to convince the easily swayed, that does not mean we should avoid all appeals to emotion. We should avoid the negative versions of both logic and emotion, but as rhetors and those who teach rhetoric, we should wield the positive versions of both of these. Emotion is necessary, even in academic writing. It just needs to be the right kind.

### The Dangers of Emotional Appeals

Now that the nuances of emotion are more visible, as are the features that distinguish it from logic, emotion is in a position to be accepted back into academic writing. But since we must take care to tame the unruly, unreasonable emotions, there will certainly be some lingering doubts as to whether the passions can indeed be trusted: I want to briefly review some legitimate criticisms that contribute to the typical academic and scientific bent against emotion.

One of these is the belief that emotions are elusive and mystical—too intangible to discuss in any scientific or objective way. In part, this is a truth, but it does not necessarily need to be a criticism. Damasio quotes Pascal as saying, “The heart has reasons that the reason does not know at all” (200). Emotion is a way of reasoning that is different from—but complementary to—logical reasoning. This might paint emotions as too un-substantive to ever really be understood. But Damasio contradicts this directly: “I do not see emotions and feelings as the intangible and vaporous qualities that many presume them to be. Their subject matter is concrete, and they can be related to specific systems in body and brain, no less so than vision or speech” (164). This leads to two important conclusions: First, the flavor added by emotion’s distinct type of reasoning is a positive thing; second, emotions are concrete and scientifically observable, from the outward movements of the body to tiny neurons firing inside the brain.

Like anything, emotions can be better understood through focused study—hence the term *emotional intelligence*.

Some are wary that emotions cannot be controlled. Solomon argues against this, saying, “Most of our emotions, most of the time, are not entirely beyond our control” (190), because logic can wrap around and through them, reinforcing and structuring them. Also, emotions happen because of circumstances, which we can control as well, at least to a degree; plus we can control our thoughts, speech, and actions (191). We are “coauthors” in creating our emotions, Solomon says, and continues the metaphor by saying that “we can’t entirely write whatever we want, of course, but we can write based on what there is to work with” (192). For a person to embrace emotions, he or she needs to accept that they can be reined for the most part.

The caution against overactive emotions is reasonable. Unbridled emotion can steer reason downward. At the same time, there is a converse danger: “Reduction in emotion,” Damasio says, “may constitute an equally important source of irrational behavior” (53), as illustrated by the examples of Elliot and Gage. Without emotion, the mind has no way to make value judgments and no place to begin building its structure of logic. Damasio adds that “taking stock of the pervasive role of feelings may give us a chance of enhancing their positive effects and reducing their potential harm....” (246). Emotions were outcast and degraded because they were seen as a danger to rationality, but ignoring them or failing to understand their intricacies will encourage the very thing meant to be avoided. A keener emotional intelligence will encourage the use of good emotions and eliminate the use of bad ones, till we arrive at the moderate use of emotion—one that is not too hard or too soft, but just right—the Goldilocks level of pathos. It must not be given to excess, like those who “love too much and hate too much” (Aristotle 216). Finding this acceptable range, we become better reasoners than those who disregard or degrade emotion.

That brings us to the next point—the question of what is good, or on what criteria to judge an emotion as positive or negative—what *is* the right target, reason, timing, or quantity?

Here is Damasio’s perspective on the quality aspect of emotion:

Whenever I call a decision advantageous, I refer to basic personal and social outcomes such as survival of the individual and its kin, the securing of shelter, the maintenance of physical and mental health, employment and financial solvency, and good standing in the social group. Gage’s or Elliot’s new mind no longer permitted them to obtain any of these advantages. (170)

It would be difficult to put it more clearly or succinctly than that. In truth, this topic of what is right deserves, at the least, an article of its own, if not several volumes. The same could be said of the philosophical concept of *quality*—even if I could define it, I surely could not do it in the scope of this paper. Let it be enough to say that there *is* quality of logic—some logic is bad, some good, some better, and some best. And just as there is quality of logic, there is quality of emotion, with all the same intricacies. Developing emotional intelligence is the sure approach toward the ambitious goal of understanding the quality and art of emotion.

### The Limits of Logic

Having considered the dangers and often unnoticed positive qualities of emotion, I also want to review the often-unnoticed limits of logic—to address any lingering doubts about logic’s reliance on emotion for a sure footing.

I will start with a thought experiment conceived by Damasio: Imagine a businessman who is presented with a deal that promises immediate financial rewards and the potential for increasing rewards in the future. The rub, though, is that the deal would be made with his best friend’s worst enemy, which would mean losing his friend. To handle this choice logically, he simply needs to stack up the pieces on either side of the decision, weighing the outcomes of each possibility. But it soon becomes apparent that each facet branches to many unknowns—who in

the company will be affected by the deal, how they will be affected, what consequences will follow, etc. The variables, instead of being tidied up by the logical appraisal, only show more and more options splitting into increasingly intricate and unknown possibilities. Logic could spend a lifetime sorting through the details, yet it might never reach a satisfactory end to all the unknowns (171). While logic alone might fail, emotions can come into the picture and give a value to each unknown, helping the decision maker to rank the possibilities and to consider only the ones that have the most importance and highest probability—emotions reduce alternatives and make the task manageable. Emotion also gives logic the thing it needs most—the exchange rate between monetary, social, and personal tradeoffs, so the distinct options can be considered in a common currency.

To illustrate further, Damasio tells of a brain-damaged patient who deliberates for nearly half an hour between two dates for his next appointment—simply wanting to discover all the logical yet inconsequential implications of each option (193). This is a patient who, except for a deficiency in emotional intelligence, has normal powers of reasoning by all accounts. Had he been fully functioning, he might have decided to let an emotion-driven thought take control, like tossing a coin or acting on intuition. In this way, emotion *does* make us biased, but, when it is reasonable, it biases in a positive way, helping us distinguish more readily, easily, and quickly between the good and bad, and the better and best (174). Emotions give us a shortcut, or perhaps the *only* route, to decisions of quality.

Just as emotion helps logic en route to conclusions, it can also help set the destination before the journey begins. It is easy to find examples of logical premises, disconnected from emotion, leading to horrible, logical conclusions. In 1927, less than 100 years ago, our own United States Supreme Court favored a law allowing forcible sterilization of “unfit” or “defective” women (a case called *Buck v. Bell*). In a case like this, logic can make value judgments based on existing measures of quality, but alone it can’t set the original premises. Logic is devoid of judgments between good and evil; it is never an ethical player: it simply

follows premises to conclusions. Thus the premises might be unethical, but the logic itself will not be. And when the premise is that bettering the human gene pool is more important than individual lives and liberties, then evil things are logical conclusions. Only emotion can decide which premises to begin with, emphasizing the importance of logic's companionship with its counterpart, as Aristotle might call it. Or, as Solomon says, "It is our emotions that make us human... not in contrast to our much-touted intelligence but in intimate conjunction with it" (164).

Kahneman also explores the weaknesses of logic by conceptualizing the mind's thought processes into two parts: System 1 makes quick, effortless intuitions, trading off accuracy for speed—a logic required by a world where time is limited. System 2, on the other hand, makes more labored and slow, yet more accurate judgments. The flux between these roughly matches the scale of illogic and logic. Throughout the book, Kahneman's primary purpose is to show that, while quick logical decisions can be helpful and even necessary, they can lead to obvious pitfalls. He helps readers understand and then avoid these dangers, primarily by examining judgments of logic—as in the false syllogism or failing to relate Detroit to Michigan. But since we have seen how logic is intertwined with emotion, it is clear that emotional intuitions are just as liable to trade accuracy for speed, again reinforcing the need for a master charioteer.

None of this suggests that logic should be diminished. It and emotion both have optimal settings, which people veer away from to their own detriment. Damasio sums up this concept by saying that "the action of biological drives, body states, and emotions may be an indispensable foundation for rationality" (200). That is, as emotion and rationality are so thoroughly intertwined, attempting to cultivate one while weeding out the other will always be counter-productive. They are root and branch, a single system producing a singular fruit.

### The Future of Academic Writing

So where does this discussion of pathos, rhetoric, and charioteers take us, and what does it imply for both teachers and writers of academic discourse? In *De Oratore*, Cicero names three duties of a rhetor: *docere*, to instruct the audience, *conciliare*, to gain their goodwill, and *movere*, to arouse their emotions (Green 561). According to Green, some critics see Cicero's three parts of rhetoric as distinct from Aristotle's. To me, though, they are simply an audience-oriented version of the same, a subtle shift from "Is the author trustworthy?" to "Does the audience trust the author?" This audience-centric scheme is key. Focusing on the audience gives a purpose to all that I have said here. If authors care about those they are communicating with, their attitude is sure to transform their writing—and one of the main results will be that they, like Jane Tompkins, will integrate pathos into their discourse.

Wayne Booth spoke of a "rhetoric of assent," in which a reasonable audience would be willing to change its mind in a given rhetorical situation. Jackson builds on this idea, saying, "If we practice a rhetoric of *affective* assent, we open ourselves to the possibility that the way we participate in emotional appeals in vernacular publics is ineffective or otherwise deficient" (490, emphasis added). In other words, affective assent means that we are willing to change our minds by admitting when our use of (or failure to use) emotion needs to be adjusted—an inevitable outcome. This may be the exact thing required to renew pathos in our academic discourse. Further research might go in this same direction, exploring how the abstract concepts from this article can be applied to concrete practice, specifically, what paths we need to take to reach the destination.

As we move toward this truly rhetorical style, it will certainly change the way we write. We will become more expert in our own field of rhetoric, turning from dialectic and embracing logos, ethos, *and* pathos. Ultimately, it means we will be owning up to our humanity as both thinking and feeling beings. This, however, also means remaking the traditions of academic writing, that super-genre, as Amy Devitt would call it, which includes all the diverse disciplinary

genres that combine to make a whole. To look at the implications this has for us as writers is to come back to the beginning of this article—back to that current of personal, expressive, pathos-embracing articles that were published in the *CCC* and other critical journals around the early 90s. It brings us to a point where we can each individually choose: While maintaining the current strengths of academic writing, we can step into risky territory to set another trend.

Conventions and traditions keep individuals writing in a way that is helpful to the community—flowing with the community. This invites convergent thinking: The group comes together, (roughly) agreeing on the same constructs and goals. One might visualize this as thousands of glowing particles flowing in a stream in one direction. Each particle has a unique path within the stream, waving up and down, back and forth, and yet the stream as a whole is unified in direction and flowing on a clearly visible path—it is a whole. Academic conventions make this unity possible. However, there is a danger that if the group (or super-genre) gets headed in the wrong direction, no single organism in the network can redirect the course. Devitt describes this phenomenon in her *Writing Genres*: “Cultural constructions, perhaps including genres, also have the dangerous ability to ‘make themselves true....’ [For example,] if students learn to support their academic arguments using logic and reason only, emotion and ethos will come to be seen as inappropriate in academic arguments” (160)—here she describes conceptually that which has happened actually. Genres by nature are resistant to change and tend to keep going in the same direction. Thus, anything that diverges from the existing boundaries will be separated from the group—or exiled.

“These potentially harmful effects of such cultural constructions as genres are precisely what critics of genre most fear.... Because genres exist, they will have ideological power” (Devitt 160). Their power is inherent in the tradition and cannot simply be removed. But the system also has a built-in fix for this problem: “Genres are still created and transmitted by individuals, by human beings...” (161). A genre as a whole cannot simply shift its direction, but individuals can. So when the direction of the genre gets off kilter, individuals must separate from the stream

and take a unique path—they must diverge, separating from the group and the genre. This divergent thinking is the only way for the stream to change course. “From such variation—and the transmission of such variations from one individual to another—comes the potential for change, for critique, and for creativity” (161).

And here is the crux of it all, which is somewhat of a paradox: We must see the value in both convergent and divergent thinking. We must maintain what is valuable in the old while still being willing to change to the new. As Devitt says, “Writers need both convergence and divergence; teachers can help students to develop whichever is lacking in particular writers and particular writing situations” (156). And not just the students, but the teachers—we academics—can embrace both sides of genre’s paradoxical coin, cultivating that careful balance between being submissively humble and daringly maverick. Both of these are vices when they are exclusive, but both are helpful when a situation’s decorum calls for them—when they work together to hone our judgment. We will see the traditional academic style as “both constraint and choice, both regularity and chaos, both inhibiting and enabling” (156). It may then be the case that a little more divergence should be encouraged. Perhaps, then, the trend of more personal writing will begin again, not in an outright rebellion or the overthrow of tradition, but in subtle individual ways, in slight, divergent movements that bring pathos back into academic writing.

Those who do dare to do this will be set apart. Their particles will be seen flowing next to the stream—still nearby, but distinctly separate. There is risk involved—vulnerability—yet this is the way genres change, with one particle, and then another, and then another, until slowly the new direction has more force, more particles, and more impact than the old stream. This is how a genre can be renewed—but only if individuals are daring enough to diverge.

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