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Theory Rhetoric/Writing

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A Rhetorical Analysis of “My Souls Cry”

“My Souls Cry” is a faction written by Alisa Jackson. In this piece she navigates her spiritual journey outside traditional religious ideals to find God for herself outside the sphere of religion that eludes and leaves one void of peace. Through the strategic use of logos, she creates a structured outline that maps her search for fulfillment, providing readers with a clear understanding of her experiences and insights. Jackson’s use of pathos comes forth in the mystical dramatic monologue, where she evokes deep emotions, drawing the audience into her internal struggles and triumphs in the end. This emotionally compelling persuasion makes her journey relatable and impactful. Jackson's use of Kairos highlights the current state of the church, subtly critiquing its shortcomings while encouraging the audience to seek their own spiritual paths. By weaving these rhetorical strategies together, she creates a compelling narrative that invites reflection on faith beyond conventional boundaries. She crafts an engaging tale that encourages contemplation on faith outside of traditional bounds by combining these rhetorical devices.

Logos is persuasion through logic. This is the way a speaker appeals to the audience through practicality and hard evidence. (Purdue Writing Lab) There are many factors overall that make up logos, which include premise, Conclusion, Argument, Syllogism, Enthymeme, Induction, and Deduction. (Purdue Writing Lab, “Using Logic // Purdue Writing Lab”) Jackson uses evidence and reasoned arguments to persuade her audience in an effective use of logos. She capitalizes on the Bible's reputation as the infallible word of God by utilizing it as the basis for her argument, which will appeal to a large portion of her audience. Her arguments are strengthened by the persuasive anchor provided by this religious authority, making them more challenging to dispute. Jackson provides pertinent statistics to support her arguments in addition to biblical references. These real-world examples give her writing more realism and authority while also proving that her claims are based on verifiable facts and not just faith. She invites her audience to interact with her message on a spiritual and logical level by bolstering it with both statistical and scriptural evidence. By using this strategy, Jackson is able to encourage readers to think about the church's current situation and the need for restoration.

Pathos is persuasion through emotion or disposition. This is the way a speaker appeals to the audience through emotion, pity, passions, or dispositions. (Purdue Writing Lab) In the chapter "Wounded in the House of My Friend," Jackson conveys the intense suffering of "church hurt" through expressive language and vivid imagery. Her use of metaphor turns the event into a mystical, tangible story that readers can relate to on a deep level. She elicits empathy and understanding by capturing the psychological turmoil of being betrayed in a place that should offer safety. Jackson's dramatic speech not only draws attention to the inner turmoil that people with these kinds of wounds face, but it also helps those who have gone through similar things to feel more connected to one another. The emotional appeal is strengthened by the readers' ability to consider their own experiences because of this shared suffering. She makes a strong connection with the audience by using imagery of a broken soul seeking refuge, which serves as a reminder of the vulnerability and trust that are frequently found in spiritual communities.

Jackson challenges readers to consider the important aspects of faith, trust, and healing by establishing her story in a way that is relatable. This chapter explores the impact of church hurt in a piercing and brilliant way, showing how deep wounds can exist even in sacred spaces, and come from the most unexpected people. By means of her creative brilliance, Jackson turns individual suffering into a shared experience, encouraging compassion and conversation among her readers.

*“Sir are you ok?” I ask the man, as I am reaching for my cell phone to call 911.*

*The 911 operator answers, “911 what is your emergency?”*

*I begin to access the man’s injuries, as he stands remarkably strong despite his wounds. If it weren’t for the obvious wounds you wouldn’t be able to tell the man was hurt. He wore it well, he seemed to be held up by some unseen force. But his eyes told a story that his lips had not yet uttered. His eyes told of a sorrow that went much deeper than the wounds.*

*“Sir, what happened to you? Who did this to you?”*

*The man stood staring at me for a moment and when he spoke, I will never forget the sound of his voice, the pain, the sob that ripped from his throat as he said,*

*“My friends… the ones I entrusted and served and walked with daily. MY… FRIENDS…” He emphasizes once more as he breaks down and falls to the ground screaming as if he just felt every stab all over again.*

Jackson demonstrates her understanding of the intended audience by delivering riveting passages like this one with passion. She is aware of their identities, but they also consider her to be one who can truly relate to their experiences. She consistently arouses emotion in the audience and wins their trust in this way.

Kairos is an appeal made through the adept use of time. This is the way a speaker appeals to the audience through notions of time. It is also considered to be the appropriate or opportune time for a speaker to insert herself into a conversation or discourse, using the three appeals listed above. (Purdue Writing Lab) Jackson's use of Kairos effectively captures the current state of the church, emphasizing what some may consider to be its shortcomings to encourage the audience to seek their own spiritual paths or as the Bible states in Philippians 2:12 … work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (“Bible Gateway Passage: Philippians 2:12 - King James Version”) She highlights the distinct viewpoint of escaping time and custom and truly getting to know God for yourself through her techniques. to let him be a real participant in your life and to make him come to life on the pages. This method encourages introspection and gives people the tools they need to pursue spiritual authenticity and personal development, implying that change is both necessary and attainable. Jackson challenges her listeners to meaningfully interact with their beliefs. She provides personal examples of the transformational power of faith by sharing her experiences both before and after her salvation. These tales demonstrate the difficulties and disappointments she encountered in institutional environments, as well as the liberation and contentment that result from sincere spiritual inquiry.

Jackson steps in at the opportune time in history, and the state of the Church and uses that as a compelling argument to draw the audience. In one of our readings the author states, thus, sensitive to *Kairos*, a speaker or writer considers the contingencies of a given place and time and considers the opportunities within this specific context for words to be effective and appropriate to that moment. (“Encompassing Terms”) In her compelling argument to draw man back to God and not religion she writes this passage:

*It often amazes me that as BIG and amazing as God is that man tries to put him in a small ring box of a particular sect of religion and close Him off to ONLY belong to THAT group. Despite Man’s futile attempt to box Him in He continues to expand beyond the box and BE undeniably a part of all, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” Colossians 1: 16-18*

*God provided a blueprint, the Bible, instead of man taking the blueprint and building according to that, they took it and added rooms, and sections, that were never a part of the original layout and have now reconstructed the house from the original intentions of the Architect. These actions have diverted the creation away from the Creator and have caused many to look to the creations designed by the creation instead of the Master Builder.*

While acknowledging the existence of a divine blueprint, Jackson speaks to an audience that is aware of how far the church has deviated from God's original plan. She contends that this divergence has caused the church to become "off track," meaning that it is no longer in line with its actual mission. She believes that there is a rare chance to make up for what has been lost at this precise moment. She invites her audience to actively take part in this restoration by highlighting the need for renewal and alignment with the fundamental tenets of faith. Her message is both a critique and a call to action, asking people to reconnect with their spiritual roots and the fundamental principles that the "architect", God, intended.

In the article, Kairos: A Rhetorical Device they state, “In literature and rhetoric, Kairos is a strategic use of opportune moments, emphasizing the timing and appropriateness of expression to achieve a specific impact. It involves selecting the most fitting moment to convey a message, recognizing that the effectiveness of communication is not solely dependent on what is said, but also on when it is said. As a literary and rhetorical device, Kairos is a nuanced understanding of timing, ensuring that words are deployed with maximum relevance and influence.” (English Studies) Jackson uses this technique to take the reader on a journey through our past, present, and future, hinting at the place where we must go to lift the veil and void that so many people experience.

A comprehensive examination of Jackson's body of work indicates that she was very focused on persuading her audience. Using the three neo-Aristotelian artistic proofs (logos, pathos, and Kairos), she creates a powerful story about her journey from being in search of peace to actually finding a relationship with God [the ultimate architect]. She provides logical arguments through logos that are backed up by biblical references and statistics, giving her claims a strong basis. Pathos is used to evoke emotion and establish a deeper connection with her audience by sharing her personal experiences. Finally, by highlighting the message's timely relevance using Kairos, she exhorts readers to acknowledge the need for church renewal in the modern era. When combined, these rhetorical devices offer her audience a potent invitation to consider their own spiritual journeys and look for a more genuine way to connect with their faith. Jackson offers hope for healing and development in addition to criticizing the church's current situation.

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