

# A Rhetorical Analysis of “The Other Canadians and Canada’s Future”

Marin Lepp

In his essay “The Other Canadians and Canada’s Future,” Habeeb Salloum delivers a vivid picture of Canada’s past, present and future states of immigration and multiculturalism. He begins by briefly outlining the history of ethnic diversity within Canada, the difficulties immigrants faced as they became assimilated into Canadian culture and the implementation of the Multicultural Act by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. Salloum then continues on to describe what Canada has been like since – the benefits of multiculturalism, as well as the criticisms it has faced. Additionally, he identifies those who are against multiculturalism as, ironically, descendents of immigrants, as they have adopted a view of Canada similar to that of Anglo Canadians. Clearly, the author has two target audiences. Primarily, he speaks to the descendents of the immigrants who are opposed to multiculturalism, but this essay is also intended for the educated and socially informed of British society since it was originally published in the widely circulated *Contemporary Review*. The most appropriate sentence that could be labelled as his thesis is “Canadian society has become, at least on the surface, a truly cultural mosaic.” Salloum utilizes logos well, for the most part, with his use of examples and statistics, though there are a few instances where his appeal to logic is somewhat weak. However, he integrates pathos excellently due to appropriate placement of this strategy; add the fact that he is knowledgeable about the issue strengthens his ethos.

The audience that Salloum is trying to reach is clear, while his thesis encompasses the fundamental purpose of the essay. It can be said that his target audience is the descendents of immigrants, since he identifies many of them as being opposed to multiculturalism. He addresses this group because he sees the irony in this ideology, that those whose ancestors were once new to Canada could have benefited from the concept of tolerance and multiculturalism. Also, there is irony in the fact that these people, for the most part, now possess an “Anglo” view of Canada’s future. The secondary audience may be recognized as educated readers with an interest in socio-cultural issues who may not be aware that assimilation still subtly occurs in Canada, since he outlines some of the controversies surrounding multiculturalism. Naturally, this readership would also maintain a degree of interest in the current state of Canadian multiculturalism and how this nation is dealing with diversity. His thesis lies at the end of paragraph 4, where he states that “Canadian society has become, at least on the surface, a truly cultural mosaic.” This is supported by the fact that the remainder of the essay encompasses the topic of multiculturalism, but his thesis still suggests that assimilation and opposition still exist within Canada.

Because Salloum has a definitive thesis and target audience, he utilizes logos effectively throughout most of his essay, though in some places his logic is weak. The organisation of the paper begins with many facts based on Canadian history and then moves into clear examples as to why assimilation into Canadian culture was difficult for ethnic minorities. With statistics and accurate dates in previous and recent history, Salloum uses logos to reinforce his credibility. As he ventures into Canada’s post- Multicultural Act milieu, he continues to use effective statistics and examples to support his message that multiculturalism is beneficial, as well as to demonstrate why

some people are against it. However, he eventually states that “even more forgotten by multiculturalism are Canada’s ‘First Nations Peoples,’” without providing adequate support for this assertion. Also, in paragraph 19, he outlines the negative aspects of assimilation, and uses his own family as an example of how they have intermarried and lost much knowledge of their Arabic origins. This appeal to logic needs more support as to why assimilation is negative when it is an inevitable, naturally occurring force. Even in Canada, where individual cultural preservation is encouraged, it is unrealistic to maintain every aspect of ethnic culture.

Conversely, Salloum used pathos and ethos quite appropriately throughout. Emotional appeal was used near the beginning of his paper, in order to emphasize the harsh realities that immigrants once faced when trying to integrate in a predominantly English and French society. One of the examples of pathos used here is his description of his own experience: “‘Black Syrian’...These epithets during my own school years were daily taunts... the school was a painful place for a child of non-British origin.” Also, since the majority of pathos was used at the beginning, it has the effect of drawing the reader in, whereas it is used more sparingly toward the end, where the author appeals to logic and the development of his argument. His ethos is based on his credibility to write about this issue, since Salloum himself is of non-British descent. Also, another dynamic that reinforces his ethos is that he thoughtfully addresses the other side of the issue, as demonstrated by paragraphs 12, 13, 17 and 20.

Essentially, Salloum delivers an effective argument for his original audience through his use of logos, pathos and ethos. He carries out what is fundamentally stated in his thesis. However, despite his effective use of examples, his argument would have been more effective if his logic was more developed in some areas. Also, this would have made him more credible in the eyes of current readers. Aside from this, he produces effective emotional appeal that is appropriate for both his target audience and for current readers. For both audiences, his ethos is strong, since he is informed and presents a fair argument, considering more than one facet of the issue.