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# Steve Jobs' use of Ethos for Persuasive Success in His 2005 Stanford Commencement Address

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## Abstract

*The use of ethos in persuasive settings has always been a powerful tool in public speaking, especially by those in power and in businesses. Kenneth Burke's Pentad plays a primary role in persuasive situations, particularly when we as scholars try to dissect and understand specific aspects of a speech situation. In this essay I used Burke's Pentad as a framework to explore Steve Jobs' use of, as I term it, "internal and external ethos" as not only a persuasive mechanism, but also as a force to build his persona/mythological legacy.*

## Introduction

The college commencement ceremony stands as a time-honored tradition in the United States. It represents not only the end of college but also the beginning of a career and what most consider the entrance into the "real world". The commencement speaker represents a piece of the philosophy of the University, and this speaker is trusted with delivery a parting message to the graduates, their friends and family, and all of those who are listening to carry with them for the rest of their lives. Jobs' persona in society and within his 2005 Stanford commencement address is worthy of analysis due to his connection to this collegiate audience. Jobs had "god-man" status within society, an individual who never graduated college, but created one of the biggest companies the world has ever seen.

While Ellen DeGeneres, Andy Sandburg, Bill Gates, Donald Trump and many other high profile individuals have been asked to give commencement speeches just like Jobs', this

generation of college students, and many in society viewed Jobs as an individual with a kind of Horatio Alger mythos, with his stories and conversations to the public about being a self-made man who dropped out of college. Colleges look to have individuals give commencement speeches that allow the audience(s) to identify with the speaker's personal story, since part of the goal of this significant event (commencement) is to create a lasting impression and connection to the university, while also symbolizing a new beginning for the graduates.

With the significance placed on this singular event by most in our culture, with it signifying an end of a part of life, while also signifying the beginning of another, I chose to analyze the 2005 Stanford commencement address given by Steve Jobs. I used methods of Burkean analysis, primarily using aspects of the pentad to deconstruct Jobs' speech to better understand the distinctions between internal and external ethos, and the role they play in persona creation. While we often discuss ethos as a meta construct, I argue that it has two separate areas. Internal ethos is the ethos that is created within a speech act, and is contained within the act itself. External ethos is all of the aspects of our world that exist outside of the speech act being investigated that can impact the creation and events within the act. A simple way of looking at this is in Jobs' life itself, and how that life shaped the persona he created in his speech.

Jobs was an influential man in his time in the field of technology, but from an academic success standpoint was not an overly educated man, as he was in fact, a college dropout. His success outside the world of academics is what led him to speak on this occasion, as he helped to revolutionize not only technology but education and the world as we know it. In life Jobs impacted education with his inventions and talks, and his openness of his frailty before his death removed the veil of "god-like" status that surrounded him in life, allowing those exposed to his speeches message to connect with it on a more personal level. Even in the moments leading up to

his untimely death Jobs presented a strong and confident persona, even though his body was deteriorating. Jobs became open with the public about his condition in the last year of his life, letting us see his physical struggle unfold before us, but even in these hardest times, he presented himself as the strong and self-made man he had for his entire career.

Through analysis we will gain a better understanding of how Jobs uses his success/standing on a deeper level as an ethos (external and internal) appeal to convince the audience to pursue their dreams. This essay applies constructs from Bitzer, Burke, and Campbell and Burkholder's ideas on rhetorical criticism. Specifically this essay use Burke's Pentad as the primary framework for analysis. As Bitzer's idea on rhetorical discourse articulate, "rhetorical discourse is called into existence by situation; the situation which the rhetor perceives amounts to an invitation to create and present discourse" (Bitzer, 1968), and that is due to the dramatic aspects of the situation. Since the pentad is tied to dramatism, and the commencement speaking situation is like a theatrical performance, the persona is enacted within the speaking situation. Through Burke's pentad, which are reinforced by Campbell and Burkholder's framework and Bitzer's ideas on rhetorical discourse this essay explore specific aspects of Jobs' speech in order to gain a deeper textual and contextual understanding of how Jobs constructed his persona in this speech in order to connect to his audience. This essay will specifically focus on the five areas of Burke's pentad: Act, Agent, Agency, Scene and Purpose. Campbell and Burkholder note, "The discipline of rhetoric is the study of symbolic attempts by humans to make order of their world, to discover who they are, and to interact with others in ways that make their lives more satisfying" (1996, p. 14), and it is in this regard that I look at the specifics of Jobs' 2005 Stanford commencement address.

## **Review of Literature**

When looking at the commencement speech Jobs gave at Stanford in 2005 it is easy to see that the structure and content of the speech (Jobs' persona) was shaped by the external ethos Jobs brought to the situation. The use of the persona as a strategy to create a speaker's rhetoric has been explored by many scholars, (Carpenter; 1994; Snow, 1985; Ware and Linkugel, 1982; Zulick, 1992). When speakers utilize different strategies of persona creation they "an assumed character" (Ware & Linkugel, 1982, p. 50) in order to build authority and invoke a connection of their audience. Bitzer (1968) argued rhetoric is a response to a situation. By agreeing with this idea a researcher must consider the ideas of both internal and external ethos, since a speech hinges on the context of meaning in which the speech is located. If Jobs' speech was created in a response to the situation (a commencement ceremony near the time of his impending death), the persona Jobs had in the global community and the way he created that persona would have an impact on how he created his persona within the commencement speech.

Since Jobs' speech falls into the epideictic type, which Aristotle argues (as cited in Roberts, 2004, p. 13), "the ceremonial orator is, properly speaking, concerned with the present, since all men praise or blame in view of the state of things existing at the time, though they often find it useful also to recall the past and to make guesses at the future". Internal ethos is contained within the situation in which a speech is given, but as Bitzer states, a speaker's external ethos is their stance and individual understanding from outside the confines of the speaking situation in which a speech act occurs. Meaning, that speakers often look to their past and their experiences to make guess and speak towards the future. This would mean that Jobs' would have drawn upon his external persona and ethos to create the internal persona and ethos in the speech and invite the audience into the "performance" of the rhetorical situation.

This dual construction of ethos is a unique aspect of the scene created by a commencement speech. The genre of commencement speeches is uniquely different than other speeches in regards to the typical structures used, which can be understood more clearly using Kenneth Burke's pentad as the lens for analysis. The five key areas of the pentad are: the Act- what is occurring/what happened, the Scene- where the act is happening and what is the background of the situation, the Agent- who is involved in the action and what role are they playing, the Agency- how do the agent (s) act and by what means do they act, and the Purpose- why do the agents act, and what do they want. By using his outside stance from his professional and personal life Jobs pulls his ideas and public stance into his speech, providing a solid ground and framework to build his speech and internal ethos around the context of the speaking situation.

Jobs' speech reflects the typical structure that is common in our American society from a commencement speaker during a commencement speech (the Act). He uses the method of, as I term it, "motivational story" (the Agency), as the structure for his speech, using different story themes/types in order to create a grand message for the speech that the audience can articulate and relate to within the scene of the speech. This structure hits on the combination of the five aspects of the pentad almost directly, and also reinforces Burke's ideas presented in his 1945 book, *A Grammar of Motives*, where he sought to formulate the basic strategies people employ in communication situations. Jobs used many different strategies within his speech to connect his ideas to his audience and he does this first by setting the scene for his speech and then he gives us an overview of the three areas of his speech, and finishes with a strong take-away point for the audience. This is not scene in the Burkean sense, but the general idea of scene. He did this first by acknowledging the situation, and also addressing his own connection to the situation. "I'm

honored to be here with you today. I never graduated. This is the closest I've been to a college graduation" (Jobs, 2005). While this may seem like an interesting thing to say to start a speech at a college graduation, Jobs does so in a direct manner that helps to create his persona in this commencement speech. Many speakers address their qualifications to give the speech, almost in a way that brings them down to the level of the audience rather than portraying themselves as someone who is disconnected or better than those who the speaker is addressing.

This is very similar to how past famous individuals have persuaded audiences, such as Lincoln, Edison, Aristotle, Kennedy. If we think back to ideas of the American mythic hero, Jobs embodies this character type in his speech. He is a self-made man, a self-taught genius who did not need schools or institutions to support him. He achieved through his own genius and hard work and through the great American work ethic. He was a rebel within his own field; a high school dropout who started a multi-billion dollar Fortune 500 company in a garage with two thousand dollars his grandmother gave him. The stories Jobs tells in his speech echo this idea of the American mythic hero and icon, with a beginning, middle and end to his life and success, just as there is a beginning, middle and end in the life of the mythic hero.

The three stories Jobs tells in his speech are about connecting the dots (how he learned how every action/event in life is connected), love and loss (how he found love and lost things/people close to him), and death (where Jobs discusses his own battle with cancer and the fear of dying). Connecting the dots is focused on piecing the many aspects we experience in life together in order to better understand what we want to do with our lives. "You can only connect the dots looking back, not forwards. You just have to trust that they will connect" (Jobs, 2005). His second story of love and loss, reminds the audience that to succeed and get the most out of life you have to love what you do and not settle for less. "Only way to do great work is love what

you do. If you haven't found it, keep looking. Don't settle" (Jobs, 2005). This link is very clearly presented by Jobs as he called upon ideas and experiences that many people in the audience of this rhetorical situation can relate to in their own lives, having experienced it themselves, allowing them to draw their own connections to Jobs' speech. His last story, on death, stresses the idea that you must make the most with the time you have. If challenges arise or time may be short you must push through those tough times and do what you need to do for your life. "Time is limited; don't waste it living someone else's life. Follow your intuition" (Jobs, 2005). The cultural understanding and fear of death is well-known in the United States, and Jobs' plays on these ideas by using his on frailty, and the talks surrounding his battle with cancer to pull the audience into this story, showing that all of us must face death at some point in our lives, but it is how we face it that shows who we are.

The last key part of Jobs' speech is the ending, where he addresses his approach to life, that he stresses as the focus of his life and his career. He goes about addressing this idea by talking about the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, a book he use for a reference/springboard when preparing this speech, which had the farewell, "Stay hungry, stay foolish" Jobs explained that he always wished for this in his life, because if one always stays hungry and passionate to grow and develop in their career and as a person they will never be unsatisfied with where their life is going. We also must stay foolish as Jobs articulates in his speech, because if we take life to seriously we cannot enjoy the beauty that is our life.

Jobs' commencement address to Stanford University is a clear structure used for a commencement address in our western culture. Many other famous individuals used a similar structure and approach to their commencement speeches. Stephen Colbert, Anderson Cooper, Denzel Washington, Conan O'Brien, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Meryl Streep and John Stewart all



used very similar structures to connect to their audience. He sets the scene, tells stories that are personal but also relatable to the audience, and ends with a clear and motivational message by setting a period in the ceremony to invite the audience into the message of his speech. As Toye (2013) explains, “Language is a kind of ideological fingerprint which-if only we know how to interpret it- gives its author away, even as he or she attempts to dissemble. This speech is the second most viewed and commented on commencement speech on YouTube, only behind David Foster Wallace’s, “This Is Water” address at Kenyon. While some of the things Jobs said in his speech are a little non-traditional they still follow the standard motivational structure of an inspirational commencement address.

### **Analysis**

The pentadic analysis of Jobs’ speech includes constructs from Kenneth Burke’s dramatic pentad, in terms of persuasion and use of ethos, and coding for those persuasive strategies within Jobs’ speech. This analysis looks for the five aspects of the pentad: Act, Agent, Agency, Scene, and Purpose. Coding those strategies and perspectives allows for a very in-depth critique and understanding of the impact of Jobs’ ethos in his speech. By coding in this manner the balance of the different aspects of the pentad can be discerned, which allows the different aspects of ethos to be investigated, to see the role internal and external ethos play in the creation of these aspects of the pentad within the speech. This will also allow insight into which strategies are most common in Jobs’ speech and allow us to see the different methods and constructs can be used for our analysis.

The coding system examined where Jobs specifically addressed concepts in his speech that could fall into these five areas of strategies. To sort the speech into these specific areas I printed out six copies of the script and labeled each main concept (Act, Agent, Agency, Scene,

and Purpose) separately on five of the copies and used the sixth as a clean master copy. This allowed me to see all five aspects laid out next of each other in a visual/spatial manner. The goal of this method was to try and see if there was a balance of the five concepts, or if one method was disproportionately used compared to the others over the other. The aspects of act and agent exist at almost three times the occurrence rate as the aspects of scene and purpose, while act and agent exist in Jobs' speech at an occurrence rate of twice as much as that of agency. This large proportion of the speech revolving around act and agent reflects the primary focus of Jobs for his speech. These five overarching categories were used because they were present throughout the speech, and led to a more in-depth analysis once I started the coding process, allowing the sub areas to branch off and crystalize the information in the broader areas.

This was considered in terms of ethos, as ethos was the strongest aspect of Jobs' speech from the Aristotelian ideas of ethos, pathos and logos, which are the primary starting point for most speech criticisms. These in-depth categories allow for a more detailed breakdown of the speech to see how Jobs approaches the speech in terms of his ethos by understanding ethos in terms of the parts that make it up in the speech. This should add to our understanding of new findings and explanations of external ethos' role in shaping and impacting the persuasive nature of a speech.

### ***Agent***

The role that the rhetor takes in a speech is vitally important to the impact of the message they are trying to convey. Campbell and Burkholder state, "an actor assumes a role or character in a play" (1996, p. 21). The role that Jobs takes (his persona) in the speech is one of an individual of experience, but also of one who experienced failure and personal trials before achieving success. "I never graduated from college. Truth be told, this is the closest I've ever

gotten to a college graduation” (Jobs, 2005). This line is at the very beginning of Jobs’ speech and sets a very different tone for the speech than is common in commencement speeches. Most of the time commencement speeches are cheerful and full of stories of success and accomplishment, or reflect a similar structure to the way Jobs’ constructed his speech, starting out with a failure, and then addressing the challenges he faced to overcome that failure and reach greatness. Jobs was a man who without formal education or family wealth who went on to become an American and global icon.

In taking this humble stance, Jobs sets himself up to be a common man, one who is not above the group, yet he is a man who went on to do great things with his life, and explains this to the audience by giving a short version of his life story. He explains his struggle to identify with the educational system on his quest to figure out what he wanted to do with his life. This is a similar situation to the one the students are in, with looming debt and an uncertain future are things they are facing. This future beyond college is something Jobs can tap into with his speech, to create an even stronger connection with the audience. This method adds to Jobs’ ethos and credibility as a speaker for this occasion because it allows the audience to see him in their shoes, as a young adult facing a crossroad in life. While Jobs did not graduate from college, college graduates are at a similar crossroad in their own lives trying to figure out what they are going to do with their lives. This stance directly draws on the external ethos that Jobs has coming into the speech, since he is pulling from his own personal and professional life to shape and present his message and persona in the speech.

His word choice throughout the speech also reflects this idea. He does not use much jargon or specific terminology, but speaks in a very common tone and style and is very conversational with his stories, a common trait of commencement speeches. His three stories; on

connecting the dots, on love and loss, and on death are told in a manner that allows the audience to join him in each story and experience the emotional and personal struggles he experienced in each. Jobs seems to be using these stories as a means to express his past and experiences and persuade the students, that while one may experience struggles and moments of self-doubt in their lives, success is still possible.

By considering external ethos in this situation it is easier to see how it shapes Jobs persona. If external ethos is removed from consideration of persona, the impact and connection of the stories and messages within Jobs' speech are nowhere near as strong, since the internal ethos is only created within the limited space (the duration) of the speech. This means that the external ethos Jobs brings to the situation makes the speech not only more personal for Jobs, but also more connected in the message and personal nature of his stories and understanding of the importance of the situation, meaning that he uses his ethos from outside of the rhetorical situation of the speech to frame and create his internal ethos within the speech. This means that his internal ethos is shaped by his external ethos.

### *Act*

The second area of Jobs' commencement speech is the act. Campbell and Burkholder argue that, "Empowering an audience is just one form of a larger process of creating ones audience- that is, of symbolically transforming those addressed into the people the rhetor wants them to be," (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, p. 23). Jobs does this in his speech by inviting the audience to identify with his experiences, thus giving them power to relate and identify with him as a speaker and a person which allows them to draw their own opinions about his life as well as their own. This allows the act of commencement to be an engaging and connecting act for both Jobs and his audience(s).

The venue of a commencement speech is designed, in such, that the individual who is speaking is placed at the forefront of the audience's attention, therefore pulling their attention to the speaker and making them a part of the speech itself. When Jobs starts to discuss his personal life in stories two and three, the audience is transformed into a simulated close group for Jobs, allowing him to connect with them on a deeper level, adding impact to his message. The unique aspect of audience in a commencement speech is two-fold; how the speaker views audience, and how the audience views their role in the situation.

While a speaker can only control their view and understanding of the audience(s) in the speech act, the external ethos of the speaker helps the speaker to connect more to the audience, regardless of the understanding the audience(s) has of the rhetorical situation created by the speech. External ethos creates a deeper connection between the speaker and the audience(s) since external ethos shapes the speaker's understanding of the audience's role within the situation to a more concrete level, which makes it easier for the audience to connect more to the speaker as well, since they also bring in their external experiences and understanding to the situation as well (Bitzer, 1968).

### ***Agency***

This leads us to the agency of Jobs' speech, an idea closely related to the structure of the speech, an aspect of the speech that Campbell and Burkholder explain is "the form of the discourse, the method by which it unfolds, and the nature of its movement" (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, p. 24). The nature of Jobs' speech is told in a story format that allows him to show the progression of his life, just like a person would share a story or experience with a close-knit group of friends. "I really didn't know what to do for a few months. I felt that I had let the previous generation of entrepreneurs down - that I had dropped the baton as it was being passed

to me” (Jobs, 2005). Using these stories as a means of agency, shapes how the audience views Jobs in this speech.

This type of structure and discourse creates a certain feeling of expectation within the audience, promoting the idea of vulnerability, but also the success that can come from it, which Jobs addresses later on in his speech. “I didn't see it then, but it turned out that getting fired from Apple was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. The heaviness of being successful was replaced by .... creative periods of my life,” (Jobs, 2005). This structure reinforces the shaped audience and persona that Jobs puts forth starting from the very beginning of his speech.

The reason Jobs is able to do all of this is due to the agency granted to him by the audience during his speech. The audience needs to grant Jobs their agency to act upon and engage in the messages within Jobs speech. Without the audience engaging in this aspect of the speech situation, the messages within Jobs speech do not exist beyond the commencement speech itself. It is Jobs' persona, and the experiences he shares within his speech with the audience that allows the audience to decide if they want to lend their agency to Jobs, which in turn allows the messages to become ideas that become a connection between Jobs and the audience.

The experiences that Jobs had outside of this situation before coming into this situation has a large impact on how he structures the speech, which is also shaped by his external ethos, since his standing outside the situation and the way he normally presents himself and his ideas become reflected in how he structures the commencement address. Jobs uses this concept as a central part of the construction of his message and stories within his speech as they are all based upon and reflective of not only human communication but of the expected structure of a commencement speech.

## *Scene*

There seem to be two key areas for us to consider in regards to Burke's aspect of scene in Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement address. As Campbell and Burkholder explain "We must know about the particular events that motivated the rhetor to engage in rhetorical action and also the particular occasion, which may entail audience expectations about the function of an act and about what choices are appropriate for it" (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, pp. 51-52). The two events that seem to really shape this speech are Jobs' life story as it unfolds in the speech, and the situation of the commencement itself.

Jobs' life story is not an easy one to follow, or for that matter, one for him to tell. There are specific instances in his life that seemed to push him beyond his comfort level and to cause him to push himself further. To establish the scene of commencement in the manner that allows Jobs to create the scene needed for his messages to have the biggest impact relies on Jobs fully committing to his message. Dropping out of college, being fired from a company he helped to create, being diagnosed with cancer, these and all of his other experiences not addressed in this speech help to shape his view on the world and, in turn, his view on how he wanted to present this commencement speech. Without those experiences, these key aspects of his life that in turn shaped who he became, which lead to his success, he may not have been given the opportunity to give this speech in the first place.

Most commencement ceremonies occur as a celebration of achievement, in front of family and friends somewhere on the university's campus. These situations are a time to reflect on the accomplishments of the students, what they have learned, and the next step they are taking in life. Most speeches given at these ceremonies are motivational and emotionally moving, helping the students feel that they are prepared to take this next step in life.

When considering this, it is easy to see that while Jobs' speech does contain some of these aspects, it challenges them as well. Roughly half of his speech is spent talking about his hardships and failures (all three of his stories are about hard times he experienced, and these are the bulk of his speech), and only the last two paragraphs are fully devoted to a motivational message. That message is quite simple, and came from a very interesting place:

“It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish." It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you,” (Jobs, 2005).

Yet this in itself may be the true showing of Jobs conforming to the norm of a commencement speech, to end with simple and motivational words, which is exactly what he did to finish his speech.

Bitzer expands on this idea by explaining that, “rhetorical works belong to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historical context in which they occur” (Bitzer, 1968). Meaning that a work is rhetorical because it is a response to a situation of a certain kind, and since Jobs is placed into this situation the rhetorical discourse and the ethos that results from it stems from the external factors that allow the internal structure and impact of his speech to occur. Since the speech can only occur due to Jobs being invited by Stanford to speak in the given situation, the situational activity of his commencement speech allows Jobs ethos to grow and build upon his externally created ethos from his career and life to be the starting point of his ethos, which is built upon during his speech.



## ***Purpose***

The last area we will examine is the purpose of Jobs' speech and how that impacts the effectiveness of his message. To fully address this section we must gather "Information about those exposed to the discourse, the empirical audience and those specifically targeted by the rhetor" (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996, p. 53-54). One might question why so much focus is being placed on the audience in this analysis, but without an audience, one cannot evaluate the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the message being presented/conveyed by the rhetor, and if Jobs truly achieved the purpose of his speech for himself and for Stanford University.

The audience can be broken down into three key groups, the students, the family members of the students, and the representatives of the university in attendance of the commencement ceremony. Jobs aimed his message primarily at the students with his speech, sharing his views and opinions with them through story, but the message was not just received and interpreted by the primary intended audience. All those exposed to the message were impacted by it in one way or another; regardless of intention Jobs did affect all those who heard his speech in some way.

Since the students are the ones for whom the ceremony is held, the commencement speaker traditionally designs their speech and the core message towards them. Jobs does this by weaving his three stories into an almost lesson-based talk, with the key focus being on never losing sight of your dreams and your passions regardless of what happens to you. "Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition," (Jobs, 2005). In doing so he invites the students into his rhetoric, allows him to connect with them on a deeper level while also allowing the students to draw comparisons to their own lives and career aspirations.

The family members of the students were the secondary audience of the speech. Since the audience of a commencement ceremony is normally comprised of friends and family of those graduating, they, too, are exposed to Jobs' message. While they are not the direct audience being addressed there are still aspects of his speech that invite them into the rhetoric as well, and cause them to become a part of the situation. "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma — which is living with the results of other people's thinking," (Jobs, 2005). While this is aimed at the students, the secondary audience can identify with this idea as well, since they are already living in the career world, and have most likely experienced some of the trials and challenges Jobs has experienced, which allows them to identify with this message on a deeper level.

Our last group to examine would be those who were at the commencement representing the university, such as the president, professors, administration, etc. These are the people responsible for this event happening. They are the ones who educated the students, set up the event, and talked Jobs into speaking at the commencement. Without this last group this situation could not occur, and in turn they are impacted by Jobs' words, (Campbell & Burkholder, 1996). What he is saying is a reflective view on the educational values and insights of the educational community of Stanford. Since he is speaking on behalf of Stanford, those that work and represent the institution at this commencement ceremony become a part of his message, as they are the living and breathing representation of how it became possible. They represent the body of education that he left to pursue his dreams, the body that gave him specific aspects to help create the inventions he did, and the body that helped to produce the people who did and could become his colleagues.

For all three of these audiences the way in which Jobs combines both the internal ethos created within the speech's rhetorical situation and the external ethos that Jobs brought into the speech situation gives a two-pronged method of connection between the audience and the speaker as well as between the audience and the speaker's message(s). Since it has been established at this point in the paper that internal ethos builds upon the external ethos that is brought into the situation by the speaker, the audience(s), and everyone involved in the rhetorical situation, it is safe to assert that internal ethos in a rhetorical situation is dependent and also an extension of the external ethos of all participants. This not only clears up the ideas and understandings that we have of contextual audiences, but also frames them in a clearer light within the rhetorical situation that they are created within and also exist within..

### **Discussion**

In every communicative presentation there are results that are the goal of the speaker and there is also unintended results as well. A similar situation occurs when an individual analyzes a particular speech, as there are contributing factors to the manner by which they do their analysis. In terms of Jobs' speech there are two very clear intended outcomes, and one clear unintended outcome.

The first intended outcome is the motivational shift that occurred in those receiving the message, primarily the students in the audience. Since the focus of a commencement address is on those who are finishing their time at a particular institution, in this case Stanford University, the primary outcome for a speaker should revolve around those students. The focus on audience and structure is key for Jobs' ethos in order to connect to the students.

When I say Jobs' ethos I mean both his internal and external ethos. The internal ethos of the speech is co-created by the audience in the speech act, which causes the motivational shift for

the audience to receive Jobs' message. Jobs' external ethos sets the groundwork for the shift to occur since Jobs' understanding of the situation and how he wants to approach motivating the students in the speech act through story based upon his personal and professional life that exist outside the created rhetorical situation of the speech.

Jobs understood the amount of importance the audience(s) placed on this occasion and structured his speech according to those expectations and also to what he wanted to convey about his own persona in his speech. By framing the three main stories of his speech in the order he did Jobs was able to tell a narrative story about himself and shape his persona for the audience. This allows him to let the structure of the stories to connect to the audience which allows him to motivate and persuade them using ethos. This can only occur and be effective when all three of these constructs build off of one another to create a strong ethos for a speaker, which Jobs did in his speech. Similar analysis could be done of other commencement speeches to check for these same trends, or to see if Jobs' methods are a unique occurrence.

The second intended outcome was the positive reflection on Stanford University as a result of the speech. This echoes the ideas of not only persona for Stanford but also the historical-cultural aspects of the commencement ceremony and of the university. The university has its own identity and history that was well established before Jobs gave this speech in 2005. As a result, Jobs needed to consider the image of Stanford and what the expectations were of him as a representative of the university while he was preparing, writing and giving his speech. As a result, his persona and internal ethos were created in a manner that allowed him to meet all of his own personal goals while also representing Stanford in a positive light.

All public figures/entities try to keep themselves in the best light possible, and that is easy to do when the people speaking on your behalf are from within your organization or the

individual is speaking for themselves. This idea drastically changes when you bring someone in to speak to members of your organization or on behalf of your organization. Jobs just happened to be doing both for this commencement speech. Jobs draws in the external ethos of himself and Stanford into the speech to help create and establish internal ethos within the speech situation.

Since Stanford also has their own external ethos that adds to the shaping of the situation, Jobs also had to consider their external ethos and how it shaped the internal ethos of the rhetorical act and how he relates his message to the students and the other audiences at the commencement ceremony. The unique aspect of this part of the analysis is that the students participated as a part of the ethos of Stanford since they exist within Stanford, and since they are a part of Stanford's ethos, their own personal ethos builds upon Stanford's ethos. Since the ethos of Stanford and the students are so closely intertwined Jobs needed to consider how he could both reflect the ethos and needs of Stanford, while also considering how to connect and understand the needs and ethos of the students and the other audiences. This builds upon the clear ideas that exist earlier in this essay, and allow for the breadth of the research to be supported by the depth of the analysis and understanding of the situation in which Jobs' speech occurred.

The unique unintended result of the speech was a moment of clarity and redemption for Jobs. At the very beginning of his speech Jobs sheds light on the fact that he never graduated from college, something that bothered both him and his parents at the time. Throughout the speech Jobs ties this starting story into the others, since they never would have happened if he had not dropped out, and as a result of dropping out he became a very successful man. Regardless of his success, the fact that he was asked to come to a college commencement ceremony (an occasion he never participated in himself) to give a commencement address to the

students and their families give him the ethos and grounding needed for a successful speech at the ceremony because Stanford is lending some of their ethos to him as well by selecting him as someone qualified to give the commencement address.

This action of being selected by Stanford drastically shifted the context of his speech and it is his use of persona that allows his ethos to be so strong throughout his speech because he builds upon the ethos lent to him before he even starts speaking. Since Stanford lends some of their ethos to Jobs it becomes combined with Jobs' own external ethos, meaning that the grounds set for Jobs to create his message and connect it to everyone involved in the rhetorical situation becomes easier, especially since the ethos of the students is so closely connect to that of Stanford since the students exist within Stanford's ethos and identity. Through the action of giving this speech, Jobs is able to complete the standard cycle of college in the United States; entrance, progression and exit into the working world. While he may not be exiting as a graduate, he is symbolically closing the door on a part of his life that had been left open for a very long time.

This article gives a different layer of perspective to viewing the rhetorical situation of a commencement address in our culture by viewing the internal and external constructs that shape the situation. By examining ethos in this manner, a deeper understanding of the role ethos plays in public speaking situations can be started and addressed, and the role ethos plays within the pentad can be given a new venue for research. While many articles on public addresses focus on the situation itself, this analysis looks at how the external and internal constructs impact each other and creates the internal ethos for Jobs in this speech. If we as a discipline were to view the speaking situations we analyze and interpret more from this stance, we may be able to draw deeper understandings of the speaking situation and how the speaker approached and created their persona for the situation.

## **Conclusion**

Overall this paper served as a preliminary glance into Jobs' 2005 Stanford commencement address to try to better understand how one's success and public standing affect their ability to persuade and impact an audience. To do this we applied Campbell and Burkholder's model on rhetorical criticism (persona, audience, structure, historical-cultural, contextual audience) and constructs from Burke, Bitzer, and Habermas in order to gain a deeper understanding of Jobs as a speaker and to evaluate the effectiveness of his message on those involved in terms of Jobs' ethos.

While a speaker can only control their view and understanding of the audience(s) in the rhetorical speech act, the external ethos of the speaker helps the speaker to connect more to the audience, meaning that the analysis of the speech given by Jobs at the 2005 Stanford commencement means that internal rhetoric is based upon and builds upon the external ethos of the speaker, as well as the external ethos of the organization that they represent. Meaning, that external ethos creates a deeper connection between the speaker and the audience(s) and also between the audience and the message(s) created in the rhetorical situation. This means that through the combined method approached used in the analysis of Jobs' speech the clear understanding of the role of ethos as a persuasive tool in a rhetorical act is more developed, because the connection of the speaker to the message and the audience to the message is more clearly defined, because ethos is no longer viewed as just a singular piece of persuasion, but a two-tiered aspect of the rhetorical situation. While there is still much more research and analysis to be done on this speech, it is safe to say that certain areas of analysis have started to peel back certain aspects of Jobs' rhetoric in a manner that allows us to see the key goals of his speech and how it was received by the audience(s) exposed to it.

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