**11AP Lang. & Comp.**

**Combining Ethos, Logos, and Pathos**

Most authors don’t rely on just a single type of appeal to persuade their audience; they combine these appeals to create an effective audience. The appeals themselves are inextricably bound together: if you lay out your argument logically, that will help you to build your ethos. It’s only logical to listen to an expert on the subject, so having ethos can help build a foundation for an appeal to logos. It’s also possible to build your ethos based on pathos – for example, who better than to speak about the pain of losing a loved one than someone who has gone through it? The best political satirists can say things that are both perfectly logical and completely hilarious, thus appealing to both logos and pathos at the same time.

The following is a letter that Toni Morrison, the only African American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, wrote to then-senator Barack Obama endorsing him as the Democratic candidate for president in 2008. The letter was published in the *New York Times*.

**Dear Senator Obama**

**TONI MORRISON**

Dear Senator Obama,

This letter represents a first for me–a public endorsement of a Presidential candidate. I feel driven to let you know why I am writing it. One reason is it may help gather other supporters; another is that this is one of those singular moments that nations ignore at their peril. I will not rehearse the multiple crises facing us, but of one thing I am certain: this opportunity for a national evolution (even revolution) will not come again soon, and I am convinced you are the person to capture it.

May I describe to you my thoughts?

I have admired Senator Clinton for years. Her knowledge always seemed to me exhaustive; her negotiation of politics expert. However I am more compelled by the quality of mind (as far as I can measure it) of a candidate. I cared little for her gender as a source of my admiration, and the little I did care was based on the fact that no liberal woman has ever ruled in America. Only conservative or “new-centrist” ones are allowed into that realm. Nor do I care very much for your race[s]. I would not support you if that was all you had to offer or because it might make me “proud.”

In thinking carefully about the strengths of the candidates, I stunned myself when I came to the following conclusion: that in addition to keen intelligence, integrity and a rare authenticity, you exhibit something that has nothing to do with age, experience, race or gender and something I don’t see in other candidates. That something is a creative imagination which coupled with brilliance equals wisdom. It is too bad if we associate it only with gray hair and old age. Or if we call searing vision naivete. Or if we believe cunning is insight. Or if we settle for finessing cures tailored for each ravaged tree in the forest while ignoring the poisonous landscape that feeds and surrounds it. Wisdom is a gift; you can’t train for it, inherit it, learn it in a class, or earn it in the workplace–that access can foster the acquisition of knowledge, but not wisdom.

When, I wondered, was the last time this country was guided by such a leader? Someone whose moral center was un-embargoed? Someone with courage instead of mere ambition? Someone who truly thinks of his country’s citizens as “we,” not “they”? Someone who understands what it will take to help America realize the virtues it fancies about itself, what it desperately needs to become in the world?

Our future is ripe, outrageously rich in its possibilities. Yet unleashing the glory of that future will require a difficult labor, and some may be so frightened of its birth they will refuse to abandon their nostalgia for the womb.

There have been a few prescient leaders in our past, but you are the man for this time.

Good luck to you and to us.

Toni Morrison

1. Who is Morrison’s audience for this letter? Evidence?

2. How does she establish ethos in this letter?

3. How does Morrison develop a logical argument? Consider: counterarguments, concession/refutation.

4. How does she appeal to pathos?