The Effects of Love

Claudia Faith Draper is a small woman in her early 30’s. In Tom Topor’s play *Nuts* Claudia is standing trial on charges of manslaughter of the first degree. Throughout all three acts of *Nuts* Claudia is trying to prove to the judge, lawyer, and her parents that she is sane and should be tried accordingly. Claudia uses many different tactics and conceptual tools to achieve this.

In Act three, scene one Claudia is asked if she loves her mother. She then expresses that the word love can mean many things, but due to overuse it is just that: a word. Discussions and questions about love can be intense or romantic but they are always hard hitting. Claudia Draper in Tom Topor’s play *Nuts* uses Pathos, Logos, emphasis and balance to clearly convey her point of view of love and how it has changed her life.

Logos and pathos do not always go hand in hand when a person is trying to persuade another of something; however, Claudia Draper uses them both strategically and effectively. Claudia successfully allows pathos to come out through her words. She believes that love is a precious thing and it should not be used without a second thought. The memories that surface when Claudia talks about being a little girl and loving her mother are the strongest use of pathos. “I used to say to her, ‘I love you to the moon and back down again and around the world and back again.’ And she used to say to me, ‘I love you to the sun and down again and around the stars and back again.’ ” The memories of how perfect and cute life was makes the audience smile and think of the love they have for their families. Claudia plays upon her own emotions so that the audience can feel as well as hear what she is saying. She becomes vulnerable when she speaks of it, thus allowing emotion of that memory to touch the minds, and more importantly, the emotions of the audience. Logos follows the
pathos in her words. She still talks about love, but she states, “...you toss the word love around like a Frisbee...” She has realized that love is just a word in the courthouse and the only meaning it holds to the lawyer is as proof of Claudia’s insanity. His logic is that if she does not love her mother she will become extremely upset and lose all self-control when the subject is brought up. He figures that, alone, will be enough evidence to confirm that she is crazy. Instead of playing his games, however, Claudia uses her own logic to counter his, and throws the ball back to him, and even into his goal. Her logical aspect of the argument is that love is not logical at all and therefore Macmillan’s questions are flawed; “You stand up there asking, ‘Do you love your daughter?’... And you think you’ve asked something real.” The use of the word love is to prove to the judge that Claudia is nuts, but Claudia proves that she is sane with her logical appeal to the situation. Love is not a game and feelings are not toys, which she clearly shows as she speaks about the effects of love. Sometimes love is like a gun Claudia states, indicating that she has a greater logical drive than Macmillan has substantiation of her believed mental illness.

That is where the emphasis comes in. She emphasizes the word love many times in many different contexts, and it aids in her logical and emotional reasoning. She loves her mother, her mother loves her, love is not like a Frisbee, “...love is not enough. It is too much and not enough.” The repetition of that one word throughout her speech is placed just enough times that it is not over done and emphasizes that she is sane and shows exactly how she feels about love. Plays are much easier to see emphasis and balance, and this piece was no exception. Claudia does more than emphasize words. In fact, at some points, the words almost get in the way of what she’s saying. She is reminded of the love she shared with her mother, but then she asks, “…so what? So what? She’s over there and I’m over here and she hates me...and I
hate her...” Claudia is emphasizing her objective once again: love is a beautiful thing, but it has lost its beauty. The word does not mean what it once did.

The monologue is split up into two parts. The first is where she uses pathos and talks about her mother and the second part is geared more toward the logical aspect while she talks to the lawyer. With that balance she is fulfilling both of her objectives. In the second part she still emphasizes the word love, but she also creates many metaphors to help her emphasize how she feels about this topic, and ultimately how she feels about her mother. The pathos and love of her mother with the logos and annoyance she has with Macmillan even out in the end. By balancing out the pathos with the logos her argument is stronger, she can now convince the judge and her parents that love is not a toy that can be handled carelessly.

The tools Claudia chooses to aid her argument are used so well it is almost scary. She finds the emotional appeal to the judge and the audience but does not stop there. She allows the lawyer, Macmillan, to play his little games but she calls him out every chance she gets (not only in this scene). Even though Claudia laughs at strange parts and acts “insane”, she justifies her actions through the power of her words, her logic, and her knowledge. Her keen sense of details and her impeccable rebuttal to all claims against her allows the audience to see how adept and aware of herself she truly is. This piece, however strange it may be, is a great example of how simple appeals and little tools can strengthen any argument.