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Michael Parenti's Use Of Rhetorical Strategies

Michael Parenti gave on April 15, 1986 a popular Lecture as a guest in University of Colorado, Boulder titled "US interventionism, the 3rd world, and the USSR." Michael Parenti, already a popular leftist thickener, author, and debater before coming to this lecture already had a large rapport with the audience who all went there on their own volition out of interest for Parenti and his ideas. With this preestablished ethos Parenti gave a hour long lecture where he discussed imperialism, and eventually took questions where he gave a powerful answer to one of the questions asked though he did not directly answer the question directly well through the answer. Parenti was a part of a fast growing leftist movement in America as it was becoming more and more acceptable after the red scare to be a leftist especially in places like colleges where younger people frequented or lived. The cold war with the USSR was still ongoing at the time of the lecture leading to large discussions about the spread of communism, and the USSR's actions on a global scale especially on whether they were positive or negative for the world at large. Parenti through this lecture and excerpt made not only argument for socialism, but also made numerous arguments against capitalism and imperialism through examples on how both negatively affect the world especially how capitalism takes advantage of smaller countries and how communism has helped many of those countries become more beneficial for their citizens then they had previously been. Parenti through this lecture makes an effective argument using a wide variety of rhetorical strategies including appeals to ethos, use of humor, style, use of pathos,

use of logos, and arrangement along with various other rhetorical strategies to make an effective argument for socialism and against capitalism.

Michael Parenti before even coming to the lecture probably had a strong reputation or ethos with the crowd as he is already a popular leftist thinker and speaker that most probably already know of before even coming to the lecture. Along with that Parenti does also through the lecture, and the excerpt further builds ethos with the crowd that often contributes to his argument to further give both him and his argument more appeal towards the audience. One way Parenti does that from within the text can be seen through Parenti's use of wordiness or experience he shows within the excerpt. This can be seen through lines such as "When I was in Cuba I was up in the Escambia, which is like the Appalachia of Cuba" which show how Parenti uses his personal experience gained from going to the countries to establish an amount of credibility to his claims others might lack. Through the inclusion of small details and fleshing out statements from these personal accounts Parenti shares it successfully further establishes his first hand gotten knowledge he has acquired from his travels further adding to his ethos from the audience.

Jokes are another way Parenti successfully builds ethos as well as achieving various other rhetorical goals throughout his lecture and especially within the excerpt itself. Through jokes such as "if you don't want to call them socialist, call them whatever you want. Post capitalist- whatever, I don't care" and "I said 'That's okay dad, neither can the students, don't worry about that. I mean I wrote it for you, it's your book and you don't have to read it. It's a very complicated book, an academic book' ". It can be seen how Parenti uses jokes too often to establish an ethos with his audience throughout the lecture but establishing him as a group similar to the audience. By calling his books "complicated" and also making fun of how others call socialists Parenti seeks to establish him as person similar to the audience within a similar

situation knowing socialist or his literature can sometimes be hard to read both seek to show how Parenti is similar to his audience in many ways and makes him to seem as part of the audience in many ways. This rhetorical strategy will allow Parent to appeal to the audience through them seeing him as similar to them, endearing many ideas that Parenti may present to them before he may even present them.

Through Jokes it can be easy to see how Parenti's use of style is used to rhetorically convince the reader through not only humor but also through some other uses as well. Parentis' style of lecture within this excerpt while not noticeable through the transcript uses two large rhetorical methods about style that allow it to have far more appeal then what it would normally be. The first thing Parenti does is slowly raise his voice and become less even with his voice as he gets more invested in the lecture which serves to not only rouse the audience, but to also allow the audience to become more invested and angry or riled up with Parenti mirroring him as the speech evolves. The other way Parenti uses style through his speech is through the use of pauses within his speech at certain parts. While this is probably a point to collect himself it also allows his speech to have certain measures of respite for the listener, but also through these pauses Parenti also often pauses between points or before larger claims are being made often increasing audience investment through allowing his ideas to sit without speech for a short second before continuing to the next. This allows the listener to have a short second to collect the ideas and emotions Parentis' speech is meant to invoke and allow them to think along with his speech more efficiently then if he simply continued the speech in an even manner the entire time. Both of these style choices serve to further the reader's emotional investment in the speech and have the emotions Parenti wishes to invoke into the listener not only be shown in his speech through his own but also be mirrored by the listener.

Through invoking emotions or pathos within the reader Parenti seeks to further sway or solidify the reader into his viewpoints and much of his arguments are built off of pathos. Parenti makes numerous appeals to his audience's emotions within his speech from his story of how his father couldn't read to illustrate the importance of reading too the need to his illustration of how the change too socialism in countries he visited allowed the people that lived their too finally get proper medical care Parenti effectively uses personal stories he has heard or experienced to make pathos appeals to him and the audience. These stories and accounts allow Parenti too further persuade his reader through invoking certain emotions within them usually through his stories either anger at the conditions the people are put through or some other concept or idea that Parenti sees as wrong, or sadness at the conditions or lives some people have to go through too effectively convince the audience through these emotions into the same or similar viewpoint too what Parenti currently holds.

Parentis' larger lecture uses numerous world events and other more solid evidence to assist his points but unlike the lecture at large this excerpt instead uses more personal non concrete stories as evidence or logos instead. This other than achieving a strong pathos in his overall argument also achieves some other purposes in his overall argument. One way this use of stories helps convince the reader is by giving a more personal closeup account of the story. With a personal retelling like through the story of Parenti telling of his fathers illiteracy

He opens the book and he starts looking through it, and he gets misty-eyed, very misty-eyed. And I thought it was because he was so touched that his son had dedicated a book to him. That wasn't the reason. He looks up to me and he says 'I can't read this, kid' I said "That's okay dad, neither can the students, don't worry about that. I mean I wrote it for you, it's your book and you don't have to read it. It's a very complicated

book, an academic book. He says, "I can't read this book." And the defeat. The defeat that man felt.

achieves a personal closeup look at the story more easily drawing readers in then a non personal account may normally, and also makes it easier for the speaker (Parenti) to have more feeling in his speech as this story has a personal quality to him. Another way these personal stories assist in Parenti's argument is through making the stories more personal it allows Parent to not only establish further ethos by telling personal stories but too also allows the reader too experience similar things too Parenti which allows you to come too similar thoughts and conclusions that he did at the time helping the listener walk the same path or use the same logic and thought process that Parenti had.

Another rhetorical strategy that can be seen through Parentis' lecture is his use of arrangement within. Parenti arranges the text in clumps with the intro, then he tells a personal story and explores some of its meaning, and then repeats telling the stories until the conclusion that ties the entire argument together. This allows Parent to draw the audience in and get them riled up with the stories and intro while walking them through a thought process with the stories and intermittent realizations within until the conclusion ties these thought processes in together. This allows Parenti to through his arrangement walk his audience through a quasi similar series of realizations that Parenti himself went through before tying these ideas together in the end to form a solid conclusion.

Through these examples it can be seen how Parenti uses rhetorical strategies to further convince his audience of his ideas. Parenti through a combination of appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos along with his use of style, arrangement, humor, and various other rhetorical strategies effectively appeals to the reader towards his ideas and opinions on socialism and capitalism.

Parenti throughout this excerpt and the lecture overall effectively used rhetorical strategies to convince the audience and petition for his viewpoint through this lecture through his use of rhetoric.

Work Cited

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