Rhetorical Critique

An Analysis of John Sapochetti's Use of Rhetorical Devices

by Lucas Tembras

"Lebron, not Michael is the Greatest of All Time," frames the problem at stake by placing an increased emphasis on a comparison between both Michael Jordan and Lebron James. The article itself appears to be John Sapochetti's attempt at changing the public's perception, who by majority, seem to agree that Jordan is "the G.O.A.T." Therefore, it can be inferred that the article's purpose is to persuade readers, which we can assume are basketball fans or follow the sport to some degree, into buying into the narrative that Lebron James is the greatest player to have ever played the sport. The platform that Sapochetti chooses to voice his message on has an influence on the liberty that he is given to make his case. Due to the fact that the publication of the article was made on the website of a relatively small digital media company (fullpresscoverage.com), how he chooses to express himself takes on a more casual form. In addition to this, the genre of the article itself warrants a more easy-going approach due to the nature of the world of sports. Although he explicitly states the reasoning behind limiting his comparison down to just two players, Michael Jordan and Lebron James, the deliberate omission of other players equally worthy of the title limits the scope of influence of the argument. If we don't consider all of the possible candidates for the title, how can we be certain the one that we have come to embrace as the "greatest" is truly the best? Personally, I believe to have provided a more holistic argument, he should've made the comparison between all of the players who qualify for the title both statistically, and in the eyes of the basketball community. It is understood that his target is to persuade the majority of people, more specifically, those who believe Jordan is the greatest of all time, but to those who believe other-wise, in that maybe they believe that Kareem Abdul-Jabbar or perhaps Larry Bird is the greatest, that should've been considered: and a more thorough argument should have been constructed. However, the angle of vision we are presented with suffices in making the distinction between both Jordan and Lebron. The logical progression and development of the text is sound. Sapochetti structures his argument by choosing to focus on generalities. Amongst these, are the narratives that revolve around both Jordan and Lebron that Sapochetti views as threats to Lebron's ascension in the so-called "G.O.A.T" hierarchy. Nonetheless, the fact that Sapochetti chose to address such broad concepts such as offensive averages, and the lack of championships that Lebron has been able to win and why, limits the argument, as although this allows for us to get an overview of the two players, it serves as more of a preface to the argument. Without the use of advanced metrics, it shows that Sapochetti fails to demonstrate an understanding of the nuances that accompany the argument. This lack of depth goes on to damage the reader's perception of his basketball knowledge by virtue of the fact that it makes it seem as though he shares the insight of a casual fan. Not to mention, the way in which Sapochetti chooses to develop his points and arguments such as when describing Jordan's competition comes off as immature and unjust as it doesn't properly credit Jordan for his accomplishments. Following this, Sapochetti's appeal to readers' emotions, imaginations, and values is weak and underdeveloped. The exclusion of Lebron's backstory coupled with the absence of Lebron's most inspiring and iconic moments weakens the article's impact. In addition, Sapochetti's weak use of broad statistics and the injection of bias debilitate his appeal to logic and make it difficult for readers to make an informed opinion. Ultimately, I both disagree and agree with the values of the author, I appreciate Lebron's contribution to the sport, but I can't get myself to support the author's indifference towards Jordan's accomplishments.