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Patrick Boyle: Hedge-Fund Manager turned Podcaster

When you read the word superhero, your mind probably immediately goes to popular comic characters such as Batman, Superman, or Spiderman. But what is it that makes these three characters superheroes? It isn't just that they have superpowers and fight bad guys, but also that they use their gifts to spread the message that good prevails over evil. Rhetorical superheroes are similar. They use their understanding of rhetorical concepts and communication skills to convey their message through various mediums, including writing, film, videography, or even artwork. In the case of my rhetorical superhero, Patrick Boyle, the medium is an interview. Patrick Boyle is a YouTuber and podcaster who makes videos about current events in the worlds of finance and economics. He formerly worked as a quantitative hedge fund manager and as an investment banker and is currently a professor at Queen Mary College and King's College London, where he teaches courses on financial derivatives and applied portfolio management. Financial derivatives are securities which get their value from underlying securities; an example is a call option, which gives its holder the right to buy a stock at a certain price in the future. The value of the call option depends on the value of the stock; thus, a call option is a derivative. Applied portfolio management discusses the principles and methods of successful management of a portfolio of financial assets.

I chose Patrick Boyle as my rhetorical superhero because I have been a fan of his YouTube channel for several years, over which time I have continually been amazed by his

ability to explain complicated topics simply, educate his audience, and cut through misinformation when reporting on current events. His podcast has been one of the main ways that I have stayed up to date on happenings in the world of finance. His videos were one of the things that sparked my interest in finance, which is what I now pursue as a major. Hearing him explain topics like the FTX collapse, bank failures, Russian sanctions, and numerous frauds educated me on many financial topics, and for that reason, Patrick's work is incredibly important to the world. Educating the public about finance can help get people into investing and responsible spending. I recently saw a statistic that 60% of Americans don't have a budget or financial plan whatsoever. This made me appreciate the work that Patrick and other reputable finance influencers are doing even more. Naturally, when an interview with him by Andrew Henderson was recommended to me by the YouTube algorithm, I was very curious to see how he would sound without a script to read. Upon watching the interview, I was amazed by Patrick's thoughtful and insightful responses and his utilization of various rhetorical concepts to get his points across. Throughout the interview, Patrick uses numerous rhetorical concepts to respond to the interviewer's questions and convey his opinions on a variety of topics.

In the first few minutes of the interview, *ethos* immediately becomes apparent as Andrew Henderson talks about Patrick Boyle's career and describes him as "insightful" and "interesting." A particular quote of Henderson's that establishes Patrick's credibility and authority better than any other is "You break it down better than anyone." The rundown of Patrick's career, positive adjectives, and the show of respect for his ability to articulate his words serve the purpose of making the information Patrick provides more believable due to the praises of another highly respected industry professional. If you were unaware of his qualifications to speak on topics covered in the interview, such as China's economy, growth and value stocks, and the effects of demographic changes on the economy, you would be hesitant to believe anything he says—and

rightly so. By showing that Patrick is a credible source, the interview becomes more interesting and informative, which allows Patrick to convey his educational message more effectively.

Based on the viewer's first impression of Patrick, he doesn't seem like someone who would rely much on *pathos* to make arguments. His formal business attire and glasses make him look like a perpetually serious professional, which is not someone who would be associated with the use of *pathos*. While it is true that due to being a commentator focused on financial news, Patrick relies mostly on *logos*, he still uses *pathos* often, particularly in the form of humor and satire. One example of this satire comes when Patrick discusses people viewing near-zero interest rates as normal because between 2009 and 2022, the federal funds rate was often around 0.1%. Patrick makes an analogy between viewing near-zero interest rates as "normal" and a patient who has been on a heart machine for the last ten years. Patrick says, "It's sort of like the patient has been on a heart machine for the last five, ten years and people are like, 'well, it's quite natural to walk around on a heart machine.'" Patrick's surprising use of humor is something that sets him apart from many other financial YouTubers and is a reason his channel grew to the impressive size that it is today, at over 650,000 subscribers.

Boyle's use of humor is a key element of how he interacts with his audience. Forty minutes of talking about finance can sometimes be very boring, even for an audience interested in the topic, like the audience of this interview. Interspersing humor throughout the interview has the effect of breaking up the responses and allows the audience to pause and laugh. Patrick's humor is clearly popular with his audience; a YouTube commenter writes, "Patrick's dry sense of humor is priceless. Extremely smart and equally funny."

In any interview, exigence and *kairos* are naturally going to play a huge role in the questions asked by the interviewer. This interview was recorded in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in

September 2023. Popular topics at the time were China's economic situation, Brexit, BRICS (an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, countries that have discussed creating a common currency), Ukraine, and the collapse of FTX (a cryptocurrency exchange that was revealed to be a Ponzi scheme). The exigence of talking about each of these events for Boyle is likely simply that they happened, and as someone who stays up to date on financial news and produces a podcast and videos talking about this news, he decided to talk about them. The *kairos* is that the situations discussed in the interview could have an enormous impact on investors in the future, and so educating the interview's audience about the topics is important for their financial security, choice of investment, and education about what may happen in the future, based on the past.

Covering all these complex topics and more in an interview presents a time constraint. The interview took forty minutes, which didn't give each question enough time to get an in-depth answer, with Patrick spending no longer than seven minutes on any one question. Instead, Patrick presents a concise opinion about each question Henderson asks him. This constraint is most evident at the end of the interview, where Henderson rather abruptly says, "With that, Patrick Boyle of YouTube, thanks for being with us in K.L." This constraint is understandably disappointing to many viewers who would like a more in-depth explanation of a certain question; however, the interview gives viewers a thought-provoking foundation to do more research on, which can often point back to Boyle's own podcast episodes or YouTube videos.

These examples of how *ethos*, *pathos*, audience, exigence, and *kairos* are used by Boyle, and the constraints that affect his delivery of the interview, clearly illustrate his rhetorical heroics. Boyle expertly uses these rhetorical concepts to convey his message of educating his audience about important financial and economic happenings of today's increasingly complex

and frightening economic landscape. Boyle's experience in the finance industry, dry humor, and admirable reason for creating financial education content make him the perfect influencer to speak on these topics, and the results speak for themselves. Comments on the video are overwhelmingly positive and express their deep appreciation for Boyle's experience, dry humor, and admirable reason for educating the public about finance. Overall, Patrick Boyle is a rhetorical superhero and an expert in using rhetoric to teach the public about topics that would otherwise only be understandable at an advanced level with a bachelor's degree in finance or economics.



A photo of Patrick Boyle from his page on the website of King's College London.

Works Cited

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