

An inconvenient truth:
al gore show
examples of pathos,
ethos, logos



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An Inconvenient Truth Introduction The movie An Inconvenient Truth is a sermon from former U. S. Vice President Al Gore on the causes and consequences of global warming delivered from a secular IMAX pulpit. Given Gore's well-deserved reputation for speaking in a mono-tone voice and without great eloquence or flair; him giving a 96 minute speech aided by a high-tech slideshow would seem to be a recipe for a box office disaster and as an effective mass sleeping potion for its audience. However, Gore's film has been well-received by critics and audiences of all nationalities and political leanings.

Ethos

Gore is a Democrat and widely viewed as being politically left of center, an environmentalist, ' tree-hugging liberal' as some would characterize him. The audience is invited to learn the inadequate approach in which science was presented to his class in primary school and his awakening to the global warming issue while in college. His interest was first sparked by Roger Revelle, Gore's professor and renowned geochemist who had taken the lead in documenting increases of CO₂ in the atmosphere. He asserts that global warning is a moral and ethical issue that has been wrongly made into a political debate. Scientists are not debating whether or not pollution is causing climate changes, only politicians. As proof, he shows that 928 peer-reviewed scientific studies have been conducted over the past decade and none of them have disputed this fact.

Logos

Gore systematically describes the perils to civilization potentially caused by global warming. Gore displays a series of maps simulating the effect such a sea level rise on coastal cities in several low-lying regions of the world. Gore
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then demonstrates that rising water levels and the massive human misery it would cause is not the worst effect of melting ice. As Greenland melts, cold water mixes into the warm Gulf Stream currents in the Atlantic which acts to keep Europe warmer than other regions of a similar latitude. If this warmer current turns cold, as it would if half of Greenland melted, a present-day ice age would envelope all of Europe. Gore refers to a simple graphic to illustrate an important point. A scale holds bars of gold on one side and the earth on the other and asks the rhetorical question, which is more important? He further argues that new industries that supply solar, nuclear, wind and battery power will replace any jobs lost by the old pollution producing industries and likely produce more. The economy will be enhanced by aggressively pursuing alternate energy sources rather than destroyed.

Pathos

Gore adds a very intimate touch to the production by sharing family stories and personal contemplations bringing in the human component, the final and necessary link to complete an all-encompassing connection with the audience. As a side-bar to the film, the audience is invited to share in some of the most important events in Gore's personal life including the emotions he felt and the change in his overall outlook on life when his son was hit by a car. As the film advances, Gore's multimedia demonstration is interchanged with him providing the audience glimpses of his personal background and opinions. This 'look behind the curtain' into Gore's private thoughts and life provides a connection between what is generally perceived as an aloof politician and the diverse theatre audience. This connection serves to persuade the audience to be more receptive to the message. Some suggest

that had Gore been perceived in a similar manner during the 2000

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presidential campaign he would have beaten Bush by a wide margin. With a previously unseen flare for the theatrical, Gore addresses what he and many scientists consider the most important issue facing mankind with some well-placed humorous commentary. Mixing levity with such a gravely serious subject is a delicate balancing act that Gore performs without offending the sensibilities of the audience. After elucidating why Americans are not marching in droves to protest government inaction, Gore cites some examples of why they should. Civilization and the earth, he explains, are colliding. The massive rise in population and the industry output needed to sustain this growth is harming the earth which will, in turn, cause a significant decline in population if not eradicate the human species altogether.

References

An Inconvenient Truth. (2006). Al Gore. Lawrence Bender Productions.