

Michael moore loves rhetoric assignment

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Jeffrey Lee Professor Lewis English 2 10 February 2010 Michael Moore Loves Rhetoric One of the most effective ways Moore draws our attention is by using real testimonies. By interviewing Americans who have been wronged by the health care system, he cleverly intertwines rhetoric to create a strong argument for universal health care. For example, after he presents the audience with a logos appeal, an ethos and/or pathos appeal will follow, or vice versa. Like a chain reaction, the appeals go hand in hand, making the viewer feel as if what they are seeing is real and not exaggerated.

From the beginning, "Sicko" relies heavily on ethos and pathos to show that the health care industry is not sympathetic to the medical needs of Americans. One example of this is the story of a man named Tracy who had kidney cancer. His hospital refused to perform surgery on him and Tracy died soon after his wife challenged the hospital on the issue. Tracy's wife, Julie, says that Tracy wanted to know why a good person like him had to be put into such an unfortunate situation. Here, Moore uses different techniques to get the audience to feel sympathy for this family.

When the film first introduces us to Tracy and his family, we see segments of home videos depicting a happy family. As Tracy's wife gives the interview, she tells an unfortunate story of Tracy's death and how their health insurance failed them which further grabs the audience's sympathy. She is interviewed in such a way where we feel as if she is in the living room with us; she seems like a friend or neighbor, and we sympathize for her loss. We are made to feel that his death was preventable.

Further, we learn that despite Tracy's wife being employed in the very hospital that provided them with so-called health care, they were denied treatment even though Tracy's brother was a perfect donor. Essentially, she was working for the very people who were denying her family the care they need. Through the use of ethos and pathos, Moore makes the audience feel mournful for Tracy, while making the American health care system seem out of touch with common ethical values. Tracy's story is followed by another ethos and pathos appeal told by Dawnelle Keyes, a woman whose daughter, Mychelle, died due to the low value that insurance companies place on people's lives. The hospital claimed that certain portions of Mychelle's treatment could not be paid for by the hospital. In order to cover these expenses, Keyes would have to take Mychelle to a different hospital. Keyes did not want to do this, and she recalls, " I just continued to ask them to treat her and they refused". Finally, Keyes took her daughter to an alternate hospital, but because of the delays, Mychelle went into cardiac arrest and died. After Keyes was done talking about her tragedy, she cried for her lost child. Just like the scene with Tracy's widow, this scene prompted the audience to sympathize with the victims.

Again, this is a clever use of ethos and pathos. Moore also chooses his background wisely in order to appeal to the audience's emotions even more. Notice when Keyes tells her tragic story of Mychelle, the interview takes place around a playground with children playing in the background. This is an effective way of appealing to our pathos because we are reminded of children and their innocence. Keyes' testimony further persuades the

audience that insurance companies are merciless and should therefore be replaced by mandatory universal health care.

Not only does “ Sicko” have many scenes of Americans describing the hardships that insurance companies have put them through, the movie also criticized the way health care workers are forced to work. For instance, Becky Malke works for an insurance company and describes the distress she experiences at her job. Becky answers phone calls for the company and tells the story of one phone call that disturbed her. Becky cries through most of her story. As she cries, Moore slowly zooms the camera onto her face, allowing us to see all her emotions, almost making the audience want to cry with her.

This is a great technique for the film’s message here ??? that even those who work for the health care industry are emotionally distraught by how uncharitable and inhumane medical insurance companies can be. We are left to feel that the current system should be overthrown in favor of universal health care. Yet again, Moore strengthens his argument through the use of personal testimonies that evoke our emotions. As the film progresses we see Moore display himself as the “ common man” in an effort to appeal to the audience the genuineness of his own character ??? his ethos.

He is casually dressed wearing only jeans, T-shirt, and a baseball cap. His message is more acceptable to the audience when he is perceived as an everyday type of guy. The audience’s guards are down. Where if he was dressed in a suit, the audience would surely view him differently, possibly feeling more distant and requiring Moore to defend his viewpoints. Instead,

Moore's stories are believable because he makes the audience relate with him and his storytellers. Another form of pathos used in "Sicko" is the association of happiness with universal health care.

For instance, Alexi Cremieux was recovering from chemotherapy that treated his tumor. Because Alexi lived in France, where there is universal health care, Alexi was given three months of paid vacation time to get well. Moore flashes images of Alexi relaxing with friends during his vacation, smiling in all his pictures. Through pathos, we are made to believe that Alexi is happier because he was assisted by universal health care. In turn, we too are left to feel that universal health care can help achieve our happiness, versus the U. S. counterpart that can only put people through hardship.

Furthermore, Moore also uses humor as a form of a pathos appeal. For example, Moore visits a British hospital, which is managed under a universal health care system, and tries to find out how the hospital's patients pay the bills for their stay. Moore asks a pregnant patient at the hospital, "So what do you pay for a stay here?" She replies, "No one pays" with a chuckle. Next, Moore asks a couple walking through the hospital with their newborn baby, "What did they charge for that baby?" The baby's father answers, "You know, it's not America" and the couple laughs. This is a powerful scene because it mocks the U.

S. system in an amusing fashion. It makes the viewer think "hey those people don't have to pay for health care, why should we?" Their humorous attitude towards the idea of paying for health care makes the viewer believe that the current system is ridiculous and that the U. S. should adopt

universal health care. Lastly, the music Moore uses also ties into the humorous appeal. He emphasizes an issue by accompanying it with a soundtrack. If it is a humorous scene, he will use sarcastic, over the top sounds; if he wants to shock the audience, he plays something more melodramatic.

For example, while telling the story of a woman who was eligible for health coverage but was later denied because of a mere yeast infection, when the film got to the yeast infection part, it was followed with a “buh buh bum” and a crow screeching. The use of these sounds dramatizes the ridiculous fact that this woman was (and should not have been) denied over a simple yeast infection. Through the use of each rhetoric appeal, ethos, pathos and logos, Moore effectively convinces the audience that universal health care is more charitable than the current U.

S. system and should therefore be replaced. He presents us with real-life people who the audience can easily identify with. The unjust manner in which these people are treated causes us to sympathize for them. And the facts given to us appear to be supported and convincing. All three appeals are blended together in a way that conveys a powerful message to those watching it. After watching “Sicko”, it is hard not to be convinced that universal health care is essential. With that said, are you convinced?