

The rhetoric in geography of bliss essay sample



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In *Geography of Bliss*, Eric Weiner is setting on finding the world's happiest country. He uses a beguiling mixture of travel, psychology, science, and humor to investigate where happiness is. Rhetoric has enjoyed many definitions, accommodated differing purposes, and varied widely in what it included. The traditional definition of rhetoric, first proposed by Aristotle, was the art of observing in any given case the "available means of persuasion." It is such a wise definition. In a broader sense, good rhetoric can refer to the effective use of language in any form of discourse. To me, good rhetoric is persuasive communication that is intended to convince the audience of a special point of view rather than to simply convey information. In other words, good rhetoric includes connecting with the audience emotionally (Pathos), containing hard evidences (Logos), and building credibility (Ethos). Rhetoric is the way to win arguments, and it is how you can change people's minds. I believe an effective argument is when people read and form an opinion about your work, they can agree with you. It can even change the audiences' mind if they think the opposite before reading your essays. In Eric Weiner's *Geography of Bliss*, he exemplifies my definition of good rhetoric. Eric Weiner uses the three base components to persuade and convince audiences who are looking for happiness and do not know what happiness really is to be on his side of the argument. All people have different definitions of happiness; even Weiner himself has been looking happiness for a long time. The audience will find out their own ideas after reading this book.

Eric Weiner found out that each country have their own vision on happiness, and the location is not a factor but families, relationships, culture, and

occupation do have an effect in one's true happiness. He started off his argument with great rhetoric that piques reader's interest at first. He tells audience his personal experience to gather the readers' attention and sympathy—" I am not a happy person, never have been" (2). His travel has sent him through the darkest corners of the world to the brightest and busiest places of all. Thus, Weiner's exigency that let him keep travelling is obvious to tell—he wanted to know what happiness was to him as an unhappy person. Also, is there a standard definition of happiness? Happiness is untouchable and mysterious but most people think it can be easily found in their lives. His simple and unadorned sentences appeal a powerful emotion to the audience. Emotions are necessary elements when we are trying to build a good powerful argument.

For instance, Weiner questions the audience: " What if you lived in a country that was fabulously wealthy and no one paid taxes? What if you lived in a country where failure is an option? What if you lived in a country so democratic that you voted seven times a year? " (2). Pathos is evident in this passage because Weiner asks the audience whether they would be happy if they lived in countries with different economic and political standards. He tries to convey his argument by evoking emotion to the audience — he tries to prove that there is not a certain definition to happiness. Happiness depends on the constraint which involves each person's perspective of the world that surrounds them. One example of such constraint is the Chinese government's policy which states a single-party of citizens do not have right to vote. The leaders will not be happy if the country becomes democratic. On the other hand, Chinese people who are living in America will be happy with

the democratic system. People living in different countries have different opinions of what happiness is, hence this is Weiner's argument on the definition of happiness.

Secondly, Weiner uses logos to convey that happiness is determined by one's surroundings. He uses evidence such as pornography and cafés to infer that people enjoy popular trends. For an example, in chapter one, he provides hard evidence about popular trends: " It is a fact of human nature that we derive pleasure from watching other engage in pleasurable acts. This explains the popularity of two enterprises: pornography and cafés.

Americans excel at the former, but Europeans do a better job at the latter (5)". Weiner uses this fact to explain that people in different countries are pleased by popular trends according to their country. Generally, people in Europe are pleased by cafés, while people in America are pleased by pornography. Apart of social trends, Weiner discusses how lack of culture has a direct impact on Qataris: " Qataris have no culture. Frankly, I can't blame on them.

If you spent a few thousand years scraping by in the desert, fending off the solid heat, not to mention various invading tribes, you wouldn't have time for culture" (117). Logos is evident here because Weiner uses common senses to employ that hot climate aggravates people in a negative manner and affects people's happiness and cultural development. In this case, hot weather deteriorates values on culture, which affects how people perceive happiness. In contrast, cold weather encourages people to cooperate with each other which also bring people closer together emotionally. This is evident in Iceland. Weiner discusses Iceland's unique qualities with the <https://assignbuster.com/the-rhetoric-in-geography-of-bliss-essay-sample/>

weather and its effects on people: “ In colder places, though, cooperation is mandatory. Everyone must work together to ensure a good harvest or a hearty haul of cod. Or someone dies. Together.”(143) Essentially, these examples show the climate naturally influences people’s understanding of happiness which reaches Weiner’s argument—each country has their own idea on happiness.

Location is not a factor but families, relationships, culture, and occupation do have an effect in one’s true happiness. Icelanders have passionate relationships with one another due to the harsh climate that they live in. Weiner also gains audience’s trust by creating great moral credibility. He said, “ As a foreign correspondent for National Public Radio, I traveled to places such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Indonesia: unhappy places” (1). As an experienced journalist, Weiner is the right person who is able to show us where happiness is and to describe it. It is no wonder that Weiner has looked for happiness over the course of a year, traveling through ten very different countries, including our own land America, depending on his particular working and travelling experience.

His credibility based on his experience of travelling so many countries and his close relationship with well-known professor, such as Ruut Veenhoven –“ Specifically, my prey is a Dutch professor named Ruut Veenhoven: the godfather of happiness research, Veenhoven runs something called the World Database of Happiness [...] If there is indeed a road map of happiness out there, an atlas of bliss, then Ruut Veenhoven will know about it” (6).

Overall, Weiner’s occupation and ambition conveys the extent of his knowledge and capabilities to the audience. In conclusion, good

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rhetoric allows the audience to accurately connect with the writer's ideas and analysis.

Weiner uses these rhetoric devices throughout his writing by providing many different perspectives on happiness. Good rhetoric is the way to win arguments, and it is how you can persuade the audience. Weiner excellently uses emotional, logical, and credible bases to meet my standard of solid rhetoric. He convinced me that happiness is not something I can buy at the store; it is not something that can be easily measured; it is not something that I can just define the meaning. We need to spend our lifetime searching for our own happiness. No matter whether people live in the Netherland, Switzerland, Bhutan, or a cold place like Iceland, happiness is not based on location because it is not a physical entity.

Works cited

Weiner, Eric. *The Geography of Bliss*. (2009): Print.