

"in defense of prejudice" by jonathan rauch essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Racism](#)



“ In Defense of Prejudice” by Jonathan Rauch Essay Sample

Jonathan Rauch's essay is a deviation from the traditional point of view. This well written essay discusses the fact that society is rather trying to eliminate hate and prejudice when in fact society should be trying to educate people against prejudice. Rauch makes an excellent point when he says “.. stamping out prejudice really means forcing everyone to share the same prejudice, namely that of whoever is in authority.” He believes that society needs to not focus on eliminating prejudices and doctrines but instead focus on redirecting them so that they are beneficial to society. That would require everyone to place prejudice against prejudice and dogma against dogma, therefore allowing everything to appear for public criticism. Rauch lets the reader know that he is a gay Jewish man, while using quotes from several people that are well know in society. In his essay, “ In Defense of Prejudice,” Jonathan Rauch successfully uses the three definitions of pathos, logos and ethos .

Rauch makes some very valid points that have no basis except for emotional appeal. This use of the “ power of a situation, piece of writing, work of art or person to cause feelings of sadness, esp. because of sympathy” is essentially pathos. He suggests the reader to realize how much of a mistake and harm it would be to our country to totally eliminate prejudice and offensive material. He also points out how ridiculous it is to try to erase all traces of hate and prejudice. Rauch brings to the reader's attention that one cannot have both the first amendment and a prejudice/racist free world.

He says, " Where there is genuine freedom of expression there will be racist expression," also stating that " If you want to believe in intellectual freedom and the progress of knowledge and the advancement of science and all of those other good things, then you must swallow hard and accept this: for as thickheaded and wayward an animal as us the realistic question is how to make the best of prejudice, not how to eradicate it." These two statements have a lot of emotional value. They are thought provoking and they direct the reader, no matter how strong their convictions were at the beginning of the essay, to start to sway in support of what Rauch is saying. The essay as a whole has several statements that appeal to nothing but the emotions of the reader. This, mixed with his use of logos, is what makes this essay so strong and persuasive.

It is difficult to find facts that support the allowance of prejudice, but Rauch finds several and uses them to benefit his point. When discussing the specific topic of prejudice in the workplace he points out several occasions where laws have been formed to eliminate prejudice. Then he shows how ridiculous these laws are. One particular example is the Equal Opportunity Commission excluding any environment that is hostile or uncomfortable for minorities. This act has resulted in the loss of traditions that didn't really hurt anyone in particular, like Bible verses that were printed on paychecks and the elimination of names such as " foreman" and " draftsman". Rauch's use of logos differs from other essays in that the examples that he uses don't reinforce his emotional persuading. In order to sway the reader away from the elimination of prejudice, Rauch contradicts the opposition's argument.

This different use of logos results in a much different essay and also a more convincing essay. The way Rauch approached his argument allows the reader to see the flaws in the opposing argument..

Rauch uses ethos very well in his essay to make what he is writing about and his views more persuading. Rauch lets the reader know that he is a minority of minorities because he is a homosexual, Jewish male. By taking the position of someone who is the target of prejudice from several sides and of someone who believes that prejudice should not be eliminated, he abolishes the whole "purism" theory. Rauch is not in favor of prejudice, and he definitely does not condone it, but what he does think is that prejudice is necessary if we want to have a strong society. Rauch also uses the characters of other well known people that share his views to help make a strong essay. He has an excellent quote taken from a work of Charles Lawrence that says, "No matter who you are, no matter what the color of your skin, no matter what your gender or sexual orientation, no matter what you believe, no matter how you behave, there is somebody out there who doesn't like people of your kind. Racism is ubiquitous. We are all racists." The character of Lawrence is beneficial in convincing the reader along with the fact that Rauch has valid sources to back up his opinion that prejudice should not be totally eliminated.

This essay by Rauch is a well written because there is an excellent balance of pathos, logos and ethos. According to Rauch, free speech will always bring with it bad, and even dangerous, speech. If we want a society with all of the benefits that stem from the free exchange of ideas, he insists, we must be

prepared to accept “ racism and sexism and homophobia, and communism and fascism and xenophobia and tribalism.” He makes very valid points that ensure that the reader will leave the essay thinking about what has been said. The result is an essay that is comprehensible and persuasive.