



Name Surname

Professor's Name

Course

Date

Rhetorical Analysis of Thomas Heatherwick's "The Rise of Boring Architecture – and the Case for Radically Human Buildings"

In Thomas Heatherwick's TED Talk "The Rise of Boring Architecture – and the Case for Radically Human Buildings," from 6 July 2022, he states that humanity is currently experiencing the "epidemic of boringness" that heavily manifests in architecture. The designer's speech aims to draw public attention to the problem of lifelessness in modern cities. Throughout the video, Thomas Heatherwick employs logos, ethos, and pathos to prove that emotional function is still essential in contemporary buildings.

The speaker dedicates the talk's first half to statistics regarding dull architecture's harm. He mentions that the house age today is forty years. Hence, the constant reconstruction causes almost forty percent of all carbon emissions. People have little emotional attachment to "monotonous homes," so they demolish them easily. Thomas adds that the current building style harms citizens' well-being as well. The audience receives statistical proof of the increasing crime rate and higher stress in such areas. Using logos, the designer backs up his opinion on the necessity of aesthetical changes.

Besides thoroughly discussing the architectural issue, Mr. Heatherwick refers to his personal experience solving the problem. The designer demonstrated an engaging slideshow of his company's projects worldwide. Despite a "limited budget," talented people managed to



revive “dead” buildings. The audience saw a transformation of old maize storage in Capetown into a futuristic university for artists. According to the speaker, the team preferred “cutting through the storage” instead of rebuilding it completely. With the same principle, the company rebuilt a cancer hospital in the UK. Designers saved the local gardens and added even more greenery. Thomas successfully uses ethos to prove his expertise, demonstrating his groundbreaking “architecture of hope.”

Intending to cause an even stronger emotional response from listeners, the speaker asks them to imagine themselves being in boring buildings. For instance, he refers to modern hospitals as “some of the most stressful and fear-inducing places.” Naturally, endless corridors with fluorescent lights affect patients’ psychological state negatively. When sick, people are in their most vulnerable state, so they need a welcoming environment. He adds that the same goes for university buildings, where flat design fails to inspire students. Through these vivid examples, Thomas uses pathos and makes the audience feel the need for change. People sympathize with patients and students since almost everybody has been in their shoes once.

Thomas is right about the lack of architectural diversity. However, I believe that most of the time, the minimalism in buildings results from limited financial resources. In other words, the architects avoid adding non-functional details to save costs. I agree that cities should fulfill the emotional function. This TED Talk proves the importance of pleasing surroundings. Refusal to follow the trend of standardization would make cities more appealing and bring a sense of home. “There is more than one approach to deal with the epidemic of boredom,” the designer says. It means that diversification of architecture styles is just the beginning.



Work Cited

Heatherwick, Thomas. "The Rise of Boring Architecture – and the Case for Radically Human Buildings | TED." *YouTube*, uploaded by TED, 6 July 2022,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhb0P5GGpys>.

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