Albert Camus: People’s Inability To Act And Schindler’s List Essay, Research Paper

Albert Camus: People’s Inability to Act and Schindler’s List

“I know that the great tragedies of history often fascinate men with approaching

horror. Paralyzed, they cannot make up their minds to do anything but wait. So

they wait, and one day the Gorgon devours them, But I should like to convince

you that the spell can be broken, that there is an illusion of impotence, that

strength of heart, intelligence and courage are enough to stop fate and

sometimes reverse it.” Albert Camus.

Albert Camus believes that the greatest tragedies of history are so

horrific that people stand in awe, and consequently, nobody even attempts to do

anything in response of the tragedies. Many are under ?an illusion of impotence?

, and eventually, Camus states, ?The Gorgon devours them?. Also, in order for

this ?spell to be broken?, people must have ?strength of heart, intelligence

and courage.? I believe that Albert Camus is correct, people are under a vale

of impotence when it comes to the tragedies of the world, and that people can

easily overcome this inability and reverse their fate, or let the ?Gorgon?

devour them. Camus’s beliefs can be proved through the use of examples from the

movie Schindler’s List.

Oscar Schindler, the movie’s main character, is, in the beginning of the

movie, not actually aware of the full extent of the killing of Jews and the

powerful anti-Semitic outlook of his comrades. His ties relating to the affairs

of the Nazi party and his loyalty to his country shield him from this knowledge.

Thus, it can be concluded that in the beginning of the movie Schindler does not

fully grasp the tragedy at hand, and consequently does nothing attempt to aid

the Jews. Shindler’s realizations of the horrors of the holocaust begin in one

scene near the middle of the film. During this infamous turning point of the

movie, Schindler, on top of a barren hill, traces the path of a young and

helpless Jewish girl who wanders haphazardly through the streets of a devastated

camp. In a red trench-coat-coat, nowhere to go, desperately searching for her

two parents, the little girl finally wanders into an abandoned building where

she is safe from the chaotic world outside. Her safety is only temporary, for

later she will be hunted down and cold heartily murdered, forgotten to the world,

destroyed by her own people, asking in wonderment, why do I deserve such

punishment?

This scene is the point at which Schindler becomes infuriated, and he

asks himself why, and most importantly, what he could do to stop the massacre.

Thus, Schindler’s change in character is an example of Camus’s idea that people

can do much more than ?wait? for each tragedy to stop. People can help, and as

Camus states, that merely ?strength of heart, intelligence and courage are

enough to stop fate and sometimes reverse it.? Schindler portrays intelligence,

courage and the will go forth and conquer.

Albert Camus has another idea. Camus believes that if one does wait and

do nothing about the horrors of history, ?one day the Gorgon devours? you.

Schindler’s List is a perfect example of how eventually people can be devoured.

In Schindler’s List, one aspect of the film relates to the Gorgon idea. The Jews

of Schindler’s List. As Camus interprets, when people wait they become devoured.

This is the same with the Jews. The Jews basically wait and are eventually

devoured, or murdered, by the nazis and German people. Of course, the Jews do

act to try and free themselves, such as hiding from the nazis and eating their

valuables, but ultimately these actions failed. Through this example, I believe

that Camus is right in his beliefs.

I think that it is sad that Camus is correct in saying that people

actually pay no attention to tragedies such as the holocaust. Anyone that reads

this quote and thinks of the holocaust would most likely ask themselves whether

or not they would recognize the holocaust if they were alive during that time.

I believe that it is hard to think in these terms and that, generally, people

deny the fact that they reject the horrific tradegies of today. Even though,

altogether, they do. Of course, ironically, lets just ?wait? and see what

happens.