

Racism in schindler's list essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ The opposite of love is not hate but indifference,” Elie Weisel stated after commenting on his thoughts on racism and his years surviving the Holocaust. Weisel was thrown in and out of concentration camps starting at the age of fifteen until finally his final camp where his father had died was liberated. The tragedies that Weisel along with the other millions of people who suffered were unimaginable and even Weisel himself strived for years to find words that somewhat explained what their experience was like.

However, no one will ever be able to fully express what it is truly like to live during such racist times, whether it be through writing or film. Racism is a term which involves the idea that one's own race is superior to another and therefore has the right to control that other race. This theory was what was practiced throughout the entire era of the Holocaust. However, instead of continuing the common practice of degrading the Jewish race and grouping them into their own community, the people of Germany who were later to be known as the Nazi Party decided to follow their leader's orders of completely exterminating the Jewish race, along with others such as gypsies and Czechoslovakians. This beginning thought of creating a superior German race quickly turned itself into a persecution and genocide of the Jewish community and many others.

It is reported that this massacre which occurred only sixty years ago killed an estimated total of nine million people. Racism existed thousands of years ago and still resides in our communities to this day. Whether societies see it or not, the problem will always be there. It is just a matter of how the problem is dealt with. Many choose indifference.

They hear about the crisis and could even experience it firsthand. However, because it is not directly affecting them, they choose to walk away and ignore it. This was something which commonly happened throughout the Holocaust. In Steven Spielberg's movie, *Shindler's List*, Oscar Schindler, a wealthy factory owner experienced the tragedies of the Jewish extermination, however did not see a major problem nor tried to stop it until late on.

Another common reaction to racism would be fighting in order to protect yourself. When a human being is verbally or physically attacked, the body's instant reaction would be to attack whomever is hurting you. Unfortunately, this common tactic for dealing with racism ultimately leads into more dangerous situations. When in conditions of racism such as the extermination of the Jewish community, for the Jews, there was no choice of dealing with the racism. They were not given the choice of fighting back and standing up for what they believed in.

If they did, they were killed. The Nazis lied their fate in their own hands. If they did as they were told, maybe they would live. If they choose to rebel, they would die. The victims of the Holocaust were silenced while fighting for their lives, although many would never make it out of the genocide.

Throughout the movie, *Schindler's List*, the writer focused more on the reactions of the witnesses of the Holocaust, such as Schindler, rather than the extermination itself. The first thought for making a Holocaust story would be to focus on the millions of victims who were tortured, gassed, and burned. However, Spielberg focused more on the citizens who knew what was

happening and never spoke up. Oscar Schindler had witnessed it all. He had seen the round up of all the Jews in the area and watched them be thrown into a caged in area referred to as the " getto". Schindler watched those people be thrown into factories, including his own, and be shot by Nazi soldiers for insignificant reasons.

Then he slowly watched the murders progress into an entire extermination. Spielberg showed Oscar Schindler's final realization that something must be done about these horrible executions after he saw the dead body of the young girl with the red coat in which he had seen earlier on. This triggered Schindler into making a list filled with names of workers for his factory which he would ultimately save from the killings of the concentration camps.

Movies such as Schindler's List which deal with the concepts of racism are an extremely important part of the film genres. Although many people know the racism issue occurs all over the world, few know the extremities it has and still goes on to. Learning about past racist occurrences such as the Holocaust is an important learning experience for all viewers of film because learning about something that happened in the past can better prevent that from happening in the future.

Something as significant as the Holocaust should never be forgotten and the will to stop the world's racism should never be lost. Elie Weisel, the survivor from the Holocaust stated about his struggle to end violence and hatred, " Indifference is never an option. It is not the beginning of a process; it is the end of a process. "