

“The Wave”

an analytical essay by Caroline

This traditional analytical essay on *The Wave* by Todd Strasser was written by the same eighth grade student who wrote “Target.” I thought it would be fun to compare the traditional essay with the innovative play “Equality through Action?” written by Chris and discuss whether one was more effective than the other.

Here are some questions that will help you think about and learn from this analytical essay:

- * After reading the introduction, what is the author trying to prove? How and why?
- * Does the author connect *The Wave* to the Holocaust?
- * Does the author give specific data from the book that supports her position “Both movements changed people irrevocably.”
- * In the ending, what ideas does the author bring in that take you beyond the introduction?
- * If you read the essay and the play, evaluate which you believe is more effective and explain why.

The Wave

The Wave, from the book *The Wave* by Todd Strasser, was eerily similar to the Nazi movement. It mirrored what happened in Germany in the 1930's with the events that lead up to the Holocaust. Like Nazi Germany, the Wave, which took place at Gordon High, had a confident leader, blind followers, and people opposed to the movement, to whom bad things happened due their resistance. Both movements changed people irrevocably.

The Wave changed nearly everyone at Gordon High, whether they were for it, against it, or caught somewhere in the middle. Mr. Ross, the leader of the Wave, changed a lot. Before the Wave he was easy going and naive. The raw power of the Wave made it nearly impossible for him to stop it, and, like an addict, he denied that there was anything wrong with it. Unwilling to call his experiment a failure, Mr. Ross continued the Wave long after he should have put a stop to it. Before the Wave, Mr. Ross had mostly cared about his student's well being, but during the Wave he lost control and cared about nothing but his experiment.

The Wave also changed the students of Gordon High. All of the students in the Wave became very focused and organized, whereas before they were disorganized and didn't really care about school. David, who was a supporter of the Wave, changed a lot. Before the Wave, he was very understanding and loving towards his girlfriend, Laurie. During the Wave though, he fought with her. He even grabbed her and pushed her down when she refused to support the Wave. After seeing who he had become, David realized that the Wave wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

Another student in Mr. Ross's class, Robert, changed drastically. Robert had been thought

of as the class weirdo and never tried to do well in his classes. The Wave transformed him. He became organized and participated in his classes. He spoke out in his classes and spoke out for the Wave. Before, he had mostly kept to himself and didn't really belong. The Wave made Robert feel needed, and because of that, he became more involved and became happier, just as many other students at Gordon High did.

It is terrifying to think that something as horrific as the Holocaust could happen, but it is obvious from what happened with the Wave that it could easily happen again. *The Wave* showed how easy it is for people to get carried away or get manipulated. Someone can easily put false information out there and manipulate people into believing that it is true, so that they can control them. If one naive high school teacher could change an entire high school with a few silly actions and mottos in just one week, imagine what someone with real power could do. The Wave wasn't just the fault of Mr. Ross though. If people hadn't just gone with the flow, then there would have been much fewer followers, and thus the Wave would have been shorter and less significant. Even something as horrible as the Holocaust could happen again, if people do not learn to think for themselves and not just go with the crowd.