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Rhetorical Analysis of Camus' Interpretation of the Myth of Sisyphus

Camus is arguably the best-known philosopher regarding the school of thought of existential absurdism and in his essay The Myth of Sisyphus, Camus discusses why one must essentially “...imagine Sisyphus to be happy.” Camus explains to his audience, people who are unsure about the purpose of life and how one can find meaning "... in an innately meaningless world” through Sisyphus. Camus purpose is to elucidate that one can only find meaning in this existential vacuum by assigning meaning to arbitrary things themselves for without the arbitrarily assigned meaning any action we do or partake is pointless. Camus is supportive and quite biased in his rhetoric since it is a persuasive essay on how in his defiant act against the gods when in the "brief pause” at the base of the bill when he is most conscious of his suffering, the act of conscientiously doing his punishment not out of misery but out of joy that he has defeated the Gods and rendered their punishments futile. The formal language is supplemented with constant reminders that his interpretation is entirely subjective as it is only Camus who interprets Sisyphus' actions as thus with the recurring “I” in his statements before describing what he believes Sisyphus to be thinking. Camus opens the essay considering the three options in life being either suicide which he disregards as merely "avoiding the problem” of finding the meaning of life; religion which he dismisses as a “leap of faith” unable to be verified in its validity; thus, leaving life worth living only if you “assign your own meaning” to it. The fourth chapter, which is perhaps the most significant and revealing chapter starts by discussing first on his explanation of Sisyphus' life being a narrative, different from the argumentative and expository backing up his conclusion on what he believes a life worth living ought to be. Camus relies on logos for his arguments considering each of the fundamental options in life and then explaining why each other than meaning in life itself does not work or make sense, at least to him.

Works Cited

Camus, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus. New York: Vintage Books, 1942. Print

http://www2.hawaii.edu/~freeman/courses/phil360/16.%20Myth%20of%20Sisyphus.*pdf*

Link to entire essay provided by Hawaii State University