

Analysis on the book night by elie wiesel essay sample



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Death is an experience that I hardly think about. Whether it concerns my family, friends, or myself, death is something in which I have ultimately no thought of in my day to day life. For Elie Wiesel, during his stay in a Nazi Concentration Camp, death was everywhere. Death was upon his family, friends, and lingered heavily upon him throughout his time spent as a prisoner at various concentration camps. In his world death was reality, death was everyday life. Death was even in the air as crematoriums burned the dead up into ashes. What I found so profoundly amazing within Wiesel's book, *Night*, was the realness of something as a fortunate young adult I have never had to consider. That is death.

As a teenager during the early 1940's in Sighet, Romania, Eliezer had a firm belief in God. He yearned to study mysticism in his Jewish religion and deepen his knowledge of the Holy Books despite his father's constant reminder that he was still too young and that there was no one in Sighet to teach him the Cabbala. Frustrated and desperate for a teacher, Eliezer meets Moshe the Beadle. Moshe asks Eliezer thought provoking questions and intends to help him deepen his knowledge of his religion. But this does not last, soon Moshe is deported with others to a concentration camp where he is shot in the leg and taken for dead. With tremendous luck he escapes from the Germans and returns to Sighet to warn the Jews. No one believes him, not even Eliezer, but soon enough Moshe's prophecy has come true. The Jews of Sighet are put into Ghettos where they await uncertainty, but if they have to await uncertainty, they do it with optimism.

Their optimism fails them and the Jews of Sighet are transported to Birkenau. This is only the beginning of Eliezer's horrific ordeal. At this time the Wiesel family suffers what they think is the most painful situation, separation.

Eliezer's sisters and mother are taken to another part of the camp. Even so, Eliezer is grateful he is still with his father.

Father and son support each other through hell, they become each other's will to live. With the help and advice of long time prisoners, they prevail through routine selections. A process in which the infamous Dr. Mengele selects who shall die and who shall live. The strongest survive.

Throughout Eliezer's struggle to stay alive in his murderous environment, he encounters different situations. These situations cause him to question his God and eventually lead to his disbelief in God. Innocent men and children are killed in front of his very eyes. Eliezer recalls the death of The Sad Eyed Angel, a young boy who was put to death by hanging, but did not die right away. He hung for a time while prisoners walked by. Elie wonders where God is, where is he now? It is situations like this where Eliezer loses faith in God. He loses his love for God, because to him it seems as though God has lost his love for his people.

Another instance in Night where Eliezer's dead faith is shown is during Yom Kippur, which is a day of atonement. Jewish people are suppose to fast during this day. Wiesel describes how once this day dominated his life. He believed so strongly in God and desperately wanted to atone for his sins. Prayer and fasting was mandatory for him to show God his dedication, love, and repentance. But that is his past. The reality is he is in a prison where he

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was condemned for the simple fact he was a Jew. How is he to practice his faith in a place where thousands of Jews were dying because of this, because of their beliefs, because of who they were? How is he suppose to fast when he is slowly melting away because of starvation?

And most importantly to Wiesel, how can he show his dedication to a God whom he firmly believes has abandoned his people? Where is his God? His decision therefore is to eat.

Emaciated prisoners drop like flies all around him, but after close to a year of death, Eliezer is use to it. A significant situation Elie Wiesel talks about in Night is when he and his father are being transported to Buchenwald. Bread is thrown into the wagon by a German workman causing the prisoners to fight each other like animals for that piece of bread. Savagely tearing each other apart, it is every man for themselves. This is part of life as a prisoner in the camp. It is something Eliezer robotically can not control, and despises. Proof of this is found in Eliezer's relationship with his father.

The struggle consumes Eliezer, and at times he catches himself thinking in these animalistic ways. During his father's end, prisoner's tell Eliezer he might as well steal his father's portion of bread. Eliezer's instinct kicks in and he actually considers it, but overcome with guilt he refuses. Later when Elie discovers his father's passing, he does not cry. Instead Eliezer feels the death of his father is like a weight being lifted. He only has to worry about himself. The only sign of humanity within Eliezer is that from time to time he is ashamed to feel this way.

At the end of the book, Eliezer, one of the few Jews to be liberated, has survived. He is treated at a hospital for food poisoning where one day he gathers enough strength to look into a mirror. He describes what he sees as a corpse. Although inside he is alive, from what he sees in the mirror, he is dead.

Eliezer's family members, friends, his faith, and much more had died during the year he spent at each and every concentration camp he was sent to. Death never left him, even when he was in that hospital looking in the mirror. Death was still there.

To compare Elie Wiesel's *Night* to Wiesenthal's *Sunflower*, both authors, who are survivors of Nazi Concentration camps, like to incorporate reminiscent memories with current experiences in their books. Because most of the present experiences happen within the concentration camps, a lot of their reminiscing is of their family, or friends, people whom they loved or pleasant experiences which made them happy. I find this extremely effective and important. This device helps the reader receive a better picture of emotions and feelings the main character is going through. Not only can we be there for what the character is presently going through, but the author is allowing us to view how they once were, what they once felt. It's as if the author is showing the reader, " Look, I had what you had, once I was normal, and had a normal life, but now this is my reality."

When someone reads Elie Wiesel they can't help but be involved in his story. This is what Wiesel wants, he wants you to involve yourself in his book. This is how we experience something we could never even fathom, even

something as abominable as the Holocaust. Through the involvement of reading is how Wiesel succeeds in making the reader aware. Aware of his past and aware of what evil is capable of, and through this awareness we are capable of prevention.

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