

Western civilization critical analysis

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Sometimes, it is very easy to read books about the lives of the real people who were able to overcome the crux in their own lives. The harder their challenges and difficulties were, the more entertaining it will be for the readers. We tend to be impressed with people who were able to write an account of their between life and death experiences and how they almost die. However, we have the tendency to forget how hard it might be for them to write down their own story of bitterness and much worse if their tragic experience was simply the beginning of a worse condition.

The two authors in the books that are going to be analyzed and compared in this paper had the courage to relate their own experiences and humiliation as a Jew during World War II for the world to witness and remember the brutality of the War. They both endured the pain as they recall the torture they had been through and put them in writing. They narrated how tranquil and promising their lives were before the World War in the abode with their families. However, the war had ripped them with everything that could have included themselves.

They were traumatized by massive and brutal deaths of people, their loved ones included. The two authors were the protagonists of their books. It was based on their first hand experiences during the war. If we are going to analyze the two books, we would have an idea how brutal the Nazi's were and how tragic the Holocaust was. The first book was a narration of the true experiences in the Holocaust in the perspective of a Transylvanian son as he witnessed the brutal death of his family members and how it gained an impact in his faith and his life.

On the other hand, the other book described the same event on the perspective of a Czech daughter who lost her family and lucky enough to be able to escape and return to her hometown in Prague. The only thing was her escape in that war did not spare her. It simply opened the door that led her to another war and another torture she had to bear (Kovaly). If we are going to compare accounts of two authors, we first need to consider the background of each author. We have to identify the compelling forces in their lives that gave a blend in their works.

The first book was titled “ Night”, which was written by the author Elie Wiesel. He began his story by describing his town in Sighet, his family and himself in the year 1942 when he was only twelve years old. He had three sisters and his dad was a shopkeeper and a venerated Jewish leader. Their family was deeply religious; as a matter of fact, Elie was enthusiastic in learning the dogma of their religion. He wanted to learn more and he had a very deep faith in God (Wiesel). However, this changed when the Germans arrived and captured their land in 1944.

Despite the early warning of a person who survived and witnessed the maltreatment that the Jews suffered in Poland, his townsmen did not heed. Rather, they simply made fun of him. It was year 1944 when they regret not to take proper consideration of the admonition given by the old man. The Germans invaded their land and moved all the Jews out of Sighet to concentration camps in Auschwitz. The Germans were cordial at first but suddenly issued a decree that they should be impounded and transported into ghettos and concentration camps. They had no idea on what would happen next.

It would have been a blessing if they would be killed immediately to spare them from torture and misery. However, it was an ardent intention of the Nazi's to impose agonies to these religious people as imposed by the leader, Adolf Hitler. They were treated like animals as they were being transported to the concentration camps. When they reached the reception center, Elie was permanently separated with her mom and sister since they were directed to the gas chamber. He was left only with his father. Inside the camp, they were forced to witness how the innocent babies were ruthlessly burned and thousands of people crying in despair.

It was his first night in the camp but it made an indelible mark on Elie's heart. It was the night that he doubted God's reverence. That night, he thought that his God also died. It was the night that dissolved his optimism and enthusiasm for life. At a very young age, Elie witnessed the cruelty of life and that he is just a tiny speck of worthless being who had to fight hunger, oppression and injuries in order to survive. He was once a very religious student whose life at that time depended on the whims of the Nazi's. His virtues changed.

His idea of retaliation against anybody who would threaten to hurt his family changed and turned into his despair to live. His concern changed as he suffered blows and fought to live. His main concern that was previously focused on God deviated to anything that could fill his stomach. In the camp, they were identified not with their name but with their number to signify perhaps that their lives do not matter, they are just mere numbers. He did not look up at his father as a blessing because they are still alive but a curse, a burden that might cause him his life.

The hard work and inhuman conditions made him deny God (Wiesel). Their transfer to another camp in Buna served another challenge to Elie. He had changed. His god had already died and hanged in the gallows. He was beaten and his pain no longer mattered. Days and nights do not have any difference nor death and life. It was this transfer that he realized his father's worth because the latter was separated from him. They had to work hard in order to live. This was the last camp they had been before they started the most painful march. It was the march that separated Elie permanently from his father.

It was the march that forced a son to leave his loving father. It was the march that deprived them of food and water and were even mocked by the guards. A lot of prisoners killed even their own kin just for a morsel of bread. Out of the hundred prisoners who marched, only a dozen survived and reached Buchenwald where his father finally died of dysentery and severe beating from the officer and other prisoners. It was the climax of Elie's senses. It was weeks before the aids arrived and he could be finally branded as Holocaust Survivor. This was the end of the World War II and the end of this book.

However, this period was only the beginning of the other book (Wiesel). The other book, "Under the Cruel Star: A life in Prague 1941-1968", the author narrated her life as a Jew in the Lodz camp. Her name was Heda Margolius Kovaly. Albeit they were in a different country and ghettos, their religious faith brought them into similar fate in the ghettos. Heda and her family were sent to Lodz ghetto. She was also separated from her family and needed to bear the abomination of the soldier's in the camp. She was of the same age

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as Elie at that time, still an adolescent, supposedly innocent to the atrocities of the world.

Like Elie, she witnessed massive deaths, injustices and forced labor. When the Russian troops approached, they were also forced to march. Unlike Elie, Kovaly was very fortunate to have a chance to escape and return to her homeland in Prague. However, much to Heda's dismay, this was not the end of her torment; rather, it was just the advent. The citizens of Prague were scared and refused to provide help, simply because they are Jews. Even her relatives and non-Jew friends were apathetic towards her condition because they, too, were afraid to suffer the beatings from a Nazi.

The war was coming to an end and she was already in Prague, her hometown. Supposedly it should serve as a citadel for her to soothe at last the pains that she suffered during the war. Unfortunately, it was not (Kovaly). However, one good thing that happened to Heda after this war was a birth of hope that finally a gush of tranquil wind will finally blow over her. She was able to reunite and later marry her sweetheart Rudolph Margolius. Like Heda, he also survived the concentration camps and the war itself. He was a very virtuous man with a lot of ideas about his country and Prague in particular.

He supported reform and believed that the principles of the Nazi were the exact opposite of Communism so he supported the principles of Communism and thought that it would be effective government systems that will help his countrymen develop after the ravages of the war. He was able to get a good job in the government as the Communist government rose into power.

However, this actually marred the supposedly happy ending of the couple.

This job actually took his life when he was accused of conniving with an enemy of the Communist government. It was the system that he supported that accused him of being a traitor.

Everything would have been perfect if the Communist party had not risen into power and condemned her husband and separated him from her forever. Things were made worse because they had a son, Ivan Margolius, who was growing up at that time. Heda was forced to make a living to support her son. However, the incident deprived her and her son the right to live a normal life. Since her husband was an enemy of the Communist State, she was deprived of the privileges to get a decent job to raise her son nor was she allowed to be helped by others without suffering the consequences from the Communist government.

No matter how her friends in Prague would have wanted to help her and her son, they were scared of the repercussions just like when the Nazi's were still in their land. They were forced to live life in poverty. They were treated like lepers that were needed to be isolated. Despite all this social persecution, she fell in love again and remarried Pavel Kovaly. However, it seems that she was born with so much bad luck that whoever would lend a hand to help her would also suffer failure.

Because of what happened, her new husband, who had a very promising career ended up having a bad reputation just because of his affiliation with Heda. In the book, Heda's miseries and continuous struggle lasted for more than twenty years. When the social had gone worst, she was able to escape again and finally live peacefully in the United States. That was

the end of her book and the end of the war in her life. This book was dedicated to her son who was clueless with the persecution of his father and the agony of her mother (Kovaly).

These two books actually presented the two victims and survivors of war in different perspectives. They both believed in the same God and the same doctrine. It was the same religion that led them to concentration camps. They both had the ardent desire to overcome whatever challenges that would come their way. One magnified and illustrated the turmoil inside the concentration camp and the genocide of the Jews, while the other placidly illustrated her agonies during the war when she lost her family and yet survived just to face another war that took her beloved away from her.

They were all torn by the war. They were all innocent victims of abusive government and capricious rulers. The titles of these two books were quite similar in a sense that they all compare their experiences with darkness. The first one was even titled “ Night” (Wiesel), to describe that one long night of unbearable nightmare that altered his life forever; while the other one denotes the cruelty of the stars that deprived her of any light to guide for more than twenty years of her life in Czechoslovakia.

It was a saga of continuous struggle for better life but their struggle simply ended up into another saga filled with tears and bitterness. The courage of these two authors to share their tragic and humiliating experiences to reveal the truth about the grim of the war was so remarkable. It is not easy to share how tragic one’s life was, but these two authors made the difference in bringing the truth about what happened during those times.

If there is one thing that their books reflected, that would be their determination to overcome whatever obstacle that would come their way. They did not resolve to self-pity. They struggled to move on even if they do not know what the future brings. They did not stop when they lost their loved ones. Instead, they continued and embraced life no matter how difficult it may seem. Their books reflected tragedies and misfortunes in one's life are not enough reason to give up. No matter how heavy our burden in life could be, still, life must go on.