Dear Elie Wiesel,

I just wanted to say that your memoir is amazing. It reveals the harsh living environments of the Holocaust, and the senses one would experience if they were there during the Holocaust. As people arrived at the camp, you would smell the burning flesh of the ones who were once living, see the flames out of the chimneys, hear the screams of the others. While at the camps, you have gone through horrific events, such as going through the death of your family members. You have seen your sister and mother die. Your memoir covers the cruel and brutal parts of the Holocaust that would have been unknown, ceased to exist, if there hadn’t been survivors of the Holocaust. You learn many lessons, such as survival skills, and to make risk-taking choices.

This memoir has changed my perspective in life because you have gone through atrocious conditions, as a child. I’ve always felt that people would never harm anyone for a belief, especially the Jewish children. It was such a shame for you to encounter this incident, as you have had some feelings that were difficult to describe in words. Feelings such as the loss of family members, the harsh setting, making choices that can decide life or death, or the thought of starvation. The human nature that you had to endure were the ones where you wouldn’t use them unless you are in a desperate situation. For instance, you had to feel overprotective of yourself, and even stealing food from your family just so you can be alive. You always thought of staying alive, and no one around you mattered. Furthermore, you mentioned that being selfish is a common trait that you needed to survive the Holocaust, but you Elie, you’ve always cared for your father, and wouldn’t take food away from him even when others were encouraging you to. Likewise, you’ve impacted my perspective in the Holocaust in many ways. I didn’t realize that there was this much violence and torture amongst the people, and how cruel the guards were. I did not perceive the feelings of someone who had lost their sibling or parent, or even child. The amount of guilt and sadness you had to face. The state of depression and how negatively these situations would affect your brain and mindset.

“…while I had many things to say, I did not have the words to say them.”

Thank you,

Quang Huynh

