Review Of The Three Autobiographies Books

When reading the three autobiographies I had chosen (The Hiding Place by Corrie Ten Boom; The Autobiography of Malcolm X, and The Story of My Experiments with Truth autobiography by Mahatma Gandhi), what I had felt throughout this entire literary engagement was a sense of inspiration. Not necessarily being inspired by the good thigs done by the authors of these pieces of literature, but I was in fact inspired by their never-ending tenacity to do what THEY believe is the greater good for people other than themselves in the world around them.

The first piece of literature that I read was The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom, the story of a middle-aged Netherlandish woman who, after the Axis Powers had attacked and bombed the Netherlands, began to shelter and harbor a slew of Jewish people in her home [the Beje House] with the rest of her immediate family (Corrie ten Boom, 2019). Although, her valiant efforts were halted when Gestapo officers raided Corrie's home in search for Jews, and although they didn't find any Jews, her and her family were taken away to Nazi prison camps for sheltering them (Boom et. all, 2015). A piece of literature that shocked and pleased me was Betsie ten Boom's reaction to being beaten and struck by a Gestapo officer, instead of defending herself or retaliating against her she simply wiped the blood off of her face and showed pity by saying "I feel so sorry for him", granted this isn't exactly a show of the "tenacity of selflessness" that I had discussed previously, but it is a show of pacifism that nonetheless impressed me to a similar degree (Boom et. all, 2015). When reading the instances of Corrie's endeavors as a savior to the Jews, I couldn't help but draw comparisons between Corrie, a Japanese man named Chiune Sugihara and the late Hermine "Miep" Geis. Miep was a legendary woman who also opened her heart to helping Jewish people in need, those people being the Frank and Van Pels families [and her own dentist] for two years (Scholastic, n.d.). And Sugihara was a Japanese diplomat posted in Lithuania shortly after the German invasion of Poland, where he (illegally) signed) visas for Jewish people to quickly travel to safer countries such as Curacao, the United States, the Soviet Union, and Canada before the Japanese government confronted him on his mysterious actions (Chiune Sugihara, (n.d.)). These three brave individuals showed great selflessness in risking their very own lives to save the lives others; whether it being Miep who saved the lives of two families for two years, or Corrie who saved over eight-hundred Jews in four years, or even Sugihara who saved a little under six-thousand Jewish people in just a few weeks' time (Chiune Sugihara, (n.d.); Corrie ten Boom, 2019; Scholastic, (n.d.)).

The second book that I read [by read I mean watched video readings of] of The Story of My Experiences with Truth by Mahatma Ghandi, an Audible audio book where Ghandi expresses how certain life events have shaped his way of thinking and made him become to peaceful pacifist that he was until his untimely death. It is common knowledge that Ghandi's historically peaceful visions and goals did not elicit positive reactions out of everyone who heard them. But it was his refusal to quit spreading positivity and wishing for a better future despite all the negativity he had encountered that truly inspired me throughout my reading/listening of his autobiography. There was not a part of this literary work that I disliked about this piece of literature, on the contrary: there were many a quote that I have gone to record onto my phone because they had stood out to me. A few examples would be the quotes; "Thus if I could not accept Christianity either as a perfect, or the greatest religion, neither was I then convinced of Hinduism being such. Hindu defects were pressingly visible to me. If untouchability could be a

part of Hinduism, it could but be a rotten part or an excrescence. I could not understand the raison d'etre (reason to exist) of a multitude of sects and castes.", where Ghandi shows his disapproval with the caste system and; "And if every page of these chapters does not proclaim to the reader that the only means for the realization of Truth is Ahimsa, I shall deem all my labour in writing these chapters to have been in vain." (Part 1…,2019; Part 4…,2019). This last quote stuck with me the most because not only did Ghandi stand up for what he believed was right for himself as an individual, but he had said all that he had said in hopes that it would inspire others to challenge the "counterproductive" ways of the world. This, like the other autobiographies I had read, shows of one man's inspiring fight to do what they believe is good not just for themselves, but for all those in the world that they live.

Third and finally, my favorite of the three books, The Autobiography of Malcom X explains the life and life events of Malcolm X and his lasting on the African American community and the religious communities in America as well. Malcolm X is by far my favorite Civil Rights activist; because not only was I impressed the sense of selflessness that he had grown to use later in his life, I am inspired and awestruck by his incredible growth from half-orphaned foster child, to lowly criminal, to a prisoner so notorious for being spiritually antagonist he was nicknamed "Satan", to a self-educated Islamic public speaker, to one American histories of most impactful Civil Rights leaders of all time (X, Haley, 2019).

What I had particularly loved reading about was how Malcolm X's views of life changed while he was in prison, it strengthens my original claim in a way that the other two excerpts could not do: during his teen years leading up to his adult years Malcom Little was nothing but a common street rat performing petty crimes (i.e. robbery, muggings, theft, drug dealing, pimping, etc.) to take care of himself. In my original claim on how these books made me feel I said that I felt inspired by the selflessness of their main characters, but Malcolm Little/X is the exception because he was not always a man who thought progress and prosperity for others. In fact, I think that there is no one more usually selfish than a criminal, which is why I love his growth and evolution more and more as I read his autobiography. Although I personally enjoy and am impressed most of all by his mental shift on how to handle the social situation involving Jim Crow era America after his return from his pilgrimage to Mecca, because of how much more peaceful his viewpoint had become. Before his pilgrimage to Mecca as a member of the Islamic community Malcolm believed that the only way to properly ensure the safety of Black people in America was complete isolation between them and their white counterparts, but after his pilgrimage to Mecca, Malcolm's ideology shifted to that which mirrored the ideology of men such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr where he believed that black and white people must grow to coexist together in peaceful harmony (X, Haley, 2019).

I've enjoyed reading all three of these inspirational autobiographies because they all warmed my heart with how humanitarian some of the characters in each book were. Even though not every character in each book was a selfless saint, the protagonists/authors all showed feats of heroism that made their life stories an absolute emotional joy to read.

References

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