

AT1 English – Night Analytical Writing

The Holocaust experiences of Elie Wiesel have shaped an important piece of modern literature, his now successful novel, 'Night', which he published in 1956. He uses his own personal and historical context to represent characters and events in this novel. This is evident when he describes the concentration camp realistically, the authority of groups during this time and the way Wiesel represents his father in a positive emotional light. These situations exhibit the experiences that Wiesel has been through and the way they then affect the content and style of his writing.

The description of the concentration camp was extremely realistic as Wiesel experienced this himself, during his time dealing with starvation, hard labour and continuous punishment, this then makes the events and scenes in the novel more explicit and realistic. This is evident in his use of adjectives, for example this phrase from Chapter 4, "Then the entire camp, block after block, filed past the hanged boy and stared at his extinguished eyes, the tongue hanging from his gaping mouth. The Kapos forced everyone to look him squarely in the face." The authority of the Kapos was implied when they forced inmates to look at the 'hanged boy'. The idea was to intimidate the captured population, as to keep them from rebelling. This only worked for those who did not have the will to leave, as there was still a group that had the will to risk their life, in attempt to escape the camp. To convey his message he used confronting imagery, double meanings and description for example 'gaping' and 'extinguished'. 'Extinguished' can apply to both a lack of life; dying and a lack of courage to fight on for liberty. The description was extremely real to convey a message of raw and authentic events and feelings in the camp. This communicates the realism and crudeness of the concentration camps described in the novel 'Night' using imagery, description and double meanings.

The authority of groups during this time was thoroughly present, using symbolism and confronting imagery in the novel 'Night'. This is present in the following scene, "It didn't take long to learn the reason for our summons: our gold teeth were to be extracted. The dentist, a Jew from Czechoslovakia, had a face not unlike a death mask. When he opened his mouth, one had a ghastly vision of yellow, rotten teeth." The dentist embodied the idea that the Nazi medical staff of WW2, those who did not care about hygienic practice when they worked, causing illness and infection among the camp. They were symbolised as unsympathetic people, and willing slaves to Hitler's rule. This also represents the ruthfulness and righteousness that certain parties felt. They took all they could and profited from it, such as taking the gold teeth of Jews in the camps. Their belief was that they were the superior race, that they deserved the best and that they should exterminate all 'imperfect races and parties'. This then influences his language choices, using more confronting symbolism to convey the phrase above such as 'death mask'. This phrase from the book 'Night' shows the way that Jews were pushed aside in WWII by using confronting imagery to convey symbolism.

Wiesel depicts his father in a more positive emotional light, due to the lack of other known family members during the later events in the novel 'Night' using symbolism. This is represented in Chapter 4, "My hand tightened its grip on my father. All I could think of was not to lose him. Not to remain alone." When Wiesel tightens his grip on his father's hand it allows us to see that even though he is trying to seem brave he is afraid to be alone, after being separated from his sisters and mother. His innocence is symbolised by holding his father's hand, an action generally done by young children and couples, doing this action at an older age shows that he is feeling scared and innocent. This causes Wiesel to write fondly and personally of his father to honour his legacy, as at this stage his father is his only close relative that he can interact with.

In conclusion, Wiesel describes the concentration camp realistically using description, confronting imagery and double meanings, presents groups with authority using imagery and symbolism, and depicts his father in a more emotional light by using symbolic actions throughout the novel 'Night'. These ideas are indicative of the context of Wiesel, including personal and historical and then the way they affect elements of the novel 'Night', such as events and characters. The novel is significant as it conveys the events of the Holocaust that have been kept in hiding for tens of years by the Nazis and the German government.