

The Plight of Jews in Auschwitz during the Holocaust: An Analytical Study of Imre Kertesz's *Fateless*

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ABSTRACT

Holocaust, genocide on the Jewish community, has tremendously distorted their lives as they have been culturally, socially, racially and politically alienated in Germany society. It has a significant impact on their lives. So, the study brings the historical narratives into consideration and analyzes the personal ideas and experiences of the survivors of the Holocaust. Imre Kertesz provided a reliable overview and framework of his brutal experiences through his autobiography, *Fateless*. The research helps to critically analyze the causes and consequences of the genocide by offering a historical perspective to explain the salient concerns of the Jews, who were killed and affected during the Holocaust. It examines and introduces the genocidal tales and horrible incidents that Jewish characters confronted through the novel. They were demonized and oppressed by the Nazi forces and as a result, these Jews are dislocated, uprooted and killed. The barbarism and callousness are examined through the lives of the characters. The characters in the concentration camps are segregated, marginalized and treated horribly through vicious laws and tactics. These characters are wounded by the scars and violence they have suffered from Germany's merciless and brutal forces. This legacy and vicious cycle of violence has haunted generations of the Jewish community. The study's main aim is to closely analyze the long-term issues of barbarousness and wrath towards Jews by giving reference to the major historical event of the Holocaust.

Keywords: Holocaust, dislocated, uprooted, marginalized, barbarousness.

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, Jews have been accused for the defeat of Germany during World War II. Accompanied by such accusations, these Jewish people were liquidated from their respective states. Jewish Holocaust is one of the darkest times in their lives, which has swamped about six million Jews. This was a destruction that was done with humans by other humans. The term 'Holocaust' was initially used to refer to something that is burnt. But, this term took its different denotation after World War II. It reflects different figurative meanings connected with violence, riots, massacres and murders, especially of Jews. This was an epidemic that brought failure to the Jews, collectively. Holocaust is a state-sponsored, well-planned and systematic thought to bring an end to the Jewish community. These people were claimed to be racially inferior and the Nazi forces oppressed them under such racial ideologies. As a result of such oppression and cruelties, they were killed on a large scale. Nearly two-third population of European Jews were killed and the rest were persecuted and forced to immigrate towards concentration camps and work there as slaves. Thus, it was the 'final solution,' a solution that focuses on killing all the Jews to bring a final end to their survival.

The tensions between Jews and the Nazi regime has been a controversial issue since times. These tensions have resulted in the domination and slaughter of the Jews, who remained submissive throughout. Cultural expansion of the Nazi forces across different states of Europe has led to the collapse of Jewish identity. Holocaust is a major devastating event on a large scale that gives an in-depth understanding of the wrath, massacres and woes experienced by these people. The wretched reality for Jews is their confrontation of the Holocaust, which has brought destruction and obstructed their lives. The horror and memory of the Holocaust can never be detached from their minds. Studying their lives has become an important aspect. For this, the events from the dark pages of history are explored, which eventually becomes an alive memory for the Jews. The harsh reality of the murders of small children makes their families more depressed. Assessing these historical events implies the immigration of Jews and disparities in their lives because of the social, political and economic superiority of the Nazis.

Holocaust is a revolutionary occurrence in history that has grasped the consideration of various academicians because of the intensity of horror it brings along. It is the most significant historical event of the times and, it has become a paradigmatic case for research and to analyze the illustrations of barbarity and ethnic violence. It brings damage, distress, devastation and destruction along. It is identified as the genocide of European Jews and a calamitous occurrence that has brought misfortune and tragedy by impacting the whole mass community. Cambridge dictionary defines the Holocaust as "the killing of millions of Jews and others by the Nazis before and during the Second World War" ("Holocaust"). It is an intended movement by the dominant forces (Nazis) to tyrannize the other minority party (Jews). It is also known as the Shoah, a term used for the mass killing of six

million European Jewish people by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during World War II.

Sufferers of the tragic incident of the Holocaust are almost dead. It was a regulated act that forced them to convert into other religions, immigrate to other states, and surrender themselves for murder. Hannah Arendt, in her book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, discusses that any historical event such as the Holocaust does not “result from pathological evil in a few individuals but are caused by the actions of ordinary people who participate in state-sponsored acts of violence” (1). This movement is a planned activity aiming to kill six million Jews. This process of accomplishing Jews was planned by Adolf Hitler and his system when he came to power in the year 1933 to exterminate the Jewish race. According to the Nazis, Jews have been deliberated as a danger to Germans, who were understood to be racially superior. This massacre makes Jewish people liquidated from their workplaces, and they were forced to work as slaves and their private properties were occupied. They were killed, deceased of starvation, illnesses and ruthless treatment, and obligated to work under dreadful conditions. Isolated transit camps were prepared for them where they can work as labour in gas chambers and eventually die.

Slowly when the situation around become peaceful, Nazis were ordered to erase all the traces of the crimes they did with the Jews. The ruling authorities didn't want to any other party to discover their delinquencies. The bodies of the Jews were dug up and destroyed. All the remains of the Auschwitz and other concentration camps were razed to the earth. They tried to destroy all the evidences of the mass murder of Jews. All the concentration camps and the Jewish people were released after performing countless atrocities. Some Jews were allowed to move towards other states through miserable journeys by foot. Some were murdered. Some were threatened to be killed if they tried to flee. Some were died because of diseases and illness. Such wretched and tortuous journey became decessate marches for all the Jews, a passage towards death. Those who were marked safe under this unbearable journey find it difficult to live with those vicious and brutalizing memories of the Holocaust. Many of them lost their family members and friends. The realization of the fact that they survived the

Holocaust haunts them repeatedly. They were delimited from carrying out their Jewish culture. In recent times, many attempts are being made to bring their testimonies and memories to the world. In his novel *Fateless*, one such attempt is made by Imre Kertesz, who himself was a survivor of the Holocaust.

ANALYTICAL STUDY OF *Fateless*

The novel *Fateless* portrays the expatriation of Jews, their existential crisis, traumatization and dehumanization during the Holocaust. The novel represents how disarticulation and dislocation of Jewish characters from one place to another have been developed as a consequence of Anti-Semitism and the ferocity of the Nazi forces. The lives of these characters have been ruined and they are destitute of their major rights. In the book, the adolescent narrator named Gyorgy Koves is suffering massively in Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Zeitz's concentration camps. The sketch of the life of Kertesz is portrayed through Gyorgy's experiences during the genocide. His journey of first being arrested and then expatriated to different concentration camps portrays the agonizing reality of Jews. Imre Kertesz tries to highlight the ruthless reality and Louise O. Vasvari in his book, *Imre Kertesz and Holocaust Literature* depicts Kertesz's life and said that “as an Auschwitz survivor, he is haunted by the problem of his own identity and also by the struggle to come to an understanding of his Jewish background” (2). In these particular concentration camps, the human deprivation of the Jews, including Gyorgy, is observed. Consequently, the unforgiving representativeness of mass killing and genocide that Gyorgy, along with other Jews, has undergone from the Nazi force is emphasized.

Very few survivors wrote about the tyranny of the Holocaust and Imre Kertesz, was one of them. He begins his novel when Gyorgy Koves seeks his teacher's consent to go and meet his father, who is about to leave for a concentration camp to work there as a labour. Moreover, he wants to meet his mother, who doesn't stay with his father after their divorce. Every other Jew there is conscious of the fact that every next Jew has to go to a concentration camp and has to bear the afflicts of the genocide inhumanely. The effect of the Holocaust bullies the family of Gyorgy Koves. The practice of mass murder and the manner of splitting Jews from their community have built substantial problems in them. Rosenfeld in *The End of the Holocaust*, claims that “the canonical number, ‘Six Million’ has been generally adopted to signify that the Jews, persecuted and slaughtered en masse, were the primary victims” (4). This represents the unspeakable nature of Holocaust because a large number of population of Jews are massacred and decimated and Gyorgy's father too witnessed the same fate. Gyorgy finds his father's departure as a challenging site where, with his father's departure, his stepmother is left without any emotional and financial support. Accordingly, the Holocaust is a political activity of authoritarianism to sweep the Jewish community.

The Holocaust has desolating consequences on the Jewish community and their personal lives. Uncle Willie enlightens Gyorgy about this ethnic cleansing and how it has become a threat to the whole community. They are extorted for being killed if they don't follow the orders of the forces. He proposes to Gyorgy that they have no choice except for being patient and assured him that his father would soon be back home. It is not only Gyorgy's father who is forced to leave for camp but also other Jews, including his mother's second husband. Jews are being targeted for murder and torture. The impact of the Holocaust is such an infuriating one that it could spread its effects to the later generations of Jews as well. As a result, the Holocaust affects the lives of both who witnessed

its catastrophe and those who witnessed other sufferings.

Kertesz, through his novel, depicts his un-continuable life under the dictatorship rule. The Nazi regime

resolved to conquer the Jewish race by making them slaves. For this, they fixed different practices and methods such as labour services by Jews in factories, gas refineries, bombing the whole Jewish land to abolish their properties. Gyorgy refers to such disastrous conditions and says, "aircraft often come over to bomb the city, and since then, they have brought in still newer laws about Jews" (27). Nazi forces bombed the entire city of Jews through airplanes. This is a deliberate act to assassinate a large number of Jews. Many more actions were enacted to bring tragedy on a large scale. A large amount of destruction by air bombing and firing has been done upon the Jews. Gyorgy undergoes several odd experiences along with his other Jewish friends. This whole process involves a kind of bewildering expressions, explanations, showing proofs of their Jewish identity and some nitpicking questions.

Gyorgy tries to assimilate as per the Nazi laws to escape from the grasps of their wretched destiny. He finds himself in a difficult situation because he, along with other Jews, cannot raise their opinions. This reflects extremely complex human reactions comprising the reluctance to confront it because of the Nazi dictatorship that is firmly established with no tolerance of any kind of opposition. Rations to them are issued by calling their roll numbers and the ration given to them are less in quantity and poor in quality. A sense of satisfaction is missing in them because they are not getting proper food to eat, due to which many of them fall sick and died. After all, they are unable to perform their work without having a proper diet, "but neither stubbornness nor prayers nor any form of escape could have freed me from one thing: hunger." (162). The Holocaust deforms Jewish life and distorts Jewish identity producing an adverse effect on their lives. They are repeatedly persecuted, suffered and marginalized. After working in Auschwitz camp, Gyorgy is exported to Buchenwald concentration camp, where he finds the worst conditions. At Buchenwald too, the conditions are nastiest. There is a crematorium there meant for the cremation of the Jews because many Jews are dying because of the heavy burdens of the work imposed upon them. Zeitz concentration camp is situated in a lonely place, somewhat monotonous. He is fitted for labor service by virtue of age, race, and condition, and he has not been back home even once in the last four years. He is compelled to work in mines putting his life at a huge risk. They are told that either adjust or dismiss and by opting for the latter choice, Jews will be dismissed by being killed by them. This becomes life-threatening for Jews. Alvin H. Rosenfeld, in his book *The End of the Holocaust*, states that "the narrator, Gyorgy Koves, an innocent, guileless youngster, tries to accommodate himself to a world whose strangeness he can hardly decipher" (233). Thus, the Holocaust develops lasting and intergenerational traumatic effects in their lives, which further develops understandings in their fateless life.

CONCLUSION

Holocaust has adverse social effects upon the Jewish community as they are traumatized by it. Imre Kertesz has aroused realization and cognizance of the world through his novel *Fateless* and represents the way Jews have been dispossessed of their social, cultural, and human rights. As a collective group, Jews have confronted genocide throughout their lives, which has directly brought horror to them. Under government-sponsored pogroms planned by the Nazis, Jewish identity and culture have been wrecked as they have been forcefully exiled and uprooted from their Jewish roots. In this way, their Jewish identity and existence is questioned and they suffer witness dislocation and marginalization. This has evolved dilemmas and crisis in their lives. Inhuman and cataclysmic events experienced by Jews in concentration camps and gas chambers have affected them. Gyorgy Koves, along with his other Jewish fellows, suffer from the savagery and animosity of

Nazi forces. Imre Kertesz highlights the harsh realities of the Jews who have been struggling for their existence and space. Moreover, the Holocaust tragedy on Jews has disintegrated their selves as the cunning Nazi forces destroy their cultural and religious places. Through this novel, the collapse of Jewish identity is explored and analyzed. Therefore, the study deciphered the personal as well as collective experiences of the entire Jewish community in concentration camps and gas chambers by analyzing the personal life of Gyorgy Koves, who was victimized and experienced hatred during the Holocaust.

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1935, Jews stripped of German citizenship; after WWII started, Jews required to wear yellow Star of David, publicly identifying themselves; 11 million dead, 6 million of them Jews (other targets were gypsies, the disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses); Holocaust murdered 2/3 of European Jews. Final Solution. Hitler's plan to exterminate all Jews. Auschwitz. Nazi extermination camp in Poland, the largest center of mass murder during the Holocaust. Close to a million Jews, Gypsies, Communists, and others were killed there. Want to learn this set...in a flash? Use Quizlet's activities and gam The genius of Imre Kertész's unblinking novel lies in its refusal to mitigate the strangeness of its events, not least of which is Georg's dogmatic insistence on making sense of what he witnesses—or pretending that what he witnesses makes sense. Nobel prize-winner Imre Kertész survived stays in both the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps. When we think about the Holocaust, unless we are aberrant or sadistic, we are unlikely to be pleased by it, in and of itself, but when we read a text (in the postmodern sense of texts, including films and art, etc.) concerning the Holocaust, if it is well-done, we will be pleased by it. Why? The Plight of Jews in Auschwitz during the Holocaust: An Analytical Study of Imre Kertész's Fateless. Diksha Gupta, Dr. Gowher Ahmad Naik. Imre Kertész provided a reliable overview and framework of his brutal experiences through his autobiography, Fateless. The research helps to critically analyze the causes and consequences of the genocide by offering a historical perspective to explain the salient concerns of the Jews, who were killed and affected during the Holocaust. It examines and introduces the genocidal tales and horrible incidents that Jewish characters confronted through the novel. They were demonized and oppressed by the Nazi forces and as a result, these Jews are dislocated, uprooted and killed. About a quarter of the victims who died in the Holocaust died during a three-month period in 1942. This data set allowed study researcher Lewi Stone, a professor of biomathematics at Tel Aviv University in Israel and a professor of mathematics at RMIT University in Melbourne, Australia, to estimate the rate at which the Nazis killed their victims during Operation Reinhard. [Photos: Escape Tunnel at Holocaust Death Site]. Stone's analysis shows how the Nazis worked toward their "goal of obliterating the entire Jewish people of occupied Poland in as short a time [as] possible, mostly within three months," Stone told Live Science in an email. The mass killing happened quickly and in complete