Night And A Farewell To Arms: Eliezer And Frederic Essay, Research Paper

In Night and A Farewell to Arms, the reader

follows the characters of Elie Wiesel and Ernest Hemingway through their

personal struggles between love and war. In Night, Eliezer faces malnutrition,

Nazis, and concentration camps, while Frederick Henry, in A Farewell to

Arms, struggles with love, patriotism, and religion. Despite their differences,

the journeys of these two young men are remarkably similar; they both are

prisoners of war, they both lose the person they love most, and they both

face a bleak and dismal fate.

Frederic and Eliezer are both prisoners

of war but in different ways. Frederic has a strong emotional attachment

to the war. ?Don?t talk about the war,? he says after abandoning the front,

?it was over?but I did not have the feeling it was really over? (Hemingway

245). For Frederic the war captured his mind in a way that he cannot escape.

Eliezer is also a POW but in a more concrete and physical way. Before being

imprisoned, Eliezer is stripped of his clothes, his self-respect, and his

identity, and he is forced into barracks. ?The barracks we had been made

to go into were very long?The antechamber of Hell must look like this.

So many crazed men, so many cries, so many bestial brutality? (Wiesel 32).

It is only love that allowed Frederic and

Eliezer to survive their prisons. Catherine Barkley is Frederick?s true

love. ?I felt damned lonely and was glad when the train got to Stresa?I

was expecting my wife?? (Hemingway 243-244). This quote shows the physical

and emotional yearning that Catherine inspires in Frederic. This desire

for her is what helps him through the war. Eliezer?s love, on the other

hand, is directed towards his father. Eliezer feels that his father is

his only possesion that the Nazis cannot take from him. ?I?ll watch over

you and then you can watch over me. We won?t let each other fall asleep.

We will look after each other? (Wiesel 85). The loss of both Eliezer?s

father and Frederic?s fiancée ones is what inevitably leads to a

dismal future.

The tragic fall of these two young characters

is directly related to the toll their prisons place on them and the absence

of the ones they love. ?I had not seen myself since the ghetto. From the

depths of the mirror a corpse gazed back at me? (Wiesel 109). As Eliezer

looks at himself, he sees that he is a hollow boy. Fredrick also has nothing

to live for at the end of A Farewell to Arms. Hemingway uses rain to symbolize

death. Correspondingly, at the end of the novel, Frederick ?…went out

and left the hospital and walked to the hotel in the rain? (Hemingway 332).

Frederick is not physically dead but rather emotionally dead.

Throughout Elie Wiesle?s Night and Ernest

Hemingway?s A Farewell to Arms similarities become apparent. In both, the

main characters are semi-autobiographical. More importantly, both of the

main characters, Eliezer and Frederic, become prisoners of war, experience

the loss of a love one, and face a bleak future. Ultimately, by taking

their respective main characters and showing how imprisonment and personal

loss can lead to emptiness, Elie Wiesel and Ernest Hemingway that truly

express the hardship of war.