
The Holocaust and The Revival Of Psychological History

The Holocaust is a field of study that will never fade out in social science. Various accounts emerged under different comprehensions on the topic, which profoundly contributes to the critical analysis of the Holocaust. Nonetheless, the majority of studies seem to be repetitive in terms of research directions. Thus, this paper aims to introduce and assess an insightful publication, which might constructively broaden the scope of extant studies. The Holocaust and The Revival of Psychological History, with the aforementioned significance, is worth addressing.

Judith Hughes, the author of the book, is one of the historians that combine psychoanalysis with an empirical study on history. How, Hughes queried at the outset of her book, could outrageous genocides have committed by the best-educated and German masses? Following this curiosity, the author provides the audience with primitive adoption of psychoanalysis in landmark works of influential scholars through manifesting the evolution of their work as well as their participation in key debates. For instance, when it comes to the discussion of conscience among the perpetrators, her list put forward Eichmann in Jerusalem by Hannah Arendt and Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth Gitta Sereny. Hence, albeit no complex psychiatric analysis conducted, Hughes managed to shed light on an important aspect that has been downplayed overtime—individual mentality of Nazi Germans.

Also, in terms of structure, the book is meticulously organized by the topical order of the Holocaust. Thanks to its straightforward outline, in addition to informed readers, it shall be easy for the broader audience to comprehend as well. Additionally, she precisely pinpointed the formation of psychological problems within German society in each stage, which later jointly contributed to the massacres toward Jews. Nevertheless, people who study social science might find the book ambiguous in explaining either the scientific approaches Hughes favored or dismissed. Whereas, it is natural for readers to expect detailed supportive or explanatory arguments inasmuch the stance is given. Furthermore, Hughes opted for the conventional approach of qualitative analysis, which relies predominantly on empirical researches and first-hand historical records on the Holocaust. Regretfully, Hughes cited heavily on original pieces of work, sometimes even exhaustively, while seldom weaved her psychiatrically expertise to the analysis. With merely the moderate presence of Freudian analysis, it is almost doubted whether the book is truly published in 2015.

In comparison to other sources provided in the course, The Holocaust and The Revival of Psychological History performs no less. For students who encounter the topic for the first time in social science study, the narrative approach of the book could foster their basic understanding of the holocaust. Further, it factually installed the history in displays of different accounts effectively, which helps the audience to develop a timeline of the holocaust automatically. Hence, it possessed similar traits to class materials since it is well-structured and persists a relatively objective stance. Concerning the textbooks, a couple of features can distinguish it from the work of Hughes. Foremost, Hughes held on to the point that the relationship between German doctrine and individual psychology is characterized by complexity, which she took as the key to examine the emergence of extermination mindset on a national scale. Whereas the textbook illustrates more inclusive comprehension, which included both internal and external perspectives such as humiliation from France and Nazi Germany's seeking bursting point for its

imperialist ideal. Secondly, Hughes tied herself to several scholars and theories, while textbooks tended to present more schools of historians and paid enough portion to their theories.

From my insight, this book is meaningful. Nonetheless, it disappointed me in the sense that it broke its promise as a book titled 'psychology.' But more importantly, I did learn through the work that beside Jewish victims, German people under Nazi control were human beings as well. For instance, some Nazi soldiers can neither release themselves from the Nazi ideal nor forgive themselves for irreversible crimes they had committed during WWII. Nevertheless, given no much theoretical accounts and evidence about psychology and psychiatry, I would suggest this literature to put more emphasis on exploring the conformity of individuals and people's minds under compound crisis and peculiar nationhood. In brief, it could have contained more inventive accounts, but the author seemed to be more willing to leave it for the descendant researchers to carry responsibility in this field of study.

In my opinion, this book is quite a success in terms of the vision it offered. A phrase I remembered from a documentary about Nazi soldiers is that "no one can deny that they more or less save some Jewish lives." Rather than portraying Nazi Germany as an outright lunatic entity, we shall never forget that humans are more complicated species. Likewise, Hughes queries the abnormal phenomenon that best-educated mass in the most advanced country gone obsessed with getting rid of a race abruptly. However, the majority of researches singularly consider it latent evilness encountered a chance to be unleashed. Oversimplifying obnoxious historical agents to comfort the traumatic sentiments is a short-cut therapy, in the long run, the history might never stop repeating itself unless the objective studies prevail. Hughes aggregated works of pioneers who demonstrate the intention to deepen psychological analysis and offer insights that might arouse people's awareness of the loopholes of conventional arguments. Therefore, I argue that this book is constructive since it concentrated on individual Nazi Germans, which is of great potential to make a breakthrough in studies of the perpetrators of genocide.

In brief, Hughes has undoubtedly manifested her outstanding skills in synthesizing and elaborating historians' work in this book. Also, Hughes cross-analyzed the psychological factors mentioned in various publications, with the defect that she didn't further polish it with her psychiatric knowledge. Albeit Hughes's work might not be considered professional historiography in a rigorous sense, her unique and pioneering perspective to assess perpetrators makes a remarkable contribution to the study. Thanks to Hughes, more interdisciplinary researches might be conducted to comprehend and prevent humanitarian crises.