Name

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Class

Date

“The Life Before Us” by Romain Gary

Kids are very contagious. When one sta1ts up, the rest join in. There were seven of us at Madame Rosa's just then, including two day pupils, that Monsieur Moussa, the garbage man, delivered at 6 A.M. with the garbage truck, because his wife had died of something and wasn't there any more. Then in the afternoon he'd pick them up and take care of them. There was Moi:se, who was even younger than me, and Banania, who was always laughing because he was born happy (Gary 7)…. I couldn't tell you how many little bastards I saw arriving at Madame Rosa's, but most of them didn't stay for permanent like me. The ones who'd been there longest after me were Moi:se, Banania and the Vietnamese, who was finally adopted by a restaurant on the rue Monsieur le Prince. That was a long time ago, and I wouldn't know him if I met him on the street (Gary 8) ….. She told me my mother saw everything I did and if I wanted to be reunited with her some day I should lead a clean honest life and keep away from juvenile delinquency. That can was very small and there wasn't room inside for all of Madame Rosa, because of her proportions. For somebody so alone it was amazing how much of her there was, and there in that can I think she must have felt more alone than ever (Gary 9)…. My three hundred francs a month, cash on the line, inflicted a respectful attitude on Madame Rosa. I was going on ten and starting to have precocious trouble, because Arabs always get a hard-on before anyone else. So I knew I was solid gold to Madame Rosa and she'd think twice before crying wolf. That's what happened in the can when I was six (Gary 10) … “All right, Madame Rosa, I know I can't have my mother, it can't be done, but couldn't we have a dog instead? (Gary 11).

Rough Draft:

### The novel, *The Life Before Us,* is written by Romain Gary. In the novel, a character Momo narrates the story of his immigration as a 10-year-old child who also happens to be an Arab immigrant in France. He is taken in foster care by a woman named Madam Rosa, she is an ex-prostitute. The novel revolves around the experiences of Momo which are beyond his age and intellect. He cannot understand the adult world and the adult world is full of secrets which Madam Rosa dares to share with him because of his tender age. This essay discusses the themes of childhood experiences and the harsh realities of life that pervade the adult world.

Childhood is a very tender age and every child likes to be surrounded by his family and loved ones all the time since he is dependent on them for his emotional needs and protection. Quite on the contrary, Momo faces a hard time when her mother abandons her and leaves behind Madam Rosa to take care of her. she cannot develop a sense of relations because none of her parents are around her and she has to live in an orphanage. He hooks the reader through the innocent retellings of the world around her. For instance, He explains their orphanage building and introduces Madam Rosa as a strict but kind at heart lady.

Madam Rosa although appears as a harsh middle-aged woman but the world pushes her to become a prostitute. She encounters the horrifying experiences of the Holocaust and deludes her pain through drugs and medication. Her character depicts the transformation of a sound person into a traumatized individual because of wars and mass killing incidents. The bitter dialogues that are spoken by her signify her disappointment in the standards set by this world and the privileged classes.

The novel *The Life Before Us*, describes the world through the eyes of Momo and Madam Rosa, the author has drawn parallels between there outlook on life. Momo’s character is enthusiastic and ready to dive in the real world whereas Madam Rosa, seeks an escape from the adult world because she has had firsthand experiences of the harsh realities of the real world.

Final Draft:

Literature captures the human essence of struggle, pain, and empathy amidst chaos and harsh realities of the world. The distinct and diverse characters created by the authors, represent different human emotions and actions that pervade their lives and affect the lives of other people around them. Likewise, it also makes the reader feel the pain of the characters and these different fictitious stories depict the realities of life. *The Life Before Us*, written by Romain Gary, captures the human essence of pain and chaos. This novel is written by a French novelist but it depicts the horrifying details of the holocaust and its effects on a Jewish woman who migrates from Poland to France, she has to become a prostitute in order to survive (Identity and Marginalization). She also becomes the caretaker of a 10-year-old boy who is abandoned by his parents. He shares an orphanage with seven other kids, all born to prostitutes. This essay describes the vivid narrative style of Momo to depict the themes of childhood innocence and the harsh realities of the world. Similarly, the writer has incorporated a dark and humorous tone in the novel to show life in both the good and bad times.

Momo’s character showcases the childlike innocence and naïve attitude against the realities of the adult world. He views the dark realities of living his life as an orphan and witnessing the struggle of Madam Rosa with her drug addiction. In the opening lines of the novel, he introduces his fellows at the orphanage and includes himself, as well. He has not seen a real family but he considers these people as his family. He is well aware of his native land and Arab culture. Likewise, life throws at him, the responsibility of bread and butter at a very tender age and he earns 300 francs and gives it to Madam Rosa, who in return lets him live at the orphanage. As a kid, Momo knows that stealing and theft are not good deeds, but he is forced to steal because he has to survive in this harsh world. Besides, he knows the value of companionship since he views suitors and customers visiting Madam Rosa to seek sexual pleasures. He compares himself with her suitors and thinks that at least he is loyal to her and volunteers to take care of her when she indulges in drugs. Moreover, his narrative style is both witty and serious, at the same time. Furthermore, it evokes humor and critics at the adult world from his perspective (Huston 568).

Madam Rosa is a holocaust survivor and she has to flee to France to save her life and look for better future prospects. Quite on the contrary, she has to become a prostitute in a foreign land, for her survival. All the ideological and political differences between the European nations, destroy her home along with many Polish refugees. This describes the aftermath of a war in human lives, since war can never be a solution to end disputes. Her tender emotions turn into bitter behavior because she leaves her soul behind in her native country and while dealing with customers, she gradually becomes a drug addict. However, despite the bitter realities of life, she still advises Momo to live a good life if he wants to meet his mother, because virtues are more valuable than bad deeds. Similarly, her drug addiction deludes her into a state of oblivion and eventually, little Momo has to take care of her as she once did.

Gary's novel incorporates the themes of childhood experiences and the harsh realities of the adult world to showcase different attitudes of people towards life. Similarly, war and turbulence disrupt the peace of the world and most importantly, it ruins the harmony among human beings. Both the characters of Momo and Madam Rosa, depict the idea of living everyday lives in a home country, instead of their native countries. The narrative style of Momo depicts his childhood innocence and his exploration of the adult world.

Work Cited

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