[Your Name]

[Instructor Name]

[Course Number]

[Date]

Self-Deception

**Introduction**

His weakness was his belief that evil had boundaries (Erik Larson). This quote of Erik Larson has been taken from another book, but it suits to Isaac’s Storm as much as it suits to that book. *Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History* (1999) tells the story of the chief meteorologist at the Galveston Texas office of the US Weather Bureau named [Isaac Monroe Cline (1861-1955) who was a prominent figure during Galveston hurricane of September 1900 stormed many parts of the US and Canada. Larson attempts to convey the idea that we should not deceive ourselves, and we should not become arrogant if we hold a public office or otherwise our stubbornness would become the cause of mass destruction. He claims that Mother Nature was not the only cause of that destruction rather human follies brought more harm. He uses scientific details in the book that cause some boredom in the text, but for those who have an interest in meteorology can learn very much from this book. Larson’s book *Isaac Storm* (1999) is an interesting and informative book that tells the reader much about the famous Galveston storm of 1900 AD and it also tells what happens when we undermine warnings regarding issues of public interest. Finally, it reveals the consequences of irrational and blind belief in human-made machinery, it becomes the cause of self-delusion and self-deception that leads to mass destruction.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Cline)

**Body**

Erik Larson wrote this book one whole century after the Galveston hurricane of September 1999 that shows that he intended to refresh the memory of Americans about the hurricane. Underlying reasons were that he wanted to recollect the reasons that caused the sudden death of more than 8,000 Americans. His focus was to talk about the reasons other than *Mother Nature* (natural occurrence of the disaster). Thus, the main point he was trying to get across was that the people designated in public offices have more responsibilities than their ones, and they are expected to behave more rationally and pragmatically rather than being arrogant of authority and power. Cline’s statement that the claim about expected deadly hurricane Galveston is “a crazy idea” is the example of such arrogance because he ignored the warnings given by the Cuban meteorologists.

Mother Nature had its role in the disaster, but the human lives that were consumed by the hurricane would be fewer if there were no role of human follies (the Weather Bureau). Larson writes about the men in the American Weather Bureau who were against the department's investment in technology to forecast the occurrence of a hurricane or other natural disasters. He mentions Chief Harrington’s decision to designate General Dunwoody as an executive of the department who was not a good person to hold such post: “Dunwoody had been,…, objecting at every opportunity to Hazen's investment in scientific research” (Larson, Erik. N.p.). Larson calls him a snake who wanted to obstruct research on weather both in Cuba and the USA. Apart from such black sheep, the Weather Bureau and Isaac Cline ignored the Cuban meteorologists' implication that a deadly hurricane would hit Galveston soon.

The Gilded Age in America was a period of transformation in the economy, technology, government, and social customs. The US had become a developed society and they had much confidence in their solidly built houses that they thought that the hurricane would not be able to hurt them on a large scale even if it enters the city. Consider this excerpt from the book: “Fifty terrified men, women, and children packed into one room, …, Beside the bed stand Dr. Isaac Monroe Cline, thirty-eight years old, bearded, confident the house can endure anything” (Larson, 191). These lines show that the Gilded Age had made them so confident that they did not consider to take special measures despite knowing the hurricane’s destruction in Cuba.

Larson spent so much time describing the scientific causes behind the hurricane. He shows his art of using imagery. His artistic language and the use of figures of speech have appealed the book to account for its literary worth apart from historical significance. His use of imagery and the detailed description of the scientific factors behind the hurricane helped him appeal to the logical sphere of his reader's mind. Moreover, it added much about the scientific reasons to his reader's mind. The issue with this detailed description is that it made the book specific to those parts of America where the hurricane is a known term. Thus, it nationalized the book but narrowed down its scope from an international perspective.

Isaac Cline might have behaved robust and strong nerved man having much knowledge about the world when he was mentioning stories about deadly storms throughout the world, but I am afraid how emotionless he was while talking about thousands of deaths far from his house: “"I had read of the Calcutta cyclone, October 5, 1864, which caused a storm tide 16 feet deep over the delta of the Ganges and drowned 40,000 persons” (Larson, Erik. N.p.). He might not know that his wife and children were also near to drown like those people about whom he was telling tales to his family. The following incidents reveal that all his family and the strong house perished during the hurricane and he miraculously escaped so did his assistant Joseph. They became estranged after the hurricane because Cline was proved badly wrong and it caused the death of more than 8000 Americans. Cline’s autobiography reveals that he later made announcement about the hurricane going against the policy of his department, and this announcement saved the lives of many people. Two arguments are enough to counter his statement. The first one is that there is no witness who can testify that he made any announcement. The other is that even if he is true in his claims, the time he tells about his announcement was the time when the storm has entered the city and the department has announced it already. Therefore, his announcement was of no importance at that moment when he himself was drowning.

The book is not a mere story of past rather it is a warning scripture for the future. It demands the government to allocate sensible, rational, and loyal people to the posts that are responsible for the lives of the public. 8000 American dead bodies stirred America and every analyst agreed that deaths on such a large scale were avoidable if timely safety measures were taken.

**Conclusion**

Larson’s book is an interesting piece of literature that is a non-fiction piece of work, but it is rich with artistic language and figures of speech like imagery, allusions, and metaphors. It gives factual information about the 1900 hurricane of Galveston, Texas. Moreover, it warns us to never underestimate any threat and stay prepared to tackle any kind of natural disaster. The book is interesting and I like it very much for a variety of qualities in one book: historical information, literary language, geopolitical commentary, scientific information, and a critique on the bureaucratic system. This book clearly tells what happens when a person is affected by self-deception, and it also reveals the consequences if a person sitting in a public office becomes self-deceptive. One segment of the book appealed to me lesser, and it is its chapter: *The Law of Storms*. It was because so much scientific details about the hurricane caused boredom, and I became less interested in reading the book. This issue, I suppose, can be solved if we discuss this chapter in class, otherwise, the book can be a useful piece of literature for this semester.

**Cited Works**

Larson, Erik, and J. Gordon Nelson. "Isaac's storm." *Environments* 27.1 (1999): 143.