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Reflective Insight: "No Happy Endings"

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Raven Bland

No Happy Endings

I am a freshman at Old Dominion University on my first trip abroad, and I was rather nervous going into this trip. A part of me felt like an underdog, due to my age, my lack of academic experience, and just experience as a whole, but this trip was nothing like I expected.

The most important thing that I have gotten from this trip is the understanding of a global perspective. What I mean by that is sometimes we can be confined to the American egocentric worldview, discounting even the parts of history that do not involve the US. There is so much more to ponder and understand when we look at history not through the perspective of nationality, American, German or Polish, for example, but through the eyes of men and women, boys and girls, a global perspective. Similarly, there are multiple religions in the world most invoking their followers to do good. Here in American we almost always conclude with a happy ending, but another thing I have gotten from our trip is that we have been “short-changed.” Stories do not always end happily, and certainly with the Holocaust there is no happy ending. Obviously the Holocaust is an important story to study, and it affected so many nationalities making victims of Jews, Roma Sinti, (gypsies), Jehovah Witnessess, political prisoners and homosexuals. I have reexamined how I may unconsciously stereotype people and how I might prevent myself from doing just that in the future. Our stories are not identical so I should not judge people’s actions or attitudes in their difference from my own perspective. Everyone has a story and understanding individual stories is the way to ensure that a Holocaust on any scale will never happen again.