Are young men who risk their lives in battle, or in boxing rings, or at the wheels of cars, brave or foolish? Is the phrase ‘*be a man*' a metaphor for courage, or of foolhardiness?

One of the unsettling aspects of the post-Holocaust era has been the establishment not only of museums and memorials but of a tourist industry which invites what sometimes becomes an almost morbid observation. How can we hope to appreciate such human suffering from the position of a relatively well-to-do and consumerist society?

Some believe punishment for a moral transgression must always be made personal for people to really fear it. That there is always a need to ‘feel' the consequences of a crime...to ‘feel' other people's pain. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Thinking about the following quote from *The Book Thief:*

*“Is there cowardice in the acknowledgement of fear? Is there cowardice in being glad that you lived?”(115)*

Is the fear of death the worst thing we can endure?

Through your research the past three school days, hopefully, you discovered the power Hitler had through his presence and words. With the beliefs he held, he seemingly convinced a nation to support his initiatives to exterminate an entire community of people. Considering the world today, are we equally manipulated by ‘*the powers that be'*? Think about our government, Hollywood, Advertisements, etc.

The central question asked is how human beings have been capable of such brutality and also have transcended suffering with acts of extraordinary love and courage. Some would credit God (or other religious figures) with this dual power, but this novel places responsibility firmly with men and women, and marvels at their goodness, their frailty, and their potential for evil. Death writes that “*I am haunted by humans*” (584). We are all haunted by this duality, and our imaginations and emotional connections with each other are our only savior. Is the capacity for violence a nasty streak in all of us?