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The Chapters one and two of the book “Exploring Paris: Discovering the Humanities” present a detailed vision about the Eiffel Tower and historical data about the Middle Ages period in France. The information shared in the chapters is impressively detailed about important historical events such as the Roman Empire in Western Europe and pieces of art that symbolized the change of a whole nation as the Eiffel Tower. In fact, those were just examples of events and artifacts that changed and continue changing the life of millions of people when they begin a journey to learn history or simply to go visit places and museums that can certain become such a life experience.

Starting off the Chapters, the book talks very precisely about the Eiffel Tower, its meaning, people’s impression, and how this could be significant to, not just to France’s, but also for world’s history. When asked about my own impressions of the tower, I said that, since I have never been to Paris, I could imagine the importance of this piece of art for Parisians because the Eiffel Tower symbolizes their history; such a monument is their identity considering that it is one of the wonders. However, I did not know that the Eiffel Tower carried so much more history throughout the centuries. What impressed me the most, was knowing that the Eiffel Tower was meant to be constructed for the World’s fair in order to restore the French nation after historical events such as the tragic defeat of Napoleon’s troops by the Prussian army in 1871 and the celebration of the French revolution that had happened exactly a hundred years before.

Considered ugly by the great monarchs of the time, the Eiffel Tower resisted until present days to become of the most popular monument of France. Although Gustave Eiffel planned the tower to be demolished in twenty years, the controversial wonder became extremely significant to the people who, as the engineer Gustave Eiffel, began to progress as self-made men and women. Despite all of the controversy, the Eiffel tower did symbolize the progress of a modern society in terms of technology, engineering, architecture, and arts as well as it helped promoting the nation’s famous food, its best wines, and its history.

On the other hand, Paris provides its tourists the other side of history. Besides showing to the world the symbols of a modern society, the capital also contains a museum that, by its lack of identity, presents a dark sight of the very same nation. The Cluny Museum has pieces of art from the Middle Ages in Western Europe. The so called Dark Ages perhaps were not as dark as most of people hear. The tourists can see numerous proofs that show that despite of the stain of death and insularity that the Church left in the history of the Middle Ages, the anonymous artists did contribute to enhancing and enlightening the dark era with such meaningful pieces of art. Even though the peoples were forced to convert to Catholicism and blinded by the fear of being decimated, the Church ended up giving to people a meaning to live in such a chaotic time. Thus art was a psychological motivation for them to continue living for the almighty Christian god and its saints that were being represented in handmade bibles and holy figures to illiterate.

Reading about the Cluny Museum was also a remarkable discovery for me because I myself, as well as many other tourists and students, did not know about the “light” side of the Dark Ages. In fact, the manipulation of the Catholic Church at the time has always been something that deeply intrigued me during history and literature classes. Impeding people to have access to culture or keep their own beliefs is simply inhuman. Nonetheless, using arts to manipulate people’s beliefs was an intelligent strategy that the Church created to enlarge its power over masses. Now I understand that at the time it was necessary for people to have something to live for, something that would motivate them to settle and accept the will of God. Thus, although the fear was predominated among the people, the pieces of art that were left to our society in current days and they continue impressing people all over the world. Personally, I began to believe that there is, indeed, a bright side in the Dark Ages. A side which I did not know before, but now I do admire in certain aspects; I still disapprove forceful methods of having control over the masses by a single entity, but now, more than ever I am hopeful about human beings and their capacity.

Reading the first two chapters of the book “Exploring Paris: Discovering the Humanities” was absolutely delightful because the information shared on these two chapters reinforced the perspectives I already had, but it definitely modified several others. Many of my personal impressions were changed and plenty of information about the Eiffel Tower and the events that characterized the Middle Ages worked as a very meaningful insight to my background about world’s history.