

Black elk versus sherman alexie

Business



Psalm, chapter ninety one, verses four to six, says, " He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday." In the memoir, " Superman and Me", by Sherman Alexie, the Native American Alexie tells the story of how he learned to read on a reservation. In the memoir, " Black Elk Speaks", Black Elk tells the story of his childhood, and his experience of living through the Wounded Knee Massacre. Sherman Alexie and Black Elk's paragraph structures are similar in that both authors write non-analytically, and are shaped by traumatic childhood experiences. One similarity between Black Elk and Sherman Alexie's writing is how they write with the goal of telling a story, not proving something.

For this reason, both of their writing does not reflect an analytical style. In Alexie's memoir, " Superman and Me", Sherman Alexie tells the story of how he learned to read from Superman comics. Alexie writes, " I learned to read with a Superman comic book. Simple enough, I suppose. I cannot recall which particular Superman comic book I read, nor can I remember which villain he fought in that issue." Since Alexie writes a memoir, the role of his piece is not to convince the audience of anything at all.

The role of his writing is to recount his past, which he does by remembering how he learned to read. Since Alexie does not attempt to clarify anything to the audience, his writing takes on a different format than one seen in analytical writing. A similar style of writing is witnessed in Black Elk's writing as well. Like Sherman Alexie, Black Elk in " Black Elk Speaks", tells a story, <https://assignbuster.com/black-elk-versus-sherman-alexie/>

and so exhibits non-analytical writing. In “ Black Elk Speaks”, Black Elk recounts his life before and up to the Wounded Knee Massacre. In one of his paragraphs, Black Elk writes, “ We must have broken camp at the mouth of the Peno soon after the battle, for I can remember my father lying on a pony drag with bison robes all around him, like a baby, and my mother riding the pony.

The snow was deep and it was very cold, and I remember sitting in another pony drag beside my father and mother, all wrapped up in fur. We were going away from where the soldiers were, and I do not know where we went, but it was west.” In his words, Black Elk utilizes description to tell his story. He does not make an argument, but only describes the movement of his people after a battle with white men. It is Black Elk’s use of description which creates a difference between analytical writing and the memoir form that he writes in. One factor that impacts Alexie and Black Elk’s writing is a traumatic experience in their childhood.

In “ Superman and Me”, Alexie informs about his prodigious talent in reading, and how it is suppressed by the society on his reservation. He writes, “ If he’d been anything but an Indian boy living on the reservation, he might have been called a prodigy. But he is an Indian boy living on the reservation and is simply an oddity. He grows into a man who often speaks of his childhood in the third-person, as if it will somehow dull the pain and make him sound more modest about his talents.” Alexie’s childhood naming as an abnormal child has had a negative effect on his life.

However, it has also blessed Alexie with a life story, which he speaks about. Alexie's story affects his writing by simply giving him material to write about. Had Alexie not experienced a deprived childhood, he would have fewer stories which he could write about, and maybe would not have become a writer. Black Elk's memoir is also marked by a tragic experience. Growing closer to adolescence during the Wounded Knee Massacre, Black Elk recalls not much, yet claims to remember fear of the white foreigners, or "Wasichus", as his people say.

He says, " I am quite sure that I remember the time when my father came home with a broken leg that he got from killing so many Wasichus, and it seems that I can remember all about the battle too, but I think I could not. It must be the fear that I remember most. All this time I was not allowed to play very far away from our tepee, and my mother would say, ' If you are not good the Wasichus will get you.'" Black Elk's youth is surrounded by a constant insecurity; fear of European attack. Black Elk's fear during his raising affects his writing because if he didn't live through the Wounded Knee Massacre, then he would have no story to tell.

Like Alexie, Black Elk's childhood experiences are a double edged sword; while they may have become permanent scars in his mind, they have provided him with something to share about his life. Essentially, the writings of Sherman Alexie and Black Elk are similar in that they both serve not to prove any arguments, but serve to relate stories of their stained childhoods. Sherman Alexie's childhood was one of rebellion against a suppressing society, while Black Elk's childhood was one marked by fear of attack. Alexie and Black Elk's experiences as a child growing up as Native Americans

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illustrate that when one needs help, he should seek it. As the Bible indicates, sometimes the help that one seeks is not tangible.