

Good essay on "iron john" by robert bly and "way of peaceful warrior" by dan mill...

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English

Very often the books that we read may touch upon the same problem, even though they have a different plot, were written in different time and have some other considerable differences.

We are dealing with two ingenious pieces of American literature that have different plots, but that are similar in some ways. These books are "Iron John" by Robert Bly and "Way of Peaceful Warrior" by Dan Millman. Both of these books touch upon the issues of self-development, manhood and making dreams come true.

"Iron John", a work by an American poet Robert Bly, was written in 1990 and is centered around a young boy, who is growing up into a man and. His growing up is happening with the help of a Wild Man, who becomes his teacher and mentor. The book touches upon the problem of manhood and what men are nowadays.

This stunning book, which has become a classic work of Robert Bly discusses the image of a mature masculinity, which is offered to us by modern culture. These principles, according to Bly, are so worn out, that men can no longer depend on them. Drawing on psychology, anthropology, mythology, folklore and legends, the book is looking for a new vision of who can be a man.

According to Robert Bly himself, modern men, while following the model of behavior that the society has imposed on them, have grouped in two poles.

On one of them you can find real men - the ideal characters Rambo and Arnold Schwarzenegger. They are the people of the old school where all the time they were hearing: "Stop acting like girls and leave all of these sentiments to whiny women."

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But now, they degenerate, and the media macho is substituted by another type - a soft and sensitive man. He is very vulnerable, he is torn by conflicting feelings, he is not able to act independently, he prefers to obey and go into the general stream. He can be called a hand-man as he often falls into the service of active women and he is offered a job of an " errand boy."

Dan Millman wrote a book on how to change your life for the better encouraging the readers to follow his example. The fact that all material is submitted in the form of an autobiography, makes the book even more influential. Here he is, Dan Millman - a gymnast and athlete, world champion in athletics, accepted to Berkeley University of South. California, who lives a life of its title: studies, trainings, friends, girls. Why would he want to change something in his life? The only person who knows the answers is his unusual spiritual teacher whom he met one night at a gas station. Here he is, Socrates - his spiritual master, who said to him that he was breathing wrong, eating wrong, thinking wrong, and generally was not a warrior at all. He promised to teach him how to be a warrior, which would change all his life for the better. So, Dan agreed to find everything about the true path. Socrates started teaching him to control his thoughts and actions in order to take control of his life and future.

In some respect, " Way of Peaceful Warrior" resembles the classical story by Carlos Castaneda - " The Teachings of Don Juan", which the writer definitely seems to be influenced by. It appears obvious that the character of Millman is Castaneda, while Socrates is Don Juan.

" The Peaceful Warrior" is full of inspirational quotes like " A warrior does not

give up what he loves, he finds the love in what he does" (Millman, 1984). Dan Millman book " Way of the Peaceful Warrior" is quite an entertaining literature, but not devoid of philosophical thought. It tells of a young man, athlete, who accidentally met with the elder Socrates who is teaching him the basics of another life. The book promotes healthy nutrition and sport lifestyle (which is good). And even if the reader does not look deep into the philosophical points discussed in the book, the book will still be useful for him because it really makes people better.

Both of the books have certain elements of the supernatural. However, it seems to me that " Iron John" is a little bit more mysterious and magical than " Way of the Peaceful Warrior". This may be explained by the fact that " Iron John" is actually based on an old fairy tale which has a lot of supernatural details.

There are three wishes, which the author of the book " Iron John" found in his heart that he could not ignore (and does not advise to others), without losing the soul. They define the " who I am, what I am and what I want to be." These desires are the same for all men - they are the key to understanding masculinity as one of the key qualities of a real man. They can be suppressed, forgotten or replaced by something else, but in the heart of every man there is a desperate desire to win the battle to survive the adventure and save the beauty. Movies that are popular with men, what men do in their free time, the strongest desire to boys - all this justifies what has been said above. This topic appears in " Way of Peaceful Warrior", too, as Socrates is teaching Dan to realize what he really wants and to understand whether what he is doing is making him happy.

In "Iron John", we can see that every man wants to be a hero. Of course, this desire can be suppressed if one neglects it for years, and man cannot feel ready for the battle that he knows awaits him. But it is not going anywhere. If the only thing a man is taught is that he must be good, he may lose his heart from his wounds that he will get in his lifetime. This topic arises in "Peaceful Warrior" as Dan learns to become a real man. One of the strongest episodes where this can be observed is the part where Socrates is asking Dan to beat him in the face, and Dan cannot do it at first because he lacks certain internal masculine energy.

The book by Robert Bly suggests that the quest for adventure is inherent in the heart of every man. It's not just a desire to "have fun". Adventure is this test mission, which is able to test the man's strength. And though it may frighten the upcoming trial, though he tries to go through it to make sure that it is within his ability. If a man has lost the desire for adventure and says that he is not interested in it, it is only because he does not know whether he has enough strength to survive them, he does not believe that he will stand the test of strength. So he comes to the conclusion that we should not try. In "Way of Peaceful Warrior", Dan Millman does not leave his wish to reach success in sports and keeps training even when everyone, including his coach, disbelieves in him thinking that everything is lots for him and that his career is impossible due to his health problems.

In "Iron John" there arouses the topic of love, too. We can see that nothing motivates a man to heroic deeds, like a beautiful woman. It's not just that men need to win the battle, but they also need someone who he can fight for. The idea behind the book is that the battle itself is never enough, it must

be meaningful. It is not enough just to be a hero; man it is important to be a hero for someone, for a woman he loves. In addition, a real woman wants a man to share her adventure. Finally, every woman wants to have a beauty that somebody will open. Men need to know that they are strong; they must know that they can cope with the difficulties. A woman should know that she is beautiful; it is necessary to know that it is worth fighting for.

A similar story line arouses in " Way of Peaceful Warrior", where on the way to success Dan starts being interested in a woman called Joy, who makes him feel more strength in himself in order to reach his goals.

One of the most central problems that is discussed in " Iron John" is a search for a father as a role model and an example of a viewpoint and mindset.

Some children, especially sons, who are looking for their fathers, suffer from hidden despair, which they do not even admit. Without knowing anything about their father, they fail to understand certain principles and order of things, so they fall into a timid despair.

In " Way of the Peaceful Warrior" the topic of father as such is not so developed. The image of the main character's father is almost absent in the book. However, we can see that Dan's mentor and teacher is becoming more than a father to him. Dan sees him as a good example and starts following his ideas fully trusting his suggestions.

Some sons fall into a secret despair. They have probably adopted, by the time they are six, their mother's view of their father, and by twenty will have adopted society's critical view of fathers, which amounts to a dismissal. What can they do but ask women for help? (Bly, 1990).

We can also say, without any doubt, that both of the works resemble the

stories of other famous literary works. For example, "Iron John" is very deeply connected to a popular medieval story of the Iron John. At the same time, the story of "Way of the Peaceful Warrior" is very similar to the plot of the popular classical books of Carlos Castaneda about the "Teachings of Don Juan".

Both books are very inspirational. "Iron John" is rather philosophical and deals with the inner world of men. At the same time, "Way of the Peaceful Warrior" is a book, which can be inspirational for everyone because this story could have happened to anyone, even to women.

So, to make a conclusion, we can say that the books that we have just discussed are very similar in some ways because they touch upon various problems of humanity, even though from the different points of view.

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