

Influence of ultima in bless me ultima

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A Chinese proverb says, “ A child’s life is like a piece of paper on which every person leaves a mark.” A child’s views and thoughts are dictated by the society and affected by other people. As each child matures and grows up, he or she each needs a teacher who can guide him or her through the confusing path of life. In *Bless Me, Ultima*, by Rudolfo Anaya, Ultima is a spiritual guide who leads and mentors Tony through the struggles of adolescent and demonstrates how life and nature intertwine to create a harmonic state of mind. Under Ultima’s counseling, Tony is able to navigate and overcome the social conflicts and dilemmas that are present in his life. Ultima influences Tony’s life by escorting him through the process of growing-up, showing him the importance of doing what is morally right and teaching him the meaning of nature.

First, Ultima purposely let Tony witness the death of Lupito to teach him the reality and the horrors of life. Ultima intentionally permits Tony to witness the dreaded incident to enhance his knowledge and to break his immaculate mindset of the world. After the incident, Ultima tells Tony, “‘ you are growing, and growth is change. Accept the change, make it part of your strength’” (259). Ultima could’ve saved Tony from the Lupito affair altogether but she did absolutely nothing to prevent him from seeing it. Demonstrated by Ultima sending the owl to pluck Tenorio’s eyes, Ultima has all the power and ability to avert Tony from witnessing the tragic event—but she didn’t. Ultima wants to take this horrific incident and make it into a lesson that can be learned and studied upon. By experiencing this tragedy, Tony gained valuable knowledge about why and how to learn from people’s mistakes and make those changes in part of his strength. Ultima also tells

Tony that it is essential to experience the numerous things in life but he needs to be aware that ““ life is filled with sadness when a boy grows to be a man. But as you grow into manhood you must not despair of life, but gather strength to sustain you...” (259). Ultima tells Tony that growing into a man might be filled with sadness, but he must take those events and gain knowledge from it. The killing of Lupito is the beginning of the chain of events that led to Tony for who he is now. As the story progresses, Tony witnesses and experiences more and more of these similar tragic events that eventually make him question if the world that he lives in is really flawless. This conflict in ideology shows the transition from the viewpoint of a child to that of an adolescent. Tony responds to these questions by further inquiring and analyzing the reliability and truthfulness of the catholic religion, faith and biblical teachings. All these demonstrate that Tony has dramatically matured and they are a good indicator of how he is changing from a kid to a young adult.

Second, Ultima teaches Tony that when in doubt, doing what is moral is always the right choice. When Ultima goes to Lucas’ house to cast out the demon spirit, she brings Tony along to witness it. Throughout the duration of the exorcism, Ultima proves to Tony that “ the smallest bit of good can stand against all powers of evil in the world and it will emerge triumphant” (98). Ultima teaches him a lesson that not the priest, his parents, nor his teacher can. Through tangible proofs and experiments, Tony learns that doing what is right is very essential. Tony displays this knowledge by not committing evil deeds with his gang of friends. Tony’s friends have committed a lot of wicked actions such as peeing on the church, abusing the catholic religion and other

sinful actions. He knows that doing what is morally right is far more important than doing things in the conventional way. Ultima also shows him that goodness can always surpass evil works. During the process of extracting the curse from Lucas, Ultima sticks pins into the three dolls and says to them, “‘ you have done evil... But good is stronger than evil’” (105). Ultima is saying that not only can goodness overcome evil, but it will always surpass it. The witches curse and perform evil actions because they seek pleasure from the pains of the victims. Ultima eventually got rid of all the witches through her curse of goodness. In the long term, doing good deeds will always override evil ones.

Third, through his interaction with the breaking of the Tellez Ranch curse, Tony learns the wonders of nature under Ultima’s guidance. On the way to the ranch, Ultima explains to Tony that “ the greater immortality is in the freedom of the man, and that freedom is best nourished by the noble expanse of the land and air and pure, white sky” (242). Tony now understands that when a person is with nature, he is free of all the burdens and struggles in life. Although plants don’t actually remove curses in our society, the author wants to relay a message that nature is a respite for the troubled and freedom for the chained. Tony has learned many things about nature such as him “ talk[ing] to the tree and ask[ing] it for its medicine, as Ultima had instructed [him] to do with every living plant” (245). Tony has learned to respect nature and not to abuse it. In the book, Ultima performs many cures and miracles in which nature plays a very big role. Anaya wants to prove that nature has a very magical remedy that can affect and alter a

person's behavior for the better. When life and nature harmonize it can provide intangible relieves and a peaceful state of mind to people.

Ultima influences Tony's life by escorting him through the process of growing-up, showing him the importance of doing what is morally right and teaching him the meaning of nature. In Bless Me Ultima, Tony has accumulated great knowledge that wasn't possible without Ultima's guidance. A child needs a teacher to guide and direct him or her onto the right path in life. One cannot learn the life lessons overnight, but can only live through these events to understand the true meaning of life.