

Comparing "living like weasels" (annie dillard) and "nature" (ralph waldo emerson...



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Comparing “ Living like Weasels” (Annie Dillard) and “ Nature” (Ralph Waldo Emerson) Essay Sample

This paper will compare and contrast two essays. The first being “ Living like Weasels” by Annie Dillard. The second essay called “ Nature” by Ralph Waldo Emerson. They both focus on the natural world and human living. The essays seem similar on the surface but use different types of analogies and examples to relate the two topics. The first essay was longer of the two and more focused on the mimicking of nature for humans.

“ Living like Weasels” is a short essay, which describes Dillard’s adventures in watching a weasel. She starts by introducing the weasel in a general description of his lifestyle of sleeping, stalking, and fighting for life. Dillard then moves on to tell about her first encounter seeing a weasel. She describes the landscape of a shallow and murky pond covered in lily pads, surrounded by wilderness. When reading this second chapter you begin to feel as if you are there. Dillard uses a vivid description of the landscape to draw you into her adventure. She then continues on to tell of her actual sighting of the weasel.

The description of the weasel in front of Dillard is also quite vivid. She claims to have related to the weasel in whole new way. Their brains were intermingled. Dillard states she had a hard time remembering exactly what the weasel was thinking but she does start ponder on why humans are not like weasels. She then moves on to discuss why humans should live like weasels and be free of want and greed. The next essay is not structured the same and much shorter.

"Nature" is actually an excerpt from a longer book. Emerson explains the relationship between human and nature as one that should be cherished, yet it is rarely understood. He mentions the fact that only a young child can see nature how it is meant to be seen. Emerson then moves on to discuss being a transparent eye-ball, seeing all and letting the natural element flow through him. He also explains that the relationship between the two cannot be described as it is of a supernatural type. Emerson ends with a paragraph on the harmony of nature and man, and how nature is not almighty without man too.

In comparing the two essays, "Living like Weasels" and "Nature", the two sound similar. Both use analogies referring to nature as a way to live. In "Living like Weasels", Dillard watches a weasel and wonders why humans do not continue this pattern of life. Dillard states that she "... would like to learn, or remember, how to live." (Dillard 249) This quote relates to a human living off of necessities as a baby does, instead of in choice like an adult. In "Nature", Emerson illustrates how nature can inspire and revive a spirit. Both essays state how wisdom can be gained from the natural world.

The purposes of the two essays seem to be the same. Each author would like to share their opinions about nature and how humans must interact or use it. Dillard seems as if she aims to educate the world about her experiences and her questions of human lifestyle. Emerson does not seem to aim to such great audience but to stick to the non believers, and educate them on his opinion. No matter what, both of the purposes are to educate those who do not know already.

When comparing the essays point of views both use first person. In " Living like Weasels" Dillard is the main character, telling of her adventures with weasels. In " Nature", Emerson tells of walking in wilderness and learning from natural objects such as the sun. Both essays also have the same tone, a calm and knowledgeable feeling is presented from each. The essays seem to be one in the same until you read below the surface.

In contrasting the two essays, " Living like Weasels" uses nature as an example to follow, while " Nature" uses it as a tool to live with. Dillard uses the weasel's lifestyle as an example in which she believes everyone should live by. She states that " A weasel doesn't attack anything, a weasel live as he's meant to, yielding at every moment to the perfect freedom of single necessity" (Dillard 249). In other words, a person should live without fighting one another and only take what he or she needs, not giving into selfishness. In " Nature" Emerson uses examples like the sun to show how adults do not see the nature completely. " The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and heart of a child." (Emerson 292). The nature does not teach man how to live, yet helps the man to live more harmonious, unlike the theme in " Living like Weasels". Nature is used in two separate contexts in these two essays.

The difference in the time period in which each of these were written has a great effect on the style, appeal and illustration of these essays. Dillard wrote " Living like Weasels" in the twentieth century. Emerson wrote " Nature" in the nineteenth century making it the older of the two. Thoughts on life had changed dramatically over this time period with the Industrial Revolution taking place. Emerson uses an older style of writing and does not <https://assignbuster.com/comparing-living-like-weasels-annie-dillard-and-nature-ralph-waldo-emerson-essay-sample/>

have the opportunity to relate to many subjects in the present day, which would make his argument stronger to the new reader. Dillard has more of an advantage to relate to the present day reader and does a better job.

The writing styles of the authors differ too. Dillard uses chapters to separate her subjects. She tells a story through each which leads you to the next yet each has its individuality. Each chapter changes style slightly, Dillard uses definition, illustration, narration, and analyzing as the four main types of writing in these chapters. However, Emerson uses a much different writing style. He is a romanticist meaning he uses ethics, self dependence, and respect as main principles in his writing ending up in a very detailed description. Nature is the focus of his writing, but he uses his own interpretations and inspirations as examples of synchronized living of humans and nature. Emerson uses complicated phrases and imagery to illustrate his points. He uses words, which have literal meanings, to create vivid imagery in your mind of how nature works. Emerson also uses strong metaphors to make the reader think. This also changes the appeal to a different audience.

Each author's appeal is focused toward another audience. Dillard focuses on telling a story with an analysis at the end of how her story relates to life. This would appeal to a younger minded audience or someone who has not as well read. Conversely, Emerson appeals to a well read audience, perhaps with a history in metaphoric writings. To the simple minded person, the three page script is confusing and timely to read. Both authors are excellent writers with different styles.

In analyzing these two essays they seem to have an equality of similarities and differences. Each essay has a common background with the authors focusing on such similar subjects. The authors also created such separate styles in their definitions and metaphors, that it would be hard to relate their underlying meanings. Each essay has a similar point, which can be derived from a short critical analysis of metaphoric and illustrative writing. In conclusion, the two essays are similar on the surface, yet differ greatly underneath.