

# Autobiography of malcolm x by alex haley critical thinking example

[Literature](#), [Biography](#)



Historical memory can be well understood as a collection of information representing the past, which is shared by a specific group of people or community. People have a tendency of communicating about collective and historical memory by relying on the individual memory. To some extent, an individual's memory of their experience and life gives them the sense of their origin and what they are, and guides them in making decisions about their future. The collaboration between journalist Alex Haley and Malcolm X led to the publication Malcolm X's autobiography in 1965. The autobiography was co-authored by Alex Haley basing on a series of selective and in-depth interviews he did in 1963 and the assassination of Malcolm X, in 1965.

The autobiography, which outlines Malcolm Xs philosophy of Black Nationalism, black pride, and pan-Africanism, is a spiritual conversation narrative. Haley later authorised the books epilogue after the death of Malcolm X, explaining their collaboration and giving summary of the death of Malcolm X. Haley was regarded as ghost-writer by scholars who were contemporary to the autobiography of Malcolm X. On the other hand, modern scholars view him as a vital and essential collaborator who intentionally lowered his authorial voice in order to create an impression to readers that Malcolm X was passing the message directly to them. Haley had a great influence on the literacy choices of Malcolm X. He persuaded Malcolm to employ the use of suspense and drama, instead of rewriting previous chapters and making them a polemic against the whole nation. This happened after Malcolm departed from Nation of Islam.

This autobiography is generally a detailed account of the life of Malcolm X, a human rights activist. It s beginning is during the pregnancy of his mother. It

gives a description of his childhood life in Michigan, the questionable circumstances of his father's death and lastly the deteriorating mental health condition of his mother that made her committed to the psychiatric hospital. His life in New York City and Boston is slightly covered, when he is associated with crime that initiated his arrest. This led to eight to ten-year sentence but he only served six years of the sentence. The autobiography addresses his ministry with the Elijah Muhammad, together with his appearance as the spokesman of the national organization. It documents his conversation in Sunni Islam, his departure and delusion with from Islam, his consistent travels in Africa, and his pilgrimage to Mecca. After the assassination of Malcolm X, that took place Audubon Ballroom in New York, February 1965, journalist Alex Haley, the book's co-author, summarizes in detail the end Malcolm's life, and explains their working conditions and agreements. He explains his personal view on this specific subject, contained in the epilogue.

### **Pros and cons of a source created by a man's memory**

This source of historical developments has no integrity and therefore one cannot fully rely on it as valid. Authors and writers are driven by different factors when composing these types of work. Some of them are driven by their personal interests and would create anything out of their mind to draw attention. These would render them to come up with unrealistic stories in order to gain fame. There are several limitations of an autobiography constructed under such conditions. This is typically a creation of the human mind. It is difficult to completely rely on these sources of information

because it is entitled to personal thinking. The creations of Malcolm X, polished by the journalist Alex Haley cannot confine everyone to believe that these historical events truly happened. Coming up with truth about a given historical topic needs a lot of research, interviews and substantial evidence in order to prove what really took place, the events that happened, and the historical period that existed. Most autobiographies have the element of fiction in them therefore it is not easy to completely rely on them, when obtaining historical knowledge.

## **Evidence as to whether Alex exaggerated Malcolm X's Events**

There are no specific clues or evidence that journalist Alex Haley obtained his own license to exaggerate events that took place in Malcolm's life. First of all, at the beginning of their collaboration Alex Haley did his best to minimise his authorial voice in all the publications that took place. He was made to sign a contract that limited his own authorial discretion, an effort in favour of producing what appeared as verbatim copy. The collaboration between the two of them took several dimensions; revising, composing, and editing the autobiography. Haley explained how Malcolm's dominance in the relationship they had. He controlled all the documentations and compositions of their work. Up to now, we cannot easily proof that the publications made after the death of Malcolm's X, by the co-author Alex Haley, was an exaggeration of what really took place in Malcolm's life.

## **CONCLUSION**

It was later perceived by historian John William Ward that the book had no critical analysis. He attributed this to the expectation of Malcolm X that journalist Alex Haley, The co-author, was not an interpreter but rather a chronicler. The Newsweek also highlighted the visible and limited criticism and insight in the autobiography but at the same time, glorifies it for its poignancy and power. The autobiography is also known to have influenced several generations of readers. It is described as one of the books with the greatest influence in the twentieth century by the historian Howard Franklin.

## **Works cited**

X, Malcolm. The autobiography of Malcolm X; with the assistance of Alex Haley.. London: Hutchinson, 1966. Print.