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Literacy Narrative Analysis

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Reading “Superman and Me” and “Coming into Language,” for the first time a reader tries to analyze what the author was trying to express and how it made them feel. These questions are what authors think about when writing, how he/she can get their message across to their readers in the most efficient way. Rhetorical situations, they are elements an author uses throughout his writing to entertain, persuade or inform. For example, every writer has an audience, a purpose, a topic, and stance. These elements a writer can establish a proper context for his readers. In both narrative essays, the writers develop a clear connection with the readers through their writing.

In “Superman and Me” the author is Sherman Alexie, his topic was on his love of books and his ability to learn how to read. Alexie’s narrative was very inspirational, and he was able to get his purpose across by sharing his passion for learning. He shares how his father’s love for reading influenced him to develop an interest to read at an early age. He wanted to share this with his audience; Native Indians as well as many minorities, who are “expected to fail.” Alexie is trying to show how by reading, it is a must to succeeding and overcoming stereotypical boundaries. Alexie demonstrates this when he shares his experience in the reservation education system. He shared how his non-Indian classmate minimizes him as a student. They expected him to be submissive and ignorant. However, he would not allow these expectations to define him. Alexie purpose for his narrative was to inspire his audience to read and obtain knowledge. He wanted to reach out to minorities who doubt themselves and show that they can overcome the labels that are stamped on them by sociality. Alexie shares how he obtained books through pawnshops and thrift stores; showing how even the unprivileged can find a way to read. He wanted the readers to know that anyone can self-educate themselves as long as he or she has the desire to learn. Alexie purposes as he mentions in his essay is to “save our lives.”

In “Coming into Language” written by Jimmy Santiago Baca; he discusses his life experiences from working at a graveyard transporting dead body parts and cleaning up blood from the ER to facing racial profiling and facing time in prison for false accusations to discussing his journey to becoming literate and taking the time in prison to seek an education. He writes this narrative as a way to share his struggles as a “Chicano” and to release the emotions built up inside him. He wished to share his experiences with other Hispanic descents who may have had similar struggles as him to admire and connect to. As well as he wanted non-Hispanic readers to read and have an insight; an understanding of some of the challenges that Chicano’s face. The primary purpose of his narrative essay was to show his audience the value of reading and writing. He shares his views on books before he was in prison and how Baca once saw reading as a waste of time and never would have thought he would gain any value from it. Nevertheless, he spent his time educating himself and saw how writing his feelings down benefited him when he was at his weakest points. Even though people did not expect inmates to educate themselves behind bars, he manages to achieve it. Baca wanted to inspire the readers to seek knowledge as it would bring many wonders to them.

Both narrative essays share similar concepts however the way each author connected to their reader was unique. As we can see “Superman and Me” the author uses his passion for reading to inspire his audience to educate themselves to overcome the expectation to fail, that was set by society. As for “Coming into Language” the author uses his hardships and barriers he faced to demonstrate why he desired a higher education as well as to encourage readers to obtain a higher education. Both essays used the elements of rhetorical situations to develop a strong reading to the readers. After reading “Superman and Me” and “Coming into Language” I was inspired to read more because as a minority I know what it feels to be belittled, always seen as ignorant and expected to fail and stay in that cycle. A big Hispanic stereotype is we are drug dealers, rapist, and criminals. We need more Hispanic lawyers, doctors, politicians, teachers to represent the Hispanic community. However, we can’t achieve this if we don’t read, learn how to write; obtain a higher education. I related to Sherman Alexie’s quote “I am smart. I am arrogant. I am lucky. I am trying to save our lives” because just like Alexie I am trying to help my community by showing how a female Hispanic could become a doctor no matter her status quo.