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Eng 1121

04-02-2020

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Analysis of Nonfiction

General Analysis

History and Social Impact

Nonfiction is a broad genre of writing that encompasses all books that aren't rooted in a fictional narrative. Nonfiction must include real-life situations, include factual information, and usually has a purpose to express or to inform. The American writer Truman Capote claimed to have invented this genre with his book *In Cold Blood* (1965). A true story of the brutal murder of a Kansas farm family, the book was based on six years of exacting research and interviews with neighbours and friends of the victims and the two captured murderers. The story is told from the points of view of different "characters," and the author attempts not to intrude his own comments or distort fact. Critics pointed out earlier precedents for this type of journalistic novel, such as John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1946), an account of the World War II atomic bombing of the Japanese city told through the histories of six survivors. Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* (1979) is another notable example of the genre. Nonfiction is important. Especially now. Kids love nonfiction, and many young readers prefer it over fiction. Nonfiction is an important

teaching tool in support of school curriculum. And nonfiction can offer children something that can help them long after the book is closed: an appreciation of the value of well-researched, accurate facts.

Discourse Community

Most importantly, nonfiction writing must involve real people, places, and events. The stories told in nonfiction works must be true. If something in the story is made-up, then it falls under fiction. Nonfiction must also contain facts, which are information that can be proved to be true. the primary goal of the creative nonfiction writer is to communicate information, just like a reporter, but to shape it in a way that reads like fiction."[2] Forms within this genre include biography, autobiography, memoir, diary, travel writing, food writing, literary journalism, chronicle, personal essays.

Rules and Message

In 2001, author Elmore Leonard published a column in the New York Times in their “Writers on Writing” series that contained 10 rules for writing fiction. Now the subject of a book, the column was equal parts entertainment and sincere advice for those who write fiction and do it poorly. Reading Elmore’s column has motivated me to write Trade Secrets’ “10 Rules for Writing Nonfiction.” Know what’s important. Tell the real story, not your story. Quote accurately and in context. Spell names correctly. Don’t use cliches. Use short sentences. Use

short paragraphs. Be careful with your punctuation. Be interesting. Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip.

Most nonfiction works also have a similar author's message, which is the reason the author writes. Most nonfiction is written to express or to inform. If the author's purpose is to express, the concepts expressed are always based on true, real-life situations. Because of this, one could argue all nonfiction serves to inform the reader, as well.

Focussed Analysis

One book that gives an example of nonfiction genre is “Becoming” by Michelle Obama. The book talks about her roots and how she found her voice, as well as her time in the White House, her public health campaign, and her role as a mother.

In her book, a work of deep reflection and mesmerizing storytelling, Michelle Obama invites readers into her world, chronicling the experiences that have shaped her - from her childhood on the South Side of Chicago to her years as an executive balancing the demands of motherhood and work, to her time spent at the world's most famous address. With unerring honesty and lively wit, she describes her triumphs and her disappointments, both public and private, telling her full story as she has lived it - in her own words and on her own terms. Warm, wise, and revelatory, *Becoming* is the deeply personal reckoning of a woman of soul and substance who has steadily defied expectations - and whose story inspires us to do the same.

The main goals in Michelle Obama's "Becoming" are dedication to personal growth and aspirations and persistence despite setbacks.

Dedication to personal growth and aspirations: Michelle traces her process of "becoming" herself. Despite Barack's intense political schedule and ambitions, she stayed true to her values and aimed to keep their family life as normal as possible.

Persistence despite setbacks: Though her guidance counselor discouraged her from applying to Princeton University, Michelle attended both Princeton and Harvard Law School. She and Barack also endured harsh criticism both during the campaign and during their time in the White House. Her intended audience are the people of the United States.

Throughout the book, Michelle demonstrates the value of a supportive community and people (particularly family and teachers) who cared about her and were invested in her success. She argues that these factors are just as important as hard work, and that without them, even smart kids who work hard can get left in the dust.

When "Becoming" author Michelle Obama and her husband Barack are whisked into the White House following his first presidential election, they are thrust into a world of luxury, one-of-a-kind experiences, and the unique privileges afforded a first family. However, Michelle emphasizes that with this ease comes an immense amount of responsibility. Despite the fact that

many of their day-to-day worries are taken care of, Michelle makes it a point to stay grounded and above all to understand the political obligation that her family has to the American people.

Work Cited

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