Lone Ranger And Tonto Fist Fight In Heaven Essay, Research Paper

Concept Essay

When a death occurs, friends and family instantly weeps and mourns for their loved one. They would then attend his/her wake and funeral service to commemorate his/her death. After the funeral service the body is taken to the graveyard for the burial. Afterwards a reception is held in the deceased s honor. These are the typical American rituals performed when someone passes away; they are done to provide his/her family and friends some closure. Other people or cultures may find closure through other rituals or ceremonies. Also some events are not viewed as highly as others, like for example when Jesse WildShoe died; no one attended his wake. Some, instead of being serious all the time, may use humor to help them cope with someone s death while others may feel it s inappropriate. Everyone has his/her own way of handling death. In Sherman Alexie s The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven, many people dealt with death differently.

In the chapter, Jesus Christ s Half-Brother is Alive and Well on the Spokane Indian Reservation, Jesse WildShoe died. He had a quick funeral and burial, but no wake because nobody on the reservation had the energy or patience to mourn. Probably because of lots had happen, like the narrator has to take care of James and he doesn t have the time or energy to attend his wake. This doesn t mean that Jesse wasn t on everyone s mind still. The narrator of this chapter was thinking about him throughout his funeral. He said, I kept wondering if maybe we should just take his body high up in the mountains and bury him in the snow that never goes away. Maybe we just sort of freeze him so he doesn t have to feel anything anymore and especially not some crazy idea of heaven or hell (122). From what he said, Jesse seemed like a man that was already tired of the world and its problems and the cold symbolizes numbness to free him from the pains of the world. The wake may not be as important to them compared to other cultures. Also the way that he was buried wasn t the typical way any American would do it. The gravediggers dug a hole and placed them in there. Instead of just covering the hole, matches were thrown in. Maybe it s a tradition to do so.

When Victor found out that his father had died of a heart attack, in This is what it Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona, he felt the pain of losing someone not close to him, but connected spiritually to him. Victor was never too close to his father since he left his family, and he only talked to him twice on the phone after that incident. The pain he felt was described as a broken bone, which can possibly means like a broken bone the wound needs time to heal. Victor always wanted him to come back, he would wait and wait in his bed just hoping he would pull up in his motorcycle; maybe that s where most of the pain is coming from because he can t be with his father physically. Also when Victor went into his trailer he was in search of valuables, Thomas said all his valuables were in the bank. Victor replied, It is, I was talking about pictures and letters and stuff like that (68). So even if he didn t know him well he wanted to find out more about his life through his pictures and letters. Victor also took some time to think about his past memories of his father. Victor didn t give his dad a funeral instead he had him cremated. Victor handed half of his father s ashes to Thomas. Thomas said, I m going to travel to Spokane Falls one last time to toss these ashes into the water (74). He wanted to do this because he believes that Victor s father will rise like a salmon, leap over the bridge, over me, and find his way home (74). Victor planned on doing the same. Victor didn t give his dad a huge funeral; he did what he felt was appropriate and that would give him a sense of closure.

Victor wasn t the only one affected by his father s death; Thomas was also close to his father; which is the reason why he received half of his ashes. Once Thomas left for Spokane Falls in search of a vision, Victor s dad asked, What the hell are you doing here (69)? He took Thomas to Denny s and bought him a meal. At that point Thomas knew that the vision was Victor s dad and it meant to look out after one another, which is the reason that Thomas went with Victor to Arizona. This is also why Thomas wanted to throw his half of the ashes into Spokane Falls. It symbolizes the time where Victor s dad found him by Spokane Falls.

Jimmy Many Horses is diagnosed with an incurable cancer, which means he is guaranteed to die. Knowing so he continued to live life as if he didn t know he had cancer. He jokes about it all the time, which makes his wife angry. He said, My favorite tumor was just about the size of a baseball, shaped like on too. Eve had stitch marks (157). His wife, at many times threatened to leave because of his joking attitude toward his life, but she usually returns. All though Jimmy isn t dead yet, he should be having a hard time dealing with death, but instead he sat and joked about his situation. Any normal person would be grieving and questioning himself asking why does it have to be him/her. The reason he joked about dying was because it relieves him of the pain that he is suffering within. Around the same time this is going on Norma s, Jimmy s wife, mother had just died as well. Norma was mad yet sad at the same time. The thing that saved them from the pain was laughter just like in Jimmy s situation. Humor was an antiseptic that cleaned the deepest of personal wounds (164).

People handle death differently. Some of it has to do with culture and who they are The typical funeral may bring closure for some, but not for others. For Victor maybe having funeral wasn t his way of expressing his true feelings, instead he poured his father s ashes into Spokane Falls; while for Jesse, to many, the funeral was the right thing for him, although the narrator wished to have him buried in the cold mountains. Everyone has his/her own way of coping with death. Jimmy, whose death was imminent, dealt with his situation through laughter. Many would say that he should be praying for a cure to be discovered or hopes to live another day. Jimmy joked about his death as if was nothing at all. People have their own ways to deal with death, whether it is a funeral, a special ritual, or just joking around as long as it helps one to get through there struggles.