

## Exemplification Essay Sample 2

### A Changing Land

Overlooking a scree slope in the towering peaks of the Backbone, Fools Crow wakes, alarmed and pained by a sharp knock to the head, the all-too-familiar croaky laughter of the sneaky Raven reaching his ears. Enveloped in the spirit world, Fools Crow learns of a terrible monster, a Napikwan, who threatens the wellbeing of the mountains (160-161). In *Fools Crow* by James Welch, Fools Crow, a young Pikuni brave, finds himself obliged to travel between the spirit world and his own reality while grappling with the conflicts of his Pikuni tribe and the threat of the Napikwan. As Raven's gruff voice tells Fools Crow of the Napikwan sabotaging the surrounding Backbone, he also warns him of the inevitable changes occurring to the Pikuni way of life, setting up a choice Fools Crow must make in the near future.

In the pictograph, the dark slash marks across the body of Fools Crow's white bighorn embody the deadly claws of Real-bear. Vast footprints, also of the powerful bear, lead away from Fools Crow, represented by the figure in the center of the pictograph. When Fools Crow wakes, he sees his catch of a white bighorn being dragged off by a large bulky shape. Real-bear, potent yet cunning, steals Fools Crow's prized bighorn out of an effortless and lazy habit (160). This newly acquired practice is caused by the isolated Napikwan and his reckless killing spree, which teaches Real-bear and the other animals of the Backbone a new and easier way to obtain food. After shooting the animals he chooses, the Napikwan leaves the bodies to rot, killing purely for the sport of it. Real-bear and the other carnivores of the Backbone soon learn to prey on the easy catches as opposed to hunting for themselves. In reality, the Napikwan, along with

disturbing, also changes the cycle of the Backbone, a foreshadowing of change that is engulfing the Pikuni way of life.

Changes present in the Backbone are not only those of the material world, but also of the spirit world. Raven, the bird figure above Fools Crow, stops on his way after searching far and long for food (the chunk in his claws) to bring to his wives. He pauses his journey to drop in on Fools Crow in order to tease him about his lost catch, but also to warn him of the Napikwan and his actions, killings Raven witnessed first hand (163). Raven knows that for his benefit among the other animals of the Backbone, he needs to put a stop to the slaughter. From his seeing blue stone, he has seen the feats of Fools Crow, and decides to “drop in,” trusting that Fools Crow will perform the task of removing the Napikwan. Raven also understands the circumstances of Fools Crow’s name, and the untruthfulness of it. In his cunning mind, Raven uses blackmail against Fools Crow, but it is all for the best, the benefit of the Backbone.

The lone Napikwan who pressures the continued existence of the Backbone is nothing more than a precursor to what other Napikwans will do. A crumbling pile of sticks sits below the dead white bighorn. The sticks, coming off the white bighorn, are of no use to Fools Crow or Raven looking from above. “Why grow those scrawny things when the roots and berries grow so abundantly around us?”, declares Mad Plume, the carrier of the Otter Medicine bundle for the Black Patched Moccasins, referring to the small plants the Napikwans instructed some Black Patched Moccasins to deposit in the Ground of Many Gifts (96). Like the flimsy plants, the sticks coming from the white bighorn’s body have little or no use for the Blackfeet. They are mere twigs, useful only for a weak fire or fragile structure. The Napikwans are changing and scattering the resources of the land into objects the Pikunis and other tribes have no use for. All

the land the Pikunis depend on is slowly being torn apart, scattered about with no care like the innocent victims of the reckless Napikwan.

The loss of Fools Crow's catch foreshadows the Napikwans' intentions for the land. With Raven's guidance, Fools Crow chances his life, and his wife's, in order to kill the Napikwan and restore order to the Backbone. This sacrifice proves Fools Crow's determination and love for his land and for his people. Although the gruff laughter of Raven prompts him to kill the Napikwan, Raven also ultimately warns Fools Crow of the inevitable transformations of the fast-changing land, leaving him to consider fewer options to save his people and their land.