

Comparing and Contrasting Quotations

Carlisle Indian School (<http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/teaching>)

Analyze (compare and contrast) the following quotations:

Speaking to a convention of Baptist ministers in 1883, Captain Henry Richard Pratt, the founder of the Carlisle Indian School, used the image of baptism to explain his philosophy for transforming Native children so they could be made to emulate white men and women:

In Indian civilization I am a Baptist, because I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked.

Pratt requested permission from the Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz, to found a school exclusively for Indians:

...give me 300 young Indians and a place in one of our best communities and let me prove it is easy to give Indian youth the English language, education, and industries that it is imperative they have in preparation for citizenship. Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania has been abandoned for a number of years. It is in a fine agricultural country and the inhabitants are kindly disposed and long free from the universal border prejudice against Indians.

Now read and analyze (compare and contrast) the following two quotations:

"The common schools
are the stomachs of the country
in which all people that come to us
are assimilated within a generation.

When a lion eats an ox,
the lion does not become an ox
but the ox becomes a lion."

...Henry Ward Beecher

"If the Great Spirit had desired me
to be a white man
he would have made me so
in the first place.

He put in your heart
certain wishes and plans;
in my heart he put
other and different desires.

Each man is good
in the sight of the Great Spirit.

It is not necessary,
that eagles should be crows."

...Sitting Bull (Teton Sioux)

What is Henry Ward Beecher's major argument?

What is Sitting Bull's counter argument? What would he say to Henry Ward Beecher?

Which of the above arguments would Henry Richard Pratt, founder of the Carlisle Indian School agree with?

Which do you think is the stronger argument? Explain your rationale.

Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans.

Source: *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, “The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites,” *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian” 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271. Full text available at: <http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/node/8868>

A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man....

It is a sad day for the Indians when they fall under the assaults of our troops, as in the Piegan massacre, the massacre of Old Black Kettle and his Cheyennes at what is termed “the battle of the Washita,” and hundreds of other like places in the history of our dealings with them; but a far sadder day is it for them when they fall under the baneful influences of a treaty agreement with the United States whereby they are to receive large annuities, and to be protected on reservations, and held apart from all association with the best of our civilization. The destruction is not so speedy, but it is far more general.

Indian schools are just as well calculated to keep the Indians intact as Indians as Catholic schools are to keep the Catholics intact. Under our principles we have established the public school system, where people of all races may become unified in every way, and loyal to the government; but we do not gather the people of one nation into schools by themselves, and the people of another nation into schools by themselves, but we invite the youth of all peoples into all schools. We shall not succeed in Americanizing the Indian unless we take him in in exactly the same way.

It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like all the rest of us. Left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life. We, left in the surroundings of civilization, grow to possess a civilized language, life, and purpose. Transfer the infant white to the savage surroundings, he will grow to possess a savage language, superstition, and habit. Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit.

Carlisle fills young Indians with the spirit of loyalty to the stars and stripes, and then moves them out into our communities to show by their conduct and ability that the Indian is no different from the white or the colored, that he has the inalienable right to liberty and opportunity that the white and the negro have.

When we cease to teach the Indian that he is less than a man; when we recognize fully that he is capable in all respects as we are, and that he only needs the opportunities and privileges which we possess to enable him to assert his humanity and manhood.