

In this autobiographical essay, the author shows the way Indian children are expected to behave at school and how to be accepted by the community in the reservation. Alexei describes the context in which he grew up, and how his environment granted easy access to books. At an early stage, he thought himself how to read using the Superman comic book, and reading became an obsession. Now as a writer, he visits schools to show children the joy of reading and writing. “Superman and Me” can be seen through a Marxist lens because the power struggle between two groups resulted in the alienation of Indians and the accumulation of resources by Europeans. Alexei, a smart Indian, is a dangerous person to Europeans because he fights against the power structure that places Indians at a disadvantage.

Indian kids struggle at school because they are expected to be stupid in order to be accepted in the community. This is only one example of the effects of European colonization in America that exists today. According to Alexei, a smart Indian is “feared and ridiculed by Indians and non-Indians alike” (2). Alexei did not fit in any group, so he had to overcome alienation through reading obsessively.

During the colonization of America, Europeans often removed native people from lands they wanted to occupy. They eventually created the Indigenous reservations in order to isolate the Indians. Their life was changed drastically, now having to adapt to living within the confines of the reserve and struggling with poverty and substance abuse. Thus, isolation from colonial times resulted in alienation. They are alienated not only from their lands, but also from a sense of purpose. This is why books saved Alexei’s life, because he was able to get out from the system and see everything clearly from outside.

Alexei fights the status quo with knowledge. The author implicitly compares himself to superman. In this case, instead of fighting villains, he is in open combat with the oppressive system that keeps Indian and non-Indian communities apart. One way of bridging the gap is through teaching kids how to read and write because it gives them the tools to become dangerous Indians. The image of Indian kids being excited to learn is a sign of Alexei's success.