

Kendra Palumbo

ENGL-121

Creative Retelling of *There There*

The story I chose to retell is *There There* written by Thomas Orange. I chose to retell this story through a poem.

*We are not the same.*

*Tony Loneman*

*I have a strange face*

*Due to fetal alcohol syndrome*

*I see a monster when I look into the mirror*

*I struggle intellectually due to this syndrome*

*I get bullied because of the way I look and the way I think*

*I am Native American, but*

*We are not the same.*

*Dene Oxendence*

*I am on a mission*

*I have a deep desire to finish a project*

*I collect stories of Native Americans living in Oakland*

*In hopes of continuing my uncle Lucas's project, who died before finishing it*

*I am part of Oakland Powwow committee*

*I set up a storytelling booth there*

*I do this so I can try and gather as many stories as I can*

*I am Native American but,*

*We are not the same.*

*Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shield*

*I come from a home that is not like yours*

*My mother drinks all the time*

*My sister is involved with a group of people I feel may be bad*

*I feel isolated and lonely*

*I fell in love once*

*It didn't last long until he abandoned me and ran away to Los Angeles*

*I feel isolated and lonely*

*I am raising my sister's grandchildren*

*I fear raising them with a connection to Native life*

*I witnessed pain, trauma, suffering, and violence as a child*

*When I was a part of my Native traditions*

*Mom died*

*Life doesn't work out the way stories do*

*Mom's dead and we're alone (p.60)*

*I am Native American but,*

*We are not the same.*

*Jacquie Red Feather*

*I was assaulted*

*By a man who turned my "no into a yes"*

*I became pregnant, and I gave the baby away*

*I am an alcoholic, 11 days sober*

*I am a grandmother*

*But I can't take care of them, I wouldn't do a good job*

*My sister Opal will take care of them*

*I lost my daughter Jamie to suicide*

*I am Native American but,*

*We are not the same.*

*Edwin Black*

*I have a master's degree in Native American literature*

*But I choose to spend all my time on the internet*

*Causing me to gain weight and isolate myself*

*Seeing my face, thinking about the sick addiction,*

*All the time I've spent doing almost nothing (p.63)*

*My mother makes comments about my weight, little does she know she's making things worse*

*I don't even know who I am, but I will soon*

*I lost weight, I feel more comfortable going out into my community*

*I may even find out who my real dad is*

*I am half-Native American but,  
We are not the same.*

*Calvin Johnson*

*I am on the powwow committee at the Indian Center  
My brother is in some trouble with drug dealers  
I try and help him get out of the situation  
Little did I know, I would end up becoming one of the dealers  
Maybe even becoming too much like them  
I am Native American but,  
Maybe we are the same.*

In my poem, I included characters that I felt a connection with. I chose to write this poem to shine light on the common misconceptions of races, cultures, ethnicities, and religions. I chose a poem to retell this story because I felt that by creating a short piece of literature, it may grab the attention of my readers. I chose to focus on the difference between these characters. In the story *There There*, the most empowering piece I noticed was that all of these characters are all Native American, but just because they are Native American and share a common heritage, it does not mean they are the same. Each character has their own struggles and experience in their lives. What I would like for people to internalize is that people who may be part of the same religion, heritage, economic status, etc., are not the same in every aspect. While I was reading this book, I was confused as to how all of these characters related to each other than them being Native American. I feel this is because of such different lives they have from. Once you get to the end of the book, you realize what the purpose was for including these characters. The moment when all of their lives collide and they now suddenly are the same. They are at the same powwow, they are all celebrating the same Native traditional way. I found this to show a sense of unity among them. The main message I'd like to get across is for people to not have a predetermined idea of someone just because of a certain category they may be placed in.

## Work Cited

Orange, Tommy. *There There*. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.