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Tony Loneman

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Colin Godfrin

Dr. Duneer

ENGL121-20

6 August 2020

Tony Loneman

Tony Loneman had a difficult life,
His mother battled alcohol abuse,
Forgetting that he would suffer from booze,
From her mistake, Tony's life is a strife.
Living with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome,
He experienced the long-term effects.
One day, he was able to self-reflect,
With his native headpiece upon his dome.
For once he was a different Tony,
Different from what everybody saw,
Tony was an Indian who was strong!
When time mattered most, he was no phony,
For once in his life he was no outlaw,
He saved the innocent from death that's wrong!

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Reflecting

Tony Loneman was my favorite character in *There There*. He lived a difficult life, not in the sense that he was down the wrong path, instead one where he struggled with constant looks and judgement of his Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, which he referred to as 'The 'Drome'. This was a weak spot for him, as he was self-conscious of his disability. However, early on, I was drawn to the compassion that Tony expressed, as he mentioned that he dealt drugs, but with good reason, as he was partaking in such activities to earn money to help support his grandmother, who was Tony's caretaker his entire life, as his mother was never around, as she struggled with her own demons.

One of the more significant parts of the novel, in my personal opinion, was when Tony put on a Native American headpiece, and saw his reflection in the black of the television screen. At first glance, this scene may not seem quite significant, but it is the sense of strength that Tony portrays in this scene that really grabbed my attention. "'All right,' I said, and hung up. I pulled my regalia out and put it on. I went out into the living room and stood in front of the TV. It was the only place in the house I could see my whole body. I shook and lifted a foot. I watched the feathers flutter on the screen. I put my arms out and dipped my shoulders down, then I walked up to the TV. I tightened my chin strap. I looked at my face. The Drome. I didn't see it there. I saw an Indian. I saw a dancer'" (Orange, 26). Just by putting on this headpiece, Tony temporarily forgot about his disability, and he felt like a powerful Native American. He was

soaking in the culture of his ancestors, which he had never had the opportunity to before. In the concluding scenes of the novel, this sense of strength proved true.

Some may view Tony as a bad guy throughout the novel. Whether it be because of his drug dealing history, or because of his mischievous and defiant lifestyle, perhaps even because of his involvement in the attempted robbery of the Great Oakland Powwow. However, when you dig deeper into Tony's life, he never had it easy. He was dealing drugs only to gather money to give to his grandmother, as he even mentions that she is too old to work and support herself. This is the lady that raised Tony when his mother couldn't, people! Not only that, but at the end of the novel, Tony is the hero. Despite his involvement in the premeditation of the robbery of the powwow, he eventually puts himself in the way of others, and is killed. He 'turned' on his group, killed Charles, and was eventually killed, himself. The beauty of this tragic scene: just like early in the novel, when he saw his reflection in the television, and he was wearing the Native American regalia that made him feel proud of his heritage and strong, while forgetting his disability, Tony couldn't bear to see the destruction of the powwow. Nor could he bear to see the elimination of his people. Not only was this exemplifying Tony's sense of strength, again, this also showed his appreciation for his culture.

While he passed onto the afterlife, his life flashed before him, as his spirit left his body. He was with his grandmother again, in a much happier time. This was a very emotional moment of the novel. To me, this was a way to show that his grandmother would be proud of him, stepping in to save others, causing him to ultimately lose his life. I also believe this is why Tony began and ended the novel; to allow for the reader to watch Tony grow and mature, in a sense, finally becoming comfortable in his own skin, and not being self-conscious, then being viewed as a hero. It was quite beautiful, and these are the reasons why Tony was my favorite character,

and the most significant, in my opinion. This is also why I chose to focus on his story within my poem. By writing this poem, I was able to avoid evaluating and discussing the novel as a whole, or another story throughout the second half of the course, and I was able to focus on a particular character that portrayed cultural pride and strength. It was beautiful.