

Journal 2

Literature, Novel



Journal 2 “ Motorcycle & Sweetgrass” brought up two major conflicts at the very end of the novel. The first conflict was based on a battle between John and the raccoons (Person vs. Nature) John was in the forest having a talk with the raccoons and giving them food. The raccoons were all surrounded around the bushes, resemble in ready to have a fight with the Nanabush. The animals reproached John and he was so furious. The clash with the raccoons shows the mysterious hidden relationship between them. John even wanted them to disappear, he burnt the forest and the creatures began to melt into the forest background. This conflict appeared the wicked and wild behaviour of the spiritual creature. The second conflict was the combat between John and Wayne. (Person vs. Person) A cousin of Virgil, Dakota, was missing and Virgil believed she went to find John for a talk. He was worried about Dakota since John was a Nanabush, she might fall into trouble. Soon or later, Virgil and Wayne went to find John and to see if Dakota was with him or not. Meanwhile, they witnessed the fight of the raccoons and the Nanabush. Wayne was fearful that the Nanabush would hurt Dakota and everyone in the community and he was dangerous, so, he decided to have a fight with the creature. Wayne defiled his motorcycle and they started their battle. He was injured so seriously, the Nanabush even threw a raccoon towards his face. Of course, John won the battle. This conflict was the most incredible part of the novel, the writer portrayed every scene of their fight and it showed the courage and confidence of this character. The first significant quote of the novel was (1) “ Who is this man? Nobody in his family was cool enough to know this guy like this, Virgil thought” (p. 47). This was the situation when the white man, John, came to the Otter Lake and visited Virgil’s

grandmother, Lillian. John was white and he was different from everyone of them in the community. The writer described the word, "cool" as the character of the white man. This compared the differences of the white community and the native community. The native community was more old fashioned and traditional, but the white community was more modern. This quote shows that the natives believed they had a lower status by comparing the whites. The two communities couldn't be connected together. John was a symbol of the white man attacking the native community, it was hard to believe that a white man could have a close relationship with a native woman. This quote showed a theme of an interracial relationship. The second quote of this novel was (2) "He was dancing! He was a blur of movement one minute, and almost still the next. At times John was silhouetted against the almost full moon. Virgil was mesmerized. This wasn't any type of dancing he'd seen on television, or at powwows. It had an ancient, tribal quality, and yet at the same time, a modern, innovative style. And just about everything in between." (p. 130) In this quote, the writer described the unique character of John. He was not only a normal white man, but a man dancing in a strange style. I believed the writer would like to use this as implying the readers that John was not a normal human, but a Nanabush. He used different abnormal behavior and actions of him as well as his style of dancing, "ancient and modern", to let the readers predict the character of John. The writer illustrates the creepiness of John, on how perilous he would affect on Maggie and the whole Otter Lake community. The last quote of this novel was (3) "Dakota might be in trouble, thought Virgil. With John, since nobody really knew his game, that was a strong

possibility. Virgil weighed his options and decided Dakota's situation was the most important. " (p. 285) When Virgil noticed Dakota, his cousin, was lost, he knew the most important thing for him to do was to find his cousin, not to go to school. Although skipping classes was not a good example, he knew that finding his cousin is more important. The writer depicted the matured attitude of Virgil. At the beginning of the story, he was a rebellious kid who always skipped classes, however, after the arrival of John, he started to become a grown up child. I believed John is a symbol to Virgil's maturity and this quote showed a theme of growth and self discovery.