

Assignment – What you might not know

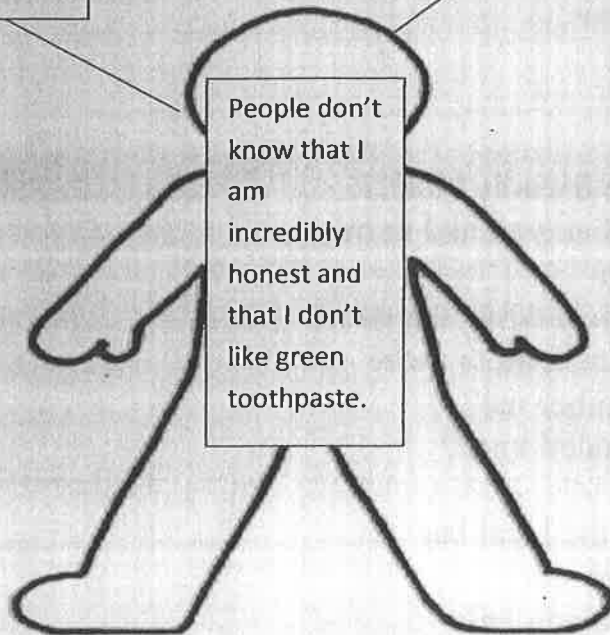
Thomas King describes in his poem, *I'm not the Indian you had in mind*, the clichés that surround indigenous people. He refers to the stereotypical "warrior" as the "friendly" one who the reader does not know. The Native individuals who people judge and "idolize" may be different than the ones people think they know.

TASK: Using the template that is given to you or one that you create on your own, consider the qualities or aspects about you that people may think they know about you, such as how you do academically or your personality traits. Then contemplate what people may not know about you (ex: fears, hobbies, certain memories/stories). Write in the comments concerning what people may not know about you inside the template that is supposed to represent you. Write the various attributes that people think they know about you on the outside the template.

People think that I like to read.

People think that I am shy.

People don't know that I am incredibly honest and that I don't like green toothpaste.



I'm not the Indian you had in mind

Thomas King

I'm not the Indian you had in mind
I've seen him, I've seen him ride
Rush of wind, darkening tide
With wolf and eagle by his side
His buttocks firm and well defined
My God, he looks good from behind
But I'm not the Indian you had in mind
I'm not the Indian you had in mind
I've heard him, heard him roar
The warrior wild in the video store
The movies that we all adore
The cliches that we can't rewind
But I'm not the Indian you had in mind
I'm not the Indian you had in mind
I've known him, oh I've known him well
The bear greased hair,
The pungent smell
The piercing eye
The startling yell
Thank God he's the friendly kind
But I'm not the Indian you had in mind
I'm that other Indian
The one who lives just down the street
The one you're disinclined to meet
The oka guy, remember me?
Hipper wash, wounded knee?
That other one
The one who runs the local bar
The CEO, the movie star
The elder with her bingo tails
The activist alone in jail
That other Indian
The doctor
The homeless bum
The boys who sing around the drum
The relative I cannot bear

My father who was never there
He must have hated me I guess
My best friend's kid with FAS
the single mom who drives the bus
I'm all of these
and they are us so damn you for the lies you told
and damn me for not being bold enough
to stand my ground and say
that what you've done is not our way
but in the end the land won't care
which one was rabbit
which was bear
who did the deed and who did not
who did the shooting and who got shot
who told the truth who told the lie
who drained the lakes and rivers dry
who made us laugh, who made us sad
who made the world monsanto mad
whose appetites consumed the earth
wasn't me
wasn't me
wasn't me
for what it's worth or maybe it was
but hey let's not get too distressed
it's not as bad as it may sound
hell we didn't make this mess
it was given us and when we're gone,
as our parents did, we'll pass it on
you see we've learned your lessons well
what to buy and what to sell
what's commodity, what's trash
what discount you can get for cash
and Indians, well, we'll still be here
the real one and the rest of us
we've got no other place to go
don't worry we won't make a fuss
well not much
still, sometimes,
sometimes late at night
when all the world is warm and dead

i wonder how things might have been
had you followed, had we led
so consider
as you live your days
that we live ours under the gaze
of generations watching us
of generations still in tact
of generations still to be
seven forward
seven back
yeah it's not easy
course you can always ask this buck
you like so much this Indian you idolize
perhaps that's wisdom on his face
compassion sparkling in his eyes
he may well have a secret song
a dance he'll share
a long lost chant
ask him to help you save the world to save yourselves
Don't look at me
I'm not the Indian you had in mind
I can't,
I can't.

<http://spirithorse.ca/not-indian/>

1. what does he mean by the title?
2. what stereotypes does he refer to?
3. what is the theme (main message) of this poem?