

ONE MARYLAND ONE BOOK 2023

# THERE THERE

TOMMY ORANGE

Teacher's Guide



## WHAT IF EVERYONE READ THE SAME BOOK AT THE SAME TIME, THEN CAME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT IT?

When we read a great book, we can't wait to share the experience with others. That's one of the joys of reading. In this spirit, Maryland Humanities created One Maryland One Book to bring together diverse people in communities across the state through the shared experience of reading the same book.

Now in its sixteenth year, One Maryland One Book remains Maryland's only statewide community reading program. Each year, the selection process is guided by a common theme. The theme for 2023 is "Connection."

The Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities partners with public libraries, high schools, colleges and universities, museums, bookstores, correctional facilities, and other organizations to bring book-centered discussions and other related events to communities across Maryland. But One Maryland One Book is not just about reading or literature; it is also about bringing people together for meaningful dialogue.

The book selected for 2023 is *There There* by Tommy Orange.

### GRAB YOUR COPY

Find a copy of *There There* at your local library or bookstore and get reading! Ask if your local branch has partnered with us to receive a set of free books, they may have one for you. For a limited time, we also are distributing e-book copies through our website, [onemarylandonebook.org](http://onemarylandonebook.org). Lastly, we always encourage you to buy a copy at your local independent bookshop or through Maryland Humanities' Bookshop.org affiliate page: <https://bit.ly/buyomob23>.

### REACH OUT

Each year, more than 15,000 Marylanders read the One Maryland One Book selection. How many of those people are your friends or family? Use the book to jumpstart a meaningful conversation in person or virtually with an old friend or to make a new one.

### PULL UP A CHAIR

We invite you to join Maryland Humanities and thousands of other Marylanders at one of the many book discussions and related events happening around the state and online from mid-September to mid-November, including the author event in October. To find One Maryland One Book programs in your area, go to [onemarylandonebook.org](http://onemarylandonebook.org) and click on "Events."

After each One Maryland One Book program you attend, please visit [omobfeedback.org](http://omobfeedback.org) and share your thoughts by taking our brief survey.

For all the latest information, "like" or follow us:

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### FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Welcome! We are thrilled to have you join Maryland Humanities for the sixteenth year of One Maryland One Book, Maryland's largest reading and discussion program. Since 2008, the OMOB has brought together thousands of readers across the state to explore a specific work of literature through discussions at book clubs, libraries, colleges, museums, and more.

Literature has the power to delight, inform, and connect us. The OMOB is selected by a committee of distinguished members of Maryland's literary community. We hope this connects you to parts of your community in a new way.

*There There* is a novel that wonderfully captures this year's theme of **Connection**, with its multigenerational, interconnected structure that follows the stories of twelve Native people as they converge on the Big Oakland Powwow. It reminds us that the best books contend with a historical trauma through many perspectives, in both the past and present. These characters have conflicting needs and emotions. They are never perfect, but always hopeful.

We at Maryland Humanities understand the impact that such a novel can have, and hope this book will continue to affect readers with its depiction of the modern Urban Indian experience, and encourage recognition of the many Native communities living today in Maryland.

We encourage you to pick up your copy of *There There* and join the conversation at one of our many public events across the state. As a program of the Maryland Center for the Book at Maryland Humanities, One Maryland One Book is made possible each year through the generosity of our sponsors and community partners. We greatly thank them for their support. Find out more how to get involved at [www.onemarylandonebook.org](http://www.onemarylandonebook.org).

Please join us!

Alicia Jones McLeod, Board Chair  
Lindsey Baker, Executive Director



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

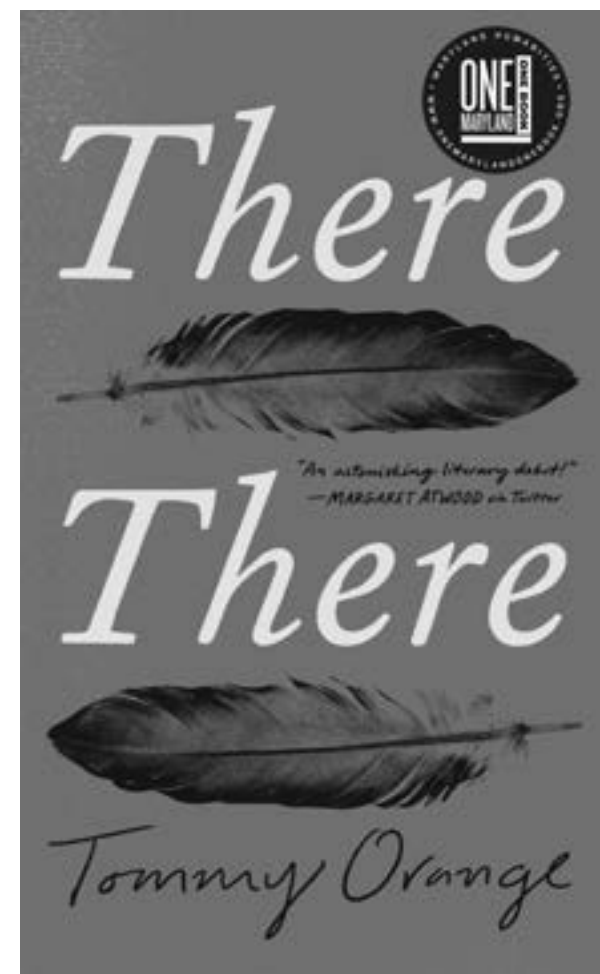
Tommy Orange is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling novel *There There*, a multi-generational, relentlessly paced story about a side of America few of us have ever seen: the lives of urban Native Americans. *There There* was one of *The New York Times Book Review's* 10 Best Books of the Year, and won the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize and the Pen/Hemingway Award. *There There* was also longlisted for the National Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Orange graduated from the MFA program at the Institute of American Indian Arts, and was a 2014 MacDowell Fellow and a 2016 Writing by Writers Fellow. He is an enrolled member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma. He was born and raised in Oakland, California.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

*Reprinted from the book's back cover*

Tommy Orange's wonderful and shattering novel follows twelve characters from Native communities: all traveling to the Big Oakland Powwow, all connected to one another in ways they may not yet realize. Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle's death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time.

Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American—grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.



**RH.11-12.1** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

**RH.11-12.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

**RH.11-12.3** Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

**RH.11-12.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text.

**RH.11-12.7** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

**RL.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**RL.2** Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

**RL.3** Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

**RL.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

**RL.6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

**SL.11-12.1** Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**SL.11-12.1c** Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

**SL.11-12.3** Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

**SL.11-12.4** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

**W.11-12.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

**W.11-12.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**W.11-12.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**W.11-12.6** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

**W.11-12.9** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

identity and culture; home and belonging; loss and grief; coming-of-age; memory; love; family and community; neglect and abandonment; addiction and recovery; generational trauma; racism and injustice; communal violence and institutional violence; storytelling; self-acceptance

**Content Warning: suicide; alcoholism and substance abuse; physical abuse; sexual assault; gun violence; neglect; depression; racist hate and violence**

BEFORE READING QUESTIONS:

These questions can be used in an anticipation guide activity where students respond independently first and then share their responses with partners or as a fully independent activity, where students complete written reflections.

- What do you know about Native American culture? Pull from any background knowledge you have - it can be what you've learned in school, what you've learned through television and/or media, what you've learned from family and friends, etc. Be as specific as possible!
- Where have you seen the image of an Indian head? Consider sports teams, pop culture, product advertisements, etc. Be as specific as possible in your response, using real-world examples.
- What lessons have you learned from your relationship with your parents/guardians? This could come from their presence or absence, and these lessons may be positive, negative, or somewhere in between. Be as specific as possible in your response.
- How do you define home? Is it a person, a place, a time period, a memory, a culture, or something else entirely? Be as specific as possible in your response!

## BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES

### Activity #1: Analyzing the Title

Create a discussion-based activity that uses the questions and follows the steps below:

- **Step #1:** Write for 2 minutes on the following question → Where are you from? Try to be as specific as you can!
- **Step #2:** Share out with a partner or group. After everyone has shared, discuss: What are the similarities and differences in how you each defined where you are from? Is there any overlap - where and why?
- **Step #3:** Write for two minutes on the following question → What assumptions do people make about where you are from? Try to be as specific as you can!
- **Step #4:** Share out with a partner or group. After everyone has shared, discuss: Why do people make these assumptions about where you are from, and what do they usually base it on? Are their assumptions similar or different from your definition of where you are from?
- **Step #5:** Watch this brief video clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc0oTc2-gHU> with an interview from the author Tommy Orange where he speaks about the meaning behind the book title *There There*. According to the interview, why did he choose this as a title and how does it relate to his goal for the book overall?
  - Interested in hearing more from the author? The full interview is available at the link here! <https://www.overheardwith EvansSmith.org/episode/tommy-orange/>
- **Step #6:** Share out your response from #4 with a partner or a small group. Then together, discuss the title of this text, *There There* - based on this activity, what themes/ideas do you predict this story will be about? Finally, have each small group share their insights with the class as a whole.

### Activity #2: Native Land

- **Step #1:** Begin the activity by having students discuss the following question with a partner/small group: *What is the value of learning history?*
- **Step #2:** How students visit Native Land Digital (<https://native-land.ca>) and type in their address to identify what Indigenous lands they currently live on.
- **Step #3:** Have students visit that tribe's website (if there is more than one tribe, have them choose one to focus on) and read through the History section of their webpage.
  - If the tribe's official website is not available, have students use a reliable source like Britannica to do additional research.
- **Step #4:** Have students create a single Google slide or poster, summarizing five facts/main points about the tribe's history.
- **Step #5:** Have students share out their information with each other and discuss the following questions:
  - Did you know anything about the Native American peoples who lived on this land before you?
  - What is your own history with this land? Meaning: when did you move here, how long have you lived here (consider how many generations it goes back with your family if you know!), how long do you think you will stay here, etc.
  - Is the history of the land something you think students should learn about in schools? Why or why not.
  - How can people benefit from learning more about the history of where they live / where they are from?

### Activity #3: Native American Stereotypes

- **Step #1:** Together as a class, define “stereotype.” Come up with a class definition and an example using an age-based stereotype about teenagers. A good sentence stem is: *All teenagers are \_\_\_\_\_.*
- **Step #2:** With a partner or in small groups, as students to respond to the question: What Native American stereotypes are they familiar with? You can have them use the same sentence stem from Step #1 or write their own.
- **Step #3:** Create a jigsaw discussion-based activity where students work in small groups to read through the following resources.
  - 5 Myths About American Indians [https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-american-indians/2017/11/21/41081cb6-ce4f-11e7-a1a3-0d1e45a6de3d\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/five-myths/five-myths-about-american-indians/2017/11/21/41081cb6-ce4f-11e7-a1a3-0d1e45a6de3d_story.html)
  - People Think Native Americans Don’t Exist / Aren’t Discriminated Against <https://www.greatfalltribune.com/story/news/2018/08/07/survey-people-think-natives-dont-exist-arent-discriminated-against/923250002/>
  - Common Native American Stereotypes Debunked <https://everydayfeminism.com/2013/06/common-native-american-stereotypes-debunked/>
  - 5 Common Indigenous Stereotypes in Film and Television <https://www.thoughtco.com/native-american-stereotypes-in-film-television-2834655>
  - Why The Myth of the “Savage Indian” Persists <https://www.sapiens.org/culture/native-american-stereotypes/>

Each small group gets one resource and answers the following 3-2-1 prompt activity:

- 3 Key Points From Your Article
  - 2 Insights About HOW Stereotypes Remain Prevalent In Our Culture Today
  - 1 Important Quote And Why You Chose It
- **Step #4:** After answering their Step #3 questions, the groups “jigsaw” or switch so that the new groups have ONE person from each resource - then each student shares their findings so that everyone has a chance to hear about all the resources!
  - **Step #5:** Close with a reflection question: How can stereotypes get in the way of understanding someone else’s experiences? How can people take steps to unlearn stereotypes they may already have?

### READING QUESTIONS

#### Prologue (pg. 3 - 11)

- Where have you seen the image of an Indian head? Consider pop culture, sports teams, product advertisements, etc.
- Summarize the story of chief Metacomet. How is he treated by English colonists and how does it relate to the Indian head?
- The narrator states that “Thanksgivings...happened everywhere, whenever there were what we have to call ‘successful massacres’” (5). Can you explain what they mean by successful massacres using multiple examples from indigenous history in the prologue? How is this similar or different from your personal history with Thanksgiving?
- Summarize the Cheyenne folklore story about the rolling head. What happens and what is the message about greed, betrayal, and escape?
- Explain the quote: “You can’t leave a war once you’ve been, you can only keep it at bay” (9). How does this relate to the experiences of the Native Americans?
- According to Orange, what was the US government’s intention when they forced Indians off their lands and into cities? How does this contrast with the result?
- Explain the quote: “The land is everywhere or nowhere” (11). What does the narrator mean by this? According to them, how is the land still present in cities?

#### Remain

##### Tony (pg. 15)

- What is “the drome”? How does it impact: the way people treat Tony, Tony’s values, Tony’s beliefs about himself?
- Characterize Tony’s relationship with Maxine. Support your description with evidence from the text!
- When Octavio presents his plan to rob the powwow, Tony makes a point to say it’s not about the money. So what is it about to him?

##### Dene (pg. 27)

- What inspires Dene’s graffiti name “Lens”?
- How is graffiti-tagging a strategy for connecting with others?
- What is the documentary Uncle Lucas wanted to make?
- While waiting to present to the panel, Dene chats with another competitor Rob. Characterize this interaction - why doesn’t Dene like Rob?
- According to Dene, what is the real meaning behind the Gertrude Stein quote “There is no there there” - how does it relate to Native people’s experiences in America?
- When Dene presents to the panel, what does he say about why he believes this documentary project is important?
- How does the panel react to his proposal? More specifically, which member is against it and why? What do these responses reveal about the types of projects that are usually seen as “prize worthy”?

### Opal (pg. 45)

- How has Opal's mom's relationships impacted her childhood?
- Discuss the symbolic meaning of Two Shoes, Opal's teddy bear. What does he represent?
- Why are Indians occupying Alcatraz? How does this differ from the reason Opal's mom is taking her children there?
- This is the first time in the narrative where characters interact with alcohol and addiction. How does alcohol impact Opal's experiences on the island?
- What happens to Opal's family at the end of this chapter? Explain using evidence about her mother and her sister Jacquie. What is Opal's outlook in the face of these challenges? Your answer should be based on her behavior, choices, and dialogue.

### Edwin (pg. 62)

- Characterize Edwin. What aspects of his identity define him? Consider his education history, his interests, his culture/background, and his family.
- For Edwin, what does the Internet represent? Use evidence from the text.
- Edwin connects with his father for the first time on Facebook. Describe their conversation. What does Edwin want to know from his dad?
- This vignette closes with a lengthy conversation between Edwin and his mom. What does this conversation reveal about what Edwin is motivated by and what he is struggling with?

## Reclaim

### Bill (pg. 81)

- "We want it now and we want it new" (82). Explain this quote from Bill - what critique is he making about our society? In your opinion, is this true for us today?
- Does Bill's time in jail have a positive or negative effect on him? How? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
- Bill works at a baseball stadium. Explain what baseball represents in American culture and then compare this to what baseball represents to Bill.

### Calvin (pg. 88)

- Explain the conflict between Calvin and his brother Charles.
- Why is Calvin getting involved in the powwow robbery?
- How does this choice to participate in the robbery compare/contrast with his aspirations for himself?

### Jacquie (pg. 98)

- Characterize Jacquie. What aspects of her identity define her? Consider the following: her role as a mother, grandmother, recovering addict, and survivor of assault.
- Jacquie provides three different descriptions of home (page 99). What are they and what do they reveal about Jacquie's childhood?
- Explain the quote: "The spider's web is a home and a trap" (101).
- For Jacquie, how are drinking and home related?
- At the conference, the keynote speaker compares suicide to jumping from a burning building. He says that "we've tried to find ways to get them to stop jumping. Convince them that burning alive is better" (104). What does he mean by this? What problem does he identify about how they're addressing the Native suicide crisis?
- What does water symbolize in this chapter? Use evidence related to Jacquie's experiences at hotel pools.

### Orvil (pg. 118)

- What is Orvil's relationship to his Indian identity? Why is it complicated for him?
- What emotions come up for Orvil when he's dancing in his regalia and listening to Indian music?
- What does Orvil find in his leg? What do you think this could represent? Consider what spiders often represent in stories, folklore, etc.
- Lony asks what a powwow is. How does Orvil respond? What does he say about why powwows are valuable?

### Interlude (pg.134)

- According to author Tommy Orange, why did Indians make powwows? And why do they keep powwowing?
- Orange tells the reader, "don't make the mistake of calling us resilient" (137). What does the word resilient mean and why does Orange claim that is not the right description from Native people's experiences?
- Explain the yacht metaphor on page 138. How does it relate to the histories of Indigenous people and white people in America?
- According to Orange, how are the expectations of a shooter different from the reality?

### Tony (pg. 142)

- What is the tone of this chapter? Why do you think the author includes it? What is the value of the reader knowing the plan for these bullets?

### Calvin (pg. 144)

- How does Calvin get involved with the powwow committee? Predict how he will use his position on this committee to influence the powwow robbery.
- How does Calvin define being Native? How does this compare to Dene's definition?

### *Jacquie (pg. 151)*

- Compare Jacquie’s temperament to Harvey’s during the car ride. Both of these people are estranged parents. How do they deal with anxiety differently?

## Return

### *Opal (pg. 159)*

- Describe Opal’s parenting style. What is her reasoning behind this approach to parenting?
- Compare and contrast the situation with the spider legs in the leg - Opal’s situation versus Orvil’s situation. Based on this, what do you think these spider legs represent?
- What happened with Ronald and why do Opal and Jacquie leave?
- Characterize Opal’s relationship with Lucas, her friend who gave her the regalia.

### *Octavio (pg. 171)*

- Explain the quote: “A real curse is like a bullet” (171). What is the meaning of this simile?
- What happened to Octavio’s dad and who was responsible?
- What happened with Manny’s dad and how does it impact Octavio?
- After Sixto kills Octavio’s mother and brother, how does Octavio respond? How is his response similar or different from his grandmother Fina’s?
- Summarize the badger story that Fina tells Octavio. How does it relate Native identity and alcoholism?
- At the end of the chapter, Fina says, “It’s how we come back from it that matters” (186). What does she mean by this and do you agree?
- Why do you think the author includes this chapter to give the reader deeper insight into Octavio’s background/history? What do we learn about him as a person that we do not get in previous chapters earlier in the story?

### *Daniel (pg. 187)*

- What is ironic about the guy’s reaction to the printed gun?
- According to Daniel, who is responsible for Manny’s death?
- How is Daniel different in real life than how he portrays himself online?
- Based on Daniel’s email, what does he want his brother Manny to know?
- Why does Daniel print the first gun? What concerns him about seeing the printed guns?
- Why does Daniel forgive Octavio? Do you think this was the right choice?
- The chapter ends with both Daniel and his mom saying “I’m sorry.” Why do they say this - what are they sorry for? Consider how each of them has responded to Manny’s death and how they have or haven’t been supporting each other.

### *Blue (pg. 197)*

- How is Blue’s connection to her Indian identity similar/different to other Indians throughout the story.
- How does Blue meet Paul and why does she decide to leave him?
- What is the author’s message about the role women can play in supporting other women? Support your answer with experience from Blue’s experience successfully escaping Paul.

### *Thomas (pg. 208)*

- Describe Thomas’s experience with the Indian drumming group. Why is it so meaningful for him?
- What qualities does Thomas share about his father that make him “one thousand percent Indian” (215)? How do these qualities compare to how other characters throughout the story define being Indian.
- For Thomas, what is “The State”? What methods has he used to achieve “The State”?
- After being fired, Thomas reflects on memories from his family’s history. How does his history relate to his desire to find community?
- At the end of the chapter, Thomas chooses to go to the drum practice for the powwow. What insecurity does he overcome to attend?

### *Powwow (pg. 229)*

- On page 229, what advice does Orvil get from an older Indian man about how to approach his powwow dance?
- On the drive to the powwow, Edwin discusses a story he’s writing (244). Summarize his story and explain how it connects to Indian experiences in the United States.
- Compare Edwin and Blue’s reactions when they meet Harvey and Jacquie.
- Describe the shooting at the powwow.
  - What initiates it?
  - What is the fate of each of these characters: Jacquie, Edwin, Orvil, Bill, Octavio, Thomas, Calvin, Tony?
  - Find an example of imagery from this section. What image stands out to you as emotional or powerful? Explain why this image is important - what does it help the reader understand?
- The book ends with Tony reflecting on a memory from his childhood. What is the memory and why do you think it comes to him when he is dying?
- The story closes with the lines: “Tony isn’t going anywhere. And somewhere in there, inside him...the birds are singing” (290). What do you think birds symbolize? Explain what they represent and how this symbolism connects to characters’ experiences throughout the story overall.



**POTENTIAL CHAPTERS**

**POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES TO DIG DEEPER WHILE OR AFTER READING**

Opal (pg. 45)

**Alcatraz**

Use this chapter and outside resources for students to take a closer look at why Indians occupied Alcatraz. Have students compare the nonfiction texts and Opal’s experience, and discuss the value and limitations of both texts.

**Resources:**

- When Native American Activists Occupied Alcatraz Island - [History.com](https://www.history.com/news/native-american-activists-occupy-alcatraz-island-45-years-ago) <https://www.history.com/news/native-american-activists-occupy-alcatraz-island-45-years-ago>
- Why Alcatraz Matters to Native Americans - The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/20/opinion/alcatraz-native-americans.html>
- How a Native American Resistance Held Alcatraz for 18 Months - The New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/20/us/native-american-occupation-alcatraz.html>
- We Hold the Rock - National Parks Services <https://www.nps.gov/alca/learn/historyculture/we-hold-the-rock.htm>

Dene (pg. 27)

**Keeping Culture Alive**

Edwin (pg. 62)

Jacque (pg. 98)

Orvil (pg. 118)

Opal (pg. 159)

Ocatvio (pg. 171)

Thomas (pg. 208)

- Use these chapters to have students discuss culture and beliefs, and how they are passed down within a community. Questions to consider include:
- In this story, what culture—including traditions, folklore, practices, beliefs, and/or behaviors do elders pass down to the generation below them? Consider elements of culture that are both positive and negative.
- How do elders (parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, older siblings, or members of the community) passed down culture and traditions to characters in the story? Is it through conversation, through teaching, through modeling behaviors, etc.
- When elders have failed to pass down culture and traditions, what reasoning do they give? How does this choice not to formally pass it down impact the younger generation?
- When people don’t have access to elders, how does this impact the younger generation’s understanding of culture and their own identity?
- What elements of culture have been down from your elders to you? How did you learn these elements of your culture? Try to be as specific as possible!

Students could select any major character that interests them

**Belonging**

Have students write an “I Am From” poem for the perspective of a specific character from the story and/or from their own perspective

- Use this link for an example poem template: [https://www.wsuu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/I\\_Am\\_From\\_Poem\(2\).pdf](https://www.wsuu.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/I_Am_From_Poem(2).pdf)

You could also use this as an opportunity to have students read and/or listen to poems from other Indian/Native writers or poets from other backgrounds, and compare and contrast their experiences with the characters’ in the book.

**Possible Resources:**

- Native American Heritage Month - [Poets.org](https://poets.org/native-american-heritage-month) <https://poets.org/native-american-heritage-month>
- Lesson Plans for Native American Heritage Month - [Poets.org](https://poets.org/collection/lesson-plans-native-american-heritage-month) <https://poets.org/collection/lesson-plans-native-american-heritage-month>
- Living Nations, Living Worlds - Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/cascade/index.html?appid=be31c5cfc7614d6680e6fa47be888dc3&bookmark=Map>
- Native Nations Poetry Is A 'Doorway,' - interview with Joy Harjo on NPR <https://www.npr.org/2020/09/12/911306413/anthology-of-native-nations-poetry-is-a-doorway-says-editor-joy-harjo>
- Living Poets Library [https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSnUY2\\_seW5JHR0zyhWn7Uy8R7Czgd3-TGwcFR9VOCQxsr\\_\\_RNwsQAZ3b1gEXGXOZfrr378LgaoWXMg/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000&slide=id.g35f391192\\_00](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/e/2PACX-1vSnUY2_seW5JHR0zyhWn7Uy8R7Czgd3-TGwcFR9VOCQxsr__RNwsQAZ3b1gEXGXOZfrr378LgaoWXMg/pub?start=false&loop=false&delayms=3000&slide=id.g35f391192_00)
- Button Poetry <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5DH3eN81b0RGJ7Xj3fsjVg>
- Poetry Foundation <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

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| <p>Interlude<br/>(pg.134 - 141)</p>                                                      | <p><b>Powwows (and our own traditions)</b></p> <p>Have students learn more about powwows, and then have them create posters (hardcopy or digital) sharing about a significant tradition or practice from their own culture.</p> <p><b>Possible Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebration of Powwow   The Living History of Native American Gatherings <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2CmYbpjz8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N2CmYbpjz8</a></li> <li>• American Indian Powwow - Smithsonian <a href="https://folklife.si.edu/online-exhibitions/american-indian-powwows/history/smithsonian">https://folklife.si.edu/online-exhibitions/american-indian-powwows/history/smithsonian</a></li> <li>• The Powwow - Open Horizons <a href="https://www.openhorizons.org/the-powwow-dancing-singing-drumming-and-socializing.html">https://www.openhorizons.org/the-powwow-dancing-singing-drumming-and-socializing.html</a></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How States Are Addressing Violence Against Indigenous Women - U.S. News <a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2021-11-01/how-states-are-addressing-the-missing-indigenous-women-crisis">https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2021-11-01/how-states-are-addressing-the-missing-indigenous-women-crisis</a></li> <li>• Missing And Murdered Indigenous Women - Native Hope <a href="https://www.nativehope.org/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-mmiw">https://www.nativehope.org/missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-mmiw</a></li> <li>• Murdered &amp; Missing Indigenous Women - Native Women’s Wilderness <a href="https://www.nativewomenswilderness.org/mmiw">https://www.nativewomenswilderness.org/mmiw</a></li> </ul> |
| <p>Dene (pg. 27)</p> <p>Orvil (pg. 118)</p> <p>Thomas (pg. 208)</p>                      | <p><b>Music</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple characters throughout the story engage with music as a means of escape, self expression, and connecting with community. Use chapters to have a discussion about the significance of listening to and performing to music.</li> <li>• Then have students create their own playlist. This can either be a playlist for themselves or a soundtrack for a character, selecting and explaining songs that are important to them or songs that represent the character’s experience.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Any chapters students believe are relevant.</p>                                        | <p><b>Symbolism</b></p> <p>Have students analyze the following symbols (or select their own!), discussing where they come up in the story and analyzing what larger concepts/ideas that can represent beyond their literal meaning.</p> <p><b>Suggested Symbols:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birds → Octavio chapter and Tony’s ending lines</li> <li>• Spider → Jacquie, Orvil, and Opal’s chapters</li> <li>• Guns → Tony, Octavio, Daniel, Calvin’s chapters</li> <li>• Alcohol → Any chapters students believe are relevant</li> <li>• Powwows → Any chapters students believe are relevant</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>Opal (pg. 45)</p> <p>Jacquie (pg. 98)</p> <p>Opal (pg. 159)</p> <p>Blue (pg. 197)</p> | <p><b>Native Womanhood</b></p> <p>After she picks Blue up on the side of the highway, Geraldine says, “This is where they get us.” Have students put this chapter and others that are women-focused in conversation with outside sources to discuss the struggles and challenges that Native women face, and how they are working to address them.</p> <p><b>Possible Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Women’s Rights and Activism - UN Women <a href="https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/indigenous-womens-rights-and-activism">https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/indigenous-womens-rights-and-activism</a></li> <li>• Indigenous women, the heartbeat that keeps ancestral communities alive - European Union <a href="https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/indigenous-women-heartbeat-keeps-ancestral-communities-alive_en">https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/indigenous-women-heartbeat-keeps-ancestral-communities-alive_en</a></li> <li>• Ending Violence Against Native Women - Indian Law Resource Center <a href="https://indianlaw.org/issue/ending-violence-against-native-women">https://indianlaw.org/issue/ending-violence-against-native-women</a></li> </ul> | <p>Dene (pg. 27)</p> <p>Orvil (pg. 118)</p> <p>Calvin (pg. 144)</p> <p>Dene (pg. 239)</p> | <p><b>Telling Your Story</b></p> <p>Have students review the chapters that involve Dene’s interview project, discussing the purpose of the project, the stories that he collects and his insights about why it is meaningful. Students can discuss why it is important to engage with multiple perspectives when it comes to learning about a particular identity group or culture.</p> <p>Then have students engage with other stories that people have shared using StoryCorps: <a href="https://storycorps.org/">https://storycorps.org/</a> and finally have students record their own stories, either in writing or verbally using a tool like Flip: <a href="https://info.flip.com/">https://info.flip.com/</a></p>                                                                                   |
|                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Any chapters in the story that involve detailed background information about main characters' identities and experiences.

## Intersectionality

*Intersectionality* is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a prominent Black woman scholar and American civil rights advocate, currently a professor at UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School. Create a discussion-based activity that uses the questions and follows the steps below:

- **Step #1:** Look at an identity wheel (like this one: <https://images.app.goo.gl/CTQnjDQYDzXbgrbQ9>) and list as many parts of your identity as you can.
- **Step #2:** Based on your list, choose 3 parts of your identity that you believe impact your day to day lives THE MOST. Write one sentence about WHY you chose each part, incorporating examples/evidence from your life if possible.
- **Step #3:** Based on your list, choose 3 parts of your identity that you believe MOST SIGNIFICANTLY impacts how OTHER PEOPLE view you and/or treat you. Write one sentence about WHY you chose each part, incorporating examples/evidence from your life if possible.
- **Step #4:** Based on your list, choose 1 part of your identity that you believe gives you power OR limits your power in society today. Write one sentence about WHY you chose this part, incorporating examples/evidence from your life if possible.
- **Step #5:** Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRci2V8PxW4>. According to this video, what is intersectionality? What parts of Emma DeGraffenreid's identity impacted how she was treated by the business that refused to hire her? What can intersectionality help us understand about social justice and about how people are viewed and/or treated in society?
- **Step #6:** Think back to previous stories we've read in this class and/or stories you are familiar with (these could be books, movies, comics, etc). Focus on a main character and answer the following questions with examples from the story: What parts of identity have the biggest impact on this character? How do multiple aspects of this character's identity impact the way they are viewed and/or treated by others in the story? Do any parts of their identity either give them power or limit their power?
- **Bonus Step #7:** Interested in investigating further? Read this article from Global Citizen.org: <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/what-is-intersectionality-explained/> and this article from Columbia School of Law: <https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later!>

**Teacher Note:** You can repeat this activity halfway through the novel or at the end of the novel - have students complete an intersectional analysis of a character in the novel, completing the same steps FOR the character.

## AFTER READING - ESSAY OR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

### Theme: Family analysis

Much of Orange's novel focuses on complex relationships within Native families. Write an essay where you examine a main character's relationship with their family. Suggested characters include: Orvil, Jacquie, Octavio, Opal, and Edwin. Start by considering the roles within their family that define them - are they a parent, a child, a sibling, etc. Then analyze what lessons the character learns through their relationships with their family members. Be sure to specify how these relationships have impacted the character's understanding of themselves - this may include their beliefs, their values, their desires, their hostilities, their obligations, etc.

### Characterization: Antihero analysis

In literature, an antihero is defined as a protagonist who lacks traditional heroic qualities. An antihero's flaws and complexities can help the audience interrogate their own humanity. Write an essay where you analyze a character from the novel and explain why they may be considered an antihero in the novel. Suggested characters include: Jacquie, Octavio, Edwin. Be sure to discuss what lessons about humanity their flaws and complexities can help the audience to explore and understand.

### Theme: Home analysis

Much of Orange's novel focuses on the complexity of home. Write an essay where you analyze one or more character's definitions of home. For this character(s), is home a place, a person, a memory, a culture, a period of time - or something else entirely? Your analysis should include a distinct definition of home from that character's perspective, supported by evidence in the text that demonstrates them living out this definition.

### Theme: Addiction analysis

Through Orange's novel, most of, if not all, the characters' lives are impacted by substance abuse and addiction. Write an essay analyzing addiction in the novel. This analysis should go deeper than the simple idea that "addiction is bad." What new truths or understandings does Orange reveal about this topic through these characters' experiences?

### Theme: Indian Identity and Belonging analysis

Throughout the novel, Orange explores identity and belonging, with most if not all of the characters struggling with what it means to be "authentically" Indian and whether or not they fit within that identity. Write an essay that compares how two or more characters define being Indian. Your analysis should include what each character bases their definition on - race, background/upbringing, behavior and choices, etc. Support this with evidence and then discuss what new understandings Orange reveals about identity and belonging through each characters' experiences.

Theme: Perspective analysis

Dene believes his project is important because “this unflinching stare into the void of addiction and depravity, this is the kind of thing only a camera can keep its eye wide open for” (239). If you are the person behind the camera lens, and the book is the camera, what insights has this story provided about addiction and depravity? What insights has it provided about other topics as well, such as: abuse, identity/culture, financial struggle, love, community, and survival? Support your response with evidence from multiple characters’ experiences throughout the text.

Theme: Characterization analysis

When commenting on the characterization of Native Americans, the narrator tells the reader, “don’t make the mistake of calling us resilient” (137). What does the word “resilient” mean and why does the narrator claim that is not the right description from Native people’s experiences? What word(s) do you think the author would use to define them instead? Support your response with evidence from multiple characters’ experiences throughout the text.

NOTES:

Horizontal lines for note-taking.

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