



THE OLD GLOBE

Presents



The Whipping Man

by Matthew Lopez

Directed by Giovanna Sardelli

WEST COAST PREMIERE

Saturday, May 8 - Sunday, June 13, 2010

The Old Globe

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This Study Guide was prepared by The Old Globe Education Department with research and activity designs by Teaching Artist, Radhika Rao and Education Intern, Maddie Shea Baldwin.

WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome San Diego students and teachers to The Old Globe and to the West Coast premiere of Matthew Lopez's *The Whipping Man*, directed by Giovanna Sardelli. *The Whipping Man* is a provocative look at a pivotal time in American history through a very unique lens. We expect that your encounter with this play will be enriching as well as highly educational.

Our Teaching Artists will visit your classrooms to assist in preparing students for their visit to the theatre. This Study Guide has been created to further the students' exploration of the play and its themes. The guide is meant to stimulate discussion, not to present a definitive voice or the "right answer." In the Study Guide, *The Whipping Man* is analyzed from three different perspectives: *Historical, Theatrical, and Life-Skills*. In the process of using the Study Guide, attending our pre-performance workshop, as well as watching the play, we hope that students will gain an enriched perspective of the historical period following the end of Civil War, from a perspective that they may not have considered before. Students will also consider certain aspects of theatre as an art form. In addition, especially since the play deals with myriad social issues, individual life choices, and complex interpersonal relationships, we have designed a life-skills section in this Study Guide that teachers can use to facilitate critical discussion pertaining to life-skills such as empathy, communication, critical thinking, and courage.

We hope that you will find the information and activities useful and that you will share your ideas and experiences with *The Whipping Man* with us.

ABOUT THE OLD GLOBE

The internationally-acclaimed, Tony® Award-winning Old Globe is one of the most renowned regional theatres in the country, and has stood as San Diego's flagship arts institution for 75 years.

The Old Globe produces a year-round season of 15 plays and musicals on its three stages including its highly-regarded Shakespeare festival. The Globe has become a gathering place for leading theatre artists from around the world, such as Tom Stoppard, Daniel Sullivan, and Chita Rivera, among many others. Numerous Broadway-bound premieres and revivals, such as *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Full Monty*, and *Damn Yankees* have been developed at The Old Globe and have gone on to enjoy highly successful runs in New York and at regional theatres across the country. Under the leadership of CEO/Executive Producer Louis G. Spisto the Globe is at the forefront of the nation's leading performing arts organizations, setting a standard for excellence in American Theatre.

ABOUT THE PLAY

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him,
"Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go, that they may serve me."
The Bible, Exodus 8:1

Set in Virginia following the final days of the Civil War, a Jewish Confederate soldier returns to his childhood home only to find it in ruins and occupied by his former slaves. Though a new chapter of history is unfolding, dangerous secrets of the past threaten to destroy their connected history, and their shared faith. *The Whipping Man* is a moving and provocative look at a pivotal time in American history.

The Whipping Man, by Matthew Lopez, revisits one of the most singularly important events in world history, the fall of the American Confederacy and the end of slavery in the United States¹. In the hours after the surrender of General Robert E. Lee at the Appomattox, the nation was at its knees, waiting with bated breath for the uncharted territory ahead. Given our reluctance to revisit the institution of slavery in this country, most contemporary Americans do not understand the intricacies of the four hundred year slave system in the US, its vastness and deep entrenchment in our culture and identity, from the birth of the nation to its restructure in the post-bellum period. To this day Americans struggle with the legacy of institutionalized racial slavery and the corrosive influences of racism that continue to plague us in the modern world. *The Whipping Man* gives audiences the opportunity to consider the complexities of the system in a most intimate way, through the story of one family on the brink of collapse in a new era for what is today the world's most influential superpower.

The Whipping Man brings to light several themes too large to fully explore here, and each reader will bring a different set of questions to the text, each member of the audience a different perspective and interpretation of the play. Amongst the many social themes explored are those of inequality, freedom, violence, racial discrimination, migration, religious identity, and shifts in power and authority. One might find that the play and the themes therein speak to biracial identity in contemporary America; racial tensions in American, one might use it to complement or complicate an exploration into Ethiopian Jewish identity, or even to differently situate the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

"The play wrestles with the idea of freedom and what it means to be free. It celebrates not only our duty, but our responsibility to ask questions."

Giovanna Sardelli, Director, *The Whipping Man*.

¹ Penumbra Theatre Company Study Guide, p. 11, available at http://penumbra theatre.org/downloads/studyguides/WhippingMan/Whipping-Man-Study-Guide_%28Printer-Friendly%29.pdf

ARTISTIC TEAM

Playwright..... Matthew Lopez
 Director Giovanna Sardelli
 Set Design Robert Mark Morgan
 Costume Design Denitsa D. Bliznakova
 Lighting Design Lap Chi Chu
 Sound Design..... Jill BC DuBoff
 Vocal and Dialect Coach..... Claudia Hill-Sparks
 Stage Manager Diana Moser
 Assistant Scenic Design Sean Fanning
 Assistant Costume Design..... Alina Bokovikova
 Production Assistant Marie Jahelka

CAST

(In order of appearance)

Caleb.....Mark J. Sullivan
 Simon Charlie Robinson
 John.....Avery Glymph



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT²

Matthew Lopez's play, *The Whipping Man* premiered at Luna Stage in Montclair, New Jersey and has received productions at Penumbra Theatre Company in St. Paul, Minnesota, Caldwell Theatre in Boca Raton, Florida and will open at Barrington Stage Company in the Berkshires later this month. Matthew's play *Tio Pepe* was presented at The Public Theatre in New York as part of Summer Play Festival 2008. Other works include *Zoey's Perfect Wedding* and *Reverberation*. Matthew's work has been heard and developed at Manhattan Theatre Club, The New Group, McCarter Theatre Center, Ars Nova and the Lark Play Development Center. He is a member of the Ars Nova Play Group and is a 2010/2011 Old Globe Playwright-in-Residence.

WORDS FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

"History is an unending sequence of great and calamitous events. To paraphrase Alan Bennett for a family audience: history is simply one thing after another.

But that is the history of kings, nations and armies and it ignores completely the people who are caught up in its unyielding progression. To look at it from a different perspective, history is the story of life interrupted, suspended momentarily, and then put back differently. History is the constant reshuffling of the deck of cards that is the human experience. What fascinate me are the moments that history skips over: when calamity subsides and life is free to return to normal.

Of course, after such events, "normal" is rarely the state to which life returns. The deck is never shuffled the same way twice. A new "normal" takes the place of the old. How, for example, do you pass through the gates of a newly liberated Auschwitz and begin to live again? How, when the machetes are finally put away, does a Rwandan return to her quotidian routines? And how, after centuries of bondage, do slaves become free people? What is that first morning like? How long does it take to register the immensity of that change? What, simply, do you do? For American slaves, in particular, there was no "normal" to return to. Their deck wasn't reshuffled. It was replaced entirely.

Those are the questions that prompted me to write *The Whipping Man*.

The Whipping Man could never tell that story in its entirety. No one piece of fiction ever could. My hope is that this play tells the story of the first tentative steps of the long, painful, hopeful journey that began in April 1865 and continues today.

And so, in one southern home in April 1865, two slaves and their former master, all self-identifying Jews, celebrate the observance of Pesach together. As they do, they each come to realize the immensity of the moment they find themselves in and of the tremendous scars, both real and psychological, they bear from their encounter with slavery. It is the story about when history ends and life begins again, much like the springtime in which the story is set".

² <http://www.matthewlopez.com/bio.html>

THE WHIPPING MAN- HISTORY & CONTEXT

THE CIVIL WAR, JEWISH CONFEDERATES, and BLACK SLAVERY³



This is a photograph of freed slaves in Richmond, Virginia. The photo was most likely taken shortly after the fall of Richmond, in April, 1865.

The American Civil War (1861–1865), was a civil war in the United States of America. Eleven Southern slave states declared their secession from the United States and formed the Confederate States of America, also known as “the Confederacy”. Led by Jefferson Davis, they fought against the United States (the Union), which was supported by all the free states and the five border slave states. In the presidential election of 1860, the Republican Party, led by Abraham Lincoln, had campaigned against the expansion of slavery beyond the states in which it already existed. The Republican victory in that election resulted in seven Southern states declaring their secession from the Union even before Lincoln took office on March 4, 1861. Both the outgoing administration of President James Buchanan and Lincoln’s incoming administration rejected the legality of secession, considering it rebellion.

Though relatively few, there were nonetheless people of Jewish faith that fought on the Confederate side. The Hebrew Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia has an assigned plot known as the Soldier’s Section. It contains the graves of 30 Jewish Confederate soldiers who died in or near Richmond. It is the only Jewish military cemetery outside of the State of Israel.

³ 8.10 History-Social Science Standards for California Public Schools: Students analyze the multiple causes key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War.

Support for secession was strongly correlated to the number of plantations in the region. States of the Deep South, which had the greatest concentration of plantations, were the first to secede. The upper South slave states of Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee had fewer plantations and rejected secession until the Fort Sumter crisis forced them to choose sides. Border States had fewer plantations still and never seceded. As of 1850 the percentage of Southern whites living in families that owned slaves was 43 percent in the lower South, 36 percent in the upper South and 22 percent in the Border States that fought mostly for the Union.

85 percent of slave-owners who owned 100 or more slaves lived in the lower South, as opposed to one percent in the Border States. Ninety-five percent of African-Americans lived in the South, comprising one third of the population there as opposed to one percent of the population of the North. Consequently, fears of eventual emancipation were much greater in the South than in the North.

“War is not proof of God’s absence. It’s proof of His absence from men’s hearts.”
Simon in *The Whipping Man*

JEWISH EXODUS and SEDER



President Barack Obama and his family hosted a Passover Seder at the White House in March 2010.

The Passover Seder is a Jewish ritual feast that marks the beginning of the Jewish holiday of Passover. It is held on the evening of the 14th day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar, which corresponds to late March or April in the Gregorian calendar. The Seder is a ritual performed by a community or by multiple generations of a family, involving a retelling of the story of the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in ancient Egypt. This story is in the Book of Exodus (*Shemot*) in the Hebrew Bible. The Seder itself is based on the Biblical verse commanding Jews to retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt: "And you shall tell it to your son on that day, saying, 'Because of this God did for us when He took me out of Egypt.'" (Exodus 13:8) Traditionally, families and friends gather in the evening to read the text of the

Haggadah, which contains the narrative of the Israelite exodus from Egypt, special blessings and rituals, commentaries from the Talmud, and special Passover songs. Seder customs include drinking four cups of wine, eating matzo and partaking of symbolic foods placed on the Passover Seder Plate. The Seder is performed in much the same way by Jews all over the world.

Instructions on how to Observe a Seder

The Passover Seder Plate (*he'ara*) is a special plate containing six symbolic foods used during the Passover Seder. Each of the six items arranged on the plate have special significance to the retelling of the story of the Exodus from Egypt. The seventh symbolic item used during the meal—a stack of three matzohs—is placed on its own plate on the Seder table.

The six items on the Seder Plate are:



- **Maror and Chazeret:** Two types of bitter herbs, symbolizing the bitterness and harshness of the slavery which the Jews endured in Ancient Egypt. For *maror*, many people use freshly grated horseradish or whole horseradish root. *Chazeret* is typically romaine lettuce, whose roots are bitter-tasting. Either the horseradish or romaine lettuce may be eaten in fulfillment of the mitzvah of eating bitter herbs during the Seder.
- **Charoset:** A sweet, brown, pebbly paste of fruits and nuts, representing the mortar used by the Jewish slaves to build the storehouses of Egypt.
- **Karpas:** A vegetable other than bitter herbs, usually parsley but sometimes something such as celery or cooked potato, which is dipped into salt water (Ashkenazi custom), vinegar (Sephardi custom), or charoset (older custom, still common amongst Yemenite Jews) at the beginning of the Seder.
- **Zeroa:** A roasted lamb bone, symbolizing the *korban Pesach* (Pesach sacrifice), which was a lamb offered in the Temple in Jerusalem and was then roasted and eaten as part of the meal on Seder night.
- **Beitzah:** A roasted egg, symbolizing the *korban chagigah* (festival sacrifice) that was offered in the Temple in Jerusalem and was then eaten as part of the meal on Seder night.

Steps to Observing a Seder:

Step 1: Light the festival candles, either at the start of the Seder or earlier, just before sunset (either is correct). Recite two blessings over the candles as you light them.

Step 2: Bless the wine that all will drink during the Seder, and then pour a cup for each guest and one for the prophet Elijah. After everyone has drunk the first cup, pour the second. (Each participant drinks four cups of wine at specified points in the service; Elijah's cup remains untouched throughout the Seder.)

Step 3: Wash your hands, with no blessing, in preparation for eating the Karpas, which is a vegetable - usually parsley - dipped in salt water. The green vegetable symbolizes rebirth of spring; the salt water represents the tears shed by Jews in slavery.

Step 4: Break the middle one of the three matzohs on the table. Return half to the pile. The other half becomes the afikomen, the part hidden away for children to find later and consume at the end of dinner. The afikomen can also be ransomed back to the adults by the children for a prize.

Step 5: Tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt and the first Pesach (Passover). Begin by having the youngest child (or youngest adult if there are no children present) ask the traditional Four Questions. At the end of the story ("Maggid" in Hebrew) recite a blessing over the second cup of wine and drink it.

Step 6: Wash your hands, saying a blessing, in preparation for eating the matzoh. Then recite two blessings over the matzoh: one, the ha-motzi, is a generic blessing for grain products used as a meal; the other is a blessing specific to matzoh. Eat a bit of matzoh after saying the blessings.

Step 7: Recite a blessing over the maror, a bitter vegetable (usually raw horseradish) that symbolizes the bitterness of slavery. Dip the maror into charoset and eat it. Then make and eat a sandwich of another piece of maror and charoset between small pieces of matzoh.

Step 8: Eat a festive meal. Anything goes here - except, of course, chametz, the leavened foods forbidden during Passover. At the end, reward the children who find the afikomen and then eat the afikomen.

Step 9: Pour the third cup of wine, recite birkat ha-mazon (grace after meals), then bless and drink the wine. Pour a fourth cup of wine for everyone. Then have someone (a child if possible) open the door for the prophet Elijah, who is supposed to arrive on Pesach to herald the Messiah.

Step 10: Recite a series of psalms and a blessing over the last cup of wine and drink it.

Step 11: Close with a statement that the Seder has been completed and a wish to celebrate next year's Pesach in Jerusalem (i.e., that the Messiah will come within the coming year).

HISTORY ACTIVITY⁴

*Research and role-play*⁵

AFRICAN AMERICAN THEATRE: Read the play, *Gem of the Ocean* by August Wilson. How does the African American experience articulated by Wilson in the first decade of 20th century compare with that described by Matthew Lopez during Civil War period?

JEWISH CONFEDERACY: Research a real life Jewish member of the Confederacy. Why did he join the Confederate Army? What happened to him during and after the Civil War?

PASSOVER SEDER:

1. Experiment with preparing a Passover Seder Plate. Two or three students can take responsibility for one aspect of the Seder Plate and the Seder ceremony.
2. Students may research one of the four questions asked during Seder. During the 'staged Seder' the teacher will ask the students questions typically asked during Seder and the students who have prepared answers to a particular question will answer them.

CRITICAL READING & ROLE PLAY⁷: Divide the class into 2 groups. Half the class takes on the role of Black Slaves and the other half takes on the role of Jewish Confederates.

Context: The Jewish confederacy has just returned from the Civil War where they have suffered defeat. Slavery has been abolished.

Activity: The Jewish Confederate group is split into two camps, one that believes that their slaves should be liberated. The other camp believes that their slaves should stay with them. Both these groups will have to make a case using their knowledge of Jewish, African American and American history. For instance, students may use the Jewish story of Exodus as mentioned in the Haggadah to argue for their cause.

EXTRA READING:

The Jewish Confederates by Robert N. Rosen.

⁴ These activities are designed to be conducted following the viewing of the Student Matinee.

⁵ VAPA 1.2. Visual and Performing Arts Standards for California Public Schools, Theatre Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre: Research, analyze, or serve as a dramaturg for a play.

⁶ 8.10 History-Social Science Standards for California Public Schools: Students analyze the multiple causes key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War.

⁷ 10.1 Students relate the moral and ethical principles in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, in Judaism, and in Christianity to the development of Western political thought.

THE WHIPPING MAN - IN THE THEATRE

ORIGINS OF THE PLAY

“In researching the end of the war and the very eventful month of April 1865, I came across a reference to the fact that Passover began that year on April 10, the day immediately following Lee’s surrender at Appomattox. This meant that as Jews across the nation were celebrating this sacred ritual commemorating their ancestors’ freedom from bondage in Egypt, a new kind of exodus was occurring all around them. The parallels were irresistible.

The Whipping Man began in my mind with the image of an old man performing a Seder. Recently freed from a lifetime of slavery, he speaks the words of the Haggadah with a newfound understanding of their meaning. The words are hopeful, a promise of justice to come. Something ancient and distant suddenly becomes immediate. The past and the present intermingle as he becomes a part of a history that began thousands of years before his birth and that arrives finally at the moment he takes his first psychological and emotional step towards emancipation. The promised justice has finally arrived.

My challenge, of course, was how to depict a slave who knows the ceremony well enough to perform it. Or that it even exists. Who would this person be? In attempting to find the answer to that question, I discovered two books that were invaluable to my research: Bertram W. Korn’s “American Jewry and the Civil War” and Robert N. Rosen’s “The Jewish Confederates.”

The idea of Jewish slave owning had never occurred to me. It seemed completely out of step with Jewish history. How could a people whose identity was forged in part by their experience as slaves own slaves themselves? How could a family sit every year at their Seder, speaking the words of the Haggadah and look at the faces of the slaves serving their meal and not make the connection between what they were saying and what they were practicing?

From this sprang the DeLeon household of Richmond, Virginia. Upstanding, decent and deeply religious, the DeLeons treat their slaves with dignity and respect. They, like many Richmonders, do not consider themselves “typical” slave owners. They don’t own a great plantation. They don’t own hundreds of slaves. What few they do own, they don’t even consider to be slaves. They are servants, treated no differently than the servants in the homes up north. They even allow and encourage their slaves to adopt Judaism, just as so many Christian slave owners allowed and encouraged their slaves to adopt Christianity.

The result, I hope, is an inexorable link between the African- American and Jewish imperatives of reminding successive generations about their people’s past. There has always been a conversation between Black and Jewish histories in the United States. It is a conversation based, I believe, on a similar history. In *The Whipping Man*, that similar history becomes a shared one.”

– Matthew Lopez, Playwright, *The Whipping Man*

THEATRE VOCABULARY⁸

ACTOR: An actor or actress is a person who acts in a dramatic production and who works in film, television, theatre, or radio in that capacity. The ancient Greek word for an "actor," means literally "one who interprets". In this sense, an actor is one who interprets a dramatic character. The actors in a show are often referred to as "cast members".

ALLUSION: Is a reference to, or representation of, a place, event, literary work, myth, or work of art, either directly or by implication. It is left to the theatre audience member to make the connection. For instance, there is an allusion to an amputation in *The Whipping Man* even though it is not shown directly.

CHARACTER: Aristotle defines the character in drama as the people represented in the play. He believed the characters qualities should be revealed in a few telling scenes. There are many types of characters: extraordinary, stock, representative, narrator, dominant trait, minor, and non human to name a few. Each type of character adds to the story and helps the audience understand the storyline.

DIALOGUE/ MONOLOGUE: Dialogue in fiction is a verbal exchange between two or more characters. If there is only one character, who is talking to himself in his mind or to an audience, it is known as monologue. An example of a dialogue from *The Whipping Man* is:

SIMON
You wounded?
 CALEB
Yeah.
 SIMON
How bad?
 CALEB
Bad.

METAPHOR: A figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote in order to suggest a similarity. For instance, in *The Whipping Man*, Simon says:

*Though the sacrifice be great and the hardships many, we
 shall not rest until the chains that enslave all men be broken.*

Here "chains" is used to refer to the bonds of slavery that African American slaves such as Simon and John were subjected to, restrictions and oppressions that prevented them from enjoying the same freedoms as White folk such as Caleb and the DeLeon family where they worked.

⁸ Visual and Performing Arts Standards for California Public Schools, Theatre VAPA 1.1. Development of Vocabulary of Theatre.

NARRATIVE: Is the plot of the drama or the series of events that occur in the play. It can refer to the arc of the story, i.e., the flow of the story from beginning to end. For example, in *The Whipping Man*, the emotional story arc moves from despair and desperation to a calmer more conversational mood, to the final moments of disappointment, surprise, anger and sadness.

PROPS: Short for '(Theatrical) Property', it refers to objects used in a play. Some props used in *The Whipping Man* include a gun, whiskey bottles, paintings, crockery, and silverware.

PROTAGANIST: A protagonist is the main character (the central or primary personal figure) of a literary, theatrical, cinematic, video game, or musical narrative, around whom the events of the narrative's plot revolve and with whom the audience is intended to share the most empathy. In *The Whipping Man*, it could be argued that there is no one protagonist; in fact, there are three central characters, Simon, Caleb, and John, that enjoy equal importance in the play.

SET: A set in theatre refers to the backdrop and the environment in which a play takes place. It is a symbolic representation of the setting of a play. Set designers work on designing or envisioning what the set will look like on stage and they collaborate with the director of production to create the set.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

- 1. Arrive on time** The time posted is the time the show actually starts... unlike at the movies, there are no commercials or previews! If you have arrived after the performance has begun you may be asked to wait in the lobby until it is appropriate to take your seats. Since parking can be a challenge and there is walk from bus drop-off areas, we suggest you plan on arriving in Balboa Park one hour prior to the scheduled start time. All school groups are expected to arrive at the Globe plaza by 10:00AM for the 10:30 curtain time.
- 2. Keep the theatre clean** We allow no food or drinks in the theatre. There is not sufficient time to have a full lunch during intermission but quick snacks on the plaza usually help to tide hungry theatre-goers over until after the show. Following the performance you may picnic on the plaza lawn or eat at the tables on the plaza.
- 3. Be considerate of other audience members** Talking, whispering, shuffling about in your seats or rattling candy wrappers during a live performance is disruptive to other audience members who are trying to enjoy the show. Your appropriate laughter and applause are appreciated; save your discussion for after the show.
- 4. Do not distract the actors** The actors can see and hear what goes on in the audience. While our actors appreciate your enthusiasm for their performance, please do not attempt to interact with, talk to or touch them while they are on stage or entering/exiting via the aisle. If you need to take notes for your class, please make sure you are not seated in the first three rows as it can be extremely distracting to the actors. Your comments to one another (both good and bad) can be heard by the actors. Please do not talk about their performances while the show is going on.
- 5. Turn off electronic devices** Pagers, cell phones and electronic watches are disruptive and may interfere with the theatre sound system. The lights from text messaging are distracting to the actors and others in the theatre. Turn electronic devices off completely during the show.
- 6. Remain seated during the performance** (except for emergencies) Be sure to use the restroom before the show or during the intermission. *The Whipping Man* is 120 minutes in length, which includes a 15 minute intermission.
- 7. No photographs or recording devices** For the safety of cast members, stage crew and the enjoyment of other patrons, no photography (flash or no flash) or recording devices are permitted during the performance. It is also illegal, since we are bound to the copyright rules of several labor and artists' unions.

THEATRE ACTIVITY⁹

Activity 1

THEATRE WARM-UP

Building concentration and memory

Everyone gets into a circle. Pick a category (e.g. make of cars, girls names, kinds of food, kinds of plants, etc.). First person states an example of the category, and points to someone else. Keep pointing. That someone else does the same, with a different item in the category, and so forth, until everyone has pointed at one person. Thus a series is built and the class has memorized a pattern (e.g., a series of car models) that goes from one person to another.

Then repeat the pattern. Make eye contact when pointing to the next person. Drop the pointing arms when everyone is comfortable. Then do the same with a second category, and make sure the pointing pattern is different (for example, for girls' names, one person may wave to the other person, for car models, one may point with one index finger to someone). Repeat till everyone is comfortable.

Then do the same exercise, without pointing, and running the 2 categories at the same time. Add a third, fourth category if you wish.

The idea is not only to listen for the item right before yours in the series (so you know when it's your turn), but also to make sure that when you point to someone else, that someone else actually hears you. If not, then repeat your item, to ensure the series does not get broken.

Activity 2¹⁰

IMPROVISATION

Building and Acting-out a Story

COLLABORATIVE STORYTELLING -The objective of this activity is to explore storytelling together and connect students to Matthew Lopez's playwriting process through improvisation that takes its inspiration from *The Whipping Man*. Before they start, the teacher can go over some basic aspects of a story: it has a beginning, middle and end; all stories have some kind of conflict, climax and resolution, stories are always set in a particular context, they have characters, and a clear plot, etc.

Students sit in a circle. The leader of the group explains that they are going to be building a story together, one sentence at a time. The leader starts the story based on modern

⁹ These activities are designed to be conducted following the viewing of the Student Matinee.

¹⁰ Visual and Performing Arts Standards for California Public Schools, Theatre VAPA 2.1, 2.2, 2.3: Development of Theatrical Skills, Creation/Invention in Theatre.

day context similar to *The Whipping Man*. For instance, the leader may say: “One day, José came home to find that his house had been destroyed and only one person remained...” or “After three years of being away in a foreign land, Jessica finally got home but she was shocked to see....” Then each person in the circle adds a sentence to the story. The leader can decide whether to start and end the story in one round or two rounds or more. After they finish the story, the leader can ask questions like: “What was the theme of the story? How could that story have been made better? How did you feel about the final story?” The group can create a few stories till they feel that they have a good one.

ACTING IT OUT - The leader does a quick recap of the story that the group chooses, and then announces that the group will create tableaux for the beginning, middle, and end. Students can be divided into two large groups. Each large group has to come up with three tableaux. One that shows a beginning, one that represents a middle, and one that represents an end of the story. Tableaus are frozen images that represent an event or scene, where each character is frozen on stage. Think of a still picture and recreate it physically.

ADDING DIALOGUE - If time permits, the tableaux can be developed so that dialogue is introduced and the tableaux can come alive with representative spoken words. The leader can enter a tableau and tap on the shoulder of any actor and that actor will have to say something that is representative of her character. Then that actor would freeze again. Then the leader can go and tap on another actor’s shoulder and that actor would “come alive”. In this way, students can explore basic elements of playwriting and dialogue creation.

INDIVIDUALLY CREATED STORY/PLAY - After the improvisation, students write their own plays or stories based on the group storytelling experience. Many students who may have previously been hesitant to write will be inspired, after an embodied engagement with storytelling, to write down their own interpretation of the story.

THE WHIPPING MAN - A LIFESKILLS PERSPECTIVE¹¹**CRITICAL REFLECTION ACTIVITY 1: FREEDOM¹²**

*“Though the sacrifice be great and the hardships many, we
shall not rest until the chains that enslave all men be
broken.”*

Simon in *The Whipping Man*

The Whipping Man deals with the topic of slavery and freedom. To explore this, the class may play an improv game to relate this abstract idea to their own lives. The group sits in a circle. The word “Freedom” is the subject of discussion and the leader asks the group to reflect for a few minutes on what freedom means to them. A word bubble is created where different definitions or connections to “Freedom” are made (e.g., liberty, choice, independence, trust). Then on a post-it or piece of paper, each person writes one “freedom” they have that is extremely important to them (e.g., freedom to speak, freedom to walk, freedom to choose my friends, freedom to come home when I want to, freedom to drive, etc). Then the post-its/pieces of paper are put into a basket/container and one person comes and picks up one “freedom” from the basket and reads it. Based on what they read, they take on a role, and point to someone in the circle and say, “I am _____ and I am taking away your freedom to ____! For instance, if the person picks up a post-it that says, “Freedom to Drive”, they could pretend to be a police officer that has suspended the person’s license or a parent that has taken away the keys to their car. If a person gets “Freedom to Walk”, they could be a person that crashed his car into you and left you paralyzed, or they could be a criminal court judge who has placed the other person in solitary confinement for a year. The person whose freedom was taken away then has to respond to the person who took their freedom away by saying something that would help them get their freedom back.

The leader then opens questions to the group. 1. How would you feel if that freedom were taken away? 2. How would you respond to the person who took your freedom away? Why? 3. Is there anything else you would do to get that freedom back? 4. Why are some freedoms taken away? Participants should be encouraged to speak from experience and share clear points of view. The process could be repeated multiple times to explore different scenarios and circumstances under which different kinds of freedoms might be taken away. Remember to consider the concept that some freedoms are taken away for just cause while others are taken away unfairly.

¹¹ These activities are designed to be conducted following the viewing of the Student Matinee.

¹² Visual and Performing Arts Standards for California Public Schools, Theatre VAPA 5.1. Connecting and Applying what is learned in Theatre to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers.

CRITICAL REFLECTION ACTIVITY 2: TRUTH & LIES¹³

*“Welcome home, Caleb. The world has changed
since you left.”*

John to Caleb in *The Whipping Man*

In *The Whipping Man*, both John and Caleb lie and withhold some truths from the other characters. Explore this idea with your group and discuss the circumstances under which people might feel compelled to lie.

Warm up Activity: Two Truths and a Lie. Students sit in a circle so that each person can see the other members in the group. Everyone is invited to think of two truths and one lie about themselves. One by one, each person shares these three “facts” with the group and the group has to guess which one of the three shared facts is a lie. Sometimes the group will get it right and sometimes it won’t.

Questions for the group after the exercise:

What made you think that a particular fact shared by a person was a lie? Did you notice something about the fact itself that made you suspicious? Did you notice something about the way the person shared it that made you suspect they were lying?

- Under what circumstances do we lie in our daily lives?
- In *The Whipping Man*, why do you think Caleb lied? Why do you think John lied?
- If you were in their position would you lie too? Why/Why not?

¹³ Visual and Performing Arts Standards for California Public Schools, Theatre VAPA 5.1. Connecting and Applying what is learned in Theatre to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS/PHRASES USED IN THE WHIPPING MAN

Abraham Lincoln: (February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865) Lincoln served as the 16th President of the United States from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865. He successfully led his country through its greatest internal crisis, the American Civil War, preserving the Union and ending slavery.

Appomattox: The Battle of Appomattox Court House, fought on the morning of April 9, 1865, was the final engagement of Confederate States Army General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia before it surrendered to the Union Army under Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, and one of the last battles of the American Civil War.

Siege of Petersburg: The Richmond-Petersburg Campaign was a series of battles around Petersburg, Virginia, fought from June 9, 1864, to March 25, 1865, during the American Civil War. After nearly ten months of siege, the loss at Fort Stedman was a devastating blow for Lee's army, setting up the Confederate defeat at Five Forks on April 1, the Union breakthrough at Petersburg on April 2, the surrender of the City of Petersburg, at dawn on April 3, and Richmond that same evening.

Confederacy: The Confederate States of America (also called the Confederacy, the Confederate States, and the CSA) was the government set up from 1861 to 1865 by eleven southern slave states of the United States of America that had declared their secession from the U.S. These states were South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina. In the United States of America prior to the American Civil War, a slave state was a U.S. state in which slavery of African Americans was legal, whereas a free state was one in which slavery was either prohibited or eliminated over time. Slavery was one of the causes of the American Civil War and was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution in 1865.

Deserter: In the context of the Civil War, a deserter was a person who abandoned the war effort, either from the Union or the Confederate side. Many blame the deserters for the Confederacy defeat in the Civil War. Reasons for desertion included poor living conditions for soldiers, insufficient food and clothing, poor pay, homesickness, depression.

Egypt & Pharaohs: Pharaoh is a title used in many modern discussions of the ancient Egyptian rulers of all periods. In antiquity this title began to be used for the ruler who was the religious and political leader of united ancient Egypt, a country located in North East Africa.

Exiles of Zion: In addition to its literal geographical meaning (Jerusalem), the term Zion has often been used as a metaphor for the Biblical land of Israel, any other Promised Land, or any other distant but much wanted goal. The Jewish longing for Zion, starting with the deportation and enslavement of Jews during the Babylonian captivity, was adopted as a metaphor by Christian Black slaves in the

United States, and after the Civil War by blacks who were still oppressed. Thus, Zion symbolizes a longing by wandering peoples for a safe homeland.

Exodus: "The exiting from Egypt" is the story of the departure of the Israelites from ancient Egypt described in the Hebrew Bible. Exodus 12:37 refers to 600,000 adult Israelite men leaving Egypt with Moses, plus an unspecified but apparently large "mixed multitude" of non-Israelites. If taken literally the total number involved, the 600,000 "fighting men" plus wives, children, and the elderly.

Frederick Douglas: (1818 – February 20, 1895) One of the most prominent figures in African American and United States history. He was a historian, abolitionist, women's suffragist, editor, orator, author, statesman, minister and reformer. Escaping from slavery, he made strong contributions to the abolitionist movement, and achieved a prominent public career.

Gangrene: A complication of necrosis (i.e., cell death) characterized by the decay of body tissues, which become black (and/or green) and malodorous. It is caused by infection or ischemia, such as by the bacteria or by thrombosis (blocked blood vessel). It is usually the result of critically insufficient blood supply (e.g., peripheral vascular disease) and is often associated with diabetes and long-term smoking. The best treatment for gangrene is revascularization (i.e., restoration of blood flow) of the affected organ, which can reverse some of the effects of necrosis and allow healing. Other treatments include removal of infected tissue and surgical amputation.

“Good Shabbos”: Traditional Shabbat (Sabbath) salutation, said upon meeting or departing. It can be said as early as Thursday, meaning “Hope you have a Good Shabbos!” It is also expressed as Shabbat Shalom, meaning a “Peaceful Sabbath.” (see Shabbat below)

Haggadah: A Jewish religious text that sets out the order of the Passover Seder. Reading the Haggadah is a fulfillment of the scriptural commandment to each Jew to "tell your son" about the Jewish liberation from slavery in Egypt as described in the Book of Exodus in the Torah.

Hardtack: A simple type of cracker or biscuit, made from flour, water, and sometimes salt. Inexpensive and long-lasting, it was and is used for sustenance in the absence of perishable foods, commonly during long sea voyages and military campaigns.

Haroseth: Charoset, haroset, or charoses is a sweet, dark-colored, chunky paste made of fruits and nuts served primarily during the Passover Seder. Its color and texture are meant to recall the mortar with which the Israelites bonded bricks when they were enslaved in Ancient Egypt.

Hebrew: A Semitic language of the Afro-Asiatic language family. Culturally, it is considered the Jewish language. Hebrew in its modern form is spoken by most of the seven million people in Israel while Classical Hebrew has been used for prayer or study in Jewish communities around the world for over two thousand years.

John Wilkes Booth: (May 10, 1838– April 26, 1865) An American stage actor who assassinated President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre, in Washington, D.C., on April 14, 1865.

Leviticus: The third book of the Hebrew Bible, and the third of five books of the Torah/Pentateuch. Leviticus contains laws and priestly rituals, but in a wider sense is about the working out of God's covenant with Israel set out in Genesis and Exodus—what is seen in the Torah as the consequences of entering into a special relationship with God. These consequences are set out in terms of community relationships and behavior.

Matzoh: A cracker-like unleavened bread made of white plain flour and water. The dough is pricked in several places and not allowed to rise before or during baking, thereby producing a hard, flat bread.

Mitzvah: The term *mitzvah* has also come to express an act of human kindness. According to the teachings of Judaism, all moral laws are, or are derived from, divine commandments.

Nat Turner: Nathaniel "Nat" Turner (October 2, 1800 – November 11, 1831) was an American slave who led a slave rebellion in Virginia on August 21, 1831 that resulted in 56 deaths including the largest number of white fatalities to occur in one uprising in the antebellum southern United States. He gathered supporters in Southampton County, Virginia. For his actions, Turner, as well as 56 blacks accused of being part of the rebellion, were convicted, sentenced to death, and executed.

Nigger: A noun in the English language, most notable for its usage in a pejorative context to refer to black people, and also as an informal slang term, among other contexts. It is a common ethnic slur and its use is controversial and generally considered highly offensive. The word originated as a term used in a neutral context to refer to black people, as a variation of the Spanish/Portuguese noun *negro*, a descendant of the Latin adjective *niger*, meaning the color black.

Passover: An important Jewish holiday commemorating The Exodus from Egypt . On the night before leaving Egypt, the final plague inflicted by God on the Egyptians was the killing of the first-born. However, to save the Israelites, they were instructed to mark their doors with blood, so that the avenging angel would see it and know to "pass over" that house. On that night, the Israelites were instructed only to eat unleavened bread as they would be leaving in haste

Pardon: A piece of paper or letter approving a soldier's leave from the army.

Pesach: Another word for Passover.

Rebs: Johnny Reb or Johnny Rebel was the slang term for any Confederate soldier, or the Confederate Army as a whole, during the American Civil War. His counterpart in the Union was Billy Yank.

Richmond, Virginia: Currently the capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the United States. During the American Civil War, Richmond served as the capital of the Confederate States of America, and many important American Civil War landmarks remain in the city today, including the Virginia State Capitol and the White House of the Confederacy, among others.

Shabbat: The seventh day of the Jewish week and a day of rest in Judaism. *Shabbat* is observed from sundown Friday until the appearance of three stars in the sky on Saturday night. The exact time,

therefore, differs from week to week and from place to place, depending on the time of sunset at each location. *Shabbat* recalls the Biblical Creation account in the Genesis, describing God creating the Heavens and the Earth in six days, and resting on and sanctifying the seventh (Genesis 1:1-2:3).

Union States: During the American Civil War, the Union was a name used to refer to the federal government of the United States, which was supported by the twenty free states and five border slave states. It was opposed by eleven Southern slave states that had declared a secession to join together to form the Confederacy. Although the Union states included the Western states of California, Oregon, and (after 1864) Nevada, as well as states generally considered to be part of the Midwest, the Union has been also often loosely referred to as "the North," both then and now.

"We never stop asking, looking, hoping for answers."

Simon in *The Whipping Man*

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