

THE WHIPPING MAN

By Matthew Lopez | Directed by Brent Hazelton
February 5 – March 16, 2014 | Stiemke Studio

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Teacher guide written by Hope Parow and
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This Teacher's Guide is designed to be used in the classroom along with The Rep's Study Guide for *The Whipping Man*. These are some suggested activities for your classroom. The Study Guide is available online at <http://www.milwaukeerep.com/season/whipping-studyguide.html>

General Pre-Show Discussion Questions:

- Discuss your existing knowledge of the Civil War as a class. What did the different sides of the Civil War hope to achieve?
- How were Milwaukee and Wisconsin involved in the Civil War? What viewpoints do you think Wisconsinites had about the issues leading up to the Civil War? (For more information, visit <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/civilwar/>)

Theme: Freedom & Accountability

Pre-Show Discussion Question:

- What restrictions or rules do you follow in your life? If you no longer had those restrictions or rules, what would you do?
- Think back on your ancestry, religion, gender, race, etc. Have any of your past relatives endured particular hardships or been victims of minority-based discrimination? Have you? How does that affect your opinion of yourself as an individual and member of society?

Post-Show Discussion Questions:

- What do you think happens to Caleb and John? At the end of the play did you get the impression that they would stick together or go their separate ways?
- What makes Simon decide to leave so suddenly? What does that say about his new found freedom? What does that say about his commitment to his wife and daughter as opposed to the house and former owner?

Activity (post-show): Where Do I Go?

Break the class into three groups and assign each group a character. Have the group write two options for what happens to their character after the play. Encourage students to be creative in their formatting: first-person letters, scripts, poetry, etc. Possibly ask them to create one where the character stays in Richmond and one where the character leaves Richmond. Ask them to use specific examples from the play. Maybe John goes the New York City? Maybe Caleb tries to follow Simon so he can be re-connected with Sarah?



Josh Landay, James Craven, and Ro Boddie star
in The Rep's *The Whipping Man*

Theme: Ownership & Enslavement

Pre-Show Discussion Question:

- How do you define free-will? Is free-will different from freedom? Why or why not?
- What freedoms do you have in your daily life? How would it feel if you did not have them?
- What is an object in your life that you cherish? How do you feel about owning that object? What would you do if you lost it or it was taken away from you?

Post-Show Discussion Questions:

- Because the DeLeon family recognized slavery as a part of their own ancestral history, did that change the relationship between them and their former slaves? If so, how?
- Besides the obvious forms of slavery in the show, what other ways are characters enslaved by certain objects or ideas in their lives?

Activity: Create Your Own Ritual

Students bring in one object from home and create a ritual around the object. It can be creative or realistic, serious or comical, short or long, but should accurately represent the student's connection to the object and what the object represents. Encourage students to use writing and performance in some way as part of the rituals or in their explanations of the rituals.

Theme: Identity & Inner Conflict

Pre-Show Discussion Question:

- What are choices you make, both small and large, that define who you are, specifically in your relationship with your peers, teachers, family, etc?
- Have you ever done something you later regretted? Have you ever acted out of peer pressure or fear of punishment?

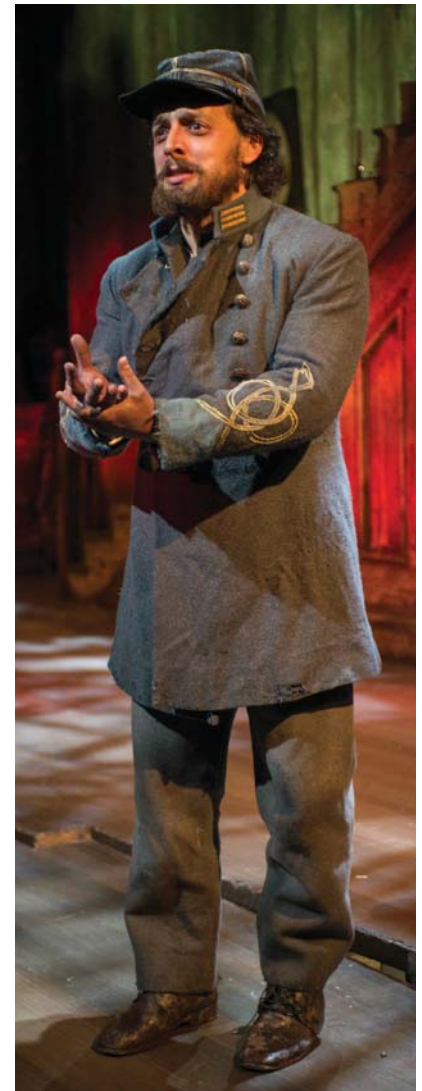
Post-Show Discussion Questions:

- What choices does the character Caleb make before and during the play in regard to his belief system? How do these choices change his worldview and his identity?
- How do the characters of John and Simon react to their newly established freedom from slavery? What are the similarities and differences? What character traits contribute to their different responses to emancipation?

Activity: "The Struggle is Real" Self-Portrait

(pre-show) Have students draw a self-portrait that describes an inner struggle. It could be a specific experience or something they deal with on a daily basis. If they think it is relevant, they can include representations of other people in their lives, and how their inner struggles affect them. Allow students to think in abstract imagery as well as more concrete representations of their conflicts.

(post-show) Have students draw a picture of one of the characters and a representation of their inner-struggle. Encourage them to think about all the characters, all of their struggles, and focus on one that they may connect with on a more personal level. After completing both portraits, discuss how their self-portraits compare and contrast to the portraits they created of the characters from the show.



Josh Landay as Caleb in The Rep's *The Whipping Man*

Theme: Relationships

Pre-Show Discussion Question:

- What is the difference between enslavement, duty/tradition, and free-will/compassion?
- What are all of the different relationships you have in your life? How important or unimportant are they to you?

Post-Show Discussion Questions:

- Why do you think Caleb whipped John? How did that define their relationship?
- Although the moment is brief, how did discovering the true relationship between John and Caleb affect your view of their relationship? How might it change their lives after the action of the play ends?

Activity: Character Mapping

(pre-show) Students create a map, noting all people, ideas, and objects in their life and how they define their relationship to each “thing”. For example: family members, friends, electronics, money, pictures, keepsakes. See the box below for how relationships should be defined.

(post-show) Students create a map, noting all people, ideas, and objects in the play and how those things are connected and by which sort of relationship.

- Caleb
- Simon
- John
- Sarah
- Books
- Alcohol
- Judaism
- Confederate Morals
- Union Morals
- The House
- Caleb's Leg
- The Whip/The Whipping Man
- The Haggadah

Relationships:

- Enslaved
- Duty/Tradition
- Free-will/Compassion

Note: Encourage students to come up with their own way of characterizing the various relationships, using the terms above as guides.



James Craven and Josh Landay in The Rep's *The Whipping Man*

COMMON CORE AND WISCONSIN'S MODEL EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Common Core State Standards For English Language Arts

Reading: Literature

RL.8.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

RL.8.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text

Wisconsin Model Academic Standards

Social Studies

History (Grade 8)

B.8.2: Employ cause-and-effect arguments to demonstrate how significant events have influenced the past and the present in United States History

B.8.3: Describe the relationships between and among significant events, such as the causes and consequences of wars in United States and world history

B.8.5: Use historical evidence to determine and support a position about important political values, such as freedom, democracy, equality, or justice, and express the position coherently

History (Grade 12)

B. 12.18: Explain the history of slavery, racial and ethnic discrimination, and efforts to eliminate discrimination in the United States and elsewhere in the world

Behavioral Science

E.8.7: Identify and explain examples of bias, prejudice, and stereotyping, and how they contribute to conflict in a society

E. 12.12: Explain current and past efforts of groups and institutions to eliminate prejudice and discrimination against racial, ethnic, religious, and social groups such as women, the children, the elderly, and individuals who are disabled

Theater (Grade 12)

A.12.1: Attend a live theatrical performance and be able to explain the personal meaning derived from the experience, and also be able to analyze, evaluate, and create meaning in a broader social and cultural context in either written or oral form

—articulate with increased understanding what they liked and didn't like and why

—explain what happened in the play and why they think the playwright made particular choices

—explain what happened in the play and why they think the director and actors made particular choices

—explain how the technical aspects of the play supported the choices of the playwright, director and actors

—describe how the audience appeared to respond to the play

—explain the message of the play and its meaning to individuals and to society

C.12.3 Explain in writing the potential impact of a play on society and culture

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