



**WE ARE PROUD
TO PRESENT...**

by **JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY**

MAR 9 - MAR 17/CALREP.ORG

What is this show About?

The subject of the play is the creation of a **presentation** focused on the a group of people. These people are the **Herero**, an ancient tribe who lived in **Namibia** since the early 17th century after immigrating from the north. Not much is known about the Herero until European empires started invading Africa.



Even now the Herero make their living by trading livestock. The origin of the Herero dress is early-20th-century German colonization. The outfits, which at first were forced on the Herero, later became a tradition, a choice, and a source of pride and status as they made the fashion their own. Tribe members wear the German uniforms at various ceremonies, funerals, and festivals as a way of honoring their warrior ancestors.



1884-1915 Herero Fight and Genocide

The German in Südwestafrika

The Hereros are a people living in what is now the independent nation of Namibia. In 1904, however, Namibia was a German colony: Deutsch-Südwestafrika, i.e., German South-West Africa. While all colonialism was brutal, German colonialism was especially so. The murder and rape of native people was not uncommon and usually went unpunished. In January 1904 the Hereros rose in revolt against their German 'masters'.



The Herero Fight for Freedom

The Hereros did not fight as a stereotypical mob of natives charging forward. The Hereros were skilled fighters who knew how to skirmish and take advantage of cover, and who sometimes fought in trenches behind barricades...The Hereros were also masters of ambush and concealment, using smokeless powder to remain unseen. The boulder-strewn hills and thick thorn bushes of Südwestafrika were their element.

In fact, unless the Hereros came out to charge, the Germans often never saw a single Herero among the boulders or in the bush! It was only the whistling of Herero bullets past the Germans' heads, and the deaths of German soldiers and officers, that indicated the Hereros' presence.

Between January and April 1904, the Germans went from ambush to ambush and regularly suffered either outright defeat at the hands of the Hereros, or near disaster with multiple infantry companies being pinned down or enveloped. It required a continual buildup of men and supplies arriving from Germany, and the regrouping of the depleted German forces already in the colony, for the Germans to achieve victory. This they accomplished in August of 1904 by a massive, multi-pronged strategic encirclement, converging from all directions of the compass, of the Hereros in their ancestral homeland in the Waterberg Mountains.

The Herero people - men, women, and children - were then driven from their homeland out to the desert to die of thirst and hunger. It was made illegal for any German settler to provide a Herero with food or water, and any Herero returning to 'German' territory would be shot on sight even if unarmed!

This infamous von Trotha order (after General Lothar von Trotha, who took command of German forces in Südwestafrika in May of 1904) produced such eventual outrage in Germany that it was rescinded. By that time, at least 60% and perhaps as many as 80% of the Herero people had died. This was the twentieth century's first genocide.

[Click here for an interactive video to hear from the Herero](#)

Extermination Order

The annihilation order against the Herero and Nama people was issued at the end of the war after the Germans defeated the Herero on October 2, 1904. The genocide order, Schiessbefehl, issued by Lieutenant General Lothar von Trotha stated:

I, the great General of the German troops, send this letter to the Herero people. The Herero people are no longer German subjects . . . The Herero people must leave the country. If the nation doesn't do this I will force them with the Groot Rohr [cannon]. Within the German borders, every Herero, with or without gun, with or without cattle, will be shot. I will no longer accept women or children, I will drive them back to their people or I will let them be shot at.

Von Trotha's proclamation affirmed policies of terrorism and force resulting in an almost extinction of the Herero people by way of starvation, concentration camps, and other genocidal tactics. Germany's colonization of South West Africa, present day Namibia, ended in what many claim as the first genocide of the 20th century, killing tens of thousands of Herero people including men, women and children.

Under his orders, Herero workers were imprisoned and lynched even those who sided with Kaiser were attacked. Three gallows were constructed in Windhoek, which displayed captured Hereros hanging like a public spectacle, which were left for days to instill fear among the Hereros. The picture below depicts what is described of the gallows where Hereros hung with the German soldiers overseeing the process.



Lemarchand, René. (2011) *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion Denial, and Memory*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.



<http://genocide.leadr.msu.edu/german-vernichtungsbefehl-annihilation-order-against-the-herero-and-nama-people-every-herero-will-be-shot/>

German Propaganda

During the genocide of the Herero people, many trade cards and other advertisements were being promoted at the time. Trade cards were popularized when given away with the purchase of commodities such as soup powder or chocolate which posed as propaganda for Germans, as many German people, specifically children collected them. The majority of the trade cards displayed Herero women as lewd images and some even portrayed the Herero people as rebellious, and dangerous.

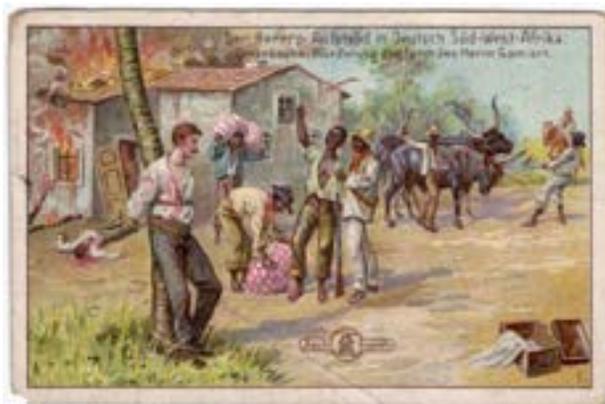


Words on the postcard: "Herero uprising in German South Africa, by cattle consuming Hereros."

The colonial war was always framed as a race war. This trade card displays the Herero people as rioting and rebelling against the German colonizers. This card depicts them as dangerous, showing the Herero looting a home of a German man, the house burning and a German dead in a pool of blood.



The trade card above displays a map of German South West Africa, and of a Herero woman, and children outside of Windhoek camp. Hartwig & Vogel's Chocolate Company produced this trade card. This postcard can be contrasted with an original photo of Windhoek, a concentration camp that Hereros were placed in after the war of 1904.



Aftermath

Eventually the Germans lost Namibia to the English after the First World War. Below is the English Report informing the government on the state of the former colony.



German postcard showing colonial soldiers putting skulls in boxes

31st March 1916

The history of the treatment of the natives in this Protectorate by the Germans makes bad reading. Their policy during the last great rebellion was one of extermination, as is evident by the reduced numbers of some of the Tribes... Von Trotha and his myrmidons... openly boasted that they had accounted for 30,000 Hereros. The unbridled licentiousness of the Soldiers [Sic.] and police in their relations with the native women regardless of objections on the part of the natives to the intercourse of their women with white men contributed in no small degree to the causes which led to the last rebellion.

With the destruction of the tribal system... the rapid demoralisation of the Native set in, so much so that concubinage with Europeans became almost a general practise in the Protectorate with the inevitable result that the natives have now the most supreme contempt for their Masters [Sic.], who in turn have endeavoured, by a policy of severity (often amounting to brutality) to maintain their prestige.

The German moreover seems to have regarded his native servants purely as slaves, and besides exercising "parental authority" (as described by them in their defence before our Magistrates), showed extreme reluctance to pay them wages contracted for."

German soldiers would dig up mass graves of Herero and send skulls and remains back to the Fatherland for study in eugenics and as a prized price of memorabilia.



From the book: *The Angel of Death has descended violently among them*

Colonialism in Performance: Blackface Minstrelsy

Blackface is much more than just dark makeup used to enhance a costume.

The stock characters of blackface minstrelsy have played a significant role in disseminating racist images, attitudes and perceptions worldwide. Much like German Propaganda trading cards did during the Herero Genocide.

Its American origins can be traced to minstrel shows. In the mid to late nineteenth century, white actors would routinely use black grease paint on their faces when depicting plantation slaves and free blacks on stage.

To be clear, these weren't flattering representations. At all. Taking place against the backdrop of a society that systematically mistreated and dehumanized black people, they were mocking portrayals that reinforced the idea that African-Americans were inferior in every way.

Racist Black Stereotypes

The term **Jim Crow** originated in 1830 when a White minstrel show performer, Thomas "Daddy" Rice, blackened his face with burnt cork and danced a jig while singing the lyrics to the song, "Jump Jim Crow."



The Buck is a large Black man who is proud, sometimes menacing, and always interested in White women.

<http://black-face.com/>

David Leonard, chair of Washington State University's department of critical culture, gender, and race studies, explained it this way in his 2012 Huffington Post essay, "Just Say No To blackface: Neo Minstrelsy and the Power to Dehumanize":

“Blackface is part of a history of dehumanization, of denied citizenship, and of efforts to excuse and justify state violence. From lynchings to mass incarceration, whites have utilized blackface (and the resulting dehumanization) as part of its moral and legal justification for violence. It is time to stop with the dismissive arguments those that describe these offensive acts as pranks, ignorance and youthful indiscretions. Blackface is never a neutral form of entertainment, but an incredibly loaded site for the production of damaging stereotypes...the same stereotypes that undergird individual and state violence, American racism, and a centuries worth of injustice.”



Mammy is a source of earthy wisdom who is fiercely independent and brooks no backtalk. Although her image changed a little over the years, she was always a favorite of advertisers.



Picaninnies have bulging eyes, unkempt hair, red lips and wide mouths into which they stuff huge slices of watermelon.

<https://www.vox.com/2014/10/29/7089591/dont-get-whats-wrong-with-blackface-heres-why-its-so-offensive>

Parallels: Indian Genocide in America

After the American Revolution, many Native American lives were already lost to disease and displacement. In 1830, the federal Indian Removal Act called for the removal of the 'Five Civilized Tribes' – the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Seminole. Between 1830 and 1838, federal officials working on behalf of white cotton growers forced nearly 100,000 Indians out of their homeland. The dangerous journey from the southern states to "Indian Territory" in current Oklahoma is referred to as the Trail of Tears in which 4,000 Cherokee people died of cold, hunger, and disease.

Wounded Knee

5 Years before Germans officially colonized Namibia, on December 29, 1890, the massacre of Sioux warriors, women and children along Wounded Knee Creek in southwestern South Dakota marked the final chapter in the long war between the United States and the Native American tribes indigenous to the Great Plains.



Big Foot, leader of the Sioux, lying in the snow where he was killed during the Wounded Knee Massacre.

Big Foot was shot where he lay on the ground. Boys who only moments before were playing leapfrog were mowed down. In just a matter of minutes, at least 150 Sioux (some historians put the number at twice as high) were killed along with 25 American soldiers. Nearly half the victims were women and children.



Bodies of Lakota Sioux at Big Foot's camp following the Wounded Knee Massacre.

The dead were carried to the nearby Episcopal church and laid in two rows underneath festive wreaths and other Christmas decorations. Days later a burial party arrived, dug a pit and dumped in the frozen bodies. For decades, survivors of the massacre lobbied in vain for compensation, while the U.S. Army awarded 20 Medals of Honor to members of the Seventh Cavalry for their roles in the bloodbath.

Current State of Race in America

A presidential candidate wins election after denigrating Muslims, Latinos, women and people with disabilities. A young white man opens fire and kills nine African Americans who welcomed him into Bible study at a church in Charleston, South Carolina, telling his victims, "I have to do it." A Muslim woman is seated on a bench in front of a coffee shop in Washington, D.C., when a woman begins screaming anti-Muslim epithets. A swastika and other anti-Semitic graffiti appear at an elementary school in Stapleton, Colorado. A lone gunman carrying an assault rifle and a handgun storms a well-known gay club in Orlando, Florida, killing 49 people and wounding 53 others.

Bias is a human condition, and American history is rife with prejudice against groups and individuals because of their race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. As a nation, we've made a lot of progress, but stereotyping and unequal treatment persist.



<https://www.splcenter.org/20170814/ten-ways-fight-hate-community-response-guide>



Since 2010, law enforcement agencies have reported an average of about 6,000 hate crime incidents per year to the FBI. But government studies show that the real number is far higher — an estimated 260,000 per year. Many hate crimes never get reported, in large part because the victims are reluctant to go to the police. In addition, many law enforcement agencies are not fully trained to recognize or investigate hate crimes, and many simply do not collect or report hate crime data to the FBI.

The good news is, all over the country people are fighting hate, standing up to promote tolerance and inclusion. More often than not, when hate flares up, good people rise up against it — often in greater numbers and with stronger voices.



Picture above from a Ku Klux Klan rally in the northeast Georgia community of Gainesville. Shortly after this picture was taken the child's mother quickly swooped her up and reprimanded her.

<https://www.poynter.org/news/how-klk-rally-image-found-new-life-20-years-after-it-was-published>

Interview with Playwright Jackie Sibblies Drury

Ramona Ostrowski: Where did the inspiration for *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...* come from? Was it the subject matter or the unusual form that first interested you?

Jackie Sibblies Drury: It was definitely the subject matter, which I came across randomly. I was trying to research a different play, and I googled “black people” and “Germany.” I found out that there was a genocide, and I had never heard of it before. So I did a bunch more research, and in trying to write a play sort of more directly about that, I think that I didn’t write a very good play—I sort of failed at writing a play—it was an impossible task. But that failure, and the struggle to articulate it, became the inspiration for the form of the piece as it exists now.

RO: After you were so intimately involved in the first several productions, the play is now having its own life out in the world. What’s that like for you as a playwright, especially for a work that in some ways is quite personal?

JSD: To be totally honest it’s super weird, and exciting. I’m thrilled that people are going to see it, and there’s always something a little bit disconcerting in it for playwrights, isn’t there? I mean, to put on a play is a beautiful thing, but it’s also a time-intensive, emotionally-intensive, labor-intensive thing to do. And so thinking about all these people working on something... that I’m not there in the room to support them at all is strange, but it’s also remarkable to see different theater

artists’ interpretation—different direction, design and also a different interpretation by performers.

RO: The play’s structure is experimental and places performers and audience in an unusual relationship. What did you learn about the piece as it met its audiences for the first time? Were there surprises in there for you?

JSD: I was surprised by how nervous I was. At the first few previews in Chicago—about a year and a half ago—the responses were pretty polarized, but that wasn’t so surprising to me. I learned a lot. Sometimes people didn’t know what to do with the script’s inherent openness; they didn’t know how it aligned with more traditional dramatic works. These points of discomfort are really fruitful for the storytelling. I found it interesting and exciting to think about getting the chance to expose people to a different way of constructing narrative, a different way of interacting with the idea of “theatre.”

RO: In the script, the end of the play marks a dramatic tonal shift that you’ve provided guideposts for, but which is largely entrusted to the director and cast to figure out through rehearsal, as well as night-to-night with an audience. Can you talk to me a little bit about

the end of the play? What’s the inspiration for placing so much in the hands of your script’s collaborators?

JSD: There’s so much about live performance that I respond to that’s not necessarily about the words that are being spoken. It’s about the stage picture or the mood in the room. As a playwright, it’s pretty frustrating because all I get are the words. I think that when I see something that I find particularly moving or powerful, it’s often not something I associate with a particular line, but rather an image, or feeling, or series of movements. I wanted to find a way, I hope, that a production or a group of people creating together—if they’re excited enough about the play and intrigued and challenged

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by that openness of an ending—will issue an invitation to the audience. That we might sort of see this person on stage, and empathize together in a room. If that happens, even for a few people, I think that’s pretty amazing. The subject matter is so dark, and the treatment of it is so ironic... and then unironic. I was wary of trying to have a button at the end, like “and that’s why genocide is bad.” The fact is: there’s nothing really to say in the face of the most awful thing that we can imagine human beings doing to other human beings. Every neat, clean “ending” just feels like moralizing, and it’s my hope that instead, *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...* will feel as open and complicated as thinking about the big idea can be.

RO: This piece refuses categorization. It even positions itself as non-theatre—rather, it’s a “presentation” about a historical subject that spins wildly out of control. The characters are Actors, played by actual actors, who themselves have had to wrestle with the difficult political and social subject matter on a personal level throughout the rehearsal process. What excites you about this structure?

JSD: This piece doesn’t work very well when we attempt to explain all the connections and tie up all of the messiness—to fix it. The play is broken a little bit on purpose, just like the historical (and contemporary) events it describes. I think that the most fertile space in it is where people can enter it and have an empathetic creative response, and also a critical, rational, creative response.

RO: What do you mean by “broken?”

JSD: The play tries to combine two different events, or two different forms of discrimination. It can’t equate them, but it puts them next to each other on the same plate, and the characters of the Actors get confused about it. I hope that everyone in that room gets confused about it too, because I certainly feel confused about it! There’s slippage of one sort of racial relation into another, there is a build-up, but

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The violence done one place has resonances in another.

there’s no cause and effect. Because of the subject matter, the equation of the play is not an equation that works. That’s what I mean by it being broken. Of course, this is all very cryptic and vague and may actually be slightly pretentious.

RO: This play often puts me in mind of Sarah Kane’s 1995 play *Blasted*, which connected individual sexual violence in a hotel room in Leeds, UK, with the same impulse that led to the ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian war. You, too, are making connections across otherwise disconnected cultural and historical moments.

JSD: When I was doing research, I discovered that there are various pictures of Herero people from that time. Very traumatic pictures. There’s one image of an execution: black men hanging in a tree. I saw it, and it was just so difficult for me to not associate that with lynchings in the South, even though it’s obviously a very, very different image. It’s sort of like a palimpsest (which traditionally was a manuscript page that was washed and re-used, but the ghosting of its original text always shines through). I feel like American racial dynamics are so drummed into me that I see them in places where they actually aren’t, but I also feel like that means that they are kind of everywhere. The violence done one place has resonances in another.

RO: What excites you about the future of theatre right now?

JSD: I think that people crave—people go to theater because they want to learn something new, and they want to think, and they want to empathize with something that is inconceivable to them. Or that’s why I go, and I feel like that’s why a lot of different kinds of people go. The American Theatre needs to trust that more, but that’s where I put my hope.

Interview with Director Chris Anthony

How working on the play been?

Chris Anthony: It's been great to work with the CSULB students who are playing student actors. They are students and they're characters are student actors, watching the ways in which these roles overlap has been fun and interesting.

What is the play about?

CA: The story of the play is six actors who are attempting to put together a presentation about the Herero of Namibia and Germans colonization of South West Africa. We experiment with which piece of the story in is the foreground or the background and how do you tell what's important. While they start out telling the story of this genocide that happens in this place they don't know or understand, they end up telling a very American story.

So it's a story within a story?

CA: Exactly, there are many layers to the reality we are stepping into. We are performing in the University Theater which is also a classroom, so we use it like we use a classroom in the play. The play goes back and forth between process and presentation, so sometimes you're seeing something that they're really good at, and sometimes you're seeing them work it out. The action of the story is about how to tell a story, and the story that we land on is pressing and relevant for us now, even though they're looking back to history.

Why is it so important now?

Over the course of the year, Cal Rep has been engaged in this dialogue about what it means to be an American through a series called Devising Democracy. I think that a lot of times we think about democracy as voting, which is super important. But in addition to voting it's about being a thoughtful, educated citizen. It's about being engaged in issues that affect everybody and this play does that. It's about the systems of oppression that lead to a genocide, it's about the history of genocide here and around the world and we're living with the fruits of that right now.

Was it hard for the students to grasp the play within the play?

I think that we get play within a play, it's harder to get rehearsal within a play. That is what the play is asking of us, the performers, the creative team, and the audience. One of the things that is great about being an actor is that you literally get to step into something, but the play reminds us that even if you're stepping into someone else's story-with your full heart, body, and mind-you're not actually that person. Theatre is this great medium that allows us to step into something--to try on a mask: "Would I do this? Would I not do that?" It allows us step out of that mask. A lot of my career has been in Shakespeare. It's clear when you're playing Macbeth, I'm stepping into this guy who commits these horrible murders but I am

not that murderer and I can take that mask off and not do that thing anymore. *Proud to Present* asks us are we really taking off the mask? While we may not be participating in systems of colonialism, are there ways that we casually inflict suffering on other people? Are there ways in which we are complicit in the suffering of other people? Are there ways in which we benefit from systems that inflict suffering on other people? I think that those are the really big questions that play is not only asking of the performers but of the audience.

What do you hope the audience gets from the play?

I hope that they understand that we're all in this together. This play is about the water that fish don't see, we're all swimming in the same pond and we may or may not see the water, we may or may not know it's there. The play is making the point, and I hope the audience understands it. We are interconnected and that until we face our history and we admit some of these things about ourselves, we won't be able to move forward.

Why did the Department choose this play?

I think our Chair Jeff Janisheski was interested in this dialogue. He was interested in a play that would connect with our audience-we have a lot of students in our audience and the ability for the audience to see themselves reflected on the stage is very exciting.

As a director, what was the biggest challenge?

Grappling with the history of this performance, and working with the young actors to help them find their own connection to this piece, to these stories, and to the ways that the characters are working things out has been some of the challenges. We had to look deep into American history; the play is set during a time of German colonialism in South West Africa, those years 1884-1915 are important in the development of America. We see the rise of the Jim Crow laws, the rise of lynchings; the post-reconstruction period in America is foundational to the way we think about race, class, and gender. That was a period of rewriting history, there was a concentrated effort to rewrite the history of the Civil War, to literally change what was in the history books. There's some interesting parallels there, not only did we have to learn what the characters are learning about Namibia and German colonization but we also had to look at America and see what our piece is in it. It's difficult to grapple with the American's understanding of Africa. We don't have much non-colonial, pre-colonial interaction with Africa in our history and in our culture. Having to grapple with that make it interesting to do this play next to *Black Panther*.

How does *Black Panther* relate to this play?

Black Panther is a fantasy that creates this mythical land of a never colonized Africa

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and what we would be like if we were never colonized. And there's an emotional resonance that the characters in this play are feeling compared to what the characters in *The Black Panther* are feeling. There's this uneasiness, and deep longing at the same time for something that was taken away. There are many beautifully written scholarly articles about *The Black Panther* and that may be one of the best things about it. We're in a dialogue, these actors struggle with telling this story. I think we are all struggling to tell our history, being honest about it, being clear about it, there's so many feelings, there's a depth of emotions that comes from confronting the history of this country, even of this state, this town. Who was here before us? What happened to them? Why aren't they at the forefront of every story? What is California's history of genocide? Why did that happen and why we don't point fingers at ourselves? We can point fingers at the holocaust and say that was the ultimate evil but what do we do about this over here? How do we even begin? So hopefully this play is one of the ways we can begin. We can at least become aware; we can at least start to ask the questions of ourselves, of our neighbors, and our friends. That's one of the interesting things about having a play within a play that there are layers and layers of introspection. How do you purge yourself of your own history is a really big question that this play asks and that I'm asking of the cast. There's a way in which theatre is a ritual, theatre is a religious right. In the beginnings of Western Theatre in ancient

Greece they didn't make a big distinction between religion and theatre - theatre was a tool of religion. What of that history has come down to us and what does that look like in 2018?

Is there something specific the actors struggled with?

The Jim Crow laws were so pervasive - the history of American slavery. It's one thing to think about it intellectually, it's one thing to look at it as a photograph, but to really think about what that meant for people every day is something else. What was required of the people that were held in bondage? What was required of people who held others in bondage? That has been disturbing for the actors. We're looking at some of the things that happened to the Herero people in captivity, they were essentially held as slaves, all the things that we know about the treatment of the Jews during the Holocaust happened to the Herero just 50 years earlier. Our actors had a hard time understanding that lynching was a thing, was a real thing. Not only was it a real thing, people used to send photographs to their families of lynched bodies hanging from trees. That's part of our history and we must face that if we're going to move forward. I think that's why it's important for our *Devising Democracy* series - to understand that we the people are going to make decisions we need to know who we are and to be honest about that.

Design View: Scenic Design

For someone that doesn't feel comfortable with this discussion, what would you say to them?

One of the things we had to do in rehearsals was establish a safe space for conversation, and that takes some intention and thought. One of
The opposite of war is not peace, it's art, it's about creating not destroying.

things we did was create this idea of a first draft, "the thing I'm about to say is just a first draft - I might revise it later", this idea that it is hard to talk about hard things, that's why we don't do it. If someone is not comfortable, see if you can offer this notion of a first draft to your friends, family, whoever you are comfortable speaking with because it takes a while to figure it out. Like these actors, we discover things in the saying and doing of it. If you're not comfortable speaking, maybe you're comfortable writing, maybe you want to write in a journal, write a song, paint a picture, maybe you want to take a yoga class, meditate on it. There are a lot of ways in which we process things, all the arts give us infinite possibilities for not only expressing but discovering.

The opposite of war is not peace, it's art, it's about creating not destroying.

In the way we use language and in the way we conduct ourselves in conversation we have the opportunity to create peace. We have the opportunity to create safety, we have the opportunity to create genuine listening.

Scenic Designer: Natalie Morales

Where does this play take place and how did that effect your creation of the set design?

Natalie Morales: This play takes place in a theatre/lecture hall, which is exactly what the space is.

What elements do you include to give theatricality to a classroom?

Using classroom/lecture hall/theater items, theatricality is added by a variety of usage of these items. Set pieces such as prop lockers, a desk and a scene shop stair unit are rolled around on stage, sometimes representing things they are not. For example, the rolling stair unit serves as a tree at one point of the show.

How are the colors of the set inspired by the play?

The colors seen on stage are not at all striking, which is the feeling we wanted to give off. The audience is coming to see a play and automatically expect some type of spectacle. But when they see ordinary objects, in not so bright colors, on stage, it's makes you question, "what happened to the set? IS there a set? Did we come on the wrong day? Are they not ready yet?" This play is more of a reality check, no surprises, except for the fact that the show is not the show you expect to see.



Design View: Lighting Design

Lighting Designer: David Zahacewski

What was the inspiration for the lighting used in the show?

In our first production meeting, Chris used the phrase... “revealing the architecture of oppression”. This instantly brought me to the idea of the recreation of work lights in a theatre and how they can be utilized in the production. For example, the grid in the UT creates very vertical shadows that reminded me of a jail cell or prison. Because part of the show is dealing directly with slavery, I wanted to enhance this architectural aspect of the theatre. I guess you can say the UT, itself, drove most of my inspiration.

The show takes place in a classroom, why not just use the classroom lights?

We are altering reality as well. Whenever we are in the presentation portion of this show we are not in the classroom. It is extremely thematically important that the altered reality world and the classroom world start to mold and blend together. Because I'm the altered reality world I decided to use more saturated colors and pin point spots I need to use theatrical lighting equipment.

How can lighting transport the audience to different places and times?

For example, we see the Herero by the fire in on scene. As a designer I must not only transform the stage for the audience but for the actor as well. The stage will become encased with flickering fire and not just the actor but the world around him must also feel the effects of this change. If I can convince the actor we are in a different location I can convince any audience member.

What are the imagined sources of light?

When we are in the classroom I am completely inspired by how these architectural lights flood a space and create enticing shadows. When we are in the presentation light it is all naturally inspired light. Moon, sun, fire, and rain.

How does the set and light design interact in the show?

I believe that movement is such a key element in our designs. The movement of light, chairs, stairs, and props are so relevant in this production and speak so loudly to the themes of this play. We, as a design team, view movement as slightly negative in this production. As a human population we think we are progressing we think we are moving in the “right direction” however, in our reality, are we moving at all, and are we moving for the better?



GLOSSARY OF TERMS – From Cracking The Codes: The System of Racial Inequity

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Bias—prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair. Unconscious or implicit bias refers to biases that we carry without awareness. To learn more about implicit bias and to take an implicit association test online, visit Project Implicit at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>

Culture—sum total of ways of living, including 1) values, 2) beliefs, 3) aesthetic standards, 4) linguistic expression, 5) patterns of thinking, 6) behavioral norms, and 7) styles of communication which a group of people has developed to assure its survival in a particular environment. We are socialized through “cultural conditioning” to adopt ways of thinking related to societal grouping.

Cultural Pluralism—recognition of the contribution of each group to the common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different lifestyles, languages, and convictions. It is a commitment to deal cooperatively with common concerns. It strives to create the condition of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society (Pusch, 1979).

Cultural racism—the individual and institutional expression of the superiority of one race’s cultural heritage and values over another.

Discrimination—the behavioral manifestation of prejudice involving the limitation of opportunities and options based on particular criterion (i.e. race, sex, age, class).

Ethnocentrism—the belief that one group is right and must be protected and defended. The negative aspect involves blatant assertion of personal and cultural superiority. “My way is the right way”.

Identity—the feeling of being included in a group or culture.

Internal and External Frameworks—the internal structures and neural pathways formed in the brain that are a response to, and a way of, making meaning of the history, culture and identity formation that pervade and inform what is considered to be normal. These frameworks may be part of, and responded to, in ways that are unconscious or deeply inform assumptions related to one’s worldview. They are associated with conscious and unconscious bias, privilege, and internalized racism. These nested elements are more than personal. They impact behaviors that are individual, collective and relational. These belief systems inform external relationships that are interpersonal, institutional, structural and are mechanisms for churning out inequities.

Internalized Racism—the personal conscious or subconscious acceptance of the dominant society’s racist views, stereotypes and biases of one’s ethnic group. It gives rise to patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that result in discriminating, minimizing, criticizing, finding

fault, invalidating, and hating oneself while simultaneously valuing the dominant culture. This internalized racism has its own systemic reality and its own negative consequences in the lives and communities of people of color.

Interpersonal Racism—actions that perpetuate inequalities on the basis of race. Such behaviors may be intentional or unintentional; unintentional acts may be racist in their consequence.

Institutional Racism—laws, customs, traditions and practices that systematically result in racial inequalities in a society. This is the institutionalization of personal racism.

Internalized Racism/Oppression—the internalization of conscious or unconscious attitudes regarding inferiority or differences by the victims of systematic oppression.

“ISMS” —a way of describing any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of their target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), youth (adultism), religion (i.e. anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobia), etc.

Modern Racism/Racialization—suggests that the culture of racial prejudice in America has changed. Many people currently use non-race related reasons to continue to deny blacks equal access to opportunity.

Multicultural Education—a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of many different cultures. It encourages people to see many different cultures as a source of learning and to respect diversity in local, national, and international environments... Multicultural Education refers first to building an awareness of one's own cultural heritage, and understand that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another; secondly, acquiring those skills in analysis and communication that help one function effectively in multicultural environments (Pusch, 1979).

Oppression—the systematic mistreatment of the powerless by the powerful, resulting in the targeting of certain groups within the society for less of its benefits – involves a subtle devaluing or non-acceptance of the powerless group – may be economic, political, social, and /or psychological. Oppression also includes the belief of superiority or “righteousness” of the group in power.

Personal Racism—individual attitudes regarding the inferiority of one group and the superiority of another that have been learned or internalized either directly (i.e. negative experiences) or indirectly (i.e. imitation and modeling of significant others' reactions,

affective responses to the media); these attitudes may be conscious or unconscious.

Power and Economics—are the engine that “drive” a system that provides a rationale and elements of cognitive dissonance that is divisive.

Prejudice—a negative attitude toward a person or group, based on pre-judgment and evaluation, often using one's own or one's group's standards as the “right” and “only” way.

Privilege/Internalized Entitlement—white privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society that whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin color. There are unearned entitlements—things that all people should have—such as feeling safe in public spaces, free speech, the ability to work in a place where we feel we can do our best work, and being valued for what we can contribute. When unearned entitlement is restricted to certain groups, however, it becomes the form of privilege that Peggy McIntosh calls “unearned advantage.” Unearned advantage gives whites a competitive edge we are reluctant to even acknowledge, much less give up. The other type of privilege is conferred dominance, which is giving one group (whites) power over another: the unequal distribution of resources and rewards.

Racism—the systematic oppression of people of color; occurs at the individual, internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and/or cultural levels; may be overt or covert, intentional or unintentional.

Structural Racism/Racialization -The word “racism” is commonly understood to refer to instances in which one individual intentionally or unintentionally targets others for negative treatment because of their skin color or other group-based physical characteristics. This individualistic conceptualization is too limited. Racialized outcomes do not require racist actors. Structural racism/racialization refers to a system of social structures that produces cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities. It is also a method of analysis that is used to examine how historical legacies, individuals, structures, and institutions work interactively to distribute material and symbolic advantages and disadvantages along racial lines.

World View—the way an individual perceives his or her relationship to the world (i.e. nature, other people, animals, institutions, objects, the cosmos, their creator). One's memories, expectations, assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, values, interests, past experiences, strong feelings, and prejudices, influence a person's worldview.

Discussion Questions

Before the Show:

How do you normally prepare for a class presentation?

Create a list of stereotypical group members.

What historical event or part of history is your favorite? Why?

What's the best part of American history?

What's the worst?

After the Show:

What image stuck with you after the show?

How did the show make you feel in the first 30 minutes? In the last 30 minutes?

Who are the "good" guys and "bad" guys in the show? Were there good and bad guys?

Did you find anything funny in the show? Why?

Did you find anything disturbing in the show? Why?

In Class Activity:

Active Listening: Find a partner and begin to ask the questions below. After asking a few have your partner ask you a few questions. Switch partners every 3 to 5 minutes

- When asked to identify your race or ethnicity, how do you respond?
- What race/ethnicity(s) do others think you are? How do you feel about that?
- Do you feel your race/ethnicity affects who you are? Why or why not?
- What language(s) is/are spoken in your home?
- If a language other than English is spoken, are there any rules about when it can be spoken?
- When is it all right and not all right to use "bad" language?
- Are you expected to speak differently to people younger than you and people older than you? In what ways?
- How do people in your family communicate anger with you?
- How do you communicate anger with them?
- What does silence mean in your home?
- How do people in your home communicate love and/or affection?
- Do you change the way that you communicate when you are with different groups (friends, family, religious, work)?
- How do you feel about answering these questions?

After the activity group discussion questions:

What did you notice you bring into the room?

How did you talk about your family, your home and yourself?