STEPPENWOLF FOR YOUNG ADULTS

At Steppenwolf: February 27 – March 16, 2019
On Tour: March 18 – 23, 2019

By Jackie Sibblies Drury
Directed by Hallie Gordon and Gabrielle Randle
When You Feel Lost, How Do You Find Your Way?

What does it mean to tell a story?

How do the stakes shift when the story you tell has nothing to do with you?

Throughout this process, we as directors have become acutely aware that we have significantly more questions about Jackie Sibblies Drury’s We Are Proud to Present a Presentation... than we have answers. We share some of our big questions above, because that’s what every season of Steppenwolf for Young Adults is all about. Asking a big question, and living in ambiguity in regard to the answer.

Sibblies Drury’s play, We Are Proud to Present a Presentation... is not about finding answers. It is about the ability to ask questions with, rather than pose them to or answer them for, teens across Chicagoland. Young people are already so good at asking questions, looking at the world as it is, and wondering aloud:

Why does it have to be that way?
What if it were different?
What if it were better?

So, when this play says, “We are proud to present...” perhaps what it is really saying is, “We are having a hard time asking...” So how do we find our way from here? From this lost place, this impossibly bad feeling? How do we get back to the story? We have an opportunity to reexamine whose story gets told and by whom. For decades, students have been given textbooks that teach history through a very specific lens. We want to take a closer look at this perspective and encourage a new lens to think about who is telling the story of our collective history and what that means.

Our hope is that this production is a prompt for a larger conversation about accountability, empathy, and generosity. How great would it be if at the end of this process, there aren’t any more answers, but that our audiences have helped us, and one another, ask better questions?

Hallie Gordon and Gabrielle Randle, Directors
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**RELAXED/SENSORY FRIENDLY PERFORMANCE**  
Saturday, March 16 at 3:00pm (public performance)  
**AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE-INTERPRETED/OPEN CAPTIONED PERFORMANCE**  
Friday, March 8 at 7:30pm (public performance)  
Wednesday, March 13 at 10:00am (student performance)  
**AUDIO-DESCRIBED PERFORMANCE AND TOUCH TOUR**  
Saturday, March 9 at 1:30pm tour, 3:00pm curtain  

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We Are Proud to Present...
The Playwright, Jackie Sibblies Drury

By Education Apprentice Tina El Gamal

WHO IS JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY?
Jackie Sibblies Drury is a Brooklyn–based playwright and graduate of Brown University’s MFA playwriting program whose other works include Really, Social Creatures and Fairview. Her play We Are Proud to Present a Presentation... had its world premiere here in Chicago at Victory Gardens Theatre in April 2012. Described by journalists as "a quiet, six-foot-tall woman with a sneaky, self-effacing sense of humor" Sibblies Drury often talks about her own work with a sense of honesty, good humor, and curiosity, explaining, "[I write] experimental plays. And then depending on how obnoxious I’m feeling, I say, ‘But what’s experimental? I don’t really know what that means! And playwriting—I don’t know what that means either!’"

In her work, Sibblies Drury plays around a lot with structure and form, writing pieces that seek to defy convention and expectation. In uprooting what audiences expect from a trip to the theater, Sibblies Drury’s work has been said to “trail off, like smoke” as opposed to providing any sort of definite end. This is a phenomenon that audiences will likely see reflected in We Are Proud to Present a Presentation... Although her work often utilizes meta-theatrical elements such as direct-address to the audience and non-traditional narrative structures, she always delivers a story. Something these stories tend to have in common is the disruption of audience comfort, and the shattering of their preconceived notions about what story will be told and how.

Sibblies Drury did not begin writing creatively until after college. At first, she thought that she wanted to be an actor. During her studies, she took a solo performance class in which students wrote and performed solo performance pieces about their lives, which then inspired her to enroll in a playwriting course. While these academic experiences were the impetus for her interest in writing, it wasn’t until after college, upon moving to New York, that she realized that she did not want to be an actor. Sibblies Drury remembers, “I was not really cut out for that kind of life. I looked at the first advertisement for headshots, and saw how expensive they were, and I was like, ‘Nope. Nope.’” Instead, while working odd jobs and helping friends with projects they were working on, she began “trying to write plays...not showing them to anybody, but still writing them.”

WHERE DID SHE GET THE INSPIRATION FOR WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT A PRESENTATION...?
Sibblies Drury admits that she didn’t know about the Herero genocide until she was doing research for another play she was writing at the time about a black German actor who, because of the color of his skin was always cast as an American solider (with a German accent). This concept led Sibblies Drury to google the phrase “Black people in Germany,” where upon searching she discovered information on the Herero Genocide, which she continued to research at the University of Chicago Library, where her husband was in graduate school at the time. Later, while pursuing her MFA at Brown, she started We are Proud to Present a Presentation... as her thesis, completing the first draft of the script in 2012, her final year at Brown.
While writing the play, Sibblies Drury says that it became challenging to separate the narrative of the Herero Genocide from the complicated history of race relations in America. Current events, such as questions surrounding President Obama’s US citizenship (leading to him release his birth certificate publicly), as well as the 2012 murder of unarmed black teenager Trayvon Martin, all played an influential role in the development of this story. These defining moments in history served as microcosms of the racial tensions that Sibblies Drury hoped to interrogate in her exploration of the unraveling, and ultimate failure of, the presentation at the heart of this play.

**JACKIE SIBBLIES DRURY SAYS THIS PLAY WAS ACTUALLY INSPIRED BY HER OWN “FAILURE” TO TELL THE STORY OF THE HERERO GENOCIDE…**

Sibblies Drury is aware that she is not a historian and has made clear that she does not feel comfortable exercising a level of authority over the historical content of this play. This is why she chose to frame it through the lens of a group of young, inexperienced actors and collaborators.

This choice was influenced by her own experience writing this play, about which she recounts that at first she attempted to write a play about the Herero Genocide that was (according to Sibblies Drury) “really terrible.” Sibblies Drury remembers getting so caught up in the vast historical nature of the piece and her attempts at trying to make the play feel relevant to the current moment that the story she was left with was completely devoid of what she had hoped to create when she set out on the journey.

She observed that this frustration was a universal experience among American academia. She says of her time in grad school, whenever otherwise confident students were asked to speak on issues of cultural studies, race, or other uncomfortable issues “these students’ presentations would either become really ironic and removed and silly, or would latch onto a dry, super-earnest and politically correct script of how we’ve been taught to talk about it. That means that no one ever says anything new; and we have no personal connection to what we’re saying.” We see pieces of the ironic, removed, silly, and super-earnest politically correct versions of this story unfold amongst the six actors in *We are Proud to Present a Presentation…* and witness their struggle to achieve successful storytelling amidst these various formulas.

“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.”

**– Jackie Sibblies Drury**

“I sort of failed at writing a play,” Sibblies Drury recalls. “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.” Sibblies Drury introduced the idea of a having group of actors struggle with the exact same artistic questions that she as a playwright was struggling with as a way to explore why it was so hard to tell this story. And thus, *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation…* was born.
What to Expect:

Key Elements in the Narrative of
We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...

By Teaching Artist Wilfredo Ramos Jr.

Sibblies Drury’s *We are Proud to Present a Presentation...* is nonlinear in its structure, jumping through time and space, from moment to moment, purposefully disorienting the audience so that they empathize with the confusion that the characters experience. To better understand the unique structure of this play, we invite you to explore six of the major theatrical narrative moments that you will encounter as an audience member.

**Past and Present**

*And When Do They Blur Together?*

One of the many questions raised in *We are Proud to Present a Presentation...* is the following:

How does a person’s social-location (their position in society and history) filter how that person tells stories and what stories they tell?

*We are Proud to Present a Presentation...* centers around a group of actors who try to create a presentation about the German-led genocide against the Herero people from 1884-1915. As the actors move between process and presentation, Sibblies Drury, as if flicking between Instagram filters, switches the scene from present to past, back and forth, faster and faster, until the two stories and the historical weight they carry exist in a single moment.

**The Letters**

The term *White Gaze* describes how, in White dominant societies like the United States, the perspectives of White people are often accepted as the default filter through which all stories are seen. In *We are Proud to Present a Presentation...*, the White Gaze appears as a box of letters written by a White German soldier, who was stationed in Namibia at the time of the genocide. The company of actors chooses to use these letters as the primary sources for the presentation, in part because the letters are readily available and Herero texts are not. Because of this decision, the actors begin building a narrative about the genocide that centers the German soldier and his experiences and marginalizes the Herero and their experiences.

As the rehearsal process progresses, this problem becomes more and more apparent and leads to tension within the group.

**The Players**

A company of actors introduces itself to the audience and previews the presentation the actors are about to perform about the Herero people of Namibia and the genocide their German conquerors carried out against them. As a part of the preview, the actors then deliver a brief overview of the history of Namibia, formerly known as Southwest Africa. During their workshop process, the actors, 3 of whom identify as Black, 3 of whom identify as White, assume the roles of German soldiers and Herero people in an attempt to see history through their eyes and learn "truths" about the genocide.
ERASURE
The word erasure describes the processes by which one community suppresses the culture and narratives of another community in order to disempower that community and maintain power by the dominant group. Midway through We are Proud to Present a Presentation..., the actors become aware that their telling of the genocide lacks Herero voices. To combat this, the actors present “Black Man”, a man from the Herero tribe. Black Man tells how the Herero kept fires burning in their backyards because they believe that their ancestors live on in the flames. If a fire goes out, Black Man explains, then the ancestors within are forgotten. In an example of erasure, the Germans use this knowledge to put out Herero fires and by exercising this particularly cruel use of power, extinguish Herero resistance to German rule.

THE IMPROVISATIONS
Late into the rehearsal process, the actors begin to realize that there is much they don’t know about the genocide against the Herero. To fill the gaps in their knowledge, the actors improvise scenes based on received ideas—ideas that a person learns through popular culture—the actors have about life in Germany and Namibia at the turn of the 20th century. During improvisations, debates erupt about whether it’s possible to fairly embody a person from one background when you represent another and the balance of compelling narrative vs. historical accuracy in storytelling.

THE RE-ENACTMENT
The actors perform the scene that depicts the genocide. For the performance, the White actors play the Germans and the Black actors play the Herero. During the re-enactment, in a moment of stark theatrical violence, the company places a noose around the neck of Black Man and prepares to lynch him, while repeating a series of racially explicit and verbally abusive chants. In this moment, the actor playing Black Man experiences racial trauma—stress from repeated experiences with racism—as he remembers the long history of Black men who have been lynched and sees himself on the edge of joining that history. Immediately, Black Man breaks character, takes off the noose, and runs out of the theater. The presentation, and the play, ends abruptly, and the remaining actors (and by association, we as an audience) are left to grapple with how the ensemble’s actions, and inactions, led them to fail to realize how harmful their process had become.
Casting Call:
Character Breakdowns

By Education Apprentice Tina El Gamal

In Jackie Sibblies Drury’s *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...*, the audience bears witness to actors in process and in presentation. In process mode, we see the actors in the rehearsal room, struggling with how to accurately perform the presentation they are creating. Meanwhile, in presentation mode, the actors are actively “presenting” the story of the Herero genocide to the audience (yes, to you!) in real time. Each of these actors embodies multiple people, including what is perhaps the most confusing and dangerous role of all, themselves. As the play continues, boundaries weaken, and the line between actor and character, process and performance, slowly begins to blur and disintegrate.

Actor 1/White Man (Played by Michael Holding)
- An actor.
- Young, white, male.
- Is not afraid of improv.
- Wants to do this play, but also doesn’t know how to tell this story.

Always asking himself:
Who am I, and how can I empathize with who I am not?

Actor 2/Black Man (Played by Terry Bell)
- An actor.
- Young, black, male.
- Has been to Germany.
- Wants to do this play, but also doesn’t know how to tell this story.

Always asking:
How do I honor where I come from if I don’t know where that is?
Actor 3/Another White Man (Played by Will Allan)
- An actor.
- Young, white, male.
- Can do a German accent.
- Wants to do this play, but also doesn’t know how to tell this story.

**Always asking:**
How do I tell a story that isn’t about me?

Actor 4/Another Black Man (Played by Jeffery Owen Freelon Jr.)
- An actor.
- Young, black, male.
- Wants to see Africa.
- Wants to do this play, but also doesn’t know how to tell this story.

**Always asking:**
How do I heal, reckon with and reclaim my identity by filling in the blanks of history?

Actor 5/Sarah (Played by Taylor Blim)
- An actor.
- Young, white, female.
- Her name is not actually Sarah.
- Wants to do this play, but also doesn’t know how to tell this story.

**Always asking:**
How can I collaborate effectively when there is very little space for my identity in the room?

Actor 6/Black Woman (Played by Jennifer Latimore)
- An actor.
- Young, black, female.
- Is also the artistic director of the ensemble.
- Wants to do this play, but also doesn’t know how to tell this story.

**Always asking:**
Can I push others to go places that I am not willing to go?
Decolonizing History
More Than Just One Side of the Story

By Education Associate Abhi Shrestha

"As we try to unpack how colonialism has affected the version of history accessible to us, we must understand that the erasure of indigenous peoples, their culture, and stories is at the root of colonialism."

In *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...* we witness six actors attempting to create a theatre piece about the genocide of the Herero Tribe in present day Namibia, by German settlers between the years 1884 and 1915. If you have not heard about this tragic moment in history, you are not alone.

The playwright, Jackie Sibblies Drury did not know about it until she Googled “black people in Germany” while conducting research for a completely different play she was working on.

The fact that this event, the first mass genocide of the 20th century, isn’t a topic that is covered in the curriculum of many United States history classes, is due to the fact we can only learn from history made accessible to us. As we try to unpack how colonialism has affected the version of history available to us, we must understand that the erasure of indigenous peoples, their culture, and stories is at the root of colonialism. This erasure is one of the themes that playwright Jackie Sibblies Drury interrogates in this play. As audience members engaging with *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...*, Drury forces us to explore the question:

**What happens when you only have one side of the story?**

**WHAT IS COLONIALISM?**
Colonialism is a structure of oppression that spans time and geography. In practice, colonization is when one country violently invades and takes control of another country, claims the land as its own, and sends settlers to live on and control that land.

There are two significant eras of colonialism in recorded history. The first began in the 15th century, when European countries such as Britain, Spain, France, and Portugal colonized lands across North and South America. The motivations for this first wave of colonial expansion can be narrowed down to religion, resources and political power.

The second era of colonial expansion occurred during the 19th century on the African continent. During what has come to be known in the West as “The Scramble for Africa,” these same European nations (Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain) split up Africa, creating borders and boundaries, and claiming large areas of land for themselves. These artificial borders split cultural groups, resulting in fierce ethnic tensions that have had devastating ramifications on indigenous populations that still exist today.
THE HERERO OF SOUTH-WEST AFRICA NAMIBIA

Here is what we know about The Herero:

Herero is a word that refers to a group of tribes. The various tribes forming the Herero group and speaking a common language of Otjiherero are the Mbanderu, Himba (also known as the Ovahimba), Herero and Tijimba.

The Herero are a pastoral cattle-breeding people and are some of the best cattle farmers in current day Namibia.

Today, when you attempt to do research, and learn about their origins and culture outside of the genocide, you are confronted with phrases like “Unfortunately little is known of their origin...” or “And most probably...” or “It is believed.” We are met with approximations when attempting to access the history of a people that existed fully and actually still exist, despite the extermination order that German colonial settlers issued during their territorial expansion at the turn of the 20th century. German soldiers forced Herero people into concentration camps, poisoned their water supply, and committed many other violent acts. Around 65,000 Herero people died of starvation, dehydration, and disease during this period.

In this German–Herero War that the play explores, the Herero population was almost completely wiped out, the region’s most prominent tribe reduced substantially in numbers. The repercussions of an event like that—the systematic wiping away of indigenous lives, culture and history—echoes for generations.
When we think about the Herero people, we must understand that the fight is not over. The story of the Herero, as is the story of many marginalized communities, is a story of resilience and active persistence. There are Herero activists who are still fighting for justice from the violence that was done to their people. They are navigating a process of decolonization, which refers to the undoing of the pain that colonialism has embedded on so many communities. For the Herero, that means attempting to gain back land stolen during colonialism and a fight for reparations: asking the German government to pay money or otherwise make amends to the Herero people.

These photos are reprinted with express permission from photographer, Jim Naughten (jimnaughten.com).

"When we think about the Herero people, we must understand that the fight is not over. The story of the Herero, as is the story of many marginalized communities, is a story of resilience and active persistence."

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE PAST
The images accompanying this article are examples of how the past, and the history of the Herero people, is a conversation that continues to this day. Photographer Jim Naughten spent several months in 2012 traveling across Namibia, spending time with and photographing dozens of members of the Herero tribe. Says Naughten, “Each image [from the series ‘Hereros’] harkens the region’s tumultuous past: residents wear Victorian era dresses and paramilitary costume as a direct result and documentation of its early 20th century German colonization.”

During the German/Herero War, the Herero tribe was devastated, losing almost eighty percent of its population. Explains Naughten, “Garments became an important expression of identity during these fragile times. Upon killing a German soldier, a Herero warrior would remove the uniform and adopt it to his personal dress as a symbol of his prowess in battle. The wearing of German uniforms became a tradition that is continued to this day by Namibian men who honor their warrior ancestors during ceremonies, festivals and funerals.”
Naughten traveled Namibia for four months with a Herero guide who helped ensure those photographed were compensated appropriately—negotiating fees, or gifts for the villagers—usually coffee, sugar and maize. Says Naughten, “[During the four months] we camped every day, drove for thousands of miles staying in villages, visiting weddings, funerals, and ceremonies across the whole country, photographing as and when we could. Our guides were key to the process and they would introduce us to chiefs and elders, explaining what we wanted to do. In this way we made sure we could proceed respectfully and spend a great deal of time talking to the people I was photographing.”

Naughten also clarifies that his portraits are not intended to serve as a conventional documentary of Herero culture. The portraits have been placed against the image of the Namibian desert, elevating what happened to the Herero on their land and allowing the desert to serve as silent witness. By using unique costuming to expose the effects of colonization on the Herero, Naughten aims to “curate a stillness that allows the past to speak.”

“By using unique costuming to expose the effects of colonization on the Herero, Naughten aims to ‘curate a stillness that allows the past to speak.’”

WHAT DO WE DO?
It is important that we continue to challenge the sources from which we learn history, and understand that as access to the full history of many indigenous and native people is limited, as learners we must have critical curiosity by challenging our textbooks, continuing to dig deeper to navigate the nuances of world history and ask ourselves:

Do I know both sides of this story?

Whose perspective am I receiving this narrative from?

What can I do to decolonize the history of disenfranchised groups to ensure that certain stories are not erased?
Jared Bellot (JB): Thank you all so much for joining me today! We have several members from the team that will be bringing this play to life. Can each of you share about your individual roles on this production?

Hallie Gordon (HG): Gabby and I are serving as co-directors on this project. Together we are working to create the visual aesthetic of the piece and articulate what the play is trying to say for us today and how that feeds back to our audience.

Gabrielle Randle (GR): As co-directors we also get to think through the story with these characters and challenge ourselves to be a little bit better in our own rehearsal process than they are in theirs!

Arnel Sancianco (AS): As the set designer, I get to not only create the background for the show, but also the physical and emotional landscape that the action of this play takes place in.

Heather Sparling (HS): And as the lighting designer, it’s my job to make sure you can (literally) see everything, but also to collaborate with my fellow designers to help support the story in a visual way that most people don’t really notice but that supports Hallie, Gabby and Arnel’s vision.

JB: Hallie and Gabby, as directors, what initially drew you to this piece?

HG: I love the theatricality of this piece, but what initially struck me about this play and has stayed with me is the way that it very explicitly talks about prejudice, racism and the idea of who has the right to tell someone else’s story. I am interested in looking at the structure of the play and figuring out how we can mirror what happens in the play in a healthy way in our own rehearsal room and learn from one another.

GR: The play really surprised me. The ending felt unexpected, yet somehow, at the same time, inevitable. For me, this play is about what we should have always seen, but for whatever reason, we have ignored. This play is about shining light on the things that we as a society don’t want to talk about.

HG: Yes! I was similarly really caught off guard in terms of how emotional the story is. This play is very funny until it’s not. Towards the end, it hits you like a punch to the face.

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This play is very funny until it’s not.
Towards the end, it hits you like a punch to the face.

– Hallie Gordon, Co-director
JB: Arnel and Heather, do you remember your first reactions to the play?

HS: As a lighting designer, when I read a play, I can usually see in my mind what it’s going to look like and how it’s going to play out right away. But I remember after reading this play sitting back and thinking, “oh my, I have no idea what the lighting design for this show is going to look like.” The possibilities felt endless and that feeling doesn’t happen on every show. It’s thrilling!

AS: I remember the sound of my jaw hitting the floor. I had no words. My partner was on the other side of the kitchen when I finished reading the script. I put it down on the counter and I just sat there staring at it. Finally he asked, “is something wrong?” And I said, “I’ve never read a play that says everything I’ve wanted to but haven’t been allowed to say.” It made me angry and excited, all at the same time.

I’ve never read a play that says everything I’ve wanted to but haven’t been allowed to say.

– Arnel Sancianco, Set Designer

JB: So much of this play is about what happens when a group of artists come together to collaborate around a project. How do you ensure when collaborating that you maintain your own artistic voice?

HS: I’m excited about entering this process not knowing what the show is going to end up looking like, so that our collaborative process is what will lead us to a unique product on stage. And no matter what we do, because I trust my collaborators, I’m going to be proud of the work that we make and trust it’s going to reflect on me as an artist in an exciting way.

HG: When I met with each of the designers individually, I said, “this is a hands-on process. I want you in the rehearsal room as much as you can be.” Part of that is because the voices of the design team, the voices of the actors, and what those individuals bring to the process is the story we’re telling.

In the play, things go awry because the actors don’t really understand the story that they are telling. We are combating this by naming everything in our process—good, bad and otherwise. For example, if we (wrongly) appropriate elements of costume design from a particular culture that doesn’t belong to us, we will name that and explain why we are doing it to echo themes in the play. By doing so, our hope is that our own process does not accidently end up echoing the process of the actors in the play.
JB: This is a play about watching a group of people who start off with the best of intentions fail in their mission. Is failure just a natural part of collaboration? Is it something that can or should be avoided?

AS: That distinction between failing and doing wrong is an important question at the center of this story. For the characters in this play, doing wrong would be not talking about things, not having the arguments, and trying to not get into conflict with one another. Failing allows them to have the conversation. And that reflects what’s happening in our culture at this moment. Many people don’t want to have hard conversations because they don’t want to get offended or chance being politically incorrect. They don’t want to have the conversation because that leads to failure. So instead they do what I believe is the wrong thing, which is to just avoid the conversation. That’s not right. That’s not how you create progress. Progress moves forward with friction underneath the tire.

JB: Gabby, keeping in mind what you and Hallie hope to avoid, what will your rehearsal room look like?

GR: We will be playing with the idea of risk that Arnel is speaking to. My dad has a saying, you can’t steal second with your foot on first. Every advancement requires a risk.

This play is unbelievably risky. There are a lot of dangerous things physically, emotionally, spiritually in this play that we’re butting up against. The exciting thing about this risk is that, because risk is the baseline, there are a lot of places we can go, because we know that no matter what, we can’t stay where we start. That is not an option.

((
You can’t steal second with your foot on first. 
Every advancement requires a risk. 
– Gabrielle Randle, Co-director
))

Arnel Sancianco, Hallie Gordon, Heather Sparling and Gabrielle Randle
JB: What does that look like in practice?

GR: Allowing ourselves to show vulnerability. There are times in this process, probably more than I’ve ever done before, when Hallie has said, “I don’t know how to do that.” And I’ve been able to respond, “I actually do know how to do that (and vice versa)!” We can complement one another. There are moments you don’t know what you can do or where your strengths lie until someone confesses to a weakness.

JB: Thousands of students from across the Chicagoland area will be seeing the show. What do you hope that they will take away from it?

HS: It’s cliché to say that everyone wants people leaving the show and talking to each other and engaging in discussion, but it’s true. I hope that when people see this show, they recognize that it is okay to take a risk and have the uncomfortable conversation and that in fact, it’s important to have those uncomfortable conversations.

AS: There will likely be people who will leave this show feeling offended, saying to themselves, “that’s not me up there.” And other people may say, “this is exactly what I’ve been trying to tell a certain family member of mine, but they won’t listen to me.” And still other people may feel, “I suddenly realize this is what someone else in my life has been trying to tell me and I haven’t listened until now.” All of that is valuable.

HG: This play brings up lots of questions and presents no real answers. The audience is left asking, so, where do we go from here? There is going to be a desire to want an answer. I want the audience to be able to live in that ambiguity and feel okay being uncomfortable.

GR: To the students coming to see this show, I hope we convey to them that on our end, we are going to provide the questions and then trust their perspective in terms of helping to figure out an answer. We want students to know that we believe their perspective is valuable.
Remembering Me
A Classroom Activity

By Teaching Artist Tiffany Fulson

**ACTIVITY TIME:** This activity (as outlined) is designed for 45 minutes; to be conducted before or after students see the show.

In the play *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...* when discussing the family structure of the Herero, Actor 2 explains:

> “Each Herero family has a fire in their backyard. The Herero believe that this fire contains the souls of their ancestors. Because of this they believe that the fire must be kept constantly burning or else their ancestors will be destroyed.”

– Actor 2

This activity is inspired by the theme of history as memory that Jackie Sibblies Drury explores in *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation...* If you could leave something for your great-great-great-grandchildren to remember you by, what would it be? This lesson asks students to explore how we remember our history and what traditions have been set in place to keep that history alive.

**STEP ONE – LETTER WRITING**

> “Dear Sarah. Today is the first of many days I will spend away from you. I will travel far away today. I will mail this letter if I arrive – I will arrive, and I will mail this letter to you. I will think of you always, and I will be my best, so that that I will know that when I return I will be the man you have imagined I will become.”

– Actor 1

On the space provided on page 20 of this guide, have students write a letter to their great-great-great-grandchildren (see example below that helps those in the future to have a true record of the past). This letter should include the following:

- 3 words to describe yourself and explanation of why
- 1 of your biggest life accomplishments thus far
- 1 piece of life philosophy or advice
- 1 family tradition

Make sure to let students know their letters will be shared with their classmates.

**LETTER EXAMPLE:**

Dear great-great-great grandchildren,
I am writing this letter to you so that you will always have a piece of me and our family history. Three words I would use to describe myself are: courageous, creative and fabulous! I love to go on adventures, perform in the theatre, and dress fashionably every day. My biggest life accomplishment thus far is winning 1st place in my high-school’s science fair. Once piece of life philosophy I’d like to give you is, always do your best with anything you do! Lastly, I’d like to share a family tradition with you that I hope you will keep alive. Every summer the entire family goes on a week-long camping trip where we sing songs, dance around the fire, and make s’mores. When I hear you sing I will always smile!
STEP TWO – SHARING STORIES

Break students into small groups of four students. Each student should take turns sharing their letter with their group. After each student has had the opportunity to read their letter, students should then collectively decide on one of the letters to explore further in the next step.

Make sure to let students know that the chosen letter will be used to create a presentation that it will be shown to the class. If the writer is uncomfortable with this, the group should choose another letter from their group.

While sharing, encourage students to reflect independently on the following guided questions:

STEP THREE – HONORING ANOTHER’S STORY

Students will create a series of four tableaux as a way to honor the writer as if they are their great-great-great grandchildren. Groups will be given an opportunity to share their tableaux to the full class in the next portion of the lesson.

Tableaux are snapshots created by a group of individuals posing together to make a motionless picture that indicates action and tells a story. Each tableau in the series should highlight one of the four responses to the journal prompt question within the chosen letter.

• 3 words to describe yourself and why
• 1 of your biggest life accomplishments thus far
• 1 piece of life philosophy
• 1 family tradition

Students should be creative in how each of these responses are embodied. Their series of four tableaux can and should be a mix of literal and figurative representations of their chosen letter. I.e. – the tableau representing science fair victory might feature students embodying the feeling of pride felt around winning a trophy, while the tableau representing the family tradition of sitting around the fire might feature students huddled around a campfire applauding a member of their group who is singing.

STEP FOUR – PROUD TO PRESENT YOUR PRESENTATIONS...

Students will have the opportunity to showcase their tableaux in front of the class.

Students in the audience should be instructed to look for moments of similarity and difference between the group performing and their own work.

STEP FIVE – REFLECTION/CLASS DISCUSSION

Silently or as a group, have students reflect on the activity based on the following questions:

• How did it feel to honor someone else’s memory/tradition? What made it easy? Difficult?
• For the letter writer: How did it feel to no longer have direct ownership of your letter?
• Do you feel the tableaux displayed the emotion and essence of you and your family traditions?
Dear great-great-great grandchildren,

In the space below, write a letter to your great-great-great-grandchildren. This letter should include the following:

- 3 words to describe yourself and explanation of why (i.e. courageous, creative, and fabulous)
- 1 of your biggest life accomplishments thus far (i.e. winning 1st place in my high-school’s science fair)
- 1 piece of life philosophy or advice (i.e. always do your best with anything you do)
- 1 family tradition (i.e. every summer the entire family goes on a week-long camping trip where we sing songs, dance around the fire, and make s’mores)
IN-SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

Steppenwolf Education reaches nearly 2,500 students per year through its in-school residency work, pairing teaching artists and classroom teachers to enrich students’ experiences of the Steppenwolf for Young Adults plays on our stages.

“I am thankful to have this relationship with Steppenwolf because it is so student centered. The students’ faces light up as they are talking enthusiastically about the plays, and the Pre/Post workshops. They are sharing their experiences and gaining self confidence well after our workshops are complete!”

- Mary Rossi
  Pre/Post Classroom Teacher, George Washington High School

TEACHING ARTIST COHORT

Steppenwolf Education teaching artists partner with classroom teachers, exploring the themes of the Steppenwolf for Young Adults season in workshops with thousands of students across the Chicagoland area.

To learn more, contact Education Manager Jared Bellot at jbellot@steppenwolf.org
Archetypes
A Classroom Activity
By Teaching Artist Fatima Sowe

ACTIVITY TIME: This activity (as outlined) is designed for 45 minutes; to be conducted before or after students see the show.

Jackie Sibblies Drury gives her characters’ straightforward titles and descriptions indicating only their racial and gender identity. [i.e. ACTOR 6 / Black Woman]. Though we never learn the names of the individuals portraying these “ACTORS,” their archetypal qualities clearly emerge throughout the play. In this lesson, students will embody secret archetypes as they plan, rehearse and perform a scene from the play. By embodying the decision-making challenges and frustrations of the characters in the play, students will exhibit empathy for the ambiguity that arises when we are lost and attempting to find our way.

5 mins

STEP ONE – DEFINE ARCHETYPE

Have students read the following definition of archetype and then brainstorm other archetype examples and their characteristics aloud:

An archetype is a broad, all-encompassing pattern of behavior in the stories and myths humanity tells. (i.e. the Hero—behavior: seeks justice for others; the Bully – behavior: intimidates others; the Martyr, behavior: willing to die for a cause, etc.)

5 mins

STEP TWO – BRAINSTORM ARCHETYPES FROM REAL LIFE

Have students identify archetypes in their lives, and the associated behavioral patterns. (i.e. THE FLAKE, borrows money, never Venmos you back.) Ask students to consider:

What happens when several of these archetypes are put together in a group?

7 mins

STEP THREE – SELECT A SECRET ARCHETYPE

Have students read over the following archetype profiles aloud and silently select a secret archetype to embody during the next step of the activity. As students decide, have them consider which archetypes are most interesting to explore, which are most similar to them, which are most different?

1. ACTOR A: (The Leader)
   Behavior: Gets the job done. Results oriented. Organizes, Plans, Coordinates.
   Objective: Ensure that the group completes group tasks, in as little time as possible.

2. ACTOR B: (The Analyzer)
   Objective: Ask at least one question for every decision the group makes and specifically ask why.

3. ACTOR C: (The Morale Booster)
   Objective: Make sure that everyone contributes an idea to the final product.

4. ACTOR D: (The Supporter)
   Behavior: Maintains clear communication/group harmony. Empathetic, team-building, tries to find ways to make all voices heard, creates harmony.
   Objective: Ensure parts of all your partner’s ideas are represented in the presentation.
STEP FOUR – PRE-PRODUCTION, REHEARSAL, PERFORMANCE

Embodying their secret Archetypes, students will go through the following stages as a group:

[8 Minutes] PLANNING/DESIGN PROCESS/PRE-PRODUCTION
Each group must:
• Read through the full scene provided on page 24.
• Decide on the 5 most important lines in the given text; these lines will form the text for your presentation. You may arrange the text in whatever order you choose.
• Assign group roles. Indicate in the scene template which group member will be reading for which “ACTOR.”

[2 Minutes] REHEARSAL
In your rehearsal process, you should explore staging that emphasizes your 5 most important lines. Your performance may be no longer than 2 minutes, ensure you have practiced enough to run smoothly.

Please note, during this process, everyone must also accomplish their individual Archetype’s objective.

STEP FIVE – PROUD TO PRESENT YOUR PRESENTATIONS
Select a few groups to present their performances for the full class.

STEP SIX – REFLECTION/CLASS DISCUSSIONS
After viewing group presentations, silently or as a class, reflect on the following questions:

Why did you select the secret archetype you did?
Where did you see yourself in your archetype? Where did you not see yourself?

Were you more focused on the overall group objective or your archetype’s objective?

After the random sorting, how many archetypes were represented in your group?
How did that composition impact your groups presentation-design process?
(i.e. Our group was composed entirely of supporters: “We had to randomly select the important lines of text because everyone was too afraid to express their opinion, our presentation lacked chronological clarity.”)

Did your group verbalize a decision-making strategy?
How did you decide what was important and what was not?

Do you notice any similar or different strategies in other groups?
You have 10 minutes to complete the following:

- Read through the scene below, excerpted from *We Are Proud to Present a Presentation*...
- As a group, decide upon the 5 most important lines, these lines will form the text for your presentation. You may arrange the text in whatever order you choose.
- Assign group roles. Indicate which group member will be reading for which “ACTOR.”
- Rehearse your text with your group. Think about how each line is said and how you will move when speaking. Your performance may be no longer than 2 minutes, ensure you have practiced enough to run smoothly.
- Please note, during this process, everyone must also accomplish their individual Archetype’s objective.

### SCENE A

**ALL:** An Overview of German South West Africa Between the Years 1884 and 1915.

**ACTOR:** 1884.

**ACTOR:** Germany is in charge.

**ACTOR:** 1885.

**ACTOR:** Germany is totally in charge.

**ACTOR:** 1901.

**ACTOR:** Germany tinkers a little with the law.

**ACTOR:** If you are German and a cow wanders on to your land:

**ACTOR:** It’s yours!

**ACTOR:** If you try to take a cow from a German and you aren’t a German:

**ACTOR:** You get hanged.

**ACTOR:** 1902.

**ACTOR:** Germany tinkers a little more with the law.

**ACTOR:** If you are German and you see land that doesn’t belong to a German:

**ACTOR:** It’s yours!

**ACTOR:** If you contest a German land claim and you aren’t German:

**ACTOR:** You get hanged.

**ACTOR:** 1904.

**ACTOR:** The Herero rebel against German rule.

**ACTOR:** 1905.

**ACTOR:** The General Issues

**ACTOR:** The Extermination Order.

**ACTOR:** The Germans imprison thousands of Herero in labor camps.

**ACTOR:** 1906.

**ACTOR:** The Germans force thousands of Herero into the desert.

**ACTOR:** 1907.

**ACTOR:** The Germans erect a wall to keep them in the desert.

**ACTOR:** 1908. The Extermination order has been issued. The labor camps have closed. Eighty percent of the Herero have been Exterminated. Those that survived the camps were used as a source of unpaid labor by the German settlers. And in this way, the German regime continued: 1909 1910 1911 1912 1913 1914 1915. And then. And only then do the English intervene.

**ACTOR:** World War I.

**ACTOR:** And there you have it. A history of German Colonial Rule in Namibia.
What is City Connections?
City Connections is Steppenwolf Education's community engagement model rooted in building authentic and mutually beneficial long-term partnerships. We take no-cost, barrier-free, artistic and educational programming into communities, with the hope that youth feel inspired to come to Steppenwolf and experiment here as artists and arts appreciators.

How do we find new partners?
City Connections seeks to bring our work outside of Steppenwolf and into neighborhoods by making connections with peer organizations that use the arts to empower youth in geographic and social communities we don’t currently serve.

Where do we serve?
This year we are working in the Albany Park, Austin, Bronzeville, Chatham, Englewood and South Shore neighborhoods.

“This first year partnering with Steppenwolf has been really impactful. I can see the change in the youth. This partnership is beautiful because these kids need creativity. Steppenwolf sharing their workshops and knowledge of the arts to our kids is more profound than I think most of us realize.”

- Max Cerda
Street Intervention Specialist, Build, Inc.

800 STUDENTS SERVED/YEAR THROUGH CITY CONNECTIONS

To learn more, contact Education Manager Jared Bellot at jbellot@steppenwolf.org
THE SCENE

THE SCENE is a special opportunity for high school students to score an affordable ticket to a Steppenwolf production, meet Chicago’s most celebrated artists and connect with other teens who are passionate about theater. Each ticket includes dinner and post-show discussion with the actors.

TICKETS ARE JUST $10

Purchase tickets online or by calling Steppenwolf Audience Services at 312-335-1650. Use code 43428

UPCOMING EVENTS

THE SCENE: WE ARE PROUD TO PRESENT A PRESENTATION...
SATURDAY, MARCH 9 @ 7:30PM (post-show)

STEP IN

STEP IN is a series that offers teens from all over the city the chance to participate in hands-on theatre workshops alongside some of the most exciting theatre artists working in the city right now while learning more about the Steppenwolf Young Adult Council, an afterschool program for teens interested in careers in the arts.

ADMISSION IS FREE!

To reserve your spot, please RSVP to Education Associate Abhi Shrestha at ashrestha@steppenwolf.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10
WEDNESDAY, MAY 1
Events last from 4:30-6:00pm

Questions? Please contact Steppenwolf’s Education Associate Abhi Shrestha at 312-654-5603 or ashrestha@steppenwolf.org.
STEPPENWOLF EDUCATION

is proud to present... a tour!

For the third year in a row, Steppenwolf Education is touring a Steppenwolf for Young Adults’ production outside of our theater walls.

This year, we are partnering with BUILD, Inc., the Chicago Park District and the Chicago Public Library to bring SYA’s We are Proud to Present a Presentation... to 500+ students and community members across our great city. We will tour this production as part of our City Connections programming and the Year of Chicago Theatre.

Each workshop will be preceded by a hands-on, hour-long workshop led by Steppenwolf teaching artists allowing participants to interact creatively with themes of the play before they see it.
CATCH US ON TOUR!
All workshops and shows are FREE.

1. Mandrake Cultural Center,
   Mandrake Park
   3858 S Cottage Grove Ave,
   Chicago, IL 60653
   Monday, March 18, 2019
   4:30–5:30p workshop
   6:00p show

2. Tuley Cultural Center,
   Tuley Park
   501 E 90th Pl,
   Chicago, IL 60619
   Tuesday, March 19, 2019
   5–6p workshop
   6:30p show

3. South Chicago Public Library
   9055 S Houston Ave,
   Chicago, IL 60617
   Wednesday, March 20, 2019
   4:30–5:30p workshop
   6:00p show

4. Albany Park Chicago Public Library
   3401 W Foster Ave,
   Chicago, IL 60625
   Thursday, March 21, 2019
   4:30–5:30p workshop
   6:00p show

5. Austin Town Hall
   5610 W Lake St,
   Chicago, IL 60644
   Friday, March 22, 2019
   5–6p workshop
   6:30p show

6. Hamilton Cultural Center,
   Hamilton Park
   513 W 72nd St,
   Chicago, IL 60621
   Saturday, March 23, 2019
   1-2p workshop
   2:30p show
Common Core State Standards Aligned With Activities in This Study Guide

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 2:
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

See ‘What to Expect’ and ‘Casting Call’, pages 6 and 8

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING, STANDARD 6:
Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

See ‘Archetype Activity’, page 22

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR WRITING, STANDARD 3:
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

See ‘Remembering Me Activity’ page 18

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING, STANDARD 3:
Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

See ‘Decolonizing History’ and ‘Stealing Second’, pages 10 and 14

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING AND LISTENING, STANDARD 1:
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

See Examples throughout guide

If you need further information on how grade-specific standards fit into these anchor standards, please let us know.
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Steppenwolf for Young Adults is a citywide partner of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) School Partner Program.
The Young Adult Council is a unique program for passionate and motivated high school students who wish to learn the inner-workings of professional theater from the most celebrated artists in the city. In addition to face time with these leading professionals, Council members attend the best plays in Chicago, learn how to analyze and speak about these plays and lead events for their peers around Steppenwolf productions in hopes of inspiring a new generation of theatre enthusiasts and practitioners.

Applications are available on March 1, 2019.

Like the Steppenwolf Young Adult Council on Facebook and Instagram! Or visit steppenwolf.org/youngadultcouncil for more information.