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# The Whipping Man

By Matthew Lopez

Directed by Lou Bellamy

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## TOOLS FOR TEACHING

The following are a series of questions you may use to prompt discussion, critical analysis or dialogue about this play. They may be used either before or after the play, either to guide audiences toward specific issues as they watch or, to stimulate conversation about topical issues afterward.

Penumbra Theatre Company now offers Lesson Plans that use the script, the production, and the study guide to investigate specific themes! Developed by high school teachers and curriculum consultants Kimberly Colbert and Kaye Peters, these questions are intended to meet the state standards for High School Language Arts and Literacy set by the Board of Education. (Grades 9 through 12). Each plan can run from approximately 15 to 45 minutes for discussion. Please contact Penumbra Theatre's Education Director for more details:  
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### **A Guide for Teaching Matthew Lopez's *The Whipping Man***

#### **Overview**

This guide provides a broad framework in which teachers may anchor their own classroom practice. For easy reference, lessons have been divided into three strands (historical context, literary, and thematic). Teachers may choose to follow one strand for the unit or weave together elements and/or lessons from the various strands. A broad essential question for the entire *The Whipping Man* unit is suggested, as well as more specific essential questions aligned with strands (highlighted below). The essential question provides a foundation for study, with guiding questions for study imbedded in each lesson which will allow for a range of critical thinking and analysis within both English/language arts and social studies content areas. Anchor, or suggested, lessons are provided for each strand along with resource readings and classroom tools we have found effective in our own classrooms.

The suggested lessons are designed to meet high-school level Minnesota Reading and Literature and Writing standards and Minnesota Social Studies standards for Institutions and Traditions in Society. The standards are noted by the possible lessons in boldface type. "LA" is Language Arts standards and "SS" is Social Studies standards. The numbers and letters refer to the specific standard.

**LA** – is Language Arts standards

**SS** – is Social Studies standards

### Vocabulary of Important Terms

<b>Abolitionists</b>	supporters of the project to end racial slavery and liberate black Americans. The movement gained momentum after the British Parliament outlawed the African slave trade in 1807 and incorporated people from various ethnicities and cultural backgrounds including but not limited to free blacks and liberal whites such as the Quakers. In 1863 slavery was outlawed in the United States with the formal declaration of the Emancipation Proclamation.
<b>American Confederacy</b>	also known as the Confederate States of America was the government formed by eleven southern states of the United States of America between 1861 and 1865 in response to the push for abolition of slavery within the Union. They elected their own president, Jefferson Davis, and even printed their own currency—both treasonous crimes according to the Union. The capital of the CSA was Richmond, VA where today monuments still stand to honor its legacy. The Confederacy fell after the surrender of Robert E. Lee to Ulysses S. Grant at Fort Sumter in the spring of 1865.
<b>Antebellum</b>	the period of time before or existing before the American Civil War during which slavery, the slave trade and the sale and purchase of slaves was legal and protected by local and federal governments.
<b>Appomattox</b>	the site of the final engagement of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia before it surrendered to the Union Army under Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865 signaling the end of the American Civil War.
<b>Battle of Fort Sumter</b>	(April 12, 1861 – April 13, 1861) was the bombardment of Fort Sumter by the Confederate Army near Charleston, South Carolina. The battle started the American Civil War.
<b>Brown, William Wells</b>	(November 6, 1814 – November 6, 1884) was a prominent abolitionist lecturer, novelist, playwright, and historian. Born into slavery in the Southern United States, Brown escaped to the North, where he worked for abolitionist causes and was a prolific writer. Brown was a pioneer in several different literary genres, including travel writing, fiction, and drama, and wrote what is considered to be the first novel by an African American.
<b>Cash Crops</b>	crops grown for money versus the sustenance of those farming them.
<b>Chattel Slavery</b>	was the type of slavery that dominated the American slave system. Chattel slaves existed as living commodities and were considered their masters' property. On the market, chattel slaves were exchanged for goods or money. In addition to their labor, masters had control over slaves' bodies and their children. Chattel slavery is most often based on race.

<b>Cotton Gin</b>	is the abbreviated name for the cotton engine, a machine that quickly and easily separates the cotton fibers from the seedpods and the sometimes sticky seeds, a process previously achieved through slave labor. With the invention of the cotton engine, expectations for production skyrocketed, making work even more demanding for laborers.
<b>Davis, Jefferson</b>	(June 3, 1808 – December 6, 1889) was a slaveholding politician who served as President of the Confederate States of America for its entire history from 1861 to 1865 during the American Civil War. His insistence on independence, even in the face of crushing defeat, prolonged the difficult war. Davis was captured in 1865 and charged (though never convicted) with treason against the United States of America.
<b>Emancipation Proclamation</b>	the document, issued on September 22, 1862 by President Abraham Lincoln, that declared all slaves held in captivity in the Confederate States of America were free.
<b>Epistemological</b>	the philosophical investigation of the origin, nature, methods, and limits of human knowledge.
<b>Fourteenth Amendment</b>	to the United States Constitution is one of the post-Civil War amendments (also known as the Reconstruction Amendments), first intended to secure rights for former slaves. It includes the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses, among others. The amendment provides a broad definition of United States citizenship, superseding the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> that had excluded slaves imported from Africa and their descendants. The amendment requires states to provide equal protection under the law to all persons within their jurisdictions and was used in the mid-20th century to dismantle racial segregation in the United States.
<b>French Revolution</b>	(1789–1799) was a pivotal period in the history of French, European and Western civilization. During this time, republicanism replaced the monarchy in France and the Roman Catholic Church underwent a radical restructuring. While France would oscillate among republic, empire and monarchy, for 75 years after the First Republic fell to a coup d'état, the Revolution is widely seen as a major turning point in the history of Western democracy—from the age of absolutism and aristocracy, to the age of the citizenry as the dominant political force. The slogan of the French Revolution was " <i>liberté, égalité, fraternité, ou la mort!</i> " ("Liberty, equality, fraternity, or death!"). This slogan outlived the revolution, later becoming the rallying cry of activists, both militant and non-violent, who promote democracy or overthrow oppressive governments.

- Grant, General Ulysses S.** (April 27, 1822 – July 23, 1885), was an American general and the eighteenth President of the United States (1869–1877). He was the first president to serve for two full terms since Andrew Jackson forty years before. He led Radical Reconstruction and built a powerful patronage-based Republican party in the South, with the adroit use of the army. He took a hard line that reduced violence by groups like the Ku Klux Klan. On April 9, 1865, he accepted the surrender of his Confederate opponent Robert E. Lee at Appomattox Court House. He is credited as the leading Union general in the American Civil War.
- Haitian Revolution** (1791-1804) was the most successful of the many African slave rebellions in the Western Hemisphere and established Haiti as a free, black republic, the first of its kind. Africans and people of African ancestry freed themselves from slavery and colonization by taking advantage of the conflict among whites over how to implement the reforms of the French Revolution in this slave society.
- Kahal Kadosh Beth Shalom** was the first Jewish congregation in Richmond, Virginia. Kahal Kadosh Beth Shalom was the sixth congregation in the United States and was the westernmost in the United States at the time of its foundation. By 1822 Kahal Kadosh Beth Shalom members worshipped in the first synagogue building in Virginia. This congregation eventually merged with Beth Ahabah, an offshoot of Beth Shalom.
- Lee, General Robert E.** (January 19, 1807 – October 12, 1870) was a career United States Army officer who defected to join the secessionist Confederate States of America. A slaveholder himself, Lee was the pride of the Confederate Army and is still hailed in parts of the South as a gallant soldier. His army was defeated at the Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865 by Union General Ulysses S. Grant, who reclaimed control of Fort Sumter for the US and ended the American Civil War.
- Lincoln, Abraham** (February 12, 1809 – April 15, 1865) was the sixteenth President of the United States. Before his election, he was a lawyer and member of the United States House of Representatives. As an outspoken opponent of the expansion of slavery in the United States, Lincoln won the Republican Party nomination in 1860 and was elected president later that year. During his term, he helped preserve the United States by leading the defeat of the Confederate States of America in the American Civil War. He introduced measures that resulted in the abolition of slavery, issuing his Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and promoting the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. His assassination, only a week after the end of the Civil War in 1865, was the first presidential assassination in U.S. history and made him a martyr for the ideal of national unity.

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<b>Manifest Destiny</b>	a phrase that expressed that the belief that the United States had a mission to expand, spreading its form of democracy and freedom. Advocates of Manifest Destiny believed that expansion was not only good, but that it was obvious ("manifest") and certain ("destiny"). Originally a political catch phrase of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century, "Manifest Destiny" eventually became a standard historical term, often used as a synonym for the territorial expansion of the United States across North America towards the Pacific Ocean and an ideological excuse or pardon for the slaughter or forced relocation of vast numbers of indigenous peoples. The term fell out of usage by U.S. policy makers early in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century, but some commentators believe that aspects of Manifest Destiny, particularly the belief in an American "mission" to promote and defend democracy throughout the world, continued to have an influence on American political ideology.
<b>Manumission</b>	the formal emancipation from slavery.
<b>Mercantile Capitalism</b>	an economic system of the major trading nations (largely European) during the 16 <sup>th</sup> , 17 <sup>th</sup> , and 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries based on the premise that their national wealth and power were best served by increasing exports from their colonies to sell at market in exchange for precious metals such as gold and silver.
<b>Miscegenation</b>	is the mixing of different ethnicities or races, especially in marriage, cohabitation, or sexual relations. <i>Interracial marriage</i> or <i>interracial dating</i> may be more common in contemporary usage. While the English word has a history of ethnocentrism and racial superiority, the Spanish, Portuguese and French words, <i>mestizaje</i> , <i>miscigenação</i> and <i>métissage</i> , connote a positive ethno-cultural melting pot. It was outlawed in the United States until the landmark civil rights decision was enacted in 1967 by the US Supreme Court and declared Virginia's anti-miscegenation statute, the "The Racial Integrity Act of 1954", unconstitutional, thereby ending all race-based legal restriction on marriage in the United States.
<b>Paternalism</b>	describes a system under which an authority presence decides to supply needs or regulate conduct of those under its control as individuals as well as in their relations to the authority and to each other. A paternalistic society is organized much in the way of a patriarchal family structure wherein the leaders are not only responsible but additionally control and mediate any interaction between other members of society.
<b>Post-bellum</b>	the period of time after or existing after the American Civil War during which slavery, the slave trade and the sale and purchase of slaves was illegal. Local and federal governments struggled to enforce the new laws and many white Americans were opposed to the ruling. During this period, nostalgia for the old slave regime became prevalent.

<b>Reconstruction</b>	refers to the period between 1863 or 1865 and 1877 when the federal government focused on resolving the consequences and aftermath of the American Civil War (1861–1865). It is also the common name for the general history of the post-Civil War era in the former Confederacy between 1865 and 1877. The start of the period is often dated to the capitulation of the Confederacy in 1865, shortly after which the practice of slavery was brought to an end after the Emancipation Proclamation.
<b>Saint Domingue Colony</b>	was a French colony from 1659 to 1804, when it became the independent nation of Haiti. This island of the Greater Antilles was “discovered” by Christopher Columbus in the winter of 1492. He named it Hispaniola. The people of culture Arawak, the Caribbean and Tainos occupied the island before the arrival of the Spaniards. In 1767, it exported 72 million pounds of raw sugar and 51 million pounds of refined sugar, one million pounds of indigo, and two million pounds of cotton. Saint-Domingue became known as the "Pearl of the West Indies" — one of the richest colonies in the 18th century French empire. By the 1780s, Saint-Domingue produced about 40 percent of all the sugar and 60 percent of all the coffee consumed in Europe. This single colony, roughly the size of the state of Maryland, produced more sugar and coffee than all of Britain's West Indian colonies combined. In 1804, Saint Domingue became the independent nation of Haiti.
<b>Seasoning</b>	the forced acclimation of newly arrived slaves. The goals of seasoning were twofold: the first was to acclimate new slaves to their surroundings including basic language acquisition, lay of the land and laws to abide; the second goal was to break any rebellious spirit that would encourage newcomers to incite trouble amongst the senior populations. Seasoning was a brutal, confusing and critical feature of the slave system.
<b>Sharecropping</b>	a leasing system in which laborers could use a portion of the land owned by another to farm for a living in return for a share of the crop produced.
<b>Subsistence</b>	is self-sufficient farming in which farmers grow only enough food to feed the family and to pay taxes or feudal dues. The typical subsistence farm has a range of crops and animals needed by the family to eat during the year. Planting decisions are made with an eye toward what the family will need during the coming year, rather than market prices.
<b>Trail of Tears</b>	was the forced relocation of Native Americans from their homelands to Indian Territory (present day Oklahoma) in the Western United States. The phrase originated from a description of the removal of the Choctaw Nation in 1831. The removals were motivated by U.S. desire for expansion, the desire to "save" Native Americans from extinction, and to profit from the acquisition of their assets and resources. Many Native Americans suffered from exposure, disease, and starvation while en route to their destinations.

**Underground  
Railroad**

a network of clandestine routes by which African slaves in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century United States attempted to escape to free states, or as far north as Canada, with the aid of abolitionists. Other routes led to Mexico or overseas. It's estimated that at its height between 1810 and 1850, between 30,000 and 100,000 people escaped enslavement via the Underground Railroad, though U.S. Census figures only account for 6,000. The Underground Railroad has captured public imagination as a symbol of freedom, and figures prominently in Black American history.

***The Whipping Man*: Teaching the Play**

**Unit Essential Question:**

How does *The Whipping Man* help us understand what unites us as people?

**Historical Context Strand Question:**

What is the significance of Exodus and Passover to African Americans?

**Literary Strand Essential Question:**

How does historical and religious allusion develop the plot, characters and meaning of *The Whipping Man*?

**Theme Strand Essential Question:**

What is the nature of love and how does that affect the way we see and relate to others?

## Historical Context

**Essential Question: In what ways might Exodus and Passover be significant for African Americans?**

In *The Whipping Man*, playwright Matthew Lopez draws connections between the enslavement of Jews in Egypt and the enslavement of Africans in the New World. Lopez sharpens the ethical conflict of the De Leon family owning slaves through the irony of their ancestors' servitude. Through a shared Jewish faith, Lopez reveals complex relations between the slaveholder and the slave.

The questions raised by the play align with state social studies standards related to people and cultures and provide an opening for historical study that is personal and immediate when combined with attending the play. The following lesson focuses on the Jewish flight from Egypt and allows students to draw parallels to slavery in America.

As noted by Michael Walzer in his book *Exodus and Revolution*, "the strength of Exodus history lies in its end, the divine promise" (10). With Canaan as the promised land and Egypt representative of bondage, Walzer argues that Exodus teaches that "the world is not all Egypt. Without that sense of possibility, oppression would be experienced as an inescapable condition" (21).

The biblical exodus of the Israelites from Egypt has been an inspiration to revolutionaries since it was recorded. Interestingly, Walzer points out that the Puritans saw their venture into America as an exodus from the religious oppression of England and Jefferson and Franklin both suggested it as the theme for the seal of the newly established United States. The story of Exodus is the story of liberation. So, Simon's departure from the De Leon plantation at the end of *The Whipping Man* represents his own exodus. With an awareness of his newfound independence, he leaves a symbolic Egypt.

Other possible lessons could be:

- Effects of slavery on the slave and the slaveholder.
- Economic factors of slaveholding societies
- Relationships between slaveholders and slaves.

## **Slavery and Exodus**

Sample Lesson: Research Lesson (3-5 days)

This lesson is designed as a foundation for study or attendance of the play to deepen student understanding of the play's plot and themes. It may be followed by a seminar discussion or other forms of analysis after attending the play to draw comparisons between the De Leon's ancestors' experiences and that of Simon and John.

### **SS (Peoples and Cultures) Standards:**

- A. Identifying societal concepts that influence the interaction among individuals, groups, and institutions in society.**
- B. Examining tension between individuality and conformity.**

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What were the circumstances surrounding the enslavement of Jews in Ancient Egypt?
2. How were they set free?
3. What is Passover and its significance to the Jewish people?
4. What are the lessons of the stories of Exodus and Passover?
5. How do they relate to Simon and John?

### **Materials:**

Markers  
Poster paper

### **Preparatory Set:**

“And Moses said unto the people. Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place:”(“Exodus” 13).

Write quote on the board and ask students:

- What do they know of the story of Moses and the Israelites?
- Does the story of the exodus of the Israelites have parallels to other historical events they can think of?
- What do the Israelites have in common with others who have fled persecution or oppression?
- You can suggest possibilities for them to consider: the Puritans, the American Revolution, American slaves, the Mariel boat people from Cuba. Brainstorm and write ideas on the board.

**Lesson Plan:**

1. Divide students into five groups or more, as class size demands.
2. Assign each group a topic to research. Be sure that one group researches the Exodus including the celebration of Passover. Others may come from the brainstorming or teacher selection.
3. Students will research the topic individually at home and return to class the next day with notes about the topic assigned.
4. Each group will meet for 15-20 minutes and collect their research, establishing subtopics: What happened, who was affected, who was the oppressor and oppressed, for example. Students will write subtopics and details from their topic on a piece of poster paper and put on wall when finished.
5. Class will then get up and look over each posted paper for connections between the experiences. (May add comments to the papers.)
6. Class will take seats. Discuss what the similarities and differences are. Revisit guiding questions.
7. Have students journal on the connections between the various experiences and what Exodus, as an allegory, might tell us about oppression and liberation. Why might African Americans, for example, relate to the Israelites?
8. Final reflection: After seeing or studying the play, ask students to analyze the parallels of the Exodus story to Simon's departure at the end of the play.

**Work Cited:**

Walzer, Michael. *Exodus and Revolution*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.

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## Literary Strand

### **Essential Question: How does historical and religious allusion develop the plot, characters, and meaning of *The Whipping Man*?**

“Allusion” is a reference in a literary work to a person, place, or thing in history or another work of literature. Allusions are often indirect or brief references to well-known characters or events (“Allusion”). Allusion is a widely used literary device and yet frequently readers and audiences skip over the unfamiliar allusions and take the familiar as either window dressing or attempts to set a work within a historical context. This lesson is designed to both help students become more aware of the powerful significance allusions can play in a work and also to deepen their understanding of their effect in Lopez’s *The Whipping Man*. This lesson could succeed a study of the historical contexts established in the above strand, which would result in less research in this strand, or it may be taught independently with students researching terms and events with which they are not familiar. For guidance, see Study Guide Introduction.

Two significant families of allusions are used within the play: Civil War history and Judaism (its ceremonies and its history). The play is set at a critical juncture in U.S. history: Lee has just surrendered at Appomattox and news of President Lincoln’s assassination comes before the play ends within one twenty four hour cycle. The South has fallen and in this historical context, two former slaves and their former owner confront their new roles. Obviously, the historical context (with which American students are at least generally familiar) is significant to the plot of the play and the themes it develops. Layered on top of this dynamic, however, is the role of the Jewish faith in the men’s lives. Jewish history plays a critical role in the climax of the play and its resolution.

Other potential literary aspects for study include:

- **The unities.** Following classical Greek form, this play is told in the same location within a twenty-four hour cycle. This device, known as “the unities” was a disciplined structure that the Greeks believed brought cohesion to a work. What is its effect here?
- **Mise en scene.** What is the significance of the *mise en scene* (stage design) and its effect on developing the play? How do the decimated house and the addition of neighbors’ belongings help to develop the play’s plot and/or meaning?
- **Character study.** How do the three characters in the play help us to understand the effects of slavery on both the slave and master?

### **“Let My People Go”: Slavery as a unifying device in *The Whipping Man***

Sample Lesson: 3 days plus play study and/or attendance

This lesson is designed to begin before studying or attending the play to heighten student awareness of allusion during study and then to reflect on the play’s meaning.

**LA Standards: I.A. 1-4, I.D. 1, 4, 6, 11, 14**

**Guiding questions:**

1. Who was Moses and how might he be relevant to slaves in America?
2. Who was Abraham (Old Testament)?
3. What links Abraham and Abraham Lincoln?
4. Why does Simon revere Abraham Lincoln?
5. What is the story of Passover?
6. How does the story of Passover relate to Simon and John?
7. What is the historical context of the setting of the play?
8. How does setting the play on April 14-15 affect the plot and theme?
9. Consider the significance of the timing in terms of the plot: how does it develop the meaning/themes of the play? (For example, what is the effect of where news of Lincoln's death falls within the plot?)
10. How does the aspect of allusion help overall to develop *The Whipping Man*?

**Preparatory set (1 day prior to play study):**

Hand out to students the lyrics to the song "Go Down Moses" (appended to end of lesson). If music is available, play the song and have students follow along. Ask:

- What is this song about?
- How does it relate to the fate of African slaves in America?

Discuss the relationship of Moses and the Israelites to the African slaves in terms of what is similar and different from students' current knowledge.

Following preliminary discussion:

1. Break students into five groups to research:
  - a. Moses (Old Testament)
  - b. Abraham (Old Testament)
  - c. Abraham Lincoln
  - d. Passover
  - e. Appomattox and the fall of the south, 1865.
2. Once students have looked up the events (may assign as homework), have them in their groups discuss the central significance of these events.
3. In class discussion, groups should present what they researched and discussed in small groups. What connects these stories?

**Materials:**

Notebook paper and writing utensils  
Poster paper  
Markers

**Lesson (study of play and 2 days afterward):**

1. During study of the play or attendance of a performance, have students write down textual references to Judaism and to historical events surrounding the Civil War.
2. Students should look up references noted (whether or not they think they know them). As with figurative language, students will better understand allusion if they look up the details and do not rely on vague recollection. For example, what is the significance of Appomattox?

3. Teacher or students should then create T-charts on large poster paper and distribute one to each group. Groups will continue from preparatory set. Groups that researched Civil War-related topics will write “Slavery and the Civil War” on their charts; groups that studied topics related to Judaism will write “Slavery and Passover” on their charts.

Set up: These charts will eventually allow comparison between the two groups of allusions. Quotes from the text will go in the left-hand column and in the right students will write a short explanation as to the significance of the text.

4. Students will, as noted above, write down specific text related to the topic set out at the top of the paper and explain what they found significant about it. Text should be pulled from the journals they kept while studying the play.
5. When finished, the poster charts should be posted next to each other in the front of the class. All of the Civil War charts on one side and the Passover on the other. Allow students a few minutes to look at what their classmates found, and add references from their own notes. This will give students with information to share on the topic they were not assigned to a chance to add their ideas. Then begin discussion:
  - a. What parallels do they see between the experiences of African American slaves and the Jews of Moses’ time? What is similar and different?
  - b. How do these parallels help to develop the play?
  - c. See guiding questions above to help students delve into the connections made by allusion in the play, beyond what they discovered themselves.
6. Students should reflect in writing on the specific allusions they found meaningful in developing their understanding of the play, its characters, plot and themes.
7. An end-of-unit assessment could focus on analyzing the effect of a prominent allusion, such as Passover, to the play’s meaning.

**Work Cited:**

“Allusion.” *All American: Glossary of Literary Terms*. 15 August 2008. University Of North Carolina at Pembroke.  
<http://www.uncp.edu/home/canada/work/allam/general/glossary.htm>.

**“Go Down Moses” (also known as “Let My People Go) lyrics**

Traditional Hymn, author and composer unknown

When Israel was in Egypt's Land,  
Let my people go,  
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

Go down, Moses,  
Way down in Egypt's Land.  
Tell ol' Pharoah,  
Let my people go.

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,  
Let my people go,  
If not, I'll smite your first-born dead,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

No more shall they in bondage toil,  
Let my people go,  
Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

The Lord told Moses what to do,  
Let my people go,  
To lead the Hebrew children through,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

O come along Moses, you'll not get lost,  
Let my people go,  
Stretch out your rod and come across,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

As Israel stood by the waterside,  
Let my people go,  
At God's command it did divide,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

When they reached the other shore,  
Let my people go,  
They sang a song of triumph o'er,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

Pharaoh said he'd go across,  
Let my people go,  
But Pharaoh and his host were lost,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

Jordan shall stand up like a wall,  
Let my people go,  
And the walls of Jericho shall fall,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

Your foes shall not before you stand,  
Let my people go,  
And you'll possess fair Canaan's land,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

O let us all from bondage flee,  
Let my people go,  
And let us all in Christ be free,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

We need not always weep and mourn,  
Let my people go,  
And wear these slavery chains forlorn,  
Let my people go.

Chorus

**Theme Strand: Love**

**Essential Question: What is the nature of love and how does it affect the way we see and relate to others?**

Humans have wrestled with defining love ever since time began. The ancient Greeks classified four types of love (*phileo, eros, storge* and *agape*), and these definitions remain as guides in psychology and humanities study today. In *The Whipping Man*, Lopez provokes his audience to define love.

In addition to love, other possible themes for exploration in *The Whipping Man* are:

- Oppression: The effect of slavery on the oppressed as well as the oppressor.
- Betrayal: De Leon selling Simon's family, and John and Caleb keeping it a secret.

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**The Ties that Bind: Love in *The Whipping Man***  
Sample Lesson in 3 days

This lesson is designed to follow viewing or study of the play. Through studying the various literary elements of character, setting and plot, students will interpret what the play teaches them about human's capacity for love.

**ELA Standards: I.D. 1, 6, 11, 13**

**SS (Peoples and Cultures) Standards:**

- A. Identifying societal concepts that influence the interaction among individuals, groups, and institutions in society.**

**Guiding questions:**

1. How can someone who owns another individual love them as a family member or partner?
2. How could someone who is owned by another individual love the person who owns them?
3. Can people "own" their families in a literal or figurative sense?
4. What is the effect of power on love?
5. What provokes Caleb to tell Simon the truth about his family and why is his confession significant to the play?
6. What kind of love can transcend ownership, if any?

**Preparatory Set:**

1. Students will do a quick journal from memory of their interpretation of each of the main characters, one at a time: Simon, Caleb, John. Teacher may provide guiding questions on the board such as:
  - a. What motivates the character?
  - b. Who is the character's family?
  - c. Does this character have power? How?
  - d. Who does the character love?Suggestion: Give students five minutes for each character and then announce to begin on next character so that each is given equal attention.
2. Place students into discussion groups of 4 and have them share their interpretations.
3. Provide each group with a large piece of paper and have them map the character's relationships, adding in Caleb's father and Simon's family. Draw lines between characters and note the type of relationship. Here, different color markers could differentiate types of relationships or just a written summary of the relationship could be written along the lines. (If using markers or colored pencils, have students create a key for the meaning of each color in a corner of the map.) For example: love, ownership, family. Students may draw as many lines between any two characters as they think relevant.
4. Discuss the map in groups and each group will choose a presenter to share with class.
5. Share.

**Lesson Plan: Padeia Seminar**

1. Ask students:
  - a. What kinds of relationships bind these characters?
  - b. Is love possible between the three characters in the play? Why? How?
2. Ask student to define love.
3. Share the following definitions of love from the Greeks:

**Eros Love** - It meant physical passion; its gratification and fulfillment.

**Storge Love** - Storge is the natural bond between mother and infant, father, children, and kin.

**Phileo Love** - Phileo love is a love of the affections. It is delighting to be in the presence of another, a warm feeling that comes and goes with intensity.

**Agape Love** - Agape love is God's kind of love. It is seeking the welfare and betterment of another regardless of how we feel. Agape does not have the primary meaning of feelings or affection. ("Paxvobisca")
4. Ask students to label on their charts from preparatory activity which kind of love, if any, exists between each of the characters.
5. In the previously formed groups, have students work together to answer the lesson's guiding questions. Each student should take notes to be able to participate in seminar.
6. Establish rules of Padeia Seminar:
  - a. Each student must have written responses to guiding questions.
  - b. Students will respect each others' opinions.
  - c. Sitting in a circle, if possible, students will self-facilitate, with the current speaker calling on the next.
  - d. Responses must remain connected to the guiding questions or in response to a point made by another student.Teachers may require participation or offer points for participation.
7. At conclusion of the seminar, allow 10 minutes for students to write a reflection that summarizes their interpretation of what the play tells them about love.

**Work Cited:**

"Four Loves." 29 August 2008. <http://paxvobisca.tripod.com/literature/fourLoves.html>