

13.

Stolen – Scene analysis (Group 1)

Activity sheet

Theatre and performance are often used to represent important social issues, encouraging different interests and perspectives to be presented and then discussed by those watching. Whether as performers or audience members, we can explore these perspectives in the same way, for example, we can develop a different understanding of ourselves by looking in the mirror.

This can challenge other methods of communication, such as the media, where issues often are not discussed but are just as closed and final as the print on the page.

In this exercise, you have the opportunity to explore the issues raised in *Bringing them home* by performing excerpts from a 1998 play, *Stolen*. Working in groups, you will develop your own production of these pieces. The aim is not so much an accurate representation of the scenes, but to explore how performance can be used to understand a social issue.

Throughout this exercise, you are encouraged to draw on what you have learned about the removal of Indigenous children from the material in this unit and bring that to your discussions and performance.

1. Reading

Read the following scenes. The background gives you some information about how these scenes work within the rest of the play.

Scenes

- ‘Am I Black or White?’ – pages 28–29
- ‘Anne’s Scene’ – page 34

Background

Anne was adopted at a very young age and she finally meets her ‘real mother’ in the first scene. Her ideas about what her ‘real’ family would be like were different to the reality. She feels torn between the two families that she is connected to. Her Indigenous and non-Indigenous connections both want her to feel like she belongs to them.

In the second scene, Anne talks directly to the audience. She tells us about how she feels a connection to both of the different cultures. A big part of her dilemma is that she doesn’t know where she fits in. Anne says: “I don’t know where I belong anymore...”

Characters

- Anne, Father, Mother, First Black Voice, Second Black Voice, Third Black Voice, White Voices (7)
- Anne

2. Discussing

In your groups, start discussing how you might perform these scenes. Consider the following production elements:

- Characterisation
- Staging (How would you use lighting? What props do you need?)
- Performance (What actions will reveal something about the issue?)
- Tone of voice

Here are some discussion questions to guide you.

Scene 1

- What were Anne's expectations of her Indigenous family?
- What effect does the sheet showing silhouettes of her families produce?
- What do Anne's non-Indigenous parents want from her?
- What do Anne's Indigenous parents want from her?
- Is Anne able to resolve these different demands?

Scene 2

- Anne tells us how she is finding it difficult to resolve the two sets of expectations from the different cultural groups. What does she say that they want?
- Anne says that she doesn't know what she wants or where she belongs anymore.
 - What has been the impact of finding out about her Indigenous heritage from her adoptive parents?
 - What has happened to Anne's sense of identity?
- What does the imagery of giving different chocolates (dark and milk) for Mother's Day suggest?

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3. Developing

Now you can develop some of the ideas that came out of your discussion and see how they will work in performance. Your group will present these scenes to the class, so the next stage is rehearsal.

- Amongst yourselves, decide who will play which part. If there are more people in your group than characters, you may want to rehearse it a couple of times with different people playing different characters. Alternatively, you may be able to think of other ways to incorporate the extra people into the scenes.
- Run through the script once by just reading lines.
- Start preparing the scenes as they will be performed. Use your discussion time to make decisions about movement, props etc.
- Obviously, you will not be introducing lighting or sound into your performance, but it is a good idea to think about how you would use these if you could.

4. Performing

Each group will present their scenes to the class.

Each performance will be followed by a discussion of the performance and what elements of the issue were brought out. Feedback on further work and development can also be provided.