Study Guide: Tribes

BY: Nina Raine
DIRECTED BY: Daryl Cloran

A Theatrefront Production produced in association with Canadian Stage and Theatre Aquarius
A Canadian premiere

Feb 2 – Mar 2, 2014

Overview and Classroom Activities
Study Guide: Tribes

A letter to teachers:

Education is a vital part of what we do at Canadian Stage. We are committed to sharing material with our audiences that will challenge, enrich and deepen their perspectives. Tribes by Nina Raine is a superb example of a play that will effectively engage and impact modern young audiences. This depiction of a contemporary family touches on relevant themes for maturing individuals such as identity, community, communication and independence.

Tribes is a thoughtful yet funny portrayal of how one family navigates the fact that their son Billy is deaf. Billy’s unconventional family has tried to raise him as part of the hearing world and neglected to adopt American Sign Language (ASL) in their home. When Billy meets Sylvia, a young woman who is becoming deaf and been raised by a deaf family, he finally discovers what it means to be heard. The cast of characters is eclectic and offers an array of relatable, or at least familiar, personalities for students. Furthermore, the characters’ interactions are unfiltered allowing for dialogue that reflects the way many young people actually speak today. Finally, through the use of innovative technology, audiences will be immersed in a unique and memorable multi-media world. The sum of these elements is a collection of hilarious, shocking and introspective moments.

Tribes was the winner of the 2012 Drama Desk and New York Theatre Critics Circle awards. Canadian Stage is delighted to host its Canadian premiere, a Theatrefront Production, produced in association with Theatre Aquarius. Directed by Daryl Cloran in the intimate Berkeley Street Theatre, audiences will get an up-close-and-personal view of one family, their joys and their struggles.

Tribes is certain to evoke enlightening conversations in classrooms about our unique identities, how we communicate with each other, and the tribes with which we choose to associate. It is a show that will be universally adored by students in grades 11 and up, with tangible connections to sociology, visual art, media studies, family studies, leadership, and drama curriculums. I encourage you to consider utilizing the context and activity ideas found within this document in conjunction with a workshop at the Deaf Culture Centre (www.deafculturecentre.ca) to achieve the most complete experience of Tribes for your students.

Please contact me at my digits below to further discuss our opportunities and to book your student tickets. See you at the theatre!

Cheers,

Erin Schachter
Education & Audience Development Manager
416.367.8243 x280
eschachter@canadianstage.com
A Student’s Guide to Live Theatre

Here are your responsibilities:

1. Thank you in advance for turning off your cell phone, iPod, iPhone and anything else that makes noise before entering the theatre. These items distract the actors, your classmates and you! They can also affect our in-house technical signals and spoil the show. This is a common courtesy. Vibrate/silent is not the same as off.

2. No texting! Because your phone is off you will need to wait until intermission to update your Facebook status (and when you login, link to Canadian Stage at www.facebook.com/cdnstage) or tweet to us @canadianstage to tell us your thoughts.

3. No headphones of any sort. Listening to your own media is not only rude, but distracting to those around you.

4. In order to respect our theatre and you, our patrons, we only allow water in the theatre and no other food or drinks.

5. Please refrain from talking during the performance - the actors and the audience will hear you! (Laugh when it’s funny, cry when it’s sad. Otherwise, zip it!)

6. Please sit in the seat assigned to you. If you sit elsewhere the seating for everyone is disrupted.

7. Represent your school and yourself well with good behavior. Theatre is awesome. You should be too!

8. Keep an open mind and think critically. Theatre is engaging and challenging. Be prepared to examine what you see rather than judge it. You’ll be surprised how much you learn, even about yourself, when you try to see things differently.

9. Enjoy the show and come again soon!
Synopsis

*Tribes* is a thoughtful yet funny portrayal of how one family navigates the fact that their son Billy is deaf. Billy’s unconventional family has tried to raise him as part of the hearing world and neglected to adopt American Sign Language (ASL) in their home. Now Billy has returned from university and is again struggling to integrate into his hearing family. When Billy meets Sylvia, a young woman who is becoming deaf and been raised by a deaf family, he finally discovers what it means to be heard. She teaches Billy sign language and exposes him to a whole new community of others who are deaf or going deaf. *Tribes* follows Billy’s attempt to be a part of many worlds at once: his family’s, Sylvia’s, and the Deaf community, all while striving to find his own identity.

The cast of characters is eclectic and offers an array of relatable, or at least familiar, personalities for students. Furthermore, the characters’ interactions are unfiltered allowing for dialogue that reflects the way many young people actually speak today. Finally, through the use of innovative technology, audiences will be immersed in a unique and memorable multi-media world. The sum of these elements is a collection of hilarious, shocking and introspective moments.

Characters

- **Billy** - a deaf man; son of Christopher and Beth, brother of Ruth and Daniel, partner of Sylvia
- **Sylvia** – a woman who is going deaf; girlfriend of Billy
- **Daniel** – Billy’s brother; sometimes hears voices in his head, writing his thesis
- **Christopher** – Billy’s father; sharp, critical, witty, a writer
- **Beth** – Billy’s mother; kind, caring, attempting to write a novel
- **Ruth** – Billy’s sister; a recreational opera singer and lover of music

Theatrical Context

*Tribes*, written by Nina Raine, had its world premiere at the Royal Court Theatre in London, England on October 14, 2010. *Tribes* went on to successfully premiere Off-Broadway in North America at the Barrow Street Theatre in New York on March 4, 2012. The play was then performed at Center Theatre Group in Los Angeles from February to April 2013, La Jolla Playhouse from June to July 2013, and the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota from October to November 2013.

*Tribes* has been nominated for many awards including six Lucille Lortel awards, four Outer Critics Circle awards, and two Drama League awards. The London production of *Tribes* was nominated for an Olivier award for Best Play. In addition to all of its nominations, *Tribes* is the winner of several awards including the 2012 Drama Desk award for Outstanding Play, the 2012 New York Drama Critics Circle award, and the 2012 Off-Broadway Alliance award for Best Play.
About the playwright

Originally published online by City Theatre Company, http://www.citytheatrecompany.org/nina-raine/

Nina Raine is an English director and playwright who began her career as a director-in-training at the Royal Court Theatre after graduating from the University of Oxford. She dramaturged and directed Unprotected at the Liverpool Everyman (TMA Best Director Award, Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award) and her debut play, Rabbit, premiered at the Old Red Lion Theatre in 2006 and transferred to the West End before going to New York. Rabbit won the Charles Wintour Evening Standard and Critics Circle Award for Most Promising Playwright. Nina also directed her second play, Tiger Country, at Hampstead Theatre. She directed Jumpy at the Royal Court Theatre, later transferring to the West End, and Shades (Critics Circle and Evening Standard Awards for Most Promising Newcomer).

Nina Raine – Why I wrote Tribes

Originally published online by Royal Court Theatre in September 2010

I first had the idea of writing Tribes when I watched a documentary about a deaf couple. The woman was pregnant. They wanted their baby to be deaf. I was struck by the thought that this was actually what many people feel, deaf or otherwise. Parents take great pleasure in witnessing the qualities they have managed to pass on to their children. Not only a set of genes. A set of values, beliefs. Even a particular language. The family is a tribe: an infighting tribe but intensely loyal.

Once I started looking around, tribes were everywhere. I went to New York and was fascinated by the orthodox Jews in Williamsburg, who all wear a sort of uniform. They were like an enormous extended family.

And just like some religions can seem completely mad to non-believers, so the rituals and hierarchies of a family can seem nonsensical to an outsider.

I learnt some sign language. I found it immensely tiring. Sign demands that you heighten your facial expressions – ‘like’ – you stroke your neck downwards and smile beatifically, ‘don’t like’ you stroke your neck upwards and make a face almost as if you are throwing up. I felt like I was being made to assume a personality that didn’t fit me. I realized how much we express our personality through the way we speak. I didn’t like having to change my personality. And sign has a different grammar. I felt stupid, slow, uncomprehending. Was this what it might be like to be a deaf person trying to follow a rapid spoken conversation? But I was also envious. I loved the way sign looked when used by those fluent in it. It could be beautiful. Wouldn’t it be great to be a ‘virtuoso’ in sign? They must exist, like poets or politicians in the hearing world...

Finally, I thought about my own family. Full of its own eccentricities, rules, in-jokes and punishments. What if someone in my (hearing, garrulous) family had been born deaf?

All these things went into the play, which took a very long time to write. All I knew was that at the beginning we would be plunged into a family dinner. The first scene was easy to write. I wrote it with no idea of the characters’ names, or of how many siblings there were. But oddly, it is one of the scenes that has hardly changed during the writing of the play. It sat there for a very long time. And then, slowly, I wrote the rest. The crazy family was born fully formed. I just had to work out what happened to them.
Study Links
Here are some curriculum connection points and sample discussion questions. These questions may be used to prompt conversations in your classroom.

English
*Listening to Understand:* In *Tribes*, there are many arguments between various members of Billy’s family. How might the characters in the play better use active listening strategies in order to effectively communicate with one another? (e.g., pose questions to one another that require the speaker to justify and extend his/her beliefs; understand and acknowledge a dissenting opinion in a family discussion).

*A Writer’s Perspective:* Explain various ways in which *Tribes* playwright Nina Raine may have been influenced by her personal experiences, beliefs, and socio-cultural contexts. For example, how does the social and/or political situation of England affect her work? What are some common themes in her writing that reflect this? Discuss.

How does Raine’s personal experience affect the creation of her characters as a playwright? Ask students which character they connect with the most. Have students write a journal entry from this character’s perspective expressing how they might feel at their most climactic moment in the play. Make sure to describe what social, personal, and cultural notions are influencing particular feelings.

Media Studies
*Individuals and Groups:* How would the overall message of *Tribes* change if Billy was raised in a deaf environment as opposed to a hearing environment? What if all of his family members were deaf as well?

*Stereotypes:* Are there any stereotypes depicted in *Tribes*? What specific research methods could inform how Raine represents various communities? [VIDEO]: Nina Raine’s research for *Tribes* on The Culture Show (BBC)

*Effects of using Media Technology:* In *Tribes*, there are many instances where projections are used to display the characters’ innermost thoughts that are never spoken aloud. How does this use of technology further the plot of *Tribes*? What are some other ways in which the delivery of content to audiences has changed as a result new technologies? Describe the effects of those changes.

Family Studies
How are Billy’s needs as an adolescent connected to his individual behavior? Consider, for example, how identity development and the corresponding need to belong to a group can affect social behaviours.

*Relating to Others:* Describe the characteristics of a healthy relationship (trust, mutual support, clear limits and boundaries, humour, honesty) and an unhealthy relationship (mistrust, jealousy, isolation, control, tension). How would you describe Billy’s relationship with various members of his family? Sylvia? Healthy or unhealthy? A combination? Why?
Drama

Presentation Techniques and Technologies: In *Tribes*, Nina Raine uses a projector to display subtext. Discuss the concept of subtext. Once students have a grasp on subtext, have students form small groups. In groups, have students write a brief scene or a pick a short scene that they are familiar with. Challenge groups to include projected subtext in their scenes just like in *Tribes*. If there is no on-site projector, have students write subtext on pieces of paper or bristol board and discover creative ways to use this in their scene.

Drama and Society – Issue-based drama: Issue-based drama takes place in spaces "not usually defined as theatre buildings, with participants who may or may not be skilled in theatre arts and to audiences who have a vested interest in the issue taken up by the performance or are members of the community addressed by the performance" (Prendergast and Saxon, 6). Could *Tribes* be considered issue-based drama? Why? What are some of the social issues that are prevalent throughout the script? Discuss.

Visual Arts

De’via Art: De’via is a movement in which Deaf artists moved away from mainstream art in order to create art that gives a voice to their unique cultural experiences. What kind of experiences have you had that are you unique to you that you may be able to express through visual art using colours, shapes, and textures? Why are these experiences unique to you? How is expressing these experiences through visual art helpful?

Critical Analysis of De’via Art: Find images of De’via art to display to the class from well known De’via artists: Betty G. Miller, Chuck Baird. Ask students: What do you see when you look at this art work for the first time? What do you think this art work is about? Do you think everyone would share your opinion or understanding? Discuss.

Sociology

Group Membership: Explain, from a sociological perspective, how Billy’s membership in the Deaf community may influence him as an individual, a member of his family, and a member of the broader community. How might previous discrimination and exclusion from various social groups affect him? What are some examples of specific groups that might form to serve the collective needs of the Deaf community? (Art classes, social functions, lectures, etc.)

Leadership

Connecting with Community: It took Billy a very long time to discover the deaf community. His family didn’t quite understand that he had different needs than them socially, so he wasn’t exposed to deaf culture growing up. How did Billy’s family stand in the way of him connecting to the deaf community? Why do you think this happened? Were there any issues of diversity that may have separated Billy’s viewpoints from his families? (e.g., gender, race, culture, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, age, religion, socioeconomic level).

Peer Influences: In what ways did Sylvia help Billy become a leader and learn to make decisions independent of his family?
Historical and Social Background

1. **Hearing Loss**  
*Originally published in Center Theatre Group Educator Resource – Tribes (Megan Mathews, 2013)*

“The lives of Deaf people are far from silent but very loudly click, buzz, swish, pop, roar, and whir.” – *Deaf in America*

The onset of Billy and Sylvia’s hearing loss is very different. Billy has been deaf all his life. Sylvia had been the only hearing member in her family. Now in her twenties, she is experiencing the same degenerative hearing loss that affected her siblings. Individuals also experience a range of severity along a continuum from mild to profound based on the number of decibels they can hear. Someone with mild hearing loss would have trouble hearing sounds that are less than 40 decibels, such as rain. Profound hearing loss means a person is unable to hear anything less than 90 decibels, such as a leaf blower. In addition, the pattern of hearing loss varies from person to person. Billy still has a very small amount of residual hearing, which is why he’s able to use hearing aids. Describing her own experience, Sylvia says, “I still get a lot...vowels. The low frequencies, like your voice, I can still hear. It just...doesn’t make sense anymore. I can’t get the consonants.” Sylvia is also surprised that losing her hearing doesn’t mean everything just goes silent: “No one told me it was going to be this noisy going deaf... It’s this buzz...this roar and outside – it’s all – black.”

2. **Anatomy of the Ear**  
*Originally published in Center Theatre Group Educator Resources – Tribes (Megan Mathews, 2013)*

The ear is a finely tuned, complicated, and delicate machine. It is made up of three parts: the outer ear, the middle ear, and the inner ear. The outer ear includes the external ear, which acts as a funnel for sound waves, and the auditory canal, which directs those sound waves into the middle ear. When the sound waves reach the middle ear, they cause the eardrum to vibrate, which in turn causes three tiny bones – the hammer, anvil, and stirrup – to vibrate as well. In the snail-like cochlea of the inner ear, tiny cells along the spiraling path turn those vibrations into electrical impulses, which hit the auditory nerve and are directed to the brain to be interpreted. Hearing loss can occur if any part of this system doesn’t function properly. Causes of hearing loss are varied and include heredity, aging, excessive exposure to loud noises, head injury, and infection.
3. **American Sign Language (ASL)**
   
   *information from The Canadian Encyclopedia Online – [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com)*
   
   Despite being called American Sign Language, ASL has become a universal language for the Deaf. The majority of culturally Deaf English-speaking Canadian's use ASL. In Quebec, they use Langue des Signes Quebecoise (LSQ) which is a distinct francophone sign language. Both sign languages have their own “dialects” and “accents” depending on the region they are used in.

4. **The Development of Deaf Education and the Deaf Community in Canada**
   
   *information from The Canadian Encyclopedia Online – [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com) as well as Deaf Heritage in Canada: A Distinctive, Diverse, and Enduring Culture (Carbin and Smith 1996).*
   
   Just like England, where *Tribes* takes place, Canada has a rich deaf history. Here are some interesting facts about the evolution of Canada’s deaf community:
   
   - “Throughout history, deaf Canadians have exhibited intense feelings for their sign language and have made concentrated efforts to keep it in their education and daily lives (Carbin and Smith 317)”.
   - “Research conducted to date does not appear to justify the use of the term Canadian Sign Language. The majority of Anglophone Canadians use American Sign Language (Carbin and Smith 319)”.
   - “Some scholars claim that the foundation of what is now known as American Sign Language appeared in North America in 1816 when Thomas Hopkins Gaullaudet, an American protestant minister, returned home from Europe and brought with him Laurent Clerc, a deaf Frenchman... a year later they introduced a version of methodical signs (sometimes called Signed French) used in France, which they had modified for use in the United States (Carbin and Smith 320)”.
   - It is believed that deaf people in North America had been signing already within their homes and local towns, but there was not yet a regulated language. Once deaf students began to attend deaf residential schools - inspired by the 1817 opening of Thomas Gaullaudet’s American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons in Hartford, Connecticut - they started to combine and incorporate all of their local signs, leading to what would later be called American Sign Language (Carbin and Smith 320).
   - “Between 1828 and 1850, 13 Canadians attended the American Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons in Hartford. Another 17 were registered at the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb between 1821 and 1853... it is logical to assume that the sign language used in American schools spread into Canada as Canadian students attending those schools returned home (Carbin and Smith 321)”.
   - “When schools for deaf students began to be established in Canada, many of the first teachers (both Canadians and Americans) were trained in American schools. They, too, brought with them the sign language being used in the United States... In this way, what is now called American Sign Language gained a foothold in the Canadian educational system and in the developing Canadian Deaf community (Carbin and Smith 321)”.
   - After deaf students finished their educational training, they tended to settle or work in cities close to the residential schools. The desire to socialize with people who shared a common language was one of the key factors in the establishment of Deaf communities. To stay in touch with each other, deaf Canadians formed debating societies, religious organizations, literary societies, athletic clubs and social clubs. These organizations strengthened the bonds among deaf people and the burgeoning Deaf Culture.
Some national deaf organizations include: the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf, the Canadian Association of the Deaf, the Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada, Canadian Deaf Ministries, Deaf Canada Conference, and Silent Voice Canada.

Critical Exploration

1. Tribes

Nina Raine on Community
originally published online by Royal Court Theatre

“I was thinking, deafness is just one example of a kind of community, and there are loads of others. When you start looking, you see how they all share the way that deaf people talk about other deaf people– It’s the same as how some Jewish people talk about other Jewish people. About how observant you are. And it’s like intellectuals talking about other intellectuals. Any kind of group, they all share certain qualities.

And then it boils down to the family– It’s like the smallest niche you can get. That’s what the play boils down to for me, the family, a tiny little kingdom with its internal rules and hierarchies and weirdnesses that are unquestioned. And how difficult it is when you meet someone that you fall in love with, how do you introduce that person into the group that already exists, the family.”

Community as a Tribe
Martin Atherton, professor of British Sign Language and Deaf Studies in the School of Education and Social Science at University of Central Lancashire, suggests that “communities can be established through a number of shared factors, such as social, geographic, relational, and political connections. Feelings of community may result from shared residence or alternatively through shared characteristics; both elements need not be shared in order to form a community” (59).

With this definition in mind, it is evident that Billy recognizes shared characteristics between himself, Sylvia, and his peers in the deaf community. He discovers that he is part of a unique group of people and feels empowered by this sense of belonging. Billy finds the courage to tell his family how he feels about their contributions, or lack thereof, to his deaf upbringing:

an excerpt from Tribes (Raine 74-5):
SYLVIA (translating in sign for Billy): The bland level of conversation. ‘How’s work?’ ‘How are you?’ You never explain your arguments. You’re all laughing about something and I have to say ‘What?’ ‘What?’ ‘What?’ ‘Oh nothing. It was about a book.’ I’m tired of saying ‘what what what’ all the time.
CHRISTOPHER: You mean you’re tired of being deaf.
SYLVIA (translating in sign for Billy): No. That’s not what I’m saying.
CHRISTOPHER: Well, that’s what I’m saying.
SYLVIA (translating in sign for Billy): I don’t have to feel deaf.
BETH: But we do explain - I
SYLVIA (translating in sign for Billy): No, you don’t. I’ve had to fit in with you. I’ve waited. I’ve waited and waited. I keep thinking, I’ll wait and you’ll come to me but you never do. You can’t be bothered.
As demonstrated by the above excerpt from *Tribes*, Billy realizes that he “doesn’t have to feel deaf” – he recognizes that he is able to communicate with the deaf community in a way that he has never been able to communicate with his family.

**Social Identity Theory**

*Information taken from Simply Psychology – Articles for Students, www.simplypsychology.org
Saul McLeod (2008)*

In 1979, a British social psychologist named Henri Tajfel created Social Identity Theory. Social Identity Theory proposes that human beings automatically classify themselves into groups - sometimes more than one per person - and they build their identity based on membership in specific groups as well as through implementing boundaries with groups that they are not a part of. Social Identity Theory suggests that being a part of groups offers identity (defines who we are) as well as builds self esteem (makes us feel good about who we are); people are known to develop a strong sense of self based on their personal group membership. Social Identity Theory is demonstrated in *Tribes* as Billy discovers his identity once he fully immerses himself in the deaf community while also establishing a romantic relationship with a deaf partner. Audiences witness Billy slowly adopt an identity based on his group participation. Furthermore, his willingness to finally confront his family indicates that he has increased confidence as a result of subscribing to/actively participating in the deaf community.

As humans, we often follow the normative process of grouping objects together; this process also applies to grouping humans together. By doing this, we highlight both the similarities and differences between groups. This creates a “them” (out-group) versus “us” (in-group) mentality. For Billy in *Tribes*, the “them” (out-group) is his family and the “us” (in-group) is the deaf community.

As explained by British Psychology Lecturer Saul McLeod, there are three mental processes involved in evaluating others as “us” and “them”:

1) **Social Categorization**

Humans categorize other humans in order to understand various social environments. Some examples of human categories are: student, teacher, Christian, Muslim, female, and male. Humans may be categorized in various ways such as race, class, gender, employment, religion, and ability. In *Tribes*, Billy could be categorized by the fact that he is deaf and the other members of his family could be categorized by the fact that they are hearing. When people are assigned to various groups, this allows us to tell things about people, or at the very least make assumptions. We are also able to tell things about ourselves by belonging to different categories, although it is important to note that humans are not restricted to one single category. For example, a person can be a student, a mother and a server at a restaurant.

2) **Social Identification**

Once people have joined a group, they tend to adopt its identity and conform to the standards and consistencies of the group. When a person adopts a group identity, it is usually emotionally
significant to their self esteem. A person’s self esteem will begin to grow as well as become attached to their affiliation with a particular group. This behavior is demonstrated by Billy In *Tribes*. Billy meets Sylvia who introduces him to the deaf community. He embraces the deaf community and takes a great sense of pride in his involvement. With the help of Sylvia, he finds a job that relies on his lip reading capabilities. He also asks his family to learn sign language in order to be able to communicate with him in his preferred language. This experience is highly emotional for Billy because he realizes that he feels more socially accepted in the deaf community than he does in his hearing family.

3) **Social Comparison**

Once we have established ourselves as part of a group, we compare our group to other groups. For group members to maintain individual self esteem, their group must be viewed as respectable when compared to other groups. Sometimes in this stage, hostility and prejudice can be developed. In *Tribes*, Billy becomes hostile towards his family who he believes never put forth the effort to understand him as a deaf individual:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An excerpt from <em>Tribes</em> (Raine 73-4):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYLVIA</strong> (translating in sign for Billy): Billy says that he’s decided to stop talking to you. He thinks you should all learn sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He says... he’s spent his life trying to understand you and now he thinks you should try to understand him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BETH</strong>: Billy...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHRISTOPHER</strong>: I’m sorry. Did I hear that right? Did she just say what I thought she said?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYLVIA</strong>: He says, this was the only way you were ever going to take any notice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BETH</strong>: But, Billy...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYLVIA</strong>: He says that when you all learn sign, then he’ll talk to you again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As established above, Billy is comparing his social situation to his family’s: deaf (us) versus hearing (them).

It is necessary to remember that in Social Identity Theory, group membership is not a forged feeling. In Tajfel’s theory, being part of a group is authentic, genuine, and crucial to an individual’s existence.

**Challenge your class:** Can you use Billy or any other character in *Tribes* to assist in identifying various social psychology theories? See appendix A for links to more relevant theories.

**Family as a Tribe**

*published in The Dominion Post on April 5, 2013*

"People like their offspring to be a member of their tribe. If you are of a particular religion you take your children to that church. You don't say to your children 'I am not going to say to you anything about my beliefs, make your own minds up'. You can't help but slightly indoctrinate in your way of life." – Nina Raine
Billy is born into a family of hearing people who dismiss the fact that he is deaf. They discouraged him from actively participating in the deaf community. Billy’s father Christopher does not allow Billy to participate in deaf activities or learn sign language because he views it as a barrier to Billy’s development as part of the hearing community. Christopher overlooks the fact that allowing Billy to experience deaf culture may be what he needs. Instead, Christopher imposes his own personal values on Billy in order to make sure he remains part of the family tribe. **How do Christopher’s rules shape Billy’s views? What do you think it feels like for Billy when he meets Sylvia and is exposed to a new culture?**

Billy expresses that Sylvia listens to him in a way that his family does not. Once Billy learns sign language, he feels like he is a member of the deaf community. He had never felt like this in his own family, but had never expressed his true feelings to them. Once he meets Sylvia and leaves home, he begins to find a new identity and explore new options independently. **How did Billy’s upbringing contribute to his socialization in society? How did his behaviour change outside of the context of his family?**

**Isolation within a Tribe**

In addition to community, identity, and family, *Tribes* also explores the idea of isolation. Isolation can be tied back to Tafjel’s Social Identity Theory. An “us” (or a “me”) versus “them” mentality is created by both those who are isolated and those who are not.

Simon Floodgate is the Director of Theatre Arts, Education and Deaf Studies at the University of Reading. In “Drama, Disability, and Education” by Andy Kempe, Floodgate writes a chapter on Performing Disability where he includes a brief case study on *Tribes*. Floodgate suggests that Billy is the least isolated person in his entire family and discusses what this might mean for Billy’s familial role:

not only has he been away at university, but he forms a relationship with Sylvia that means that he can again move out of the family home and nurture himself. He meets other deaf people via Sylvia and begins to learn [sign language]. His father, Christopher, goes into self-isolation – wearing headphones while learning Chinese. His brother and sister are also unable to successfully form relationships, and both feel incredibly isolated within the family set-up. Billy is the glue for them all (67).

Although Billy is deaf, his family exhibits an inability to hear as they refuse to listen to each other, and most notably Billy, throughout the play. **What do you think Nina Raine is suggesting by creating a deaf character that is surrounded by a family who does not listen?**
2. Communication

Nina Raine on Communication

*published in the Columbia Spectator on December 11, 2012*

“How many ways there are of communicating and not communicating. You can communicate through sign language, and what happens when someone’s words are not the same as your words. Just because we have a word for it doesn’t mean that we agree on the feeling that is behind that word. How words are an attempt. And I suppose that is where the music comes in, and music has no words.

With opera, half the time you don’t know what they’re saying, but we feel *Oh, this is sad.* And I’m interested in how come you and me can listen to the same piece of music and actually agree on what is sad and what is happy. We’ll agree in a way that we won’t agree about a word. All the levels and layers of language.”

Communication between Characters

In *Tribes*, each character displays a characteristic, hobby, or vocation that intentionally associates them with a specific form of communication. Nina Raine’s choice to do this is cognizant in order to challenge the audience to consider the infinite ways that we communicate.

**Billy**: Billy grew up in a household of hearing people who didn’t know how to use American Sign Language. Because of this, he became an exceptional lip reader. Although lip reading is difficult, many members of the deaf community highly recommend learning to lip read, stating that they became “less conscious” of their hearing ability once they learned to read lips (Burchett 12). Billy really embraces his ability to read lips once he meets Sylvia, even using it to assist him in employment. Eventually, Sylvia also teaches Billy American Sign Language (ASL).

**Lip Reading Activity**

*developed by Royal Court Theatre, originally published in Royal Court Theatre – Tribes Background Pack*

http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/education/educational-resources/

Split class into partners. Label each person A or B. Make two parallel lines, A facing B about 10 feet apart (if the room allows it – as far as you can but so that you can still see their lips). Hands should be either behind your back or at your sides. A should start first by telling B what they did yesterday morning using only words. It’s important not to exaggerate your mouth movements – be as natural as you can be. Find out how much B could understand. Swap and let B to the same.

Now decide on a fairy tale or other simple story (something like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* or *Little Red Riding Hood* or *The Three Little Pigs*). Mute your voice and tell the story to your partner across the room, using only your lips and mouth but not your voice. When your partner thinks s/he has guessed the story, they should raise their hand to indicate. If some students are having trouble understanding, allow
their partner to use their hands. When everyone involved in the activity has finished, discuss how much you were able to understand. Ask whether being able to use your hands helped in any way.

**CHRISTOPHER:** Christopher is adamant throughout the entire script that “we don't know what feelings are until we put them into words!” (Raine 16). Because Christopher is a writer, written and spoken language is the most effective way of communicating for him. He goes so far as to say that the “whole point of art” is “putting feelings into words so that we know how to feel them.” In opposition, Beth believes that art speaks for itself through the feelings it evokes.

**BETH:** Beth is very caught up in her new found passion, opera. She is an artistic soul and feels that she can communicate her true feelings through singing. She states: “But what’s great about opera is it creates feelings, that, that you can’t put into words.”

**DANIEL:** Daniel believes that language is “worthless.” He shares a passage from his master’s thesis that claims “we’re prisoners of our own subjectivity. The subjectivity of our own perceptions.” He continues his thoughts in the passage below:

Excerpt from *Tribes* (Raine, 12)

DANIEL: ...Language is radically indeterminate. Language doesn’t determine meaning. We have words but they are token, they are a pale photocopy of life.
... DANIEL: ...How can you convey a nexus of feelings with words.

**RUTH:** Ruth attempts to please all members of her family. She communicates in whichever method is most relevant to the person she is trying to connect with. She is often at a loss for words - communicating through silence may be her largest contribution. Ruth tries to write a book but Christopher insults her writing; she thinks it may be nice to learn sign language for Billy, but never does; and she always intervenes when Daniel and Beth are fighting however, she never succeeds in getting them to stop. Ruth has trouble finding a voice of her own in a very outspoken family.

**SYLVIA:** Sylvia grew up as the only hearing person in a deaf family so she uses American Sign Language to communicate. Now that Sylvia is slowly losing her hearing, she uses ASL even more than before.

Playwright to Audience Communication

In *Tribes*, Nina Raine communicates with her audience through various outlets including dialogue between characters, American Sign Language, multi-media projections, and perhaps the most compelling method of communication, *subtext*.

**What is Subtext?**
Subtext is defined as “an underlying and often distinct theme in a piece of writing or conversation” by the Oxford English Dictionary. In simpler terms, subtext is a thought or thoughts that are implied by text but that are not said outright by characters. Normally, it is left up to readers or audience members to determine subtext based on the way that the text is written or acted. Often times on paper, subtext is
implied with ellipses or written actions. However in Tribes, the subtext is revealed through the juxtaposition of spoken dialogue and visual projections. The combination of these two contrary methods allows the reader to interpret or “read” themes or opinions that are not explicitly spoken by characters. For example:

An excerpt from Tribes (Raine 71):

BETH. How's the case going?

PROJECTED SUBTEXT: Why isn’t Billy saying anything?

...  
BETH. It's lovely to be busy. You haven't told me anything about it yet, Billy. I want to hear all about it. I won't put it in my book, promise.

PROJECTED SUBTEXT: What’s wrong?

In the above excerpt, Beth can clearly sense that something is wrong with Billy but instead of asking him outright she hints at what she’s really saying through subtext. Normally, it would be up to the reader of the text to uncover Beth's internal dialogue. However, the reader is able to view her innermost thoughts because of visual projections that are written into the script.

Activity – Communicating without Words

Developed by Center Theatre, originally published in Center Theater’s Tribes Educator Resource
http://www.centertheatregroup.org/Global/Production/2013/Tribes/tribeseducatorresources.pdf

Throughout Tribes, we witness characters expressing themselves verbally, through sign language, body language, gestures, facial expressions and silence. While we might not know American Sign Language, we all communicate in a variety of ways in our daily lives.

Discuss with your class: What and how do we communicate without words in daily life? “Cover the space”: Have students move through the space without talking or touching. Have students move as if they are: Light, heavy, explosive, angry, in love, rebellious, confused, depressed, happy (and any other feelings you would like to add).

After covering the space while communicating the feelings above with their body, ask students to distill their movement into one gesture. Pick two opposite emotions and ask the class to communicate these feelings using only their shoulders, then their head and finally with just their hands. Discuss what it feels like to communicate without spoken words. Did you find it easier or harder to express yourself? Did you find it easier or harder to understand the emotions/gestures of others?
3. De'VIA Art

What is De'VIA Art?
all information in the following section is from Deaf Art Online, www.deafart.org

De'VIA stands for DeafView/ImageArt. De'VIA is a movement in which Deaf artists steer away from mainstream art in order to create art that gives a voice to their unique cultural experiences. De'VIA is different from mainstream art because it highlights themes of Deaf culture and representations of Deaf experiences. De'VIA artists are not the same as Deaf artists: De'VIA art “is created when the artist intends to express their Deaf experience through visual art” whereas Deaf artists “use art in any form, media, or subject matter, and who are held to the same artistic standards as other artists.”

Eight Deaf artists came together in May 1989 for the Deaf Way Arts Festival at Gallaudet University where they created a manifesto to fully define DeafView/Image Art:

The De'VIA Manifesto
“De'VIA represents Deaf artists and perceptions based on their Deaf experiences. It uses formal art elements with the intention of expressing innate cultural or physical Deaf experience. These experiences may include Deaf metaphors, Deaf perspectives, and Deaf insight in relationship with the environment (both the natural world and Deaf cultural environment), spiritual and everyday life.

De'VIA can be identified by formal elements such as Deaf artists’ possible tendency to use contrasting colors and values, intense colors, contrasting textures. It may also most often include a centralized focus, with exaggeration or emphasis on facial features, especially eyes, mouths, ears, and hands. Currently, Deaf artists tend to work in human scale with these exaggerations, and not exaggerate the space around these elements.

There is a difference between Deaf artists and De'VIA. Deaf artists are those who use art in any form, media, or subject matter, and who are held to the same artistic standards as other artists. De'VIA is created when the artist intends to express their Deaf experience through visual art. De'VIA may also be created by deafened or hearing artists, if the intention is to create work that is born of their Deaf experience (a possible example would be a hearing child of Deaf parents). It is clearly possible for Deaf artists not to work in the area of De'VIA.

While applied and decorative arts may also use the qualities of De'VIA (high contrast, centralized focus, exaggeration of specific features), this manifesto is specifically written to cover the traditional fields of visual fine arts (painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, printmaking) as well as alternative media when used as fine arts such as fiber arts, ceramics, neon, and collage.”

Created in May, 1989, at The Deaf Way. The signatories were: Dr. Betty G. Miller, painter; Dr. Paul Johnston, sculptor; Dr. Deborah M. Sonnenstrahl, art historian; Chuck Baird, painter; Guy Wonder, sculptor; Alex Wilhite, painter; Sandi Inches Vasnick, fiber artist; Nancy Creighton, fiber artist; and Lai-Yok Ho, video artist. Some famous artists in the genre of De'VIA include: Betty Miller, Paul Johnston, Chuck Baird, Mary Thornley, Robin Taylor, Irene Bartok, Thad Martin, Joan Popovich-Kutsher, Ann Silver, Ethan Sinnott, Harry Williams, Lee Ivey.
Bettigee The Deaf Picnic, 1994, Betty G. Miller

Deaf Identity Crayons: Then and Now, Ann Silver
Why Me, Chuck Baird

Deaf Education Pinball, Paul Johnston
For more examples of De’VIA art, visit
http://www.deafart.org/Artworks/Deaf_Studies_VI_Artworks/deaf_studies_vi_artworks.html

De’VIA in Toronto
information below is from the Deaf Culture Centre website, www.deafculturecentre.ca

The Deaf Culture Centre (http://www.deafculturecentre.ca), located in the Historic Distillery District in Toronto, acts as “a symbol of the Deaf community celebrating Deaf life. It is a public forum both historical and forward-looking. The Deaf Culture Centre is a fun gathering place that is open to the public and rooted in the Deaf community. It provides education, culture, visual and performing arts”.
Admission to the Deaf Culture Centre is free.

The Deaf Culture Centre has many collections of art including De’VIA art. The Centre also educates students in grades 9 through 12 about DeafView/ImageArt, holding curriculum based classes that enable understanding and creation of De’VIA Art. For the full curriculum, follow this link:
Classroom Activities

Pre-Performance Activities

1. Cultural Mapping

*Developed by Center Theatre, originally published in Center Theater’s Tribes Educator Resource*

[http://www.centertheatregroup.org/Global/Production/2013/Tribes/tribeseducatorresources.pdf](http://www.centertheatregroup.org/Global/Production/2013/Tribes/tribeseducatorresources.pdf)

**Objectives:**
- Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates.
- Students will be introduced to *Tribes* and begin to reflect on the play.

**Exercise**

Ask the students to move the desks to the side and stand in a circle. Describe the room as a map of the world. Identify Toronto in the space. Have students who were born in Toronto gather in that place. Have the other students group themselves according to their birthplace (north, east, south, or west of Toronto). Each group must determine two additional things that they have in common. Report back to the whole class. (Example: The members of the “north” group all like pizza and are the oldest in their families.)

Repeat activity using other divisions such as: Oldest, middle, youngest, only child. Speak one language, two languages, etc.

*Tribes* Cultural Mapping quotes:

“It’s a scary universe out there. If you’re part of a group, it’s easier.”

“The thing I’m finding, it’s all about empathy.”

“Join in! have an argument!”

“how can you feel a feeling unless you have the word for it?”

“Look at me. Look at me!”

“I just stopped listening.”

Ask each student to stand by the quote that most intrigues them. Discuss in the group why they chose that quote. What intrigues them about it?

2. Creating an Accessible Scene

*developed by Royal Court Theatre, originally published in Royal Court Theatre – Tribes Background Pack*

[http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/education/educational-resources/](http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/education/educational-resources/)

**Objectives:**

This exercise will help students to understand how much they rely on both visual and audio information to carry forward a story. When creating an inclusive piece for the stage, it’s important to think about captions, subtitles, (live) stage directions and signing. If you have decided to use sign, think about
different ways of providing signing: is the interpreter onstage with the action or at the side of the stage?

**Exercise:**
Create groups of about five students. Give each group a stimulus picture – domestic scenes or interesting news story pictures can make good stimuli. Give each group about 10 minutes to create a scene around the picture which might be a small part of a bigger story. The students must try to create the scene taking into account the above.

The students will create a short scene and present it twice. The first presentation will be to a blind audience - students watching should watch this version with their backs to the actors. The second version should be with the audience, facing the actors. The idea is to contrast the understanding between the two versions of the same piece.

After the showing, the students should discuss how successful their performance was in terms of accessibility.

**3. Beauty and the Need to Communicate**

*Developed by Center Theatre, originally published in Center Theater’s Tribes Educator Resource*

http://www.centertheatregroup.org/Global/Production/2013/Tribes/tribeseducatorresources.pdf

*This entire unit can be utilized in sequence or as individual segments as the educator sees fit for their students.

What happens when we don’t have words for what we need to express? What happens when we don’t support the language of others? Can we include others in our language(s)? What if we are supportive and/or inclusive? What if we aren’t?

Begin with the theatre game The Big Chief (see below), where all participants but one are “in the know” and using movement language.

**The Big Chief Circle Game**
The object of the game is for the Chief to lead gesture phrases and have the participants in the circle, the tribe, follow. As the gestures change, make sure that the outsider is unable to detect who initiated the new movement. This is a nonverbal game.

One participant volunteers or is designated as the outsider and leaves the room while the rest of the tribal circle designates a Chief. (Chief, originating during the period of 1250-1300 AD, meaning the head or ruler of a tribe or clan: i.e. an Indian or Tribal Chief)

The participant designated as Chief initiates gesture phrases (arm and hand movements that one can follow safely in the circle) and the rest of the circle, the tribe, mirrors the Chief. Once a movement
pattern is established, the Chief introduces a new one and so on. The Chief learns to be strategic about changing the pattern so the outsider will not detect the change.

The tribe mirrors the movements without giving away the Chief. Let students know they can follow the Chief without looking directly at him/her. The outsider returns to the room and enters the circle. As the tribe executes their movements, the outsider tries to identify who the Chief is, by detecting who is initiating the gestures. The outsider is free to move about the tribal circle to change his/her position in order to try to discover the Chief.

Allow the outsider to have up to three guesses to identify the Chief or if time permits, allow the outsider to continue until he/she can detect the Chief.

When the round is over, have the outsider join the tribe and select another outsider. When that student has left the room, designate another Chief and play again.

Play a number of rounds so the group might experience being in the different roles: leader, tribe member and outsider.

Discussion Questions:
Discuss what it felt like to be the Chief, a member of the tribe, and the outsider. Ask the students who played the outsider, what did you do to try to find out who the Chief was without the ability to talk? How did you figure out the source of the communication? What senses were you using? Sense of smell? Taste? Touch? Hearing? Sight? Did you depend on any of your senses more because you weren’t able to talk?

Have you ever felt like an outsider? What was it like to not be “in the know” when everyone else seems to be in sync? What was it like to have to detect the Chief in order to join the tribe?

What was it like to be a member of the tribe? Did you feel you needed to protect the Chief and the other tribe members? In life, have you ever been a “tribe member”? If so, what was it like when an outsider entered the situation?

Do you send signals to each other when you’re uncomfortable or wanting to nonverbally keep your communication from the outsider?

What was it like to be Chief? To lead and not be found out? How did you feel about your tribe and about the outsider? Does playing this game remind you of any real life situations? In real life situations, are you most often the Chief, tribe member, or outsider? If you were Deaf, how would you find where the communication is happening and how would you follow it?

Try the game again, but this time, once the outsider guesses the Chief, have them join the tribal circle and have the Chief and tribe welcome them and then teach the outsider to follow the movements. Notice and discuss the differences in the dynamic and roles.
After playing The Big Chief game, connect the game to the experience of seeing the play Tribes. Ask the students to look for any “Big Chief moments” that they see while watching the play. Encourage them to notice at any given time, who is the Chief? Who is an outsider? Who are the tribe members? How do they communicate? How do they follow what is being communicated?

4. An exploration of tribes

*Tribes* can be a fitting way to explore ideas of protection and enabling. Consider using the play and the idea of ‘tribes’ to examine:

- tribes as enabling vs. protecting
- tribes, secrecy and loyalty
- notions of public and private tribes

Below are two ways into this exploration:

**Protection vs. Enabling**

In small groups, have students experiment with the six-dimensional sculptures (that is, a body sculpture that ‘reads’ from above, below, and all four walls in the room), or a dynamic tableau. Students can experiment with this way of physicalizing an idea by exploring particularly relevant ideas within *Tribes* (communication, belonging, isolation, for example). Once students are comfortable working within the six-dimensional sculpture structure, ask them to create a sculpture which physicalizes the idea of “enabling”. Now invite students to ‘enter’ the sculpture one at a time and change one element at a time, with an aim to mold the sculpture from conveying "enabling" to conveying “protection”. Use this experience to examine the line between protection and enabling, and the tribe’s role in both. What physical choices were made by the sculptors as the sculpture progressed? When did the audience begin to ‘read’ the shift in the sculpture? How did those being sculpted internalize this change?

**Breaking Out and Breaking In**

Have students stand in a circle. Explain that the area within the circle is a safe, protected area, and the area outside, is freedom. Invite a student to try to ‘break in’ to the circle, with their objective to be protected. Similarly, invite a student to ‘break out’ of the circle, playing the objective to break free from the tribe. Use this experience to explore these desires and how they fuel choices we make. What strategies did people use to ‘get in’ and to ‘get out’ of the circle (trickery, bribery, force, flattery, etc.).
Post-Performance Activities

The following are suggestions for ways to unpack Tribes with your students. These activities are easily adapted to be used following other theatre experiences.

1. **Theatre Response**

Choose one of the following, as a response to Tribes.

1. Choose a character from the play and invite him/her to a meal. The components of this assignment include:
   a) A letter of invitation
   b) Description of the chosen location for the meal.
   c) The planned menu.

2. Write a (two-page) letter to a friend about your experience of the show and/or your journey to it. You may wish to recommend it, or not, giving your reasons; as well as highlights, surprises, questions or difficulties you have noted.

3. With a colleague (or two) perform a prepared improvised scene that is “missing” from the play.

4. Select the character that most resonates for you, and allow yourself to be hot-seated in that role. (You may wish to complete a character sketch/profile in preparation.)

5. Create a poster to advertise the play. Decide your intended “audience” and then consider colour, style, impact, and placement of important information (which will include at least the title and author, location, dates and times of performances, and may include prices, special student matinees, director, actors, etc.).

6. Working in a partnership, interview and video-tape one of the characters from the play.

7. Select one character, and complete a character sketch comprised of collection of objects (minimum six) that each one of which reflects an aspect of, or prompt a story about that character. Be prepared to explain the collection.

8. The major themes of the play include:
   Tribes – the ones we belong to, the ones that reject us, the ones we strive to be part of
   Loneliness –
   Identity –
   Unwritten rules –
   Love –
   Indebtedness –
   Being different –

   Generate 10 questions, related to the play that will promote discussion on three of these topics.
9. Create visual review of the play. This will likely take the form of a collage (a collection of visual images whose theme is the topic of the play). You may wish to add a poem or short piece of prose to this collage.

10. Write a short review (maximum two pages, single-spaced if hand written, double-spaced on the computer) with the following structure:
   a) Introduction (basic information: what, where, when, etc.)
   b) A brief plot outline (four or five sentences maximum)
   c) Aspects of the production that you liked (e.g., the most interesting performance, the set, lighting, etc.)
   d) An aspect of the production that you had questions about, felt was incomplete, did not like, etc. (if appropriate, but don’t force it if you generally enjoyed the production), e.g., overplaying a character, faulty directions, etc. (The attached hand out will help with c and d)
   e) Concluding comments may include a rating, recommendation, overall impression, and even leave us with a questions or thoughts to pursue.

What to make notes on:
The table below will help you with ideas for evaluating a performance.
Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/responding/livetheatrerev2.shtml

A comparison of theatrical elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set</td>
<td>Type of set: stylised, naturalistic, colourful, atmospheric, simple,</td>
<td>Did it add to (or detract from) the atmosphere? How? (Give examples.) Was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>complex?</td>
<td>the set in any way surprising? In what way? Were the actors always in/on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costume</td>
<td>Period? Colour? Fabric and details?</td>
<td>the 'stage areas'?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound</td>
<td>Was there music? Other sounds?</td>
<td>How was sound used? Did it heighten atmosphere or impact? How? When? Give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a couple of examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Was the lighting 'natural' or dramatic? (Bright / dim / use of colour /</td>
<td>At what moments did lighting add impact to the action? Give details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>use of other lighting devices)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters /</td>
<td>Who were the characters? Who were more / less important characters?</td>
<td>Were the characters believable? Which of them was strong/weak? Comment on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characterisation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units of action</td>
<td>Moments of impact?</td>
<td>Most memorable moments? Describe them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Naturalistic or stylised? Formal or informal?</td>
<td>There are many different registers an actor can use in English - which</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/drama/responding/livetheatrerev2.shtml
| Pacing and timing | Fast or slow-moving sequences. | Were there times when the action was slowed down or speeded up? Why do you think this was? What was the effect? **Describe the sequence** first. |
| Director's decisions | Casting | Any double casting? How did the actors play their two parts |
| Special effects | Smoke, wind, use of gauzes, flying harness, back projection. | How were they used? **Comment** on how well they worked. |

**A sample rubric for self assessment on reflection exercises**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does my response reflect and apply my understanding of the play, its ideas, its characters?</th>
<th>Did I think critically and/or creatively about the play, its ideas, its characters?</th>
<th>Are my ideas communicated clearly through visuals/words/my body/my voice?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Your description of the play/its ideas/its characters in this response is <strong>beginning to show</strong> your understanding <strong>Tribes</strong></td>
<td>-You are <strong>beginning to explore</strong> ideas and characters critically and/or creatively</td>
<td>- Your visuals/words/body/voice communicate(s) your ideas <strong>clearly, at times</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Your discussion of the play/its ideas/ its characters in this response shows your <strong>general understanding</strong> of the <strong>Tribes</strong></td>
<td>-You explore ideas and characters critically and/or creatively, at <strong>times</strong></td>
<td>- Your visuals/words/body/voice communicate(s) your ideas <strong>clearly</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Your representation of the play/its ideas/ its characters in this response shows your <strong>thoughtful understanding</strong> of <strong>Tribes</strong></td>
<td>-You explore ideas and characters critically and/or creatively through <strong>your use of detail</strong></td>
<td>- Your visuals/words/body/voice communicate(s) your ideas <strong>clearly and expressively</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Rules of the World

*Developed by Center Theatre, originally published in Center Theater’s Tribes Educator Resource*

http://www.centertheatregroup.org/Global/Production/2013/Tribes/tribeseducatorresources.pdf

We meet characters in *Tribes* who live in different worlds. They have to communicate differently in each world. Billy has discovered the world of sign language. Billy has had to adjust to his hearing family and their ways of communicating his entire life and now is spending a lot of time communicating in sign language with the Deaf community. This puts him between worlds, as he needs to communicate differently in each of them. It was hard for Billy that his family did not learn sign. Sylvia translated to his family for him: “And you made promises. We’ll learn sign. You never did.” Sylvia, who is going deaf, is suddenly having a difficult time communicating in the hearing world in what has always been her first language. Sylvia is also between worlds as she is no longer as easily able to communicate with the hearing as she used to be. Daniel responds to Sylvia, “But you’re in both worlds. You’re in both worlds.”

*Writing Exercise*: Are there two worlds you experience in your own life? What two worlds are you in between? How does your communication differ in each world? Students write a detailed account of their different worlds.

*Writing Exercise*: Students receive pictures from National Geographic magazine. Each student selects an image. From looking at the picture and from their imaginations, they write the rules of the world of that image. Ask them to describe the society in detail.

3. Have Your Say

*Developed by Center Theatre, originally published in Center Theater’s Tribes Educator Resource*

http://www.centertheatregroup.org/Global/Production/2013/Tribes/tribeseducatorresources.pdf

In *Tribes*, the character Billy has to tell his family something he’s never said to them. It’s hard, but he does it. Now, students get to write a letter to a person or a group of people who they need to say something to, but never have. These letters will not be shared, so encourage bravery and honesty.

*Materials*: stationary and envelopes, pens, stamps, music

*Activity*: Ask students to find a comfortable space on the floor to lie down if space permits. Otherwise, they can remain at their desks with eyes closed. Play a meditative song. Ask students to give the weight
of their bodies to the floor. Let them know you will ask three questions while the song is playing. No spoken answer is required, just silent thinking.

1) Is there a person or a group of people you’ve always wanted to say something to, but were too scared or embarrassed?

2) What would you like to say to them if you could say absolutely anything?

3) How would you feel after you told this person or group what you really felt?

Once the song ends, distribute stationary, envelopes, pens and stamps. Ask the students to write a letter to the person or group they just thought about. Tell them to write and say whatever they want. Encourage them to be brave, honest and direct. Let them know the letters won’t be shared. Some examples could be someone you have a crush on, a person who hurt you or someone you owe an apology to. Or perhaps someone you should have thanked or congratulated! Play music in the background while students compose their letters. Ask students to sign their letter, and then seal in a stamped and addressed envelope. Invite the students to take the letters home and rip them up whenever they are ready. Gather in a circle and do a check-out with the class. Encourage each student to share a thought or feeling about the activity.
Appendix A:
"Additional Social Psychology Theories from A First Look at Communication Theory (6th Ed.) by Em Griffin"

**Attribution theory** – is concerned with the ways in which people explain (or attribute) the behaviour of others. The theory divides the way people attribute causes to events into two types. *External* or "situational" attributions assign causality to an outside factor, such as the weather. *Internal* or "dispositional" attributions assign causality to factors within the person, such as ability or personality.

**Cognitive dissonance** – was originally based on the concept of cognitive consistency, but is now more related to self-concept theory. When people do something that violates their view of themselves, this causes an uncomfortable state of dissonance that motivates a change in either attitudes or behaviour (Festinger, 1957).

**Drive theory** – posits that the presence of an audience causes arousal which creates dominant or typical responses in the context of the situation.

**Elaboration likelihood model** – maintains that information processing, often in the case of a persuasion attempt can be divided into two separate processes based on the "likelihood of cognitive elaborations," that is, whether people think critically about the content of a message, or respond to superficial aspects of the message and other immediate cues.

**Evolutionary psychology** – suggests that human behavioural tendencies are at least partly inherited and have been influenced by the process of natural selection. One popular area of study is the possibility that human sex differences are due to differential reproductive strategies.

**Observational learning (social learning)** – suggests that behaviour can be acquired by observation and imitation of others, unlike traditional learning theories which require reinforcement or punishment for learning to occur.

**Schemata theory** – focuses on "schemas" which are cognitive structures that organize knowledge and guide information processing. They take the form of generalized beliefs that can operate automatically and lead to biases in perception and memory.

**Self-perception theory** – emphasizes that we observe ourselves in the same manner that we observe others, and draw conclusions about our likes and dislikes. Extrinsic self perceptions can lead to the over-justification effect.

**Self-verification theory** – focuses on people’s desire to be known and understood by others. The key assumption is that once people develop firmly held beliefs about themselves, they come to prefer that others see them as they see themselves.
Social comparison theory – suggests that humans gain information about themselves, and make inferences that are relevant to self-esteem, by comparison to relevant others.

Social exchange theory – is an economic social theory that assumes human relationships are based on rational choice and cost-benefit analyses. If one partner's costs begin to outweigh his or her benefits, that person may leave the relationship, especially if there are good alternatives available.

Social penetration theory – proposes that, as relationships develop, interpersonal communication moves from relatively shallow, non-intimate levels to deeper, more intimate ones. The theory was formulated by psychologists Irwin Altman and Dalmas Taylor in 1973 to provide an understanding of the closeness between two individuals.

Socioemotional selectivity theory – posits that as people age and their perceived time left in life decreases, they shift from focusing on information seeking goals to focusing on emotional goals.

System justification theory – proposes that people have a motivation to defend and bolster the status quo, in order to continue believing that their social, political, and economic systems are legitimate and just.

Terror management theory – suggests that human mortality causes existential dread and terror, and that much of human behavior exists as a buffer against this dread (e.g., self-esteem and worldviews).

Triangular theory of love – by Sternberg, characterizes love in an interpersonal relationship on three different scales: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Different stages and types of love can be categorized by different combinations of these three elements.
Works Cited


This Study Guide was created and compiled by:

Erin Schachter, Education & Audience Development Manager  
Holly LaFlamme, Education & Audience Development Coordinator  
Melissa Farmer, Educator Advisor  
Sally Spofforth, Educator Advisor

Educator Outreach Program Sponsor:

Canadian Stage Educator Advisory Committee, 2013.2014

Please feel free to contact me or an Advisor from your own board to discuss productions and further education opportunities at Canadian Stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Erin Schachter</th>
<th>Alicia Roberge</th>
<th>Marc Garneau, TDSB</th>
<th><a href="mailto:alicia.roberge@tdsb.on.ca">alicia.roberge@tdsb.on.ca</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marc Garneau, TDSB</td>
<td>Brendon Allen</td>
<td>The Bishop Strachan School, CIS</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ballen@bss.on.ca">ballen@bss.on.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDSB</td>
<td>Christine Jackson</td>
<td>TDSB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDSB</td>
<td>Janet O’Neill</td>
<td>TDSB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park CI, TDSB</td>
<td>Jennifer Burak</td>
<td>TDSB</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jennifer.burak@tdsb.on.ca">Jennifer.burak@tdsb.on.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Education Consultant</td>
<td>Julian Richings</td>
<td>York Humber, TDSB</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kristen.beach@tdsb.on.ca">Kristen.beach@tdsb.on.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurence Siegel</td>
<td>Arts Education Consultant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branksome Hall, CIS</td>
<td>Melissa Farmer</td>
<td>Monarch Park, TDSB</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mfarmer@branksome.on.ca">mfarmer@branksome.on.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Limerick</td>
<td>Marc Garneau, TDSB</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Sally.spofforth@tdsb.on.ca">Sally.spofforth@tdsb.on.ca</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

S T R O N G E R  C O M M U N I T I E S  T O G E T H E R ™