
The Cheyenne are Leaving

a story of belonging

A Why Not Theatre production



INDEX

Note from the theatre

1. Introduction..... p. 4
2. Summary of the play..... p. 5
3. The meaning of home..... p. 6
4. What is migration..... p. 8
5. At home with the Cheyenne are Leaving team..... p. 10
6. Excerpts from the play and exercises..... p. 14
7. HOME poem by Warsan Shire..... p. 22
8. Practical information..... p. 23
9. References..... p. 24



Note from the theatre



Dear teacher

We hope you will find this teaching material helpful - both for preparing your students before coming to see our production of THE CHEYENNE ARE LEAVING by Tanja Mastilo, and for post-show discussion and analysis.

Extracts from the manuscript are included in this material but should you wish to receive the full text, please drop us a line at: info@whynottheatre.dk.

Similarly we would be more than happy to conduct Artist Talks after selected performances, so please let us know if you would like us to organise one of these sessions for your group. Our experience shows that it can be hugely beneficial for students to have the opportunity to ask questions after seeing the show and to chat informally with the actors, director and writer.

We look forward to welcoming you to the theatre and hope you will have an enjoyable evening in our company.

With best wishes

Sue Hansen-Styles
Artistic Leader of Why Not Theatre Company

Educational Material written by Nina Larissa Bassett and Sue Hansen-Styles

“Home is where the heart is”

Introduction

What does the word ‘home’ mean? Stupid question. Easily answered. It’s the place where people sleep, eat, argue with siblings and watch TV. We use this dull four letter word in our conversations in numerous contexts daily. So, consider it a little longer. Soon the word ‘home’ will conjure up images, emotions, memories - maybe even longings. The meaning of home is in fact personal. It can connect to the four walls you live within, the neighbourhood you move through every day, the country you were born in, or possibly a more metaphysical space, an ideal place you haven’t yet seen. No two interpretations are the same - one person’s cosy comfort is another person’s colour scheme nightmare. One person’s palace is another person’s garden shed. What do you associate with your home? Maybe you have lived in several places - do you consider them all your home? Or maybe home lies in a country where you no longer live.

The corona crisis lockdown provided us with the opportunity to take a closer look at our lives at home. We became confronted with what we love about our homes, and what makes us unhappy and annoyed. Through these experiences possibly we have reflected on what we miss about our lives beyond home. And considered how we define and value freedom. During a short period of time our homes took on several meanings, depending on our needs and feelings. It has served both as a place that kept us safe from danger and a space that restricted our movements. It’s no longer a fixed entity - ‘the four walls where I go to sleep’ - but a place of transformation, fluctuating between comfort and confinement. Thus the meaning of home becomes defined by its inhabitants and their state of mind.

In this material we will be looking at different concepts of home from being a status symbol to a place with it’s own soul, we will consider the different forms of migration, we will hear from the team behind *The Cheyenne are Leaving* about their relationships to home and migration, and finally we will share some excerpts from the play with you.

Happy reading!

Nina Larissa Bassett - Director

“You can never go home again”

Summary of the play

The Cheyenne are Leaving is set in a fictive world facing division and destruction. The country is split into zones - North, South, East and West. The citizens are being separated into groups and forced to relocate into dubious camps.

The famous author, Noel, has withdrawn from the horror of the outside world. He lives in his home; the cradle of his creativity and the kingdom of his memories. His home is his castle, this is where he belongs. It is an impenetrable world and aided by his imagination Noel is able to live a rich life within his own four walls. He refuses to engage with pressures or fears impressed upon local citizens by the authorities, who are urging his kind to leave the area.

An insistent visitor arrives at the door bearing a message from the past. Reluctantly Noel lets in an enigmatic young man named Leon.

The young man is an aspiring writer and a great fan of Noel's work. Coily he reveals that he is connected to Noel's past, as both men hover around the secret. Noel and Leon are two very different people but as the evening progresses they embark upon an emotional journey, discovering their shared passion for words and stories.

Their differences clash repeatedly as experience meets innocence and fear meets hope as their talks lead to an exploration into the quality of human life.

Outside the authorities are closing in, ordering all citizens from the North to vacate the area by midnight.

Noel is faced with a dilemma; should he defy the authorities and stay put or leave his beloved home? The place that houses his memories and work - the place where he knows who he is - to face a life on the run, filled with unknown terrors and no hope of shelter or safety. In addition he has to consider the young man, who appears to have placed his life in his hands.

To Noel fleeing his home will mean sacrificing his identity and all he has created, so the question becomes: where lies the true value of his life - and his freedom?

“Home sweet Home”

The meaning of home

Human beings began to settle and build their own homes around 12.000 years ago in the Neolithic era, prior to this we lived in makeshift dwellings in order to move around for food or due to changes in climate. We could say that this process suggests that the concept of living within four walls has pretty much become part of our basic human nature.

As a general rule we consider a home to be a house or an apartment but around the world people live in numerous variations of homes from houseboats to mobile homes, from shacks to yurts and even castles.

In the West the care and design of homes has taken on an increasingly predominant role. More time and money is spent on decorating and designing than ever before. One can consider that this development has not only been born from general, societal affluence but also from the fact that we are able to spend more time in our homes due to the improvement of living and working conditions. Our homes are therefore gaining significance because we spend more free time in them. Environmental psychologist at Wooster College, Susan Clayton, explains that for many people, their home is part of their self-definition, which is why we do things like decorate our houses and take care of our lawns. In the West the home is often connected to a sense of status - our expensive furniture and nice gardens send signals to those around us - however these connections tend to stay superficial, and remain outer signals, but do not speak of our inner selves. Many people in the West change homes more than once in a lifetime, thereby uprooting one established sense of identity and exchanging it for another.

According to Clayton, people in the West may feel sentimental or nostalgic attachment to the places we've lived in but we are able to regard them as separate from our inner selves. In other words, your sense of self is not inherently intertwined with the place you live. However other cultures possess a profoundly deeper sense of home. University of Heidelberg anthropologist William S. Sax studied communities in South East Asia and he found that to them, “a home isn't just where you are, but it's who you are”. The Zuni tribe of the American Southwest regard home as an actual living thing. It's the setting for raising children, for communicating with God and the spirit world, and for life itself.

Imagine being so deeply connected with the place where you live that it becomes part of you, as if it's alive.

And then imagine losing it.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly, contains the following text regarding housing and quality of living: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-

being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services”.

Sadly we are far from ensuring that all our fellow human beings receive these fundamental human rights. Based on national reports, it's estimated that no fewer than 150 million people, or about 2% of the world's population, are homeless. In addition about 1.6 billion, more than 20% of the world's population, lack adequate housing with running water or sanitation.

The causes of homelessness are manifold, such as upheavals due to natural disasters, fraud/theft, arson, or war-related destruction, relationship breakdown, mental health issues, expropriation by government, repossession/foreclosure, eviction by landlords and so on.

A less obvious form of homelessness is suffered by refugees, who have fled their homes due to war, violence or persecution. They may need to live in temporary housing, shelters, or they may claim asylum in another country and attempt to relocate permanently.

“There’s no place like home”

What is migration?

Human migration refers to the permanent change of residence by an individual or a group, however this does not include movements such as nomadism, migrant labour, commuting, and tourism, which are transitory by nature.

Historically humans have migrated driven by either changes in climate or the search for food. We have been able to trace this kind of activity back 200.000 years.

Even today, at least 258 million people - 3% of the world’s population - live outside of their country of birth. It’s thanks to migration that our daily lives are more diverse and stimulating, as we all enjoy food, music, art and stories that originate from other parts of the globe.

Broadly speaking migrations fall into two categories. The first pertains to individuals or groups moving from one location to another on a predominantly voluntary basis, be it between countries, or from a rural to a city environment. The reasons are multiple; economic, relationships, work etc. The second category refers to forced migration, where a group or individual is moved from one location to another against their will, examples are people expelled by their government during war or due to political persecution, people moved for slavery, or because they are prisoners. Between the two categories are voluntary migrations of refugees fleeing from war, famine, or natural disasters. The term voluntary is used tentatively, and in this context merely refers to the fact these forms of migrants were not forcibly removed by another party.

In recent history alone we will find numerous examples of large scale forced migrations, and migrations provoked by war.

European slave traders operating in Africa from around 1500 to the 1860s caused one of the largest forced migration on record, it is estimated that around 20 million people were enslaved and consigned to North and South America, though countless never survived the inhuman sea crossings. Within the USA indigenous people, such as the Cheyenne and the Sioux, lived through years of conflict and territorial disputes with US settlers, which culminated in war, and resulted in forcible relocation to restricted areas - called Reservations.

The largest mass expulsions have probably been those imposed by Nazi Germany, which deported 7–8 million persons during World War II (1939–45), and by the Soviet Union, which forcibly expelled 9–10 million ethnic Germans from eastern Europe into Germany in the closing year of the war and afterward.

The largest migrations in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century have consisted of refugees fleeing war, such as the estimated 3–4 million people who fled Afghanistan in the 1980s, the 5–6 million who departed Syria and the 600.000 Rohingya refugees currently living in camps on the Bangladesh border.

In the future, the changing climate may cause even more mass movements. A 2018 World Bank report suggests that more than 143 million people may soon become climate migrants, forced to leave home due to floods, droughts, and water scarcity.

Whether voluntary or forced, migration has profoundly shaped our world and will continue to do so.

We live in an era that is experiencing large scale migrations all over the world, the reasons are manifold from climate problems to war and conflict to economic pressures. Europe's largest migration situation has predominately been the Syrian migrations that began in 2015 due to military conflict. The way these migrations are viewed vary from country to country depending on political discourses and populist trends. But often they become the subject of, at times heated, public debates, which can lose track of the human tragedy and emphasis the "problems", the "burdens" and even the "threats" of migration.

Reality couldn't be further from the numbers, statistics and sensation seeking headlines that from time to time flash across news reports. The reality is about individual lives moving from one place to another. Each with their own reason, their own story. Some by choice, many with no choice other than to leave their home.

”Home is where the Heart is”

At home with the Cheyenne team

As the team behind *The Cheyenne are Leaving* are from different parts of the world, we asked them questions about their relationships to the concept of home and migration.

What does home mean to you?

NATHAN, actor, born in New Zealand

“I think I have two senses of home. One practical and one which is more romantic. The first is really the place I return to, it changes depending on what I am doing and where I am. When travelling or working away from home any base becomes home. The other sense of home is more about time, moments when I have wanted or longed to be home, the only home I knew growing up Dittmer Drive, Palmerston North.”

JOE, actor, born in South Africa

“Before lockdown I felt I carried all I needed in me; that I could travel and move around and as long as I held myself close I would have a sense of home. In a world where easy access to flying meant I was never more than half a day's journey from my family and the place I grew up, never more than a half a day's travel from a new city and a different life, the idea of home was something I never considered. Now, with borders closed and travel a luxury, home seems in sharp relief, but unattainable. I miss home, but most likely wouldn't recognise it.

In the time of crisis my idea of home has perhaps reverted to its most foundational version, longing for my parents and our garden, and to play with our dogs.”

NINA, director, born in the U.K.

“I've lived in many places throughout my life, but I would consider very few of them my home. My Finnish mother and British father moved to Denmark when I was small, and we lived in many different places here. So, as a child “home” became a longing for something I had lost, a country I would visit for holidays, more specifically, England. As I got older, continuing the trend of moving from place to place, I outgrew that particular nostalgia, and felt to a certain degree home-less. Without a sense of home. Though I was integrated I never really embraced Danish food traditions, music, books, jokes etc. - things that define a culture. I admired how comfortable my Danish friends seemed in their strong feeling of belonging that surrounded them like protective blankets. Denmark was their home but I always felt awkward doing “the Danish thing”. Later I realised that home is a question of connections. Home is where you feel connected. With that in mind my home has been the

flat where I raised my son, the beach house in Cyprus where my boyfriend recovered from an illness... and the theatre.”

TANJA, writer, born in Yugoslavia

Home is people. And memories.

Sarajevo will always be my home, since that's where all of my beautiful childhood memories live. Serbia will always be my home since that's where my dear friends live, where I went to high-school, where I went to my first party, had my first beer, kissed my first boy. Copenhagen will always be my home since that's where a lot of people who are very dear and important to me live, where I went to university, got my first job, got to see my plays come to life. And yet, somehow, I so often can't shake the feeling that home is something I'm yet to find.

SUE, producer, born in the U.K.

Home is where the heart is. It can be both the country and the building I live in. So home, for me, can be 2 different places.

I was born, grew up, took my education and worked in the UK. The UK was my home until I left at the age of 37 to take up a job in Luxembourg. While in Luxembourg, I lived, worked and paid my taxes there, but although I considered it my home, my heart was still definitely in the UK. And even though I'd left my parents home many years earlier, that house still felt very much mine. It was my safe haven, where I knew my parents - and my bed - were always there for me. That was my secure place.

After meeting and marrying my Danish husband, I joined him in Brussels and we bought our first apartment together. Brussels was then my new home and that was where my heart was now. But still I referred to my parents' house - the place I grew up in and where I always stayed when I returned on family visits, as 'home'. That habit continued until after both parents had passed away.

My husband and I then moved to Copenhagen and there is no doubt that, after nearly 20 years here, DK is my home. A large part of my heart will always belong in England and that will never change. And maybe it is just out of habit, but I still catch myself saying 'I'm going home' when referring to a visit to the UK. Or maybe it's not as simple as that.

We also asked the team to tell a story from their family history.

Share a story from your family history where someone migrated.

NATHAN, actor, born in New Zealand

My father was born in Friesland (The Netherlands), my mother Indonesia, my sister Iowa (USA), myself New Zealand. I remember hearing my father on the radio one day when I was young, and I suddenly heard that he sounded different than the interviewer. I heard his accent for the first time. But I knew that he belonged in New Zealand more than the country which had given him his accent. Why was New Zealand his home? Because we

were there, his family. Ironically when he travelled back to The Netherlands they commented on his strange accent there too! He left his home country as a 19 year old in the full knowledge that he may never afford the journey back. Perhaps my practical sense of home is something I learned from him.

JOE, actor, born in South Africa

My parents met in Birmingham, England, both studying in a foreign city-- my father from the north of England, my mother from Bulawayo.

When my mother finished her studies and returned home my father followed her. Then seeking an escape from the war of independence in Zimbabwe they moved south, to Johannesburg. That is where my sister and I were born.

In many ways my family's story has been the story of white post-colonialism. My mother's parents moved to what was then the settler state of Rhodesia, escaping the trauma and destruction of WW II, but seeing for the first time what the English Empire meant beyond the borders of England, and for the first time seeing what their complicity meant. They witnessed the toppling of that same violently racist regime in Zimbabwe, and they saw the overturning of Apartheid in South Africa.

The story of my family in Southern Africa can be read in many ways: it shows people seeking out safety and being willing to take risks to find it, but it also shows the freedom of white people to seek that safety largely without consequence. It shows a story of hope, but it also maps the dying breaths of colonialism in Southern Africa, mapping the end of a world order that produced so many forced removals, displacements, and refugees with little consequence for the colonisers. It shows a stark contrast of the dream of empire and the reality of empire - and it shows the hypocrisy of the colonial world in the face of today's refugee crises.

NINA, director, born in the U.K.

As a young man my Grandfather was curious about the world and loved to travel. Causing some controversy he avoided expectations to carry on the family undertaker business and became a medical nurse with the British Royal Navy. During WW II he was serving on several big destroyers and his family - my Grandma, uncle and dad - were stationed on a base in Malta, however Mussolini was seriously threatening to invade the island, so they were shipped off to Alexandria in Egypt. Here again, the war came closer and the navy families were evacuated from the city, as bombs dropped around them. The little family spent the rest of the WW II on a naval base in Bethlehem, South Africa, whilst my Grandfather continued his service. After the war they had to return to Great Britain. This was the first time my father saw his "home country", at the age of eight. But he never felt at home there. He too, was filled with wanderlust and met my mother on a trip to Copenhagen in the late 1960s. I'm certain that I would not be here today had my Granddad not been such a restless soul.

TANJA, writer, born in Yugoslavia

My parents are from Yugoslavia, their parents were from Yugoslavia as well, and their parents too. But that doesn't mean there was no migration in my family - or rather in every family that comes from the Balkans. The Balkans are a text book example of what happens when wars and migrations shape lives and to this day continue to shape human destinies - the unfortunate geographical position of the Balkans at the border of East and West Empires meant that almost every barbaric tribe and Empire passed through, concurred, and left their marks.

I was born in Sarajevo, and back then Sarajevo had this rare and unique beautiful phenomenon - in the centre of the city every day around noon, you could hear a catholic cathedral's bells, orthodox church's bells and mosque's calls for prayer all at the exact same time. All within 500 meters. You could barely tell one from the other, it would all become one big noise, blurred and meshed in one, symbolically reminding us every day of a very turbulent history that shaped that city and that country.

Throughout the centuries various cultures and religions were brought to the Balkans by migrations and occupations. Starting with Roman and Byzantine empires in the early Middle Ages, through Ottoman Turks's reign that lasted five long centuries (from 14th to the early 20th century), and all the way to the Austro-Hungary Empire, the people of Balkans were rarely still and not moving.

And finally, when the end of the 20th century brought yet another bloody war on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, around 2,2 million people left their homes and migrated to other parts of the country, or Europe, USA, Australia....

And I am one of them.

EXERCISES AND EXCERPTS

The following are four small scenes from *The Cheyenne are Leaving*. Read them and think about the relationship between Noel and Leon. Consider their experiences of the conflict surrounding them, and how they relate to their own safety. Think about what you would do in their place.

The young writer meets his idol in extraordinary circumstances.

Scene 1.

p. 18

Noel: You? You don't know me, why would you be worried about me?

Leon: I'm a fan. A big fan. So all of your fans must be equally worried.

Noel: 'Must be'. But you don't actually know for a fact that they are?

Leon: Well, no, I don't know, there's no way for me to know, of course, but if I was worried then I'm sure everyone else who loved your books must be worried as well. People don't want bad things to happen to the people they like.

Noel: Is that so?

Leon: Ok, that sounded dumb. But it's the truth.

Noel: It's the truth....

Leon: You know, Mr. Bogdanov, I'm a writer myself.

Noel (*to himself*): Oh dear God...

Leon: Well, I aspire to be... I haven't really published much, or well, anything, just some of my stories on some blogs... and one poem in a magazine. But I've written a lot.

Noel: I'm sure you have...

Leon: It would be such an honour, sir, if you'd have a look.... when you get the time, I mean.

Noel: Have a look at what?

Leon: Some of my stories, see what you think.

Noel: I don't think I'll have the time, I'm pretty busy.

Leon: I would be honoured, to have one of my role models read my stories and give me advice..

Noel: Give you advice? You can't give someone advice on how to write.

Leon: Of course you can sir.

Noel: No, you can't. I can't. I won't. In any case there's nothing more tedious than reading other writers' unfinished drafts.

Leon: Who said they were unfinished?

Noel: Finished ones are even worse. I'm going to sleep now.

Leon: Can I ask you something, sir?

Noel: There doesn't seem to be a way of stopping you..

Normal evening life of Noel living in a conflict zone.

Scene 2.

p. 24

Noel: Well, I should go to bed now.

Leon: It's getting pretty quiet.

Noel: Usually they stop in the evening... Sometimes it starts again in the middle of the night, but normally they wait till the early morning.

Leon: Yes, it's like that in the North as well. But evenings aren't quiet. There's always something on the streets, people, cars, shouting..

Noel: It's quiet around here. Not that many people left, I guess...

Leon: They all left?

Noel: Most of them, yes. This area was very mixed, so there were a lot of northerners around here. Most of them packed their bags when the first bombs went off.

Leon: People up north think there's no one left here. No northerners.

Noel: Well, that's not too far from the truth... I don't know how many are left in those buildings across the road, but judging by the darkness in many of the apartments, I'd say none. I really think it's just the few of us here, and then no one, not for miles.

Leon: Aren't you scared?

Noel: Of what?

Leon: I don't know... of bombs?

Noel: What's the point of that?

Leon: Or of being out here, alone?

Noel: This is probably the safest place, since nobody thinks there's anyone left.

Leon: Or the most dangerous, since nobody thinks there's anyone left. They might bomb it to oblivion thinking it's deserted.

Noel: As if knowing there are still people left would stop them.

Leon: That's not a consolation.

Noel: No? I find that quite soothing, actually. I'm off to bed now. Don't touch anything.

Leon says nothing. He's still sitting on his bed. Noel turns and leaves the room.

The pressure mounts, as the authorities start rounding people up.

Scene 3.

p. 30

Leon: Listen to me carefully. You cannot leave with them. Whatever happens, you - we cannot leave.. not with them. I know you might be surprised to hear me say that, but...

Noel: I never intended to leave.

Leon: Oh... well good then... Because you mustn't.

Noel: And why is that?

Leon: This is a trap.

Noel: It's a trap?

Leon (*nervously*): Yes, yes, it is.

Noel: And how would you know that? A moment ago you were bombarding me with all the questions, and now all of a sudden you seem to know what's going on.

Leon: It's just a hunch, I guess. It doesn't make sense. Why would they guarantee safety to anyone? And what kind of safety? You don't know that. And who are those people, did they say who they were?

Noel: No, I don't think they did.

Leon: No, no, we cannot leave. We cannot, it's a trap.

Noel (*calmly*): Well, we don't know that for sure.

Leon looks at him panicked.

Noel: Try to calm down.

Leon: Calm down?

Noel: Yes, calm down.

Leon: They want people to gather at midnight - don't you find that strange?

Noel: Why should I?

Leon: It's such an ominous hour.

Noel: Oh, please. This isn't a western. Calm down. No one's going anywhere.

Leon sits down.

Leon: But that's a problem, as well..

Noel (*looking through the window*): That must mean there are far more northerners left in blocks A and C than I anticipated.

Leon says nothing.

Noel: Far too many it would appear.

Leon: They're trying to get rid of them? Why?

Noel looks at him, annoyed.

Noel: Because they want a clean area, isn't that obvious?

Leon: Cleaned from what?

Noel: Jesus, from the northerners, who else? This is South. It isn't that difficult to figure it out.

Leon: But what if they don't leave?

Noel: Use your imagination.

Leon: I don't want to use my imagination, I'm trying to calm myself.

Noel: In that case, you should definitely use your imagination.

Noel gets up to leave.

Noel: I'm going back to bed.

Leon (*jumps*): What? You can't be serious? You can't go back to bed now, you don't know what's going to happen.

Noel: I never know what's going to happen, this night is no different than any other.

Noel cannot imagine life as a refugee.

Scene 4.

p. 36

Noel: Then don't go. Nobody said you have to.

Leon: But what happens if I don't? Haven't you heard the stories?

Noel: What stories?

Leon: Stories.. you know.. from other parts of the town..

Noel: Tell me.

Leon: Well, I mean, I haven't heard much either, but I think what they were saying was that once the message is given that people should leave then people should leave.

Noel: Well, then why don't you?

Leon says nothing, still pacing around.

Leon: Why don't *you*?

Noel: Leave? Never.

Leon: Why not?

Noel: This is my home. Only I decide when I want to leave my home.

Leon: You'd die for your home?

Noel: I'm not going to be a pawn in someone's hands, moving me around how and where ever strategically it suits them. I refuse to be that.

Leon: Yeah, well, this is not a game, and there's nothing left here...

Noel: And what's out there? North, East, West? Other towns, other cities? What's in it for me? Wherever I would end up I know I would be perceived as if I wanted to take something of theirs, as an intruder, or at the very best a guest. Do you want to be a guest all of your life? For the rest of your life? Proving something to someone all of your life. They would look at me as if I *wanted to be there*.

Leon says nothing for a while.

Leon: I thought you didn't care how others perceive you.

Noel: That is not a matter of others' perception anymore. It would become a way of living. You would become it, it would become you. You would start perceiving yourself as such. As someone taking something that doesn't belong to you. As if you would need to be grateful for the rest of your life. That they allowed you to survive.

Leon says nothing.

Noel has strong views about where he belongs, Leon is still searching. Both are forced to consider where they can be at home. Maybe there is a story of migration in your family. It can be from a different country, or from one part of the country to another. Consider how this move has affected your life today.

- a) How many different types of homes can you think of?
- b) Where is your home?
 - The place you were born and grew up?
 - the place where you are now living?
 - the place where your family is?
- c) Where do you come from? And why can this be a difficult question?
- d) What does the word "home" mean to you?

It could be:

-the place where you live permanently, especially as a member of a family or household.

-
- just the place where you live
 - a place where you feel safe
 - a place where you can live, laugh, learn and be loved, respected and cared for.
 - a place where you sleep and have your personal belongings
 - a house, a flat, a tent.

e) Why is home important generally? Why is home important to you?

It could be:

- it is where you can be with your family
- because it is a place that will always be there for you
- because it is where your family is
- because it is a place where you can relax
- because it is a place you feel safe
- because it is a place that provides a foundation for your daily living

f) Is home a place or a feeling?

Here are some ideas for thought:

-Home is a place that feels familiar and feels good; it is a place that comes without question, a place that is waiting for you day in and day out, a place that is yours. Home is a place that just feels right. Deep inside of your heart, you will know when you have found it.

g) What would you miss most when you leave home?

h) What is more important today: where you come from? Or where you are going?

We leave you with this poem by Warsan Shire. A poet living in London, born in Kenya to Somalian parents.

Home

no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well
your neighbours running faster than you
breath bloody in their throats
the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory
is holding a gun bigger than his body
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.

no one leaves home unless home chases you
fire under feet
hot blood in your belly
it's not something you ever thought of doing
until the blade burnt threats into
your neck
and even then you carried the anthem under
your breath
only tearing up your passport in an airport
toilet
sobbing as each mouthful of paper
made it clear that you wouldn't be going back.

you have to understand,
that no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land
no one burns their palms
under trains
beneath carriages
no one spends days and nights in the stomach
of a truck
feeding on newspaper unless the miles
travelled
means something more than journey.
no one crawls under fences
no one wants to be beaten
pitied

no one chooses refugee camps
or strip searches where your
body is left aching
or prison,
because prison is safer
than a city of fire
and one prison guard
in the night
is better than a truckload
of men who look like your father
no one could take it
no one could stomach it
no one skin would be tough enough

the
go home blacks
refugees
dirty immigrants
asylum seekers
sucking our country dry
niggers with their hands out
they smell strange
savage
messed up their country and now they want
to mess ours up
how do the words
the dirty looks
roll off your backs
maybe because the blow is softer
than a limb torn off

or the words are more tender
than fourteen men between
your legs
or the insults are easier
to swallow
than rubble
than bone
than your child body
in pieces.

i want to go home,
but home is the mouth of a shark
home is the barrel of the gun
and no one would leave home
unless home chased you to the shore
unless home told you
to quicken your legs
leave your clothes behind
crawl through the desert
wade through the oceans
drown
save
be hunger
beg
forget pride
your survival is more important

no one leaves home until home is a sweaty
voice in your ear
saying-
leave,
run away from me now
i don't know what i've become
but i know that anywhere
is safer than here

THE CHEYENNE ARE LEAVING

Practical information

The world premiere of Tanja Mastilo's new play reveals in intimate detail the anguish of being thrown into an undeterminable conflict, separated from loved ones and told to leave your home.

On stage: Nathan Meisner and Joe Young
Written by: Tanja Mastilo
Directed by: Nina Larissa Bassett
Set design: Peter Rasmussen
Sound design: Barry Wesil
Produced by: Why Not Theatre Company

Venue: Teatret ved Sorte Hest, Vesterbrogade 150, 1502 København V.

Dates: 13th November – 5th December 2020, Monday to Friday at 8pm, Saturdays at 5pm

The play is 1 hour 20 mins and is performed in English.

For school group bookings please contact: billet@sortehest.com

Artists talks for groups can be arranged by appointment with Why Not Theatre Company. Just drop us a line at: info@whynottheatre.dk

Why Not Theatre Company

Currently one of Denmark's leading professional, English speaking theatres Why Not Theatre Company seeks to tell compelling stories that are engaging and inspiring. We delve into texts of high literary quality and tell thought-provoking stories that captivate the audience. We make an effort to introduce new faces to the English speaking theatre scene through our productions, and in The Cheyenne are Leaving we are thrilled to bring South African actor, Joe Young, to Copenhagen to take on the role of Leon. Danish audiences might recognise him from Fix&Foxy's Reumert-nominated production Dark Noon in 2018. Our latest productions include Mairead, also by Tanja Mastilo (2019) and Dance with Me by Peter Asmussen (2020). Why Not Theatre Company was founded in 2011 and only performs in English.

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Videos:

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