



## Images of Black Women in Drama

Curriculum Unit 80.03.04  
by Belinda Carberry

I have observed in my classrooms apathy and declining enthusiasm by black female students toward independence, long range planning, and pride. They do not recognize the need and opportunity for black women to become self sufficient and intellectual contributors to their community and family.

Many of these students are grooming themselves to become abusive mothers, frustrated and battered wives, neurotic employees, and psychotic citizens. These students fail to realize that by refusing to become active in classroom activities, extracurricular activities in the school, or community related programs their future life style will be socially or economically limited. Michele Wallace says that "The black woman has become a social and intellectual suicide." <sup>1</sup>

The scenario of the unwed mother, the abused wife, the welfare recipient, the crowded home situation, and the low family income is not foreign to these students; yet their awareness of these problems has not provided incentive for them to find alternatives to such an existence.

The historical role of the black woman as mother, wife, and uneducated employee has kept young black females from striving to enter the mainstream of job opportunities. Many women have accepted the idea that:

1. They can find a man to take care of them
2. They can handle the abuse as long as he pays the bills
3. It isn't worth working if all the money goes toward paying a baby sitter
4. If they have a child out of wedlock, they can go on welfare

As I hear these types of statements being made by the students I teach, I wonder what I can do to change their thinking so that they might lead a more independent, more prosperous life. These students must be made to see the masses of impoverished, unemployed black women and their numerous children as burdens to society and to the fathers who, more than likely, work for meager wages.

First, these students must be made to realize their own worth. They must be made to believe that what they admire in doctors, lawyers, and actors, etc. are qualities that exist in themselves, but are untapped or undeveloped.

I believe that if the teacher presents plays and poems written by blacks that focus on the varied roles of the black woman, the student will be able to extract from the readings one or several qualities portrayed by the character(s) to imitate for personal improvement.

The poems and plays will focus on black women as loving mothers, educated women, prostitutes, frustrated and passive wives, domineering grandmothers, annoyed sisters, women in love, liberated women, and incarcerated women.

The student will be able to decide for herself whether a role is deplorable or admirable. She will be able to compare and contrast, reject or accept the character(s). The quality or trait of the character(s) that the student finds to be admirable will be absorbed by the student and will, hopefully, contribute to transforming the student into an independent thinking and striving individual.

The selected readings will allow the students to become more reluctant to continue with their present behavior out of fear of experiencing the same dilemma as the character(s). Therefore, I view the plays and poems as a medium for modifying students' behavior.

If the plays and poems can make the students realize that they are presently at a stage in their lives where planning and decision making are vital to their future, then the objective of this unit will have been accomplished. The result of this unit will enable each student to take herself and education more seriously, because she will have had the opportunity to examine the predicaments of the characters which often result from a lack of belief in their own worth or a lack of education.

Several plays will be acted out in the classroom. All of the poems will be acted out also. At least one play will be performed before a select group of students. These students will be carefully selected so as to minimize poor audience behavior and to lessen discomfort for the students performing.

Each play will be supplemented with poems that relate to the mood or tone of the play. The supplementary readings will give the students and me an idea of the emotional concern of the content of the readings. This will also allow me to observe the reactions of individual students in order to assign roles and encourage participation.

The poems will be read before and after the reading of each play. A tape recorder will be used to compare and contrast the mood and pitch of the reader. We will be able to detect any changes in a student's intonation and word emphasis. Such a change will determine the effect the reading of the plays and poems have in modifying a student's behavior. If the second reading of a poem is read with more emphasis on key words, if the student's tone seems to comply with the mood of the poem, then it is safe to assume that some personal absorption of the subject matter has taken place in the student and some behavior change will follow. It is optimistic to believe that an immediate change will occur in the student's behavior. If the student continues to maintain her present course of behavior after being introduced to this unit, the objective of this unit should not be disregarded. Like most of learning, the usefulness and appreciation of knowledge and skills acquired are often delayed.

Because students, in general, are reluctant to read before an audience, they must be eased into the task. Spolin, Boyd, Wright, and Chekhov provide some interesting improvisation exercises and games that will allow students to unwind before attempting to act out a role.

Boyd says that a role in a play or game is a tremendous experience, a sort of vacation from one's everyday

self and everyday routine of life. She says that personal strain and conflict are often dissolved in game and play. <sup>2</sup>

Chekhov notes that if an actor confines himself/herself to just speaking lines, he/she makes himself/herself a slave to the creation of the author. Improvisation enables the actor to express his/her own creative individuality. <sup>3</sup>

After having overcome feelings of indignation and irritation that improvisation and game playing generates, the student will be able to express her feelings through drama, which will eventually lead to behavior modification. Since most teenagers re-act to the actions of their peers, I believe that the absurd and exaggerated behavior that games and improvisation demands will allow students to become more aware of their need for self improvement. Students will also become more tolerant of the transformation process of their peers. This procedure will generate a more relaxed atmosphere that will enable students to perform out-of-character roles less reluctantly. I believe that after each student has participated in this out-of-character role, she will take back to her everyday self remnants of the character(s) that will contribute to her personal improvement.

Improvisation exercises and games will serve as warm-up activities that will be performed prior to the reading of the poems and plays. The purpose of these activities is to stimulate student emotions relative to the content of the play or poem. Specific improvisation exercises and games will be explained in the sample lessons.

Since the students at Lee High School are basically placed in classes according to their reading ability, most classes are racially mixed. I would have to arrange with my department head and the counselor to form a class in Afro American Literature that would incorporate this unit.

This unit has not been developed to separate racial groups. It has been developed to educate a specific group of students who need to be uplifted and shown that they too can be productive and prosperous individuals. Lee has courses of this nature for the Hispanic students. *Images of Black Women in Drama* is needed to motivate the black student.

Black male students will be encouraged to elect this class since they are the sons, brothers, and nephews of black women. Often, they are dragged into and associated with the problems of the black female. Often they are innocent by-standers. Regardless, many times males do not know how to respond to female problems and they are labelled as being "insensitive" and/or "chauvinistic." The male student through active participation in role playing, researching, and scrutinizing the roles of the females in the plays and poems will modify his behavior and attitudes toward the females he knows. Perhaps he will learn to offer positive criticism to them.

The male student is very important in the success of this unit. All of the plays except "Ladies in Waiting" include male characters. Their involvement in the plays, poems, improvisation exercises, and discussions will contribute to the female's revelation of her need to become an independent thinking individual.

Other interested students will be allowed to participate in this unit, because even though the unit focuses on the problems of the black woman, these problems are not unique to her. Females of other cultural backgrounds experience the same or similar problems. These students will definitely find situations in the plays and poems that mirror personal experiences. Through examining these characters' roles, these students will also find resolutions to their problems dealing with lack of pride and lack of education.

From past experiences of teaching Afro-American Literature to students of different cultural backgrounds, I have found that non-black students are initially hesitant about participating in readings written by or about blacks. However, once they realize that my objective is not to cause racial tension, but to compare and contrast ideas for self-improvement or mutual understanding, then the students begin to relax and become involved in the class activities.

Juniors and seniors who read on or slightly below grade level will be encouraged to elect this course. These are the students who are, more than likely, "turned off" by school. The content and language of the plays and poems have been selected to appeal to the most reluctant reader.

It is important for the students to know how they will be graded since most of the class activities involve oral participation and little written work. The following criteria will be used in grading each student:

1. Active participation in improvisation, games, and oral reading will constitute 50% of the students' grade.

Much emphasis is placed on this section because I believe that the activities will be instrumental in transforming students' behavior.

2. Keeping a journal will constitute 20% of the students' grade. Each student will be required to keep a daily record of her experiences. The journal must include:

- a. personal contributions to the class
- b. personal responses to class activities
- c. personal comments on major characters in the plays and poems

The journal will be an out-side-of-class activity that will be checked periodically. This procedure will allow me to keep accurate records of the students' participation.

3. Students will be required to complete a 5 to 10 page research paper that will constitute 20% of their grade. The student will select one of the following topics that relate to the black woman in our society:

- a. The Black Woman in Education
- b. The Black Woman in Politics
- c. The Careers of Black Women
- d. The Black Woman in Entertainment (sports, music, theater).

The purpose of this assignment is to reinforce the idea that the black female student can and must become goal oriented so that she will experience a more productive and prosperous life. Insight into statistics and historical data along with the classroom activities, will reinforce the students' attempts to rid themselves of their present apathy and "social and intellectual suicide."

This assignment will be introduced in Lesson II. "A Raisin in the Sun" portrays three types of women: the uneducated but striving grandmother; the loving but passive wife; and the educated school girl. Students will be able to detect bits of the historical development of the black woman in this play. The research will reinforce it. A list of references will be available for student use.

4. Quizzes will constitute 10% of the students' grade. The quizzes will include questions about the plays and poems.

The following reading materials focus on aspects of the black woman's life. The first three plays will be discussed in the first three lessons in this paper. Most of the poems will serve as supplementary readings. Limited space prevents the preparation of lessons for the remaining plays and poems. I will, however, develop lessons for the remaining plays and poems as student

interest develops.

**Plays** To be found in:

*Soul Gone Home* Langston Hughes *The Poetry of the Negro: 1946-1970*

*A Raisin in the Sun* Lorraine Hansberry *Contemporary Black Drama Five on the Black*

*Hand Side* Charlie Russell *Black Perspective*

*For Colored Girls* Ntozake Shange *For Colored Girls*

*The Wife of His*

*Youth* Charles Chestnutt *The Search*

*Ladies in Waiting* Peter DeAnda *Black Drama Anthology*

*Wine in the*

*Wilderness* Alice Childress *Major Black Writers*

*Mother and Son* Langston Hughes *Black Drama Anthology*

*Strictly Matrimony* Erroll Hill *Black Drama Anthology*

*The Marriage* Donald Greaves *Black Drama Anthology*

*The Owl Killer* Philip Hayes Dean *Black Drama Anthology*

*The Corner* Ed Bullins *Black Drama Anthology*

## Poems

"Mother to Son" Langston Hughes *American Negro Poetry*  
"The Scarlet Woman" Fenton Johnson *Black Writers of America*  
"The Mother" Gwendolyn Brooks *Black Writers of America*  
"For All Black Women,  
From All Black  
Men" Eldridge Cleaver *Black Writers of America*  
"For All My People" Margaret Walker *American Negro Poetry*  
"We Wear the Mask" Paul Laurence Dunbar *American Negro Poetry*  
"Sadie and Maud" Margaret Walker *The Poetry of the Negro 1946-1970*  
"My Sort of Man" Paul Laurence Dunbar *The Poetry of the Negro 1946-1970*  
"For A Lady I Know" Countee Cullen *The Poetry of the Negro 1946-1970*  
"No Image" Waring Cuney *American Negro Poetry*  
"No Time for Poetry" Julia Field *American Negro Poetry*  
"Woman With Flowers" Naomi Long Madgett *American Negro Poetry*  
"Good Times" Lucille Clifton *American Negro Poetry*  
"My Poem" Nikki Giovanni *American Negro Poetry*  
"And She Was Bad" Marvin Wyche, Jr. *American Negro Poetry*  
"Five Sense" Marvin Wyche, Jr. *American Negro Poetry*  
"The Lonely Woman" Fenton Johnson *Black Writers of America*  
"Mae's Rent Party" Ernest J. Wilson, Jr. *The Poetry of the Negro 1946-1970*  
"In the Morning" Paul Laurence Dunbar *Black Writers of America*

## Lesson I

Play: *Soul Gone Home*

Poems: "Mother to Son"

"The Scarlet Woman"

"The Lonely Woman"

"Mae's Rent Party"

### *Summary of Play*

*Soul Gone Home* is about a black female mourning the death of her son. In her lamentation, she speaks of her son and, unexpectedly, the son speaks back to her. This becomes the son's opportunity to "tell his mother off" without fear of being abused, since he is actually dead. The play is hilarious, yet it leaves the reader annoyed with the mother's life style, which is the indirect cause of the boy's death.

### *Summary of Poems*

"Mother to Son" is a poem written in Negro dialect. The speaker in the poem is obviously poorly educated. The speaker is a mother giving advice to her son on perseverance. She tells her son how she struggled to make it. She implies that life has not been a clear climb for her. She tells the son not to stop "cause you finds it kind of hard."

"The Scarlet Woman" is about a female recalling the time when she was pure and angelic. She was supported by her father, who unexpectedly died a few days after his insurance policy had expired. The woman had to find work. She used her looks to seduce men of both races for pay, and now she can drink more than any man for miles around.

"The Lonely Mother" is being told by someone observing a mother lamenting the loss of her son. It is not quite certain if the boy is dead or if he has just gone astray. The mother survives her sorrow through the watchful attendance of the angel, Michael.

"Mae's Rent Party" is about a female who decides to have parties that will help pay her rent. The speaker tells of the soul food menu and all the people who attend the party. Mae's parties seem to be notorious and people look forward to attending them.

### *Procedures for Introducing the Play, Poems, Improvisation Exercises and Games*

Since this lesson will introduce the unit *Images of Black Women in Drama*, I will give the students an oral introduction on the purpose of this unit, much like the introduction on pages one and two of this paper. I will explain the rationale for improvisation exercises and games.

Chaikin's Color Exercise (see page 3) is a way of getting students up and away from their desks. It is an abstract activity that involves creative thinking in order to make the sounds and movements that represent colors. From past experiences of using this exercise, I find that it gives the students a concrete idea of how abstract improvisation can be. It also raises mixed emotions in the students. Voice tones are lifted and the mood of the classroom becomes cheerful.

After introducing the exercise, I will distribute the poem "Mother and Son." This poem should change the mood of the readers to one that complements the mood of the poem. All of the students will read the poem silently and then, several students will be asked to read the poem, giving their personal interpretation.

***The following questions will be asked:***

1. What is the mood of the poem?
2. Why did you stress certain words?
3. What type of life style has the mother experienced?
4. What are the characteristics of crystal?
5. What do "turnin' corners" and "reach' landins'" symbolize?

This poem end these questions will prepare the students to begin focusing on the plight of the black woman.

Before the students read "The Scarlet Woman," they will go through a Facial Exercise showing sorrow, anger, joy, pride, shame, suspicion, etc. These emotions will be demonstrated while students are seated and then when they are walking around the room.

The purpose of this exercise is to prepare the students to read the poem in the manners above.

***The following questions will be asked.***

1. What is the significance of the title?
2. What are the female's virtues and vices?
3. Should this female be pitied?

The reading of "The Lonely Woman" will follow the question and answer session above. It is not necessary to have a second improvisation at this point, since the students have already acted out feelings of sorrow, anger, shame, etc. The mood of this poem is much like the poem above.

***The following question will be asked:***

How does this poem compare or contrast to the three poems above?

Chaikin's Mirror Exercise (see page 19) will be performed prior to the reading of "Mae's Rent Party." This exercise will allow students to respond to each other's actions. Students will be much more responsive to each others' gestures when acting out roles. For example, the speaker in "Mae's Rent Party" is bubbling over with excitement about the party. A person listening to such an exciting account would certainly imitate some of the facial and body gestures of the speaker.

This activity forces the students to become aware of one another. It also allows the students to complement one another's roles, meaning that their body language will encourage them to respond meaningfully to the



situation at hand.

**The following questions will be asked:**

1. Who is the speaker in this poem?
2. What is the mood of the poem?
3. Can you describe Mae even though a description of her was not given in the poem?

All of these poems have set the mood of a female image and have prepared the students to read *Soul Gone Home*. The students have been acquainted with the “out-of-character” behavior of one another. They should be ready to act out the play in a dramatic and meaningful style.

At this point, I will select the students who will act out the play most effectively. The boy should be played by a student who has shown the most interest in the exercises, poems, and discussions. The mother should be played by a female student who has shown visceral feelings about mother/child relationships. The two attendants will be played by two volunteers.

Since this is the first full class performance, it should be very impressive for all students. I believe I should select the students to perform in order to get the best performance that will encourage other students to become more involved in future class activities.

**The following questions will be asked:**

1. What is the mood(s) of the play?
2. What type of adolescent life style would produce an adult like the female in this play?
3. Compare and contrast the females in this play with the females in the following poems: “Mother to Son,” “The Lonely Mother,” “Mae’s Rent Party,” and “The Scarlet Woman.”

A second reading of the poems will take place at this point. The same students who used the tape recorder at the first readings will re-read the poems. We will discuss the changes in tone, pitch, volume, and word emphasis. These changes will indicate a change in students’ attitudes and view of the content of the play and poems. A change in student behavior should begin to take place.

**Lesson II**

Play: “A Raisin in the Sun”

Poems: “In the Morning”

“For A Lady I Know”

“For All Black Women, From All Black Men”

“Good Times”

## “The Mother”

### *Summary of the Play*

The Youngers receive a \$10,000 life insurance policy check. Walter Younger has plans to start a liquor store business with the money, and Walter’s wife and sister lean toward the elder Mrs. Younger’s decision for using the money.

The females in this play have definite personality traits that will be scrutinized by the students.

### *Summary of the Poems*

“In the Morning” is a poem written in Negro dialect. The speaker is a female, possibly a mother figure, who is trying desperately to get a boy up in the morning. The boy takes too long to get out of the bed, which infuriates the woman. She carries on a vehement monologue that finally persuades him to get up. She instructs him to wash his face, comb his hair, and come to breakfast. After all the belligerent discourse, she delivers an eloquent grace to bless the food.

“For A Lady I Know” is about a female who dies and goes to heaven. Even after she gets to heaven, she rises early every morning to do chores while her people snore and sleep late.

“For All Black Women, From All Black Men” is lengthy prose. It traces the Plight of the black man from slavery to the present. The man in this work is making a Plea to all black women to become more understanding and more sensitive to the needs of their black men.

“Good Times” is a poem of jubilation because the father has paid the rent man and the insurance man. The entire family celebrates.

“The Mother” is a poem about a mother’s thoughts after having an abortion. The poem is written in the first person, which allows the reader to empathize with the female.

### *Procedures for Introducing the Play, Poems, Improvisation, and Games*

An exercise in Tension/Release will precede the reading of “In the Morning.” This poem requires the reader to speak loudly then softly; slowly and then quickly. The student must read calmly at some points and tensely at others. The students will meet this type of behavior in the play. The poem will prepare the students for such dramatic reading.

The procedure for this exercise requires the students to sit quietly in their seats and think of a situation that angers them. They will tighten their muscles and release them. This exercise will be repeated.

The students will also be directed to hum and become progressively louder. They then will release the sound. This exercise also prepares the students to read the poem and play dramatically—with change in pitch, volume, and word emphasis.

### **Questions to be asked:**

1. What is the mood(s) of the poem?

2. Is there a conflict in the character's personality?

"For A Lady I Know" will be read following the question and answer session above. No improvisation is needed here, because the mood of both poems are similar.

**Questions to be asked:**

1. How is this poem like "In the Morning"?
2. What is this poem saying about the role of the black woman?

"For All Black Women, From All Black Men" is rather lengthy. Perhaps the Humming and Release Exercise will set the mood for this work. Students will be able to relax and release tensions before reading. Since "A Raisin in the Sun" is lengthy, the students will be required to read only sections of the prose that have special interest to them.

**Questions to be asked:**

1. What parts of this work are most meaningful to you?
2. Why is the black man re-introducing himself in this work?
3. Why does he call the black female his Queen?
4. What qualities must a Queen possess?
5. How do the women in the following poems relate to the prose: "The Scarlet Woman," "The Mother," and "Mae's Rent Party?"
6. How does the female in *Soul Gone Home* relate to the image of the female in Cleaver's work?

Before reading "Good Times" the students will role-play a scene of a child being happy because the mother won the Lottery just before eviction day.

A second exercise will require the students to walk around in a circle giving one word definitions of good times. Both of these activities and poem are related to themes in the play.

**Questions to be asked:**

1. Who is the speaker in this poem?

2. What is the mood of the poem?
3. Why would a child feel jubilant about the rent being paid?

Before the reading of “The Mother” the students will improvise a scene of a mother and daughter discussing the abortion the daughter is about to have.

A second improvisation will require students to act out a scene where a wife and husband discuss the need for an abortion.

These activities are preparing the students to respond to the “Right to an Abortion” issue. It will also prepare the students to understand Ruth’s decision to have an abortion. These thoughts will bring the students to grips with their own ideas on abortion.

**Questions to be asked:**

1. What does the poet mean, “You remember the child you got, but did not get”?
2. List the details the female remembers about the experience.
3. How many abortions did she experience?
4. What are your views on abortion?

All of the supplementary readings include improvisation exercises or games. The students should be prepared to go right in to the reading of the play. However, Chaikin’s Machine exercise (see page 19) might provide the students with an increased feeling of unity and togetherness. The Machine Exercise reveals the concept of “the whole is equal to the sum of its parts.” The machine can not function unless all of its parts are functioning. From this exercise, students will realize that they must Perform their part in the readings as best they can, because their performance affects the performance of the other participants.

**Questions to be asked:**

1. At what point(s) in the play is there a failure in communication between male and female?
2. Do you think the Youngers could live with the thought experienced by the female in “The Mother”?
3. What poem reveals a degree of immaturity in Walter?
4. Describe Beneatha. How does she compare to the females we’ve met so far?

The procedure for re-reading the poems will remain the same.

## Lesson III

Play: *Five on the Black Hand Side*

Poems: "Woman With Flowers"

"To Image" "And She Was Bad"

### *Summary of the Play*

This play reveals the conflicts that exist between black men and black women. The play offers insight into how some men view marriage and woman. We also receive insight into how some women handle their relationships with men. Through a near separation of a couple who had been married for many years, we see a domineering husband learn to give his wife the freedom to work and regain her pride.

### **Questions to be asked:**

1. Was Mr. Brooks serious when he said, "A woman needs a good education"?
2. What poem comes to mind on page 41? Are black women locked into this responsibility?
3. Booker T. has a white girl friend because he says he ". . . digs a certain quality in a chick, and I don't find it in the sisters." What quality is he referring to?
4. If Booker T. were your brother how would you respond to his statement?
5. What does Mrs. Booker mean when she says that she is "an invisible woman"?
6. Is Stormy Monday's name appropriate? Why?
7. How did Gladys become assertive and aggressive?
8. How realistic was the protest staged by the women?

### *Summary of the Poems and Questions to be Asked*

"Women With Flowers" compares women to flowers. Both need tender loving care, believes the speaker.

### **Question to be asked:**

How would you imagine Mr. Brooks responding to this poem? Sweetmeat?

"No Image" is about a black female who sees no beauty in herself. The speaker believes that this woman would recognize her beauty if she could walk naked by a river, presumably in Africa. There, she could see her beauty reflected in the river while she bathed. The reason why she does not recognize her beauty now is that "dishwater gives back no image."

**Question to be asked:**

At what point in the play can this poem be approximately inserted?

“And She Was Bad” is a poem ridiculing black women who dress too ostentatiously. The speaker criticizes those women who concentrate on their bodies instead of their brains.

**Question to be asked:**

On page 78, Stormy Monday talks about assertiveness and aggressiveness. On page 81, Stormy talks about women’s appearance and thinking ability. Compare this poem to her point.

*Procedure for Improvisation*

The first two poems in this unit do not require improvisation activities before the reading. However, the exercises for “The Scarlet Woman” will refresh the students’ ability to read the poems “out of character.” For example, all three poems can be read expressing the emotions of sarcasm, envy, sincerity, etc.

The procedure for re-reading the poems will remain the same.

## Notes

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1. Michele Wallace, *Black Macho & Super Woman* (New York: Warner Books, 1978), p. 27.
2. Viola Spolin, *Improvisation for the Theater*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), p. 5.
3. Michael Chekhov, *The Actor on the Technique of Acting*, (New York: Harper Row, 1953), p. 35.

## Student Bibliography

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The following books are available in the English Department at Richard C. Lee High School.

Adams, William, Peter Conn and Barry Slepian. *Afro American Literature: Drama*. New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1971.

This text includes “A Raisin in the Sun” and “A Land Beyond the River.”

Bontemps, Arna, ed., *American Negro Poetry*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

An anthology of Afro American Poetry.

Hayes, Robert, David J. Burrows and Frederick R. Lapidus. *Afro American Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1971.

A collection of Afro American Writings. Many of the poems used in this unit are available in this text.

Murray, Alma, Robert Thomas. *Major Black Writers* . New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1971.

This text includes several of the poems used in this unit and the play, "Wine in the Wilderness."

*Black Perspective* . New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1971.

This text includes the play "Five on the Black Hand Side."

*The Search* . New York: Scholastic Book Services, 1971.

This text includes the story "The Wife Of His Youth."

Standford, Barbara Dodds. *I, Too Sing America: Black Voices In American Literature* . New Jersey: Hayden Book Company, Inc., 1971.

This text includes a chronological listing of the poems and detailed explanations of the time in which they were written. Includes *Wife of His Youth* and "We Wear the Mask."

## Suggested Research References for Students

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Adam, Ruth. *A Woman's Place* . New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1975.

Good chapters on issues of abortion, equal education, equal pay.

Adams, Eloise and Mary Louise Briscoe. *Up Against the Wall Mother* . Beverly Hills: Glencoe Press, 1971.

Includes "Her Story" by Naomi Long Madgett, "The Mother" by Gwendolyn Brooks.

Cade, Toni. *The Black Woman: An Anthology* . New York: Signet Books, 1970.

An anthology of issues concerning the social, educational, economic, matriarchal role of black women.

First National Women's Conference, The. *The Spirit of Houston* . Washington: National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year, 1978.

An indepth study on numerous rights of women.

Kundsins, Ruth B. *Women and Success* . New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1973.

An interesting chapter on individuality.

Ladner, Joyce A. *Tomorrow's Tomorrow* . New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1971.

A comprehensive study of black females' life styles.

Lerner, Gerda. *Black Women in White America* . New York: Vintage Books, 1972.

A documented history of black women in America.

Scott, Anne Firer. *The American Woman: Who Is She?* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971.

Includes a chapter on “the Disadvantages of Being Female and Black.”

Wallace, Michele. *Black Macho and the Super Woman* . New York: Warner Books, 1978.

An expose of the power struggle between black men and black women.

## Teacher Bibliography

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Barksdale, Richard and Kenneth Kinnamon. *Black Writer of America: A Complete Anthology* . New York: MacMillan Company, 1972.

An excellent reference book. Included biographies.

Bentley, Eric. *The Life of Drama* . New York: Atheneum, 1979.

A good reference book on aspects of a play and kinds of plays.

Cade, Toni. *The Black Woman: An Anthology* . New York: Signet Books, 1970.

An anthology of issues concerning the social, educational, economic, natriarchal role of the black female.

Chaikin, Joseph. *The Presence of the Actor* . New York: Atheneum,

1972.

This is an excellent text for improvisation exercises.

Chekhov, Michael. *The Actor on the Technique of Acting* . New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1953.

An excellent text on the purpose of improvisation activities.

Couch, William, Jr., ed. *New Black Playwrights* . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968.

This text includes the play “Happy Ending.”

Henderson, Stephen. *Understanding the New Black Poetry* . New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1973.

This is a good reference on understanding black speech and black music.

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Provides reason why acting is positive for individual creativity.

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