



## **Drama and Destiny**

Curriculum Unit 98.04.03  
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Drama & Destiny sets a course of exploration for eighth grade Theatre students to learn about themselves, their country, and the possibilities that the future holds for them. The unit includes two main sections: 1) Why America?, which addresses the cosmology and geology involved in creating our world and subsequently the country we live in; 2) What is Justice?, which focuses on issues of racism, segregation, and discrimination in America and how such issues are represented in two plays *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and *A Raisin in The Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry. A short concluding section follows, titled *What Does The Future Hold?*, which takes a look at technological advancement past, present, and future and the impact our inventiveness has had and will have with respect to progress, ethics, and survival for America and for humanity.

Given the time frame for my classes 8th grade drama students meet once per week for a 50-minute session the unit has been designed to cover the course of the first semester (approximately twenty classes). In accordance with National Arts Content Standards, classes include warm-up exercises, key questions, discussions, acting exercises, readthroughs, improvisation, scenework, and creative writing. Students will also be given the opportunity of performing selected scenes for other classes and their written work will be published in our school's annual anthology, *The Poets' Posse*. By demonstrating historical events through reading plays, discussion, analysis, acting, and playwriting, it is the intent of this unit to foster in the students an understanding of history in order to deal with the present and foresee future problems and possibilities.

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### **Part One: WHY AMERICA?**

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Renowned astronomer, Carl Sagan, reminds us that we are made of stardust, as all matter, energy, space and time in the universe would appear to have emanated from a single point about 15 to 20 billion years ago; a point perhaps no bigger than the period at the end of this sentence. In a great explosion that we call big bang, all the substance of the universe was dispersed throughout space. Gravitational force pulled clumps of matter into huge clusters, which in turn formed galaxies and subsequently gave birth to our own planet. Not necessarily an easy birth at that, but a long process panting a toxic atmosphere that would take almost two billion years before it could begin to sustain life. That arduous labor was repeatedly convulsed by violent volcanic eruptions that subdued great land masses and eventually gave rise to the continents as we know

them today, including the great expanse of plains, mountains and lakes we now call the United States of America. In this first section students will explore who they are in relation to their country, the world around them, and the universe of which substance we are all made.

## **Quantum Leaps**

**THE ATOM GAME:** To introduce students to the beginning of time, the unit begins with a game called Atom. Atom is played in an open space, which can be created by pushing chairs (and desks) aside, or weather permitting, going outside. The game begins with music (either played or sung by the teacher), which will be stopped intermittently throughout the game. As the music continues, students move around; walking, skipping, dancing, etc. The music is stopped and the teacher says, Freeze. Students then freeze their positions. The teacher calls out Atom and a number, e.g., Atom Five. Students try to gather together in groups of five. Any students left over from the groupings are out of the game, but can then help the teacher to call out numbers as the activity is repeated. The game ends when two students are left. As raucous as the game can get when students are hustling to form groups, Atom teaches students to listen and respond on cue even in the midst of their own enthusiasm for the game.

After the game, we will gather together in a circle of chairs (a typical setting for a theater class). Students will be asked Why is this game called Atom? In the discussion that follows, we will define the words matter, energy, space and time in context with the game they have just played, i.e., their bodies are matter, which they move with energy, from one place to another through space, and this action of a particle being energized to move through space from one position to another is what creates time. Students will then be introduced to Democritus, the Greek natural philosopher (c. 460-370 B.C.), who believed that everything in the world was made up of tiny immutable blocks that were invisible. Because Democritus considered such a block to be uncuttable, he called it an atom, which means the same thing. Democritus also believed that nature consisted of many kinds of atoms, and that each one had hooks and barbs so that it could join with others to make up all sorts of things from flower petals to human beings. Students will be asked how this could be? How could someone living over 2,000 years ago without the benefit of modern technology (not to mention the Discovery channel) come up with the idea of the atom? We will then discuss how each of us possesses the capacity for imagination, logic, and reason and that since the beginning of time human beings have had an insatiable desire to understand the mysteries of existence who we are and where we came from.

**TALKING HEADS:** To more clearly appreciate our human quest for understanding the mysteries of existence, and in particular, some of the ideas that led up to the Big Bang theory, students will share in an oral reading of Talking Heads Profiles timeline (next page). This timeline was synthesized from information from Steven Hawking's A Brief History of Time, pages 1-13, and the eighth grade science text, Exploring the Universe, pages 56-62. It includes brief profiles of some of the remarkable thinkers throughout history, such as: Aristotle, Nicholas Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, Johannes Kepler, Isaac Newton, Edwin Hubble and Stephen Hawking.

**TALK SHOW:** The format of a television talk show is employed to help students practice theatrical character development. Since talk shows are one of Americas chief forms of entertainment ranging from the socially responsible Oprah Winfrey to the coliseum-like forum of Jerry Springer students are very responsive to play-acting a talk show. This format not only serves as a medium for improvisational work, but can also support selected thematic content. After students have completed the oral reading of Talking Heads, they will improvise a talk show (obviously capable of time travel) to discuss Who are we? and Where did the world come from? They will select their roles as MC and guests for the show from the people profiled in the Talking Heads timeline and will act in those characters.

## Hard Rock

Owing to space-age technology, we have been able to view our planet from high above Earth's atmosphere and to witness a vast ocean covering most of its surface. With its dispersed cloud cover, it looks like a blue marble. Intuitively, ancient Greeks must have shared this view in their belief in Oceanus, the legendary ocean-river that ran past the Straits of Gibraltar to encompass the world. Homer, with no small degree of prescience, believed Oceanus to be the source of all things; an idea with which Charles Darwin might have agreed at least metaphorically in his *Origin of the Species* (1859).

**HARD ROCK TIME LINE:** Students will learn that the world's oceans are, in fact, one great ocean-river, whose circular flowing currents form a continuous worldwide pattern of circulation by introducing them to geological concepts regarding the formation of the continents. Students will share in an oral reading of *Hard Rock - the lithosphere takes shape* (below), along with a presentation using illustrations from the eighth grade science text, *Dynamic Earth*, regarding continental drift and plate tectonics (Chapter 3, Plate Tectonics, pp. 54-77).

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## **HARD ROCK: THE LITHOSPHERE TAKES SHAPE**

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Early 1900s: Alfred Wegener a meteorologist, develops the theory of continental drift; that the Earth once had a single landmass that broke up into large pieces, which have since drifted apart.

1950s-1960s: Ocean floor spreading is determined as the process in which old ocean floor is pushed away from a midocean ridge by the formation of new ocean floor. Convection currents within the Earth's mantle create new divergent boundaries as rising magma weakens continental areas resulting in rift valleys. The V-shaped rift valleys subsequently fill with water and the lava eruptions that come up through their bases cool at the surface, leveling in new ocean floor.

1960s: Theory of Plate Tectonics links the ideas of continental drift and ocean-floor spreading to explain how the Earth has evolved over time. It helps to explain the formation, movements, collisions, and destruction of the Earth's crust.

250 million years ago the mega continent Pangaea was surrounded by ocean.

200 million years ago convection currents within the Earth's mantle created new divergent boundaries as rising magma weakened continental areas resulting in rift valleys. The V-shaped rift valleys subsequently filled with water and the lava eruptions that came up through their bases, cooled at the surface, leveling in new ocean floor.

135 million years ago the mega continent of Pangaea diverged into three continents: North America, Eurasia, and Gondwanaland.

100 million years ago Gondwanaland diverged into South America, Africa, India and Antarctica-Australia.

45 million years ago Europe broke free from Asia and Australia broke free from Antarctica.

To the present Europe and Asia converged and connected with the northeastern portion of Africa; North and

South America became linked by what we now call Mesoamerica, and India, having collided into the Eurasian plate, literally gave rise to the Himalayas (17 million years ago).

100 million years ahead The southeastern coast of Africa may disconnect from the continent; the rest of Africa may connect with Europe, Asia and India.

150 million years ahead Australia and Antarctica may connect; a new ocean may form between the southeastern coast of Africa and an extended peninsula off the southwestern portion of India.

250 million years ahead Most of the Earth's continents may once again form into a mega continent surrounded by water, with a new ocean in its center and the Antarctica/Australia continent not far off its southern coast.

Info Source: Dynamic Earth, Chapter 3, Plate Tectonics, pp. 54-77.

**MACHINE:** The Machine is a theatre exercise that engages students through movement and sound to collaborate in the construction of an abstract machine. One student begins the exercise by taking a position in the playing area (designated floor space) and making a simple movement or sound (or both) that he or she will repeat throughout the course of the exercise. Another student enters the playing area and connects to the first student using a different repetitive movement or sound, thus adding a new part to the machine. Other students enter either one at a time, in pairs, or in small groupings to add movement and sound to the machine. Students continue their repetitive movements and sounds. The teacher then instructs the machine to speed up, slow down, break down, repair itself, etc. This activity promotes creative collaboration in that students share in the improvisation and actually become physically connected in the process. Like the Talk Show exercise, the Machine can also address thematic content.

After students review the Hard Rock timeline and discuss the Dynamic Earth illustrated presentation, they will improvise a machine that makes continents. Students will be coached to demonstrate volcanic activity, ocean floor spreading, and continental drift. Students will also be asked to show how the machine will make the future world of 250 million years from now when most of the Earth's continents may once again converge when America becomes part of a mega continent surrounded by water with a new ocean in its center and the Antarctica/Australia continent not far off its southern coast.

### **Newcomers & Uninvited Guests**

With a basic understanding of the cosmology and geology involved in creating our world, we will begin to narrow our focus to the country we live in and the early migrations, explorations and turf battles that formed America.

Students will be apprised that approximately 100 thousand years ago, humans began to migrate across the continents. This diaspora acted as a centrifugal force pushing humanity out from its center in Africa to the Middle East and Europe and eventually to Asia and the Americas. Consequently, due to genetic isolation and harsh environmental conditions, distinct and intricately diverse peoples evolved, sometimes labeled separate races.

**DEUCALION & PYRRH, A GREEK MYTH:** Although America is a land of many peoples and a country that coexists in a world of diverse cultures, it is not only a scientific datum that we are all descendants of a particular anthropological archetype, but a mythological, if not religious idea as well. Ancient stories about a great flood covering the Earth have come to us from various cultures around the world. Perhaps the most well-known in

the west is the Biblical story of Noah. In Greek mythology there is also a deluge story wherein only Deucalion (Prometheus' son) and Pyrrha (Pandora's daughter) are saved by Zeus. In both accounts the respective deities in power flood the Earth, saving only the faithful. Similarly, the endings to these stories offer hope as the world is renewed and a new family of man begins: Noah's sons venture forth to father new cultures Shem becomes the father of the Semitic people, his brother Ham, the father of African nations, and so forth. Deucalion and Pyrrha veil their heads and cast behind them the bones of their mother Mother Earth, that is and in so doing, the stones (her bones) take human form as they fall, becoming the first inhabitants of the Stone Age. Students will share in an oral reading of Deucalion (from Ingrid and Edgar D'Aulaire's *Book of Greek Myths*). They will discuss the similarity of this story to the Biblical story of Noah and to an even more ancient Mesopotamian flood legend (circa 3000 B.C.), which I will relay to them. In this story, the gods plan to wipe out mankind with a great flood, but they select one man and his family to be saved. They tell him to build an ark seven stories tall, which he does. He gathers the seeds of all living things and the beasts of the field. Along with these things he brings on board his gold, silver, and his family. After seven days of violent storms, the ark comes to rest on a mountain and a new beginning for mankind ensues. (*Life in The Ancient World*, pp. 20-21.)

We will further discuss these stories in relation to Earth's geological transformations as well as our cosmological beginnings. Not only do legend (and/or religion) and science seem to say that humans stem from the same initial family tree on Earth, but it would seem that they also agree that we share a seemingly infinite connection as stardust from which our universe was born.

**EARLY MIGRATIONS & EXPLORATIONS:** Referring to the eighth-grade social studies text, *Exploring American History* (pp. 6-90), students will discuss some of the early migrations and explorations to America. Roughly 31,000 years after the first people settled on the North American continent having migrated across Beringia (nowadays, the Bering Strait); c. 30,000 B.C. America would be discovered by Leif Ericson, a Viking, in the year 1000, and newly discovered once again in 1492 by Cristobal Colone (otherwise known as Christopher Columbus). Subsequently this vast land mass would get its name from French geographer, Martin Waldseemüller, who mistakenly named the continent after Italian sailor, Amerigo Vespucci, which he published in an atlas thinking Amerigo to be the explorer who discovered the new world. (In 1505, several letters describing such a discovery by Vespucci had been printed in Europe; *The Cosmographiae Introductio* by Martin Waldseemüller; *Exploring American History*, p. 55.) Misnomer notwithstanding, eventually the disenfranchised as well as the profiteers of Europe would come to call this new world home as their countries disputed land rights and suffered religious conflicts. By the early 1600s, Cabot would lay claim North America for England (1497); Cortes would conquer Mexico for Spain (1519); Coronado would march across the American Southeast (1540); Raleigh would settle Roanoke Island (1585); Champlain would explore Canada (1603); Jamestown, a British colony would be founded (1607); the Pilgrims, fleeing from religious persecution, would land at Plymouth Rock (1620); and Dutchman, Peter Minuit, would purchase Manhattan Island from the Man-a-hat-ta Indians for twenty-four dollars worth of goods (1624). At about this time, Dutch and English trading ships would begin transporting Africans to North America, some first as indentured servants, but most as slaves.

**TABLEAU:** Drama students will learn to use movement and gesture to express ideas, situations, and emotions through pantomime and tableau. As in the Atom game, students move freely about while music is played or sung. The teacher says Freeze! whereupon the class remains frozen in place. The teacher then announces a character type (human or otherwise), such as basketball players or frogs and the class begins to move again in the character type. This process is continued for several character types chosen by the teacher. Emotions or even inanimate objects can be substituted for character types. This technique helps students to get in character and is a good warm-up for any shared oral reading.

After our review and discussion of early migrations and explorations, students will play Tableau to demonstrate the various types of people we talked about, e.g., people crossing Beringia, explorers on board a ship, Pilgrims, etc. Then they will work in small groups (of three to five students) to improvise living tableaux (human pictures) of early migrations and explorations. Student narrators will be selected to explain the events (or read from their text books), and groups of students will strike poses respectively. Minor props and costume pieces may be used in this exercise, such as: hats, a Viking helmet (should you happen to have one on hand), a cardboard tube used as a telescope, stackable wooden boxes or plastic crates to create set pieces (ships, walls, podium, etc.), and large pieces of cloth. The overall objective here is to have students gain a visceral awareness of historical events by creating a living timeline.

**TURF BATTLES:** Referring to the eighth-grade social studies text, *Exploring American History* (pp. 96-107), students will review colonial America. By 1733 the British had established thirteen colonies for England along the eastern coast of America. A little over 100 years earlier, Pilgrims previously known as Separatists since they had separated from the Church of England and had been living in the Netherlands for twelve years as a punishment from King James I for doing so took an important step towards democracy in the New World.

While sailing for Virginia, Pilgrims on board the *Mayflower* were blown off course. On December 11, 1620, having sent an exploring party to investigate land sighted in Massachusetts, they decided to build a village in Plymouth Harbor. Since they hadn't landed in Virginia, and as a result were left without any laws to guide them, they drew up a document while still on board their ship. They named it the *Mayflower Compact*. In this document, the Pilgrims swore their allegiance to the king of England and agreed that some citizens could take part in governing Plymouth Colony. With the help of Squanto, an English-speaking Patuxet who had lived in England for nine years after his capture by an English sea captain the Pilgrims were able to survive their first winter in the New World.

At first relations between the early New England settlers and Native Americans were cooperative as they engaged in the trade of European cloth, blankets, pots, and firearms for native food and furs. In 1630, The Great Migration began, bringing over a thousand Puritans to Massachusetts Bay Colony by 1634. Puritan leaders, such as John Winthrop and John Cotton wanted to set up a holy Christian colony that lived by the teachings of Christ. Staunch in this desire, Puritans looked down on the Native Americans and believed that those who did not become Christians should be forced to leave. Some Native Americans became Christians and lived alongside English neighbors in Praying Towns. But by the early 1600s as settlers living in the Massachusetts Bay Colony increasingly demanded more of a say in government, they also increasingly encroached on the land of their native hosts. By 1637, the Pequots angered at the loss of their land and the unfriendly settlers, joined with other tribes in war against the colonists. Puritans and their allies burned down a Pequot fort, killing 400. Those Pequots remaining were mostly sold as slaves.

Forty years after the Pequot War, The Massachusetts Bay Colony tried to force its laws upon Native Americans. The colonists no longer had to rely on native help since they were better able to fend for themselves. English settlers often took land set aside for Native Americans. The Puritans tried to impose a tax on the Wampanoag tribe. As a result, in 1675, a native alliance led by Metacomet, the Wampanoag chief named King Philip by the colonists waged war. After two years of fighting, and with the aid of Uncas, chief of the Mohegans who saw the Wampanoags as rivals, the Puritans had won.

Tribal unity all but disappeared for the native people living in the New England region. In the first centuries of European contact, pandemics of smallpox, measles, and other sicknesses, against which Native Americans had no immunity, weakened any native resistance to the colonial displacement of their local communities.

Failure of the colonists to appreciate the ecological resourcefulness and abiding respect for nature of the Native Americans gave rise to suffocating provincialism. The defeat suffered in King Philip's War, which led to the execution of Metacomb, the selling of his wife and son into slavery, and the abandonment of native Christian converts who had been sequestered on an island in Boston Harbor, basically ended these native cultures that had thrived for centuries.

FILM CLIPS - SQUANTO: Students will view a few clips from the film Squanto his capture and escape from England, and his generosity toward European settlers in the New World (his home) in spite of his ordeal. They will engage in a discussion about the difference in attitude toward land between Native Americans and their uninvited guests from England. Where Native Americans saw the land as a living entity that they learned to coexist with, colonial settlers viewed it as the prize of acquisition and the spoils of victory.

### **We The People & Others**

Four centuries before Pilgrims took one of the first steps toward self-governance in America, King John of England was forced to sign The Magna Carta, which denied the king any power to take away the rights of the nobles (1215). By 1258, representative government began in England. The ideas of representative government and citizens' rights were also reflected in the New World. (But with typical Eurocentric arrogance, they were reflected solely for whites.)

BEGINNINGS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA: Referring to the eighth-grade social studies text, *Exploring American History* (pp. 144-149; 186-208), students will be given an overview of the beginnings of representative government in America. A year before the Mayflower Compact was signed, The Virginia's House of Burgesses, the first assembly elected by property owners, became the first representative government in America (1619). In 1639, Connecticut settlers issued the Fundamental Orders, which guaranteed that male landowners could take a part in government regardless of their religious beliefs. The following year found Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams both banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony by Puritans (who practiced a kind of no-frills Christianity and ostracized those who did not share in their beliefs). Yet, Hutchinson and Williams were able to go on to build a colony based on religious freedom in Rhode Island. In 1644, Rhode Island became an official colony of England through a charter from King Charles I, which gave men the right to choose their own government and make their own laws. This charter also stated that government could not pass laws about religious matters.

The colonies expanded to support the great numbers of people from Europe who had come to this new promised land. England had opened a portal of hope and prosperity; this American dream that offered in large measure religious freedom and economic advantage. By the mid 1600s, over 20,000 colonists were living in New England. Yet, as the colonies grew, they increasingly demanded more autonomy in self-governance from their mother country and dramatically cut her apron strings by refusing to comply with long-distance governance. Early in 1776, more than 150,000 copies of *Common Sense* (Thomas Paine's treatise on independence) were sold. Later that same year, Thomas Jefferson, a young lawyer from Virginia who had served as a member of the Virginia Assembly for seven years, would draft a document that would set a war in motion and at the same time, would found a new nation: The Declaration of Independence.

LIFE, LIBERTY, HAPPINESS & THEATRE OF THE ABSURD: After reviewing and discussing the above, students will focus on The Declaration of Independence (which appears in their Social Studies text, *Exploring American History*, pp. 204-207). Since students are introduced to The Declaration of Independence in the early grades and also do more in-depth study in eighth grade, they should already be familiar with it. Using information from their social studies text books, students will work collaboratively in small groups to brainstorm ideas for a

fictional revolution. This revolution may mirror the American Revolution, but should be abstract and ridiculous. As they brainstorm, they may discover some inconsistencies in American history to draw from, such as the economical and political conflicts that suborned a nation dedicated to freedom to allow slavery and racial discrimination. The groups will take turns presenting their ideas to the class for comment and critique. In the spirit of Theatre of the Absurd a post World War II drama form that expressed the bleak sense of loss [as] described by French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre when he wrote about the feeling that life is absurd (Acting & Theatre, p. 55) student groups will continue to collaborate in order to write a declaration of independence for their contrived revolutions. Two models for the kind of fiction students will be writing are Eugene Ionesco's Rhinoceros (where a town of people gradually turn into rhinos) and Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot (where two tramps make meaningless chatter as they wait for the non-existent Godot to tell them what to do). Their final documents will require the following: 1) A preamble stating why the declaration must be made and that events have forced a people to break away from the nation ruling them; 2) The principals and ideals of the new nation being formed and the fundamental rights of its citizenry; 3) Reasons for independence due to specific offenses made by the ruling nation; 4) A formal statement of separation from the ruling nation that shows commitment and willingness to sacrifice all.

When the writing is completed, student groups will present their formal (though abstract) declarations to the class. For each presentation (probably four to five), we will discuss the merits of each piece and how it contrasts with the actual Declaration of Independence. In so doing, we will also focus on the incongruity in the actual declaration of a people decrying the tyranny of one country as they willfully exploited the guardians of another; the one they are claiming as their own. And, with a mounting labor force kidnapped from yet other countries on the continent of Africa, we will also discuss the hypocrisy of a document that stated "all men are created equal." In the end, America won her independence, for which Americans living today in one of the richest countries on Earth can be most grateful. But it would take almost ninety years after the signing of The Declaration of Independence before Congress would pass the Thirteenth Amendment to abolish human slavery in this country. Such "truths" were apparently not so self-evident, and to this day are still struggling to become so.

DWINDLING NATION OF NATIONS: As America saw rockets' red glare in a star-spangled banner with its incumbent promise of freedom, the bright lights of hundreds of Indian nations continued to flicker and fade. Within one hundred years after America gained her independence, they were all but extinguished as U.S. government boarding schools for Indians began opening up around the turn of the century. These schools were instrumental in brainwashing children to Christian ways and away from their savage roots by shearing their hair, changing their dress and forbidding them to speak their own language or practice their beliefs. Such schools were actually considered humanitarian in their day. In view of the extent of violations to the Treaty of Laramie (1868) thought by Chief Red Cloud and other Lakota chiefs to be a peace and trade agreement that would guarantee white withdrawal from the sacred Black Hills and Bozeman trail in South Dakota the internment of Indian children was, by comparison, humane. Red Cloud hadn't read the fine print of the treaty: I am not hard to swindle because I cannot read and write (The Native Americans Illustrated History, p. 340). The Sioux also hadn't read between the lines that the Union Pacific Railway would be forcing them off their lands. When General George Armstrong Custer made the treaty all but null and void by opening up the Black Hills to financial concerns as well as poor miners, the great Sioux War erupted. Custer certainly got his comeuppance at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. But not long after, the formidable force that had defeated him, surrendered at the Red Cloud agency in Nebraska. This surrender was led by Crazy Horse and followed by three hundred warriors and a thousand Oglala Sioux and Cheyenne, herding in twenty-five hundred ponies. (The Native Americans Illustrated, pp. 345-352.)



CENTO: Cento is a poetic form that is constructed almost as a puzzle might be. Phrases from existing poetry are gathered and arranged in an order that is pleasing and meaningful to the student. The source of inspiration we will use for our centos will be culled from *The Native Americans Illustrated*, which includes over a hundred poems.

RESPECT: The word respect stems from its Latin roots, *re*, which means again and *specere*, which means to look. In this context, students will be advised that respect means more than looking with one's eyes; that in order to truly treat others with respect, we need to look again. Students will also be given a copy of the Anti-Defamation League's Definition of Terms, which addresses various types of prejudices among people including: racism, bigotry, heterosexism and homophobia, anti-semitism, and sexism. To further demonstrate an understanding of these terms, students will engage in the Talk Show activity (see Talk Show in the Quantum Leaps section), this time improvising characters to reveal the various kinds of prejudices people can have.

Students will be advised that much of the work we have done thus far has involved respect. Using intelligence, the perceptive qualities of thought, we have looked again at our history, a past all too often consumed with violence and injustice, yet a time that also held hope for a promised land of liberty and freedom. With compassion, the vision in our hearts, we can continue to look again, before history to the beginning of the universe and the stardust of which we are made. In that vision, we may truly be able to conceptualize a future of peace and prosperity for all.

In this spirit, the section ends with a lesson from Confucius on how to become human.

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## **LESSON PLAN: CONFUCIUS & BECOMING HUMAN**

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Objective: Students will explore the pragmatic aspect of the religious philosophy of Confucius (the well-known 5th-6th century B.C. Chinese philosopher and teacher). They will use the poetic form of calligram to demonstrate an awareness of this philosophy.

Purpose: Confucius' philosophy (as described in a PBS Bill Moyer's interview on Confucianism with Houston Smith, Professor of Comparative Religions) is based on the concept of empathy. In this regard it is similar to the Anti-Defamation League's ideas about overcoming prejudice as stated in their information sheet Definition of Terms. In understanding the role empathy can play in the course of human affairs, students can develop a valuable skill to help them communicate more effectively and get along with others; both necessary ingredients for happy and productive learning and living. As a drama skill, empathy is essential to acting as well as analyzing characters and writing plays.

Presentation: Students will be introduced to Confucius and his philosophy. Simply stated, Confucianism offers a cosmic view of existence that emanates from the family at its center. The key to the philosophy is empathy, but we are warned that to have empathy only for our family creates nepotism; to have empathy only for our community creates provincialism; to empathize only with our own kind creates nationalism; and not until we can have empathy for the entire world, can we create humanism. Beyond humanism, Confucius believed that we could expand our empathy even further to the cosmos and to our existence into the infinite.

Application & Method: The poetic form of calligram will be introduced. A calligram is a poem written or typed in a visual pattern. Students will be instructed to draw five concentric arcs on a sheet of plain paper. The arcs should be drawn in light pencil line, spaced about one inch apart from each other, and labeled (in color marking pens) as follows.

Students are then instructed to use scrap paper to write a phrase that describes the importance of empathy for each area. After reviewing and revising the work, students will pencil in the phrases on each arc line. They will then use color marking pens to ink their phrases (using a specific color for each phrase), after which they will erase the pencil lines. What they will end up with should resemble a rainbow. Students will be told that the rainbow is often used as a symbol for diversity, and that this kind of poetic writing that forms a shape and/or design is called a calligram.

As in any creative process, following the rules is far less important than discovering one's soul or personal aesthetic. The instructions mentioned above are meant as guidelines. Students are always welcomed to color outside the lines and let their imaginations take the lead.

Evaluation: Students will present and discuss their works in class. These will also be posted in the Library Media Center as part of our Poetry A to Z schoolwide theme.

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## **Part Two: WHAT IS JUSTICE?**

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Considering that humanity is believed to have emanated out of Africa, it would seem a pleasant thought to view the people of Earth as a six-billion member extended family. Or, as Sagan suggested, made of stardust having exploded like fireworks from the beginning of time. Yet for much of the world and unfortunately, also for America, such is not the case. Perhaps a good example of this kind of incongruity a family of man separated by ethnic bias and bigotry can be further demonstrated in the closing argument of *To Kill a Mockingbird's* main character, Atticus Finch, in his defense of Tom Robinson, a black man accused of raping a white woman. Therein he quotes Thomas Jefferson's ideal that all men are created equal as stated in The Declaration of Independence:

In this year of grace, 1935, we're beginning to hear more and more references to Thomas Jefferson's phrase about all men being created equal. But we know that all men are not created equal in the sense that some men are smarter than others, some have more opportunity because they're born with it, some men make more money, some ladies make better cakes, some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope But there's one way in which all men are created equal. There's one human institution that makes the pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein. That institution, gentlemen, is a court of law. In our courts all men are created equal. I'm no idealist to believe so firmly in the integrity of our courts and in the jury system - that's no ideal to me, it is a living, working reality. But a court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. I'm confident that you gentlemen will review without passion the evidence you've heard, come to a decision, and restore this defendant to his family. In the name of God, do your duty!

With regard to Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia*, wherein two chapters (pp. 122-128; 185-193)

he provides the first major treatise on scientific racism in this country, the outcome of the guilty verdict in *To Kill A Mockingbird* is not so surprising. Although Jefferson deserves the accolades of being labeled the quintessential Renaissance man a statesman and former president who doubled the land size of the U.S. when he made the Louisiana Purchase; the founder of the University of Virginia; clearly a facile writer and one of the preeminent architects of his day his weary criticisms of enslaved Africans and preposterous assumptions of their mental deficiencies and social inferiority, clearly label him a racist. While Jefferson repeatedly states that slavery must end in America, he continues to decry those he would see set free. He even goes so far as to criticize them for not being very good slaves! . . . among the Romans, their slaves were often their rarest artists . . . Epictetus, Terence, and Phaedrus, were slaves. But they were of the race of whites. It is not their condition then, but nature, which has produced the distinction (p. 191) (Little did Jefferson know at the time, that one day Picasso would credit early African sculpture as a source of his inspiration.) Since these kinds of statements are mind-bogglingly incongruous with the eloquence of his writing in *The Declaration of Independence*, it makes one wonder whether Jefferson had a vested interest (apart from any racist proclivity) in somehow proving that Africans were less than human. If all men are created equal, then prominent plantation` owners stood a lot to lose when the overwhelming majority of their no-cost/low-overhead labor force left the fields to set up shop and compete with them.

By 1935, seventy-five years after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished human slavery and sixty-five years after the Fifteenth Amendment granted African Americans the right to vote, the fictional attorney in Harper Lee's novel loses a case with an airtight defense due to racism. A few years earlier in 1931, the real-life case of the Scottsboro Boys trial begins, attracting national attention and making liberal northerners aware of gross injustices in the rural southern judicial system. In Scottsboro, Alabama, on March 31, 1931, nine young black men were charged with the rape of two white girls. They were all convicted by an all-white jury and eight of them were sentenced to death. A Scottsboro Committee was formed by northern liberals and the U.S. Supreme Court declared mistrials in 1932 and 1935. However, the defendants were eventually convicted and sentenced to terms up to ninety-nine years. (American Images on File, *The Black Experience*, p. 4.47.)

PICTORIAL PRESENTATIONS: In Part Two: What is Justice? students will often refer to *American Images on File, The Black Experience*, a Media, Inc., 1990 publication, which is a collection of approximately 600 (8" X 10") captioned photographs of prominent African Americans and events in history (bound in a loose-leaf ring binder). The book also includes a Black History time line of events spanning almost five centuries. In using the book for pictorial presentations, various pictures will be selected in order to cover a particular period of time, e.g., The Reconstruction spanning a time frame from 1867 to 1877. Photo prints (pictures) will be handed out to students, which they will look over as they study captions for each print they have been given. After a few minutes for review, students will take turns presenting their pictures (in chronological order). In this kind of presentation, we will often allow time for brief discussions about the people and events represented in the timeline.

## **Slavery & Discrimination in The Land of The Free**

The kingdoms of Ghana, Benin, Mali, Ashanti, and the Songhai were early African societies (c. 300 to the mid 1600s) that featured highly organized governments, military divisions, and profitable trade relations with European and Asian nations. These kingdoms existed on what came to be called The Gold Coast, which became the primary area for the capture and sale of Africans into slavery.

Slavery was a practice long held in the ancient world as well as in feudal Europe. The word slave itself comes from Slav, after the pagan Slavs that Western (Christian) Europeans felt entitled to enslave. Today, slavery is still practiced in some parts of the world as a result of debt bondage. Slavery was also a practice among many

African tribes to hold prisoners of war in bondage. However, as Ronald Segal points out in his book, *The Black Diaspora*, the acquisition of people to a house, district, or village was of senior importance. (This triad system of three interlocking social groups formed the basic foundations from which kingdoms would arise in central Africa; it was introduced by Bantu-speaking farmers from the Benue Valley in Nigeria.) The head of a house became more powerful the more he could attract followers by offering gifts. People, not goods, were the prize, and the goods acquired through production or trade were invested in acquiring the allegiance or dependence of more people . . . powerful provincial lords required correspondingly large gifts to secure their allegiance . . . those arriving as captives or as refugees from drought and famine required no further gifts . . . since they were already being given their lives' (*The Black Diaspora*, p. 12). Segal goes on to say that when the Atlantic trade offered imported high volume goods on easy credit terms goods that seemingly competed with the acquisition of dependents for prestige goods became the prize, not people. Such trade offered district chiefs a fast track to power. But since the suppliers of the imported goods increasingly demanded people (slaves) in exchange, the chiefs forfeited many of those dependents that had helped to create their power in the first place.

**FROM AFRICA TO AMERICA PICTORIAL P'RESENTATION:** Students will share in a pictorial presentation from *American Historical Images on File, The Black Experience* (pp. 1.03-2.55; 3.00-3.05). Roughly twenty pictures will be selected to depict the beginnings of slavery in America and will include such prominent features as: The arrival of the earliest slave ships in the New World; the first blacks to arrive in Jamestown who became indentured servants; the Triangle Trade route and its middle passage; Crispus Attucks and the Boston Massacre; Francois Dominique Toussant L'Ouvertures massive slave uprising in Haiti (which later inspired Americans Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vesey as a model for their rebellions); Joseph Cinqu and the Amistad revolt; Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad; the Dred Scott decision; the Emancipation Proclamation and The Civil War; the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers; draft riots in New York; the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing human slavery; General Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox .

After the presentation, students will engage in the Tableau exercises to create a living timeline (as mentioned in the Early Migrations & Explorations section of Part One: Why America?). The focus here will be on the courage, strength, and intelligence of our early African ancestors in America, who stood up to oppression in spite of dire odds. In so doing, they led African Americans to become the conscience of America and the frontrunners of social and political change in this country.

**RECONSTRUCTION, AND SEGREGATION PICTORIAL PRESENTATION:** Students will share in pictorial presentation from *American Historical Images on File, The Black Experience* (pp. 3.04-3.27). After the Civil War, African Americans had a reprieve from discrimination. The beginnings of Reconstruction brought widespread change in voting and education laws, thus giving blacks access to advantages previously denied them. Many blacks held elected office. New schools for black education sprang up in the North and South. These changes brought about a growing black middle class. While social life remained segregated for blacks and whites during the Reconstruction period, many states moved toward integration by passing laws guaranteeing blacks equal access to public transportation and accommodations. Government and politics were almost fully integrated throughout the South. Blacks served in Congress and the state legislatures, and sat on juries, school boards, and city councils. Black men served as mayors, judges, sheriffs, policemen and magistrates. By 1867, 700,000 African Americans voted for the first time in Northern-mandated elections (held in each Southern state to decide whether to rewrite the state constitution). Earlier in that same year, on March 2nd, The First Reconstruction Act the first of four acts designed to protect the civil rights of African Americans divided the ten unreconstructed states in the South into five military zones, which were run by armed commanders. These commanders registered qualified voters (especially black men) who were to elect delegates to state

constitutional conventions. Blacks and whites worked together for the first time to draft state constitutions in accordance with the guidelines of the First Reconstruction Act. These included mandatory black suffrage and the passage of the Fourteenth amendment granting citizenship to African Americans.

In the course of almost 350 years of slavery, war, and racial hatred, the Reconstruction was not to last. By 1877, Reconstruction governments fell in South Carolina and Louisiana, marking the end of this era, although black disenfranchisement Jim Crow laws would not come until the 1890s and blacks had voted for nearly a quarter of a century.

**THE AMENDMENT PROCESS:** Students will refer to their social studies text books to review the process for making amendments to the Constitution (pp. 262). They will then assume the characters of senators and representatives living in the late 1800s (some from the South and some from the North). They will improvise arguments for and against giving African Americans the right to vote (which actually occurred in 1870 with the ratification of the 15th Amendment). Then they will present their arguments to the class as if they were presenting to Congress. As in all our presentation work, the class will have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

### **Heading for a New Deal**

Referring to their social studies text, *Exploring American History* (pp. 551-553) as well as *American Images on File*, *The Black Experience* (pp. 4.08-4.27), students will be given a presentation covering historical events that led up to the kind of discrimination depicted in Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*. In 1903, W.E.B. DuBois foretold the future of race relations in America as the problem of the twentieth century. Almost one hundred years later, the color line he spoke of may have faded and blurred, but it has yet to be fully erased. In that expanse of time, inroads to civil rights and human equality would be made by such organizations as The Niagara Movement (1905), which led to the formation of the The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (1910). George Edmund Haynes and Ruth Standish Baldwin would cofound the Urban League in New York to help needy Black Americans and train black social workers in 1911. This organization would expand into the 1920s to become the National Urban League. Yet as African Americans strove for their fair share of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, they would consistently be hit with countermeasures aimed at them by either white supremacist groups or Eurocentric imperialistic attitudes.

In the 1910s, 840 lynchings had occurred in America and the NAACP carried out a political and legal campaign to institute a federal antilynching law. In 1915, the New Ku Klux Klan, founded in Georgia by ex-minister William J. Simmons, enlisted professional promoters throughout the North and South. These efforts helped to increase its membership to approximately four to five million by the mid-1920s. (By 1930, its membership declined to an estimated thirty thousand.) 367,000 blacks had served the United States during World War I, mostly in all-black regiments, and a hundred thousand black soldiers became some of the most highly decorated in the war after assisting in the liberation of France. Conversely, in the red summer of 1919, twenty-five race riots broke out in American cities as a result of a growing resentment in the North towards Black American soldiers returning from the war as well as an increase in lynchings in the South. In 1920, ratification of the Twentieth Amendment gave women the right to vote. But the 1920s also saw the escalation of Jim Crow laws separating blacks from whites in housing, employment, education, sports, and the military; laws that forced them to ride in separate train cars and in the back section of public buses, attend black cinemas, and be buried in segregated cemeteries.

In 1929, the stock market crashed. Because many people could no longer afford to buy the goods that were being produced in America, factories cut back on production and laid off workers, which in turn increased the

number of people unable to afford buying goods. Banks failed due to unpaid loans, which prohibited them from making further loans and as a result, many businesses went bankrupt. Thus began the Great Depression in which blacks were hit the hardest. In 1932, when Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected, approximately one in four workers were unemployed. By 1933, President Roosevelt had implemented several New Deal programs to stay the effects of the depression and to prevent another one from happening again. These included: regulating banks to protect people's money; hiring the jobless; establishing public works programs; paying farmers to raise fewer crops; establishing guidelines for industry; ensuring job safety; regulating the stock market to prevent another crash; establishing the Tennessee Valley Authority; establishing labor unions to bargain for better conditions and wages; passing the Social Security Act by Congress. While these programs introduced federal support for needy citizens, most of their agencies proved to be discriminatory in that they barred blacks from receiving help.

### **Order in the Court**

The aforementioned historical accounts will serve as a background for analyzing the play, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This play will introduce students not only to contemporary theatre, but to the American judicial system as it is represented in drama, as well as to issues of bigotry, segregation, socioeconomic status, and integrity. In the course of working with this play, students will also be introduced to script structure.

FILM CLIP: TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD: The Academy Award winning film of Harper Lee's Pulitzer prize winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, will be presented to students in selected sections. The first segment that will be viewed depicts the home and neighborhood of the Finch family in the sleepy southern town of Maycomb, Alabama. The year is 1935. Atticus Finch is a middle-aged defense attorney and the widowed father of two children, Mary Louis (nicknamed Scout) and Jeremy (nicknamed Jem). In this first scene we are introduced to these three characters as well as their housekeeper and surrogate mother, Calpurnia, and their neighbor, Miss Maudie. Scout tells Miss Maudie about the air rifles Atticus had given both she and Jem. He had warned them never to shoot at mockingbirds. Miss Maudie quite agrees stating that Mockingbirds just make music . . . they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out. This line, from which the title of Harper Lee's book is drawn, foreshadows the threat to innocence to come in the play. We learn that Scout's father has become the target of ridicule for defending Tom Robinson, a Negro who is being tried for the rape and assault of Mayella Ewell, a white woman. As Bob Ewell (Mayella's father) and his daughter pass by, Miss Maudie comments that they live off the county (welfare) near a small Negro settlement, and that the only thing that Bob Ewell feels he can be proud of is the fact that he's white. By the end of the segment, Scout asks Atticus why he just doesn't give up. His reply: Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win.

COURTROOM SCENE: The play, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, adapted by Harper Lee from her novel, mainly addresses the trial of Tom Robinson. Students will enter the classroom, which will be set up in courtroom fashion. They will be assigned to sit in certain areas and will be given scripts. We will recap the story from the film clip that we have seen in preparation for our readthrough. Characters will be assigned at this point and I will give a brief description of each one's role (as well as their basic function in the courtroom, i.e., judge, juror, witness, bailiff, attorney). There will be intermittent discussion during the reading with regard to its implied historical content as well as its thematic content.

The courtroom scene begins with Miss Maudie's opening monologue informing us of the public excitement that has mounted over this trial. There are picnic parties in the courthouse square and the streets have become overcrowded with mules and wagons parked under every tree. As Scout and Jem arrive late to court (against the wishes of their father), Reverend Sykes, the local black minister, suggests: You could come with me if

you'd care to sit on the colored side of the balcony, which they do.

During the course of the reading, students will become aware that bigotry, hatred and fear have brought Tom Robinson to trial, not evidence. In Bob Ewell's testimony, he states: Judge, I've asked this county for fifteen years to clean out that nigger nest down yonder. They're dangerous to live around. Sides devaluin' my property. Mayella's life is also revealed in her testimony. We learn that she is the oldest of seven children for whom she has acted as a mother most of her life. She is lonely, has no friends, and is abused by her father, who is often drunk.

As the scene progresses, students will be asked to predict certain outcomes, such as: Why does Atticus make a point about which side of Mayella's face had been bruised? Why does he ask Bob Ewell to write his name on a piece of paper? Why does he upset Mayella, the alleged rape victim, by asking questions about her father and about her relationship with Tom Robinson?

FILM CLIP: TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, continued: The outcome of Tom Robinson's trial will be shown in the final scene from the movie. In Atticus closing statement, he points out the obvious issues of the case: No evidence had been presented against Tom Robinson; Mayella was obviously attacked by a left-handed person and Tom's left hand doesn't function at all; Bob Ewell, an abusive father whom Mayella fears, is left-handed. Atticus goes on to express his sincere sympathy for Mayella Ewell. While she is not guilty of a crime, she has committed an offense that society will not accept - she's white and she tempted a Negro. . . No code mattered to her before she broke it but it came crashing down on her afterwards! . . . So a quiet, respectable Negro man, who had the unmitigated temerity to feel sorry for a white woman, is on trial for his life.

At the end of the trial, Tom Robinson is found guilty. Scout asks Atticus how the jury could find Robinson guilty, to which Atticus replies: I don't know how. But they've done it before and they'll do it again. And when they do, it seems like only the children weep.

ANATOMY OF A SCRIPT: After viewing clips from To Kill A Mockingbird, and completing the courtroom scene readthrough of the play, students will review the elements of a plot in general and how these apply to this play specifically. They will be told that anatomy means structure or how anything can be broken down into all its parts. The word anatomy usually has to do with living things, such as human beings their skeletons, veins and internal organs, etc., but it can also be used to describe how something is put together. Like a human being, a script has a kind of skeleton that we call a plot, the bones of the play. If the bones are strong enough and well organized, the body of the play should hold up nicely. If they are weak or fractured, the play will fall apart. The plot in most stories or plays has three main parts: the beginning, the middle and the end.

We will then explore the anatomy of the script for To Kill a Mockingbird with regard to the following questions about its plot:

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## UNDERSTANDING THE PLOT

### BEGINNING (Exposition)

1. WHAT is the setting?
2. WHERE is the setting?

3. WHEN does the story take place?
4. WHO are the main characters?
5. WHO are the supporting characters?
6. WHEN does the story begin to take off? (point of attack)
7. WHAT problem or challenge is presented? (inciting incident)
8. WHAT« is the reader/audience expected to wonder about? (major dramatic question)

MIDDLE (progressing action)

9. WHAT happens in the story to make it interesting? (complications)

Stories can have lots of complications. Each complication can also have its own beginning, middle and end. Complications often happen when someone in the story discovers something new.

10. WHAT new and unexpected thing happens that turns or changes the direction that the story has been going in? (turning point, crisis, peripetia)
11. WHAT dramatic thing happens as a result of the turning point? (climax)

END (Denouement, resolution)

12. WHAT happens after the climax? How do things work out?

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### **Real Estate & The Home of The Brave**

Ironically given the world's violent history of sundry factions warring against each other or the imperialism of one group at the expense of another, we are genetically one species or race: homo sapiens, humans. As people we share a DNA blueprint for life so similar that it defies segregation into a few racial groups. That same basic blueprint is elaborated in an endless variety of biologically and culturally distinctive individuals and peoples. Yet, while cultural diversity has greatly enriched us in many ways, it has also fostered sectarian, fundamentalist, nationalist and racial hatreds throughout the world. America's melting pot, Walt Whitman's teeming Nation of nations, has boiled over on more than a few occasions as We the People have attempted to commit ethnocide against the aboriginal peoples of this land, enslaved Africans, excluded Chinese, indentured Europeans, turned starving Irish away from our ports, forced Mexican Americans to return to Mexico during the Great Depression, imprisoned Japanese Americans in internment camps, ignored persecuted European Jews, etc.



## A Dream Deferred

While Roosevelt's New Deal was taking hold in America, Adolf Hitler was gaining power in Europe where economic and political troubles spurred the formation of the Nationalist Socialist, or Nazi, party. Three years after Hitler became the dictator of Germany, Jesse Owens upset his firmly held racist theories by breaking world records in track and winning four gold medals at the Munich Olympic games in 1936. Yet at home, the American dream for those Americans of African descent was still being deferred. In 1937, just one year after Owens' outstanding victory, an antilynching law failed to be passed by the Senate once again. By 1941, the U.S. had entered World War II. A year later, the Air Force established a training academy for black pilots in Tuskegee, Alabama. That same year, A. Philip Randolph threatened to march on Washington with 100,000 supporters in order to protest segregation and inequality. President Roosevelt created the Fair Employment Practice Committee designed to stop discrimination in war production industries and government employment. But U.S. armed forces would remain segregated for seven years before another president, Harry Truman, would issue Executive Order 9811. While black men protested *We Won't Fight in a Jim Crow Army* on the American homefront, many black men fought for the American dream and its promise of liberty abroad. The Tuskegee airmen went on to serve in Europe with the 99th Pursuit Squadron, an all-black fighter unit, which flew more than three thousand missions over Europe and was responsible for downing three hundred German planes. By the end of World War II, one million African Americans had served, including Dorie Miller, who won a medal for valor at Pearl Harbor. (American Images on File, *The Black Experience*, pp. 4.52-4.75.)

INTO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT PICTORIAL PRESENTATION: Students will share in pictorial presentation from American Historical Images on File, *The Black Experience* (pp. 4.83; 5.00-5.06) that will highlight several events at the beginning of the civil rights movement including the 1950 *Sweatt v. Painter* decision that a new segregated black law school could not offer an education equal to the University of Texas law school; the Tuskegee Institute report that 1952 was the first year since 1882 in which no one had been lynched in the U.S.; the 1953 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that Washington D.C. restaurants could not refuse to serve blacks; the 1954 *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka* decision in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. That same year, the first White Citizens Council was organized in Indianola, Mississippi to resist integration. In 1955, fourteen-year old Emmett Till was lynched in Money, Mississippi for supposedly whistling at a white woman. Also in 1955, the U.S. banned segregation in public recreational facilities and Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. After her arrest, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. organized the year-long Montgomery Bus Boycott and buses were eventually integrated in December, 1956. In 1956 as well, Autherine Lucy was admitted to the University of Alabama, and confronted with riots. She was later expelled for criticizing the university's lack of support during the incident. In 1957 The Southern Christian Leadership Conference was organized and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was named president, while in Little Rock, U.S. soldiers escorted nine black children to school after the Arkansas National Guard had been called to keep them out.

In this tug-o-war political climate, Lorraine Hansberry grew up to become at age 29, the youngest American, the fifth woman, and the only black dramatist hitherto to win the Best Play of the Year Award of the New York Drama Critics. In 1959 *A Raisin in the Sun* opened and became the first play by an African American woman to reach a Broadway stage. The play had its origins in the playwright's own childhood experiences in 1930s Chicago where, in defiance of the restrictive covenants that confined blacks to the ghetto, her family moved into a hostile white neighborhood (Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun Thirtieth Anniversary Edition*, p. 157). At the age of eight, Hansberry's father moved his family into a white neighborhood and shortly thereafter was evicted by the Illinois courts. He, along with other NAACP lawyers, fought the case and won. *Hansberry v. Lee* became an historic Supreme Court decision. But as Lorraine Hansberry later wrote, the cost,

in emotional turmoil . . . led to my father's early death as a permanently embittered exile in a foreign country when he saw that after such sacrificial efforts the Negroes of Chicago were as ghetto-locked as ever (pp. 157-158).

FILM CLIP - "A RAISIN IN THE SUN": Students will view the opening scene of A Raisin in the Sun, which introduces the Younger family (featuring Ruby Dee as Ruth, Sidney Poitier as Walter Lee, Diana Sands as Beneatha, and Claudia McNeil as Lena, Mama). In this scene Mama is about to receive an insurance check from her late husband's policy in the amount of ten thousand dollars. This veritable gold mine that befalls the Younger family offers promise of new beginnings. For Mama and Ruth, it means a new home that will see them out of their cramped and impoverished apartment. For Beneatha, it bequeaths a bright future in the realization of her schooling to become a doctor. For Walter Lee, it offers initiation into manhood as he plans to invest the money into a liquor store venture and become his own boss.

After viewing this opening segment (roughly thirty minutes into the movie), students will focus on characterization as the playwright's way of showing how each person in a play is unique. The playwright does this in three ways: 1) through dialogue (what the characters say to one another); 2) descriptions that are given in the script; and 3) stage directions that tell how the characters feel. (Sometimes stage directions tell how the character should move on stage). We will also review each character that appears in the clip as to his or her function (main, supporting, or minor character); social, psychological, and moral attitude; how each is typified and individualized; and whether or not each character is sympathetic or nonsympathetic.

"A RAISIN IN THE SUN" READTHROUGH: Students will share in a readthrough of Act Two of A Raisin in the Sun (pp. 64 - 112). Since the cast of characters will be less than the number of students in the class, we will shift roles every ten pages or so to give everyone a chance to read. Prior to the reading, students will warm up with voice exercises, which include: relaxation stretching; deep breathing; saving breath (holding a sound), enunciating vowel sounds and projecting from the diaphragm; and tongue twisters. Throughout the readthrough, we will focus on character motivation in relation to the time period in which the play takes place by reviewing such questions as: Why does Ruth contemplate having an abortion? Why is Beneatha interested in African culture? Why does Mama give Walter Lee charge of most of the money? Why does she want to move into a white neighborhood? Why does Karl Linder, head of The Welcoming Committee try to buy the Youngers off from moving into his neighborhood. Why does Joseph Asagai, Beneatha's African friend, criticize Beneatha and look down on Walter Lee? Why does Walter Lee look down on Joseph Asagai? Why does Mama take pity on W,alter Lee after he loses the money?

FILM CLIP - "A RAISIN IN THE SUN": Students will view the third act of A Raisin in the Sun, which in the last scene, finds the Younger family moving into their new house. We will then review the Langston Hughes poem from which the title of the play is drawn.

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over

Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

POWER TO THE PEOPLE PICTORIAL PRESENTATION. After reading and discussing the poem, students will be asked what dream has been deferred? In the discussion that follows, we will refer to their social studies text, Exploring American History (pp. 616-621) and American Historical Images on File, The Black Experience (pp. 5.09-5.17) with respect to the events that led up to the March on Washington in 1963 and Dr. King's famous "I have a dream speech.

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## **ILESSON PLAN: A DIALOGUE ACROSS TIME**

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Objective: From their work in this section, students will collaborate in groups to write a scene, selecting two characters, one from To Kill A Mockingbird and one from A Raisin in the Sun (e.g., Mayella Ewell and Beneatha Younger, Tom Robinson and Walter Lee, Atticus Finch and Mama, etc.) The setting for the scene will obviously be abstract since the characters will come from different time periods.

Purpose: By contrasting similarities and differences between the selected characters, with due regard to the historical periods they represent, these scenes will show how attitudes can change and/or remain the same over time.

Presentation: The objective and purpose of the scene writing will be conveyed to students. The historical time frames and synopses for both plays will be presented and reviewed.

Application & Method: The teacher will coach two students in an improvisational demonstration, engaging two minor characters from each play in a conversation. This will be done to give the class an idea about how to approach their writing. Afterward, the class will brainstorm ideas related to the scenework. Students will then pair off to work on writing, rehearsing and performing their scenes.

Evaluation: Student pairs will take turns presenting their scenes to the class. After each presentation, the class will have the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

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## Part Three: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

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### More Quantum Leaps

The unit ends with a futuristic exploration. herein students read *The Darwin Chip - Evolving a Conscious Computer* (Discover Magazine, June 1998), and will view and discuss a *Star Trek, The Next Generation* episode titled, *The Measure of A Man*, which focuses on the civil rights of an android.

### The Measure of A Man

In this *Star Trek, The Next Generation* episode, Captain Picard of the Federation starship, *Enterprise*, represents Data, an android, in a court case to dispute a three-hundred-year-old law that as an artificial life form, Data is, in fact, the property of Starfleet (the military branch of The Federation). The case is precipitated by the request of a Starfleet cyberneticist who plans to disassemble Data in order to study him and make duplicate models. In the course of the trial, the evidence against Data seems overwhelming, but Guinan, ship's barkeep, in her ever sagacious way, advises Picard that an army of Datas without rights sounds all too familiar. Picard realizes that she is speaking of slavery and that idea becomes the linchpin in Data's defense.

While this is of course fiction, the idea of determining whether a sentient being is either an individual or property is not so far removed from us as our work thus far has shown. The story of Cinqu and the slaveship, *The Amistad*, should tell us as much. After living for three years in captivity while American courts in the course of five separate trials to determine whether he and thirty-five other Africans were actually the property of Portuguese slave traders, or in fact, human beings due their freedom Cinqu and his people were able to return home in 1841. (*Learning Through Drama* by Jeannette Gaffney; 1990 YNHTI, Vol. 2.)

### Global Citizenry

Coming into the next millennium, we may have no safe choice but to get along with each other, both nationally and internationally. With six billion people currently inhabiting our world and a projected nine billion by the year 2050, the viability of human life on Earth is questionable; questionable now with such daunting issues as world hunger and global warming; and questionable with these problems increasing exponentially in the future. As the world grows bigger in population and smaller or more intimate through a global telecommunications and economic network, hope looms on the horizon for a planetary civilization. Glimpses of that hope can be seen in some of the international efforts to reduce CFCs and prevent global warming, e.g.: The Montreal Protocols (1987), the UN-sponsored Earth Summit (1992), and the UN 1995 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Control. (*Exploring American History*, pp. 664-669.)

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## LESSON PLAN: SCI FI SCENARIOS

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Objective: Students will collaborate to write a one act futuristic play that explores an ethical issue, such as those involved with genetic engineering or artificial intelligence.

Purpose: The futuristic milieu of science fiction draws on the past to envision the future. In order to begin

envisioning a better universe, or an apocalyptic one, students need to take a look at the one we've got. Basing their observations on fact, which may include historical events as well as budding technologies, students can create fiction by projecting the past and present into the future. In so doing, they can remedy the ills of history or determine the destruction to come if we don't change our ways.

Presentation: Several articles from various magazines will be given to students for their perusal: *The Next Hundred Years* (The New York Times Magazine, September 29, 1996); *The Power of Invention* (Newsweek Extra, A New Millennium, Winter, 1997-98); *Making Sense of The Millennium* (National Geographic, January 1998); *Reinventing Life* (Discover, May 1998); *The Darwin Chip* (Discover, June, 1998); *Is Ours The Only Universe?* (U.S. News & World Report, July 20, 1998). We will then discuss the articles and particular pieces of information that the students found interesting. Afterward, we will brainstorm ideas for futuristic scenarios.

Application & Method: In creating a science fiction story, existing science plays a key role in the credibility of the piece. Students will work in groups of three to four students to select a topic, research actual historical events and existing technology that relate to it, further brainstorm ideas, and finally, write the piece. All the skills they have learned thus far with regard to plot lines and characterization should be evident in their final works.

Evaluation: Work in progress will be evaluated along the way. Student groups will share their ideas, research, and writing with the class for comments and suggestions. The groups will continue to fine-tune their pieces and will rehearse the work in order to give a final runthrough for the class (on book; using their scripts if necessary). Each one-act will be judged for its credibility, the validity of the ethical dilemma it proposes, and its ability to evoke an emotional response from the audience.

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In the year 2001, with the convergence of quantum, bimolecular and computer revolutions, the human race may begin to approach its adolescent phase. In our early childhood, we began to realize the dangers of natural and unnatural disasters from ice ages to nuclear proliferation. Hopefully, we have averted blowing ourselves to bits and are beginning to take responsibility for global ecology. The marriage of biology and computer is quickly unraveling the DNA code, which may give us the knowledge and technology to cure disease and feed the world. In Sandia Nation Laboratories in New Mexico, a fusion research accelerator (producing ten times the power of the world's electrical generating systems combined) may help to solve to our world's energy problems. These technological advances along with other centripetal forces the rise of a global economy and an international middle class, ~and the development of a global language (English is the lingua franca for business, science and the internet) have the capability of bringing our world together.

In this year of 1998, as we approach the new millennium, it might be well to remember Carl Sagan's words that we are made of stardust, and as such are capable of pulling together to create a universe of possibilities.

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Winer, Bart. *Life in The Ancient World*. New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1961. A colorfully illustrated book that includes photography; piecing together the past of the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Palestine, Iran, Crete and Greece, and Rome. 340 B.C., Aristotle, an ancient Greek philosopher, realized that the Earth was round, which he wrote about in his book *On the Heavens* . Aristotle also believed that the Earth was the center of the universe and that the universe had always existed and would continue to exist forever. 2nd c. A.D., Ptolemy believed that the Earth was the center of the universe and that it was surrounded by eight concentric spheres that carried the heavenly bodies around it. The first sphere carried the moon; the next, Mercury; then Venus, the sun, Jupiter, and Saturn; the final sphere held the fixed stars, which did not move individually, but

orbited around the Earth in a fixed group. 1514, Nicholas Copernicus did not believe that the Earth was the center of the known universe, but that the planets orbited the sun. He proposed a simpler model than Ptolemy's, but circulated it anonymously. As a Polish priest, he felt he had to be careful since the Catholic Church at that time felt it necessary to punish people whose ideas might challenge their own religious beliefs. 1609, Galileo Galilei believed in Copernicus' theory. With the new invention of the telescope, he observed that the moons of Jupiter orbited around the planet, which also meant that everything did not directly orbit around the Earth. 1609, Johannes Kepler suggested that the planets did not move in circular orbits around the sun, but elliptical (elongated circle) orbits. He was not particularly happy with this discovery because it was believed (since the time of Aristotle) that the circle was a pure and perfect form. Elliptical orbits seemed less perfect, but they did explain the pattern of planets that could actually be observed in the night sky far better than earlier ideas. 1687, Isaac Newton the author of one of the most important works ever published in the physical sciences, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* postulated (claimed as a principle of truth) that each body in the universe was attracted to every other body. The larger and closer the bodies, the more attracted to one another they became. This attraction is called universal gravitation and Newton was able to explain mathematically how planets and their satellites (moons) followed elliptical paths around the sun. 18th c, Kant & Laplace believed that our solar system began as a huge cloud of gas and dust called 2 nebula. In their Nebular Theory, they said that particles of dust and gas in this nebula were spread out evenly at first. As the cloud began to spin, the particles were drawn inward toward the center of the nebula. As the spinning nebula caused many particles to be pushed closer together, a large bulge began to form in the nebula's center, which became a new star (protostar), and eventually our sun. Less dense gas and dust surrounded the sun, which began to group together forming planets (protoplanets; taking between 10 million and 100 million years to form). 1916, Albert Einstein's theories of relativity rejected Newton's carefully ordered universe. Einstein's equations suggested that if enough matter collapsed into a black hole, gravity overwhelmed other forces and formed a point with no dimensions, but infinite density. 1970s, Stephen Hawking & Roger Penrose are generally credited with proving that singularities are not just hypothetical, but probably exist. A singularity is a zone that seems to defy current understanding of the laws of physics. Singularities are believed to reside at the cores of the gravitational sump pumps called black holes. (A black hole is the core of a supermassive star that remains after a supernova; the gravity of the core is so strong that not even light can escape. 1929, Edwin Hubble made the landmark observation that distant galaxies were moving away from us. By observing that light from distant galaxies shifted toward red wavelengths, he found that the more distant a light source, the greater its red shift, which meant that the universe was expanding. With the knowledge that the universe was expanding, it could be reasoned that it had been doing so over a period of time, which also meant that at some point in the very distant past, it had been contracted into a very small, infinitely dense mass (since all this expansion had to come from somewhere). 1948, George Gamow coins the protosubstance ylem (a medieval English word for matter). 1950s, Fred Hoyle did not believe that the universe had a starting point and ridiculed the idea by labeling it big bang. 1965, Arno Penzias & Robert Wilson made the discovery that space is filled with background radiation, which led astronomers to believe that such radiation was residue from the big bang

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