



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
**WHITEWATER**

COLLEGE *of* ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

## Clybourne Park Study Guide

The Theatre/Dance Department's production of  
*Clybourne Park* can be seen  
December 2 – 7 at 7:30 pm in Barnett Theatre.  
Tickets 262-472-2222 Monday – Friday 9:30 am – 5:00 pm

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## A. Notes for Teachers

Thank you for bringing your students to see *Clybourne Park*, produced by the UW-Whitewater Theatre/Dance Department. This Study Guide is intended to help make your class's experience as enjoyable and as memorable as possible.

Bruce Norris's provocative satire deals with issues of race, discrimination, gentrification and community. The following guidelines can help you lead productive pre- and post-show sessions in which all students feel safe, respected and able to contribute openly and honestly to discussion.

- Class members should agree on a set of ground rules that will steer the discussion. Ask for student input on what those principles should be. Examples of ground rules might include a commitment to confidentiality within the classroom and to respecting others, a ban on the use of slurs and an agreement that only one person will speak at a time.
- Your class may include students from a wide variety of cultural, racial, religious and national backgrounds. Teachers and students must resist the urge to place individuals in the spotlight based on their perceived identity or point of view. Students will enter into the conversation as they feel comfortable.
- It is the moderator's role to establish as safe a setting as possible and he or she must take special care to ensure that students holding a majority opinion do not vilify those "on the other side" who hold a minority view. The moderator should also pose questions to the class to help keep the conversation on track.
- The point of a classroom discussion about the issues addressed in *Clybourne Park* should not be to reach a class consensus. The goal should be to establish a forum for a free and respectful exchange of ideas.
- Please keep in mind that the better students are prepared prior to attending the play, the more they will get out of the experience. An awareness of what they are about to see will provide students with greater access to the ideas presented onstage. For this reason, this Study Guide is filled with background information and suggestions for classroom discussions and activities.
- Your students' experiences of the play will also be heightened by effective follow-up class discussion.

## B. Introduction to the Company and the Play

### UW-Whitewater Theatre/Dance Department

The UW-Whitewater Theatre/Dance Department is designed to give students a first-hand experience in many areas of theatre and dance. Students enjoy the privilege and responsibility of being able to participate in all aspects of the season's productions through different technical, design, performance, and management opportunities. Rapidly becoming one of the most respected and mentioned Theatre/Dance programs in the state, the UW-Whitewater Theatre/Dance Department brings excitement to the stage through its pursuit of excellence in the performing arts.

The Theatre/Dance Department offers degrees in all areas of theatre.

Majors:

Bachelor of Fine Art:

Performance

Design/Technology

Stage Management

Management/Promotion

Bachelor of Art - Theatre

Bachelor of Science in Education -Theatre

Minors:

Theatre

Dance

Arts Management

Annually, the Theatre/Dance Department produces two seasons – academic season and Summeround. The academic season consists of 5 theatrical works and a dance production. The theatrical works include a children's tour, a musical (traditional, non-traditional, or opera), and three other productions ranging from contemporary to classic pieces. The annual dance production, DanceScapes, features faculty, student and guest artist work choreography performed by student dancers.

#### **For more information:**

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<https://www.facebook.com/UWWTheatreDance>

## Clybourne Park by Bruce Norris

In this hilariously unsettling comedy – inspired by Lorraine Hansberry’s 1959 play *A Raisin in the Sun* – a battle over race and real estate rages across two generations in a suburban Chicago neighborhood. With a modern twist on issues of race, class, property ownership and community, *Clybourne Park* takes a sophisticated and satirical approach to issues of discrimination, gentrification and political correctness.

*Clybourne Park* premiered off-Broadway in February 2010 at Playwrights Horizons in New York, followed by a January 2011 UK premiere at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Since then, the acclaimed comedy has appeared in numerous top ten lists and won the 2010 London Evening Standard, 2010 Critics’ Circle and 2011 Olivier awards for Best New Play, as well as the 2011 South Bank Sky Arts Theatre Award and 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

The Pulitzer board described it as, “a powerful work whose memorable characters speak in witty and perceptive ways to America’s sometimes toxic struggle with race and class consciousness.”

The 2011/12 theatre season featured several productions of *Clybourne Park* staged at major regional theatres throughout the United States, including the January/February 2012 Los Angeles premiere at the Mark Taper Forum, produced by Center Theater Group in partnership with Lincoln Center Theater and producers Scott Rudin and Stuart Thompson. This production later transferred to Broadway where it earned the prestigious Tony Award for Best Play.

WARNING: Strong language and mature subject matter.

Approaching contemporary issues of race, class and community through the form of satire is complicated and intentionally provocative. *Clybourne Park* encourages audience members to question societal attitudes and examine their own positions and actions through a style of humor that can be both unsettling and uncomfortable.

If you have questions or concerns about the content of the play, please do not hesitate to contact our director at [butcharj@uww.edu](mailto:butcharj@uww.edu).

## Bruce Norris – Playwright

Originally from Houston, Texas, Bruce Norris earned a degree in theatre from Chicago's Northwestern University and went on to a career as an actor and playwright, basing himself in Chicago for 18 years. In 1997 he moved to Brooklyn, New York, where he currently resides. As an actor he has performed on stages across the United States and his major film appearances include *A Civil Action*, *The Sixth Sense* and *All Good Things*.

His play *Clybourne Park* premiered at Playwrights Horizons in New York in January 2010 and went on to receive its UK premiere at London's Royal Court Theatre the following year, earning the prestigious Olivier Award for Best New Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. *Clybourne Park* premiered on Broadway in the spring of 2012, earning Norris a Tony Award for Best Play.

Bruce Norris's other plays have received their world premieres at Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre. These include:

*The Infidel* (2000)

*Purple Heart* (2002)

*We All Went Down to Amsterdam* (2003, Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Work)

*The Pain and the Itch* (2004, Joseph Jefferson Award for Best New Work)

*The Unmentionables* (2006)

*A Parallelogram* (2010)

Many of his plays have received subsequent productions across the world and Norris is the recipient of the 2009 Steinberg Playwright Award, the Whiting Foundation Prize for Drama and the Kesselring Prize, Honorable Mention.

Bruce Norris's daring and irreverent plays have earned him the reputation of being a provocateur with a penchant for sparking arguments. Speaking to Nosheen Iqbal of *The Guardian* about *Clybourne Park*'s London premiere, he said:

There is a shocking degree of openness in [the 1950s] to make crass assertions about race. To say, 'Oh, white people are this way but black people are that way.' Today, we have this received etiquette when we're speaking about race, but it is every bit as rigid and ordained as the old vocabulary – we just have a new set of words to talk about similar things.

To read more about playwright Bruce Norris and his own take on writing *Clybourne Park*, please see **Section E, Background Information. Section E2** is an interview between Norris and Studio 180 Core Artistic Team member Mark McGrinder (who plays Karl and Steve in their production of *Clybourne Park*). **Section E3** is an interview between Norris and Steppenwolf Theatre's Rebecca Rugg.

Have students read and discuss these interviews prior to seeing the play to help contextualize the play and to gain an understanding of what the playwright set out to accomplish. Alternatively, read the interviews after seeing the play and discuss the ways in which Norris's own views illuminate or clarify moments for you. Do any of his responses surprise you? How do they encourage you to see characters and scenarios differently?

## C. Attending the Performance

Prior to the performance, please ensure that your students are well prepared. The better prepared they are, the more they will get out of the experience. The following guidelines should help you and your students get the most out of attending *Clybourne Park*:

- Please arrive early. All performances will begin at 7:30 pm. To avoid disruption, LATECOMERS will be seated at the discretion of the front of house staff, during an appropriate break in the action.
- Food and beverages are not permitted in the auditorium and all photography and recording of the performance is strictly prohibited. Please impress upon your students the importance of turning off all cell phones, iPods and other electronic devices. Remind students that they will be seeing people performing live and, as a rule, if you can see and hear the actors, the actors can see and hear you. Even text messaging – with its distracting, glowing blue light – is extremely disruptive in the theatre. Please be courteous.
- Content Warning: *Clybourne Park* contains some strong language and tackles important issues of race, gender and class in provocative and satirical ways. This includes the inclusion of intentionally provocative jokes and discussions of stereotypes and slurs.
- We encourage student responses and feedback. Please take the time to discuss appropriate audience responses with your students. For *Clybourne Park* we will be asking audiences to participate in a feedback activity. Details will be included in the evening's program.

## D. Background Information

### 1. Source Material: *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

*Clybourne Park* is inspired by Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 classic American play *A Raisin in the Sun* – the first play by an African American woman ever to appear on Broadway. Prior knowledge of *A Raisin in the Sun* is not essential to the enjoyment and understanding of *Clybourne Park*. However, Drama and English students will benefit from studying this source material and exploring ways in which playwright Bruce Norris adapts the iconic characters and themes, spinning them to reveal contemporary truths about race, class, gender and the nature of community.

The following introduction to the play is taken from James V. Hatch and Ted Shine's anthology, *Black Theatre USA: Plays by African Americans*, and is useful in contextualizing *A Raisin in the Sun* within the canon of American drama:

***A Raisin in the Sun***  
**1959**

**Lorraine Hansberry (1930 – 1965)**

Lorraine Hansberry, disturbed by the depiction of African Americans in Broadway plays and musicals, decided to counter these stereotypes by writing her own play. Her intent was to write a social drama about believable characters who happened to be Black, rather than a “Negro play.” She also wanted to create a work of art. She accomplished her goals with her first and most famous play, *A Raisin in the Sun*.

The critics, with few exceptions, were unanimous in their praise of the work. It was reminiscent of *Take a Giant Step* in that white audiences recognized similarities between themselves and Hansberry's characters – just as they had done with Peterson's 1953 drama. The Youngers' values, dreams, and aspirations were basically the same as theirs. Mama Younger wants a decent home, her daughter, Beneatha, wants to become a doctor, and her son, Walter Lee, wants to become a prosperous businessman. Like Willie Loman, the tragic protagonist in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Walter Lee believes in and pursues the American dream. Both men want to become capitalists, believing that wealth will solve their problems and bring them happiness. When they realize too late that these values are false ones, Willie Loman commits suicide, but Walter Lee retrieves his dignity and becomes the man he has always wanted to be.

*A Raisin in the Sun* was written during the turbulent fifties when the Civil Rights Movement was well under way. The tactic employed by most activists was peaceful civil disobedience as advocated by Dr. Martin Luther King. They agreed with playwrights like Hansberry who believed that African Americans deserved their share of the American dream. More militant activists, on the other hand, found the play to be the perfect integrationist piece. Integration, they thought, was trivial and not the concern of poor African Americans who wanted power – the power to earn equal wages, to be politically active at all levels of government, and to enjoy the rights and privileges accorded other citizens. Harold Cruse, the noted African American scholar and critic, was of the same opinion. He dismissed the play as “glorified soap opera.” the Youngers, he felt, were “tidied up” with middle-class “values, sentiments and strivings,” making them acceptable to Broadway, and [he felt] that Hansberry and other Black playwrights misrepresented the poor Black majority by using them to promote their own cause: the integration of the Black middle class.

But are the Youngers' values limited to the middle class? The idea that poor Blacks would not have dreams and ambitions like the Youngers seems absurd. Why wouldn't a family living in a leaking



apartment with rats and roaches want to move into a decent home? And where would you find affordable, decent homes? In white neighborhoods. The Youngers moved, not to be *with* whites, but to improve their condition; to live in a home that would provide them comfort and privacy.

When Hansberry was eight years old, her family purchased a home in a middle-class white section of Chicago where they were threatened and harassed by hostile neighbors. She narrowly escaped serious injury when a brick was thrown through their window. This experience, and her deep concern with the struggles of her people, served in part as impetus for *A Raisin in the Sun*.

*A Raisin in the Sun* is a landmark drama for a number of reasons: it was the first play written by an African American woman to be produced on Broadway; Lorraine Hansberry became the first African American and the youngest to win the New York Drama Critics Award; Lloyd Richards, the director, was the first African American to direct a Broadway show in over fifty years. The Broadway opening was on March 11, 1959, where it ran for 530 performances. It is one of the most performed plays by an African American playwright. In less than a quarter of a century it became an American classic. Large numbers of whites were introduced to modern African American characters and life for the first time through Hansberry's play, which paved the way for the wider acceptance of other works by Black playwrights who followed, such as Lonne Elder, Charles Fuller, Adrienne Kennedy, and August Wilson. The movie adaption of the play, featuring the Broadway cast, won the Cannes Film Festival Award in 1961. *Raisin*, a musical version of the play with book by Robert Nemiroff and Charlotte Zaltzberg, music by Judd Woldin, and lyrics by Robert Brittan, won Tony and Grammy Awards as Best Musical Comedy in 1974.

There were numerous cuts made in the original production, some having to do with plot and others with characters. The original ending, for example, was changed from one in which the Youngers waited in their new home for their neighbors to attack it, to the present, happier ending. The script that appears here is from the original Broadway production.

Lorraine Hansberry was born in Chicago, the daughter of a prosperous real estate broker. She attended segregated schools on the South Side where she made friends with students whose families were less fortunate than hers. After graduation from Englewood High School in 1948, she attended the University of Wisconsin studying art and stage design. There she developed an appreciation for the plays of Ibsen, Strindberg, and O'Casey. After her sophomore year she moved to New York, becoming active with little theatre groups, and working as a journalist for the African American publication, *Freedom*. She was on friendly terms with Paul Robeson, chairman of the editorial board, W.E.B. DuBois, and Langston Hughes. She met and married Robert Nemiroff, a music publisher, in 1953, who encouraged her to pursue her interest in playwriting. *A Raisin in the Sun* was the result. In 1963 she was diagnosed as having cancer and spent the next two years in and out of hospitals. She died on January 12, 1965. Nemiroff, her literary executor, compiled fragments from her plays, stories and letters into a biographical play celebrating her life and spirit, which he called *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. It was the longest running Off-Broadway play during the 1969 season. ■

## 2. Interview with Playwright Bruce Norris by Studio 180 Theatre's Mark McGrinder

"I don't ever think to myself, 'well today I'm going to write a satire,'" confides Bruce Norris early in our conversation...

And while one can't argue with the playwright's assertion, it's equally difficult to dispute that with *Clybourne Park* Norris has cemented his status as one of the most potent satirical voices of our time. "I think I probably tend to have a view of human behavior that some people would consider satirical because it doesn't take a sympathetic point of view always as its first impulse."

Norris is quick to admit that this lack of sympathy often leads to misconceptions about his own point of view. "I mean there are people who refer to me as 'The Republican Playwright,' you know. I assure you that I'm not, although I don't want to lead from my politics. I'd rather lead from something I observe about human behavior. I tend to have a fairly critical or distanced eye on what people do and if it's funny then people consider that satire – if it's serious then they consider it, you know, social realism."

However Norris chooses to categorize his own work, he's keenly aware of the need for self-reflection. "I think there's an epidemic of earnestness that has infected the theatre so that a lot of theatre you see these days leans politically – inclines – toward the left. So I think it's very difficult to find people on the left who are willing to be self-critical or to laugh at ourselves for our own flaws or inconsistencies – hypocrisies. And so when you do that I guess it's a notable thing."

Notable indeed. In April of 2011 *Clybourne Park* was awarded the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Drama – an honor the edgy comedy shares with similarly "notable" works like *Our Town*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches* and *August: Osage County*. "I feel like most of us on the left probably feel like we don't need any additional help from within tearing us down, but I tend to think we have to be self-critical. No matter what your political stripe is, you have to be self-critical and analyze what the flaws in your own reasoning are and be honest about them, otherwise you've laid yourself vulnerable to attack from without."

Notions of "left versus right" pepper Norris's dialogue, but he points out that culpability has no political affiliation. "One of the shibboleths of the left, one of the things we lead with, is the utopian impulse. The idea that somehow everything we do – whether it's recycling our plastic bags or wearing vegan footwear or, you know, buying local produce – all of these things are somehow going to conspire to save the world. And I think that we have to let go of that utopian fantasy of ourselves, to realize that to be part of a consumer culture means that you are kind of a rapist of the planet, and you can do things to ameliorate that to some extent but it's a human condition and not something the left does versus the right. It's like, all of us in the civilized world are ruining the planet."

Asked whether he considers his views cynical or pessimistic, Norris doesn't mince words. "You know everyone likes to say 'cynicism' – both [words] are bad because we live in an optimistic culture, one that fetishizes optimism. But I feel like there are some pessimistic cultures in the world that I'm drawn to. Like the Irish. They're sort of fatalistic but, you know, the nice thing about pessimistic cultures is that they don't do a lot of things like start wars. What's the most optimistic act the U.S. government has undertaken in the last decade? It's assuming there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and that they could find them. I mean that's very optimistic. And in doing so we would bring freedom to the people of Iraq. I mean those are the acts of optimistic people. Pessimistic people just don't start wars."

Lest you think we're veering into Stuff Happens territory here, it's worth noting that war is more than a

metaphor for Norris when it comes to Clybourne Park, a play routinely defined as “a comedy about race.”

“Everyone latches on to the idea that the play is about race,” he offers, “and I’ve said this a couple of times before that I don’t really feel that race is its central topic. I really feel that territoriality is its central topic. That’s just a human impulse that in the large scale creates war, and in the small scale is what creates a homeowners’ committee or a community association. It’s squabbles over territory like, ‘you let your lawn grow too long – you should cut your lawn.’ Those kinds of squabbles are the same as, ‘God promised us this part of the West Bank’ or ‘this part of the Sinai Peninsula’ or something like that. They’re entitlements that certain groups feel they have to certain territory. And when they necessitate demonizing ‘the other’ in order to establish who has the right to territory – that’s when I think racism emerges. There’s no racism between different ethnic groups when they don’t want to live in the same space.”

Whether our tendency to demonize our neighbors in the ongoing battle for territorial supremacy has changed over the last 50 years is central to Norris’s play, which finds inspiration in Lorraine Hansberry’s landmark drama *A Raisin in the Sun*. *Clybourne Park*’s first act takes place in 1959, concurrent with the events in Hansberry’s play, while the second act catapults us into the 21st century. “My initial thought was a two-part thought. I’d always been fond of *A Raisin in the Sun* and I thought about how interesting it would be to tell the story from the point of view of the white neighborhood. And what’s particularly relevant is if you bring it full circle and ask how has that changed or evolved, or not, today? And my feeling, basically, is that it has not changed profoundly. It has changed superficially. And we have a black president and we have a lot of changes in politics, hiring practices, economic practices – things like that. Has it made a difference in the way people secretly behave? I don’t think it really has.”

As to whether or not his play can serve as a catalyst for change, Norris isn’t overly concerned. “What I would say about doing theatre is we have to let go of the idea that doing a play is somehow going to solve the issue of racism. I mean, a play doesn’t do anything. A play is just something to look at and it may give you cause to ponder.”

You’d be forgiven for thinking that sounds pessimistic, but if we may indulge the utopian impulse for a moment, “cause to ponder” is what STUDIO 180 is all about. ■

### 3. Interview with Playwright Bruce Norris by Chicago's Steppenwolf Theatre Company

**Artistic Producer Rebecca Rugg**

*From Steppenwolf Theatre Company's Backstage Archive 2011-2012 Volume 1*

#### **RACE, PULITZERS AND PUNCHLINES**

(Excerpted from *Reimagining A Raisin in the Sun: Former New Plays*, forthcoming from NU Press)

**Rebecca Rugg:** The Royal Court production of *Clybourne Park* moved to the West End and won the Olivier for Best New Play. And then it won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Congratulations.

**Bruce Norris:** On the West End, I felt like I was sitting outside of myself watching this whole thing happen, feeling like it was happening to someone not me.

**RR:** Is that because of anxiety?

**BN:** I have a very complicated relationship to the entire notion of commercial productions at all. Almost in kind of an adolescent way, I have an attitude that if someone likes what I do then that means by definition it is not good. If I do my job correctly I should outrage people and have rotten vegetables thrown at me, that that would be the only proof that I had done something successfully. Like I said, it's completely adolescent but that's the instinct that I have. So when people like something that I've done and they pay for it, it's very confusing to me. I don't understand why they would be paying for it if I wrote it to upset them.

**RR:** How is life different post-Pulitzer?

**BN:** The most important change is that now I have a very attractive glass paperweight with the profile of Joseph Pulitzer etched into it, so my papers remain securely in place on my desktop.

**RR:** *Clybourne Park* is a very complex play about race, among other topics. The experience of watching it, and I'll speak here as a white person, is quite complicated.

**BN:** Well, I think the most interesting question that has been put to me about it was the one you put to me last time we talked, which was "did you write this play for white people?" Remember?

**RR:** Yeah, and you said yes.

**BN:** And I said yes.

**RR:** And I was totally shocked. I was sure you were going to say no.

**BN:** No, I think it is a play for white people. It's a play about white people. It's about the white response to race, about being the power elite, about being the people who have power in the race argument, and what that makes us in the present day – the contortions that makes us go through. Because on the Left we really, really like to deny the power that we have. We don't want to seem like we're powerful and have the largest army in the world. We want to pretend that we don't. So, while the play is about white people, it's even better if there are black people in the audience because it makes white people even more uncomfortable.

**RR:** I've heard you say elsewhere, that *Clybourne Park* is inspired by Karl Linder, who, before he was yours, was Lorraine Hansberry's character in *A Raisin in the Sun*.

**BN:** I saw *A Raisin in the Sun* as a film in probably 7th grade. Interestingly our Social Studies teacher was showing it to a class of all white students who lived in an independent school district the boundaries of which had been formed specifically to prevent being our being integrated into the Houston school district and being bussed to other schools with black students.

So I don't know whether our teacher was just obtuse or crafty and subversive but she was showing us a movie that basically in the end -- because Karl doesn't come in until the second act -- is really pointing a finger at us and saying we are those people. So I watch it at twelve years old and I could realize even then that I'm Karl Linder. To see that when you're a kid and to realize that you're the villain has an impact.

For years I thought I wanted to play Karl Linder but then as time went on I thought it's really an interesting story to think about the conversation that was going on in the white community about the Younger family moving into Clybourne Park. It percolated for many years and that's how I ended up writing this play.

**RR:** Can we talk about theatrical realism? Is Clybourne Park part of a theatrical genealogy that you can trace?

**BN:** Well, I tend to write in the "realistic" form because it limits what's possible and that gives a play a rigidity, a structure. A more freeform approach to writing a play feels loose and a little bit flimsy to me. I like the firm structure that's imposed by realism, not just realistic behavior, but realistic furniture and facts. If you want to demonstrate something about the way we behave and interact with each other, then it's really useful to have a concrete world there to interact with.

I think when people want to write about dreams and magic onstage, they often don't have much they want to say about behavior. They want to talk about ideas and not behavior.

**RR:** I had the opportunity to teach this play to students at Northwestern recently, and the subject of the jokes arose. Students wanted to know why the black woman is spared being the punch line of a joke, from a playwright who doesn't spare anyone.

**BN:** It's not as though everyone in the room has to be the butt of a joke, one by one. It's a conversation, not a formula. But also, the black woman IS the person who everyone in that room would be most afraid of offending, the one person who would be off limits. All she has to do is say she's uncomfortable and everyone gets worried.

**RR:** With those same students we had a long conversation about the presence of the deaf woman in the first act. I wonder if you can talk about that character and the choice to include her.

**BN:** Well the first thing I'll say is that deaf is funny. And I defy anyone who tells me differently. But it's not that the deaf woman herself is funny, or her deafness that's funny, it's everyone around her and how they treat her and act towards her that's funny. And it makes it clear how awful everyone is around race, that there is this false CARE taken towards her deafness. It shines a light on race, by contrast.

**RR:** Why isn't there a disabled person in the contemporary scenes?

**BN:** Well, there wouldn't be. She's deaf, and I wanted to make the point that nobody who could HEAR Karl Lindner would marry him. Who else would marry him?

## F. Timeline of American Civil Rights

- 1619 First African slaves arrive in Virginia
- 1775–1783 American Revolutionary War
- 1776 American Declaration of Independence:  
Adopted by the Continental Congress, made up of representatives of the thirteen American colonies, declaring independence from the British Empire. The Declaration contains the famous statement upholding human rights and equality: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- 1790 Naturalization Act:  
American citizenship is available to whites only, restricting to whites the rights to vote, own property, bring suit or testify in court.
- 1861–1865 American Civil War:  
The North is victorious over the Southern Confederates and slavery is abolished.
- 1866 Ku Klux Klan established in Tennessee
- 1868 Fourteenth Amendment grants citizenship rights to African Americans
- 1870 Fifteenth Amendment prohibits racial discrimination in voting
- 1887 Jim Crow Laws:  
Laws segregating blacks and whites in the Southern States are introduced and reinforced through violence and lynching. In all areas of life including political, social, economic, education, housing and employment, African Americans endure legal subjugation and discrimination.
- 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson*:  
This Supreme Court ruling legitimizes the “separate but equal” doctrine that prevails in the American South throughout the Jim Crow period. The case involves African American Homer Adolph Plessy who was arrested for sitting in a whites-only railway car on a Louisiana train. Claiming that racially segregated seating on trains violated Plessy’s Constitutional rights under the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments, his lawyers appeal his case all the way to the US Supreme Court where it is defeated in a decision upholding the notion that separate seating for blacks and whites does not violate equality rights for African Americans.
- 1905 W.E.B. DuBois founds the Niagara Movement, demanding equal rights for African Americans
- 1909 National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded
- 1924 Indian Citizenship Act grants universal citizenship to Native Americans

- 1947 Jackie Robinson becomes first African American Major League Baseball player
- 1948 President Truman issues executive order integrating armed forces
- 1954 McCarran-Walter Act:  
This Act removes racial barriers to American citizenship granting citizenship to Asian immigrants for the first time.
- 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*:  
This landmark Supreme Court case is widely accepted as a catalyst for the American civil rights movement. The decision overturns *Plessy v. Ferguson* and maintains that separate schools for black and white children are a fundamental violation of equality rights.
- 1955 Murder of Emmett Till:  
In Mississippi, a young African American boy is brutally murdered by two white men, after he allegedly whistles at a white woman. The men, acquitted by an all-white jury, later boast about committing the murder, sparking public outrage at the injustice.
- Montgomery Bus Boycott:  
African American icon Rosa Parks refuses to relinquish her bus seat to a white person on Dec. 1, sparking a year-long civil disobedience protest campaign led by Martin Luther King Jr. and culminating in the Supreme Court ruling establishing the equality rights violation of separate seating on Alabama public transportation.
- 1957 Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) founded:  
This important organization is co-founded by Martin Luther King Jr. who becomes its first president. The SCLC plays an instrumental leadership role in the civil rights movement, based on the principles of non-violence and civil disobedience.
- 1959 *A Raisin in the Sun* opens on Broadway:  
The first play by an African American woman produced on Broadway.
- 1960 Four African American students conduct a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina. This model of non-violent civil disobedience is emulated throughout the country and contributes to the desegregation of public spaces throughout the South.
- 1961 During the spring and summer months over 1,000 black and white student "Freedom Riders" test the new law prohibiting segregation on interstate transport, taking trips throughout the American South and shining a spotlight on civil rights protest and the call for desegregation.
- 1963 March on Washington:  
On August 28 approximately 300,000 people march in America's most famous political rally, demanding equal rights for African Americans. At the Lincoln Memorial Martin Luther King Jr. delivers his legendary "I Have a Dream" speech. This event is widely remembered as a key event of the civil rights movement and is credited with bringing about major legislative victories for African Americans and equality rights.

- 1964 Twenty-fourth Amendment abolishes the poll tax, legally removing barriers to voting for poor African Americans
- Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed:  
President Lynden B. Johnson signs the Act prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion or national origin. The Act also provides the federal government with the authority to enforce desegregation in the South.
- Martin Luther King Jr. wins Nobel Peace Prize
- 1965 Voting Rights Act passed:  
This Act, signed by President Johnson, criminalizes widespread practices historically imposing barriers to Southern African Americans to register to vote such as literacy tests and poll taxes.
- 1966 Black Panthers founded
- 1967 Thurgood Marshall becomes first African American Justice appointed to the Supreme Court
- 1968 Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated
- Civil Rights Act of 1968 passed:  
This Act, signed by President Johnson, prohibits racial discrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing.
- 1988 Civil Rights Restoration Act passed:  
Overriding President Reagan's veto, Congress passes this Act, which expands the reach of non-discrimination laws within private institutions receiving federal funds.
- 1992 Rodney King Riots:  
For the first time in years, race riots erupt in Los Angeles after four white police officers are acquitted for the videotaped beating of African American man Rodney King.
- 2009 President Barack Obama becomes the first African American President of the United States



## G. Topics for Discussion and Classroom Activities

### 1. Theatrical Presentation

#### a) ISSUE-BASED THEATRE

With your class, examine the campus Mission statement.

##### **UW-Whitewater's Mission:**

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is committed to the development of the individual, the growth of personal and professional integrity and respect for diversity and global perspectives. These are met by providing academic and co-curricular programs that emphasize the pursuit of knowledge and understanding and a commitment to service within a safe and secure environment.

- i. What does this statement mean to you? Does the UW-Whitewater mission resonate and have meaning? How does this production of *Clybourne Park* work toward fulfilling our Mission?
- ii. Why live theatre? What makes theatre an effective art form through which to explore social and political issues? Numerous excellent feature films, documentaries, books and articles about racism and community are widely available. What is unique about live theatre? Consider what is specific about your intellectual, emotional and communal responses to attending live theatre, compared to engaging in other forms of art, communication and media.

Hint: How does live theatre HUMANIZE issues and why is the humanization of social and political issues important?

- iii. Brainstorm issues that you would like to see turned into a piece of theatre. If you were going to see another play, or write a play yourself, what would you want it to be about? This question may serve as a jumping off point for drama students to begin their own issue-based theatre projects around stories and topics of particular relevance to them.

#### b) POINTS OF VIEW

One way we hope theatre will be an effective tool to explore important issues is through the portrayal of multiple perspectives or points of view. How effective is *Clybourne Park* in exploring different sides of a story? Was the play evenhanded? Did you feel that a multitude of opinions and points of view were expressed? Were the characters portrayed fairly? Which characters and stories were the most memorable? Which voices remained with you longest and why? Which moments had the greatest impact? Which characters surprised you? Did the play create questions for you regarding the characters or their circumstances? Did you form an emotional attachment to any of the characters? Who did you want to see more of? Did you disagree with what some of the characters were saying? What would you ask those characters, given the opportunity?

### c) SOURCE MATERIAL & INSPIRATION

Playwright Bruce Norris found inspiration for *Clybourne Park* in Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 classic *A Raisin in the Sun*. In an interview by Steppenwolf Theatre Artistic Producer Rebecca Rugg (complete interview found in **Section E3** of this Study Guide), Norris discusses how his interest in one of Hansberry's characters – Karl Lindner – inspired him to write the play:

"I saw *A Raisin in the Sun* as a film in probably 7th grade. Interestingly our Social Studies teacher was showing it to a class of all white students who lived in an independent school district the boundaries of which had been formed specifically to prevent our being integrated into the Houston school district and being bussed to other schools with black students.

So I don't know whether our teacher was just obtuse or crafty and subversive but she was showing us a movie that basically in the end -- because Karl doesn't come in until the second act -- is really pointing a finger at us and saying we are those people. So I watch it at twelve years old and I could realize even then that I'm Karl Linder. To see that when you're a kid and to realize that you're the villain has an impact.

For years I thought I wanted to play Karl Linder but then as time went on I thought it's really an interesting story to think about the conversation that was going on in the white community about the Younger family moving into *Clybourne Park*. It percolated for many years and that's how I ended up writing this play." ■

- i. Have students read *A Raisin in the Sun* and discuss the connections between the two scripts. Which characters does Norris borrow from the source material? What are the similarities and differences between the characters in both plays?
- ii. Have students select another character from *A Raisin in the Sun* as a source of inspiration for a new play. Encourage students to ask questions about that character in terms of her/his point of view, objectives, desires and aspirations. Have each student write a scene or play revolving around that character.
- iii. Select another play from your course curriculum and have students select a character from the script. Encourage students to focus on a minor character or a character that represents a dissenting voice within the play. Instruct students to write scenes or plays revolving around that character and her/his particular point of view. Why might this character think/feel/believe what s/he does? What circumstances may have led to this particular worldview? What other people in her/his life may be influential and therefore an intrinsic part of the story?

#### **d) SATIRE**

Satire is the literary art of diminishing a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking towards it attitudes of amusement, contempt or scorn. In satire, human vice or folly is attacked through irony, derision or wit. It differs from comedy in that comedy evokes laughter as an end in itself, while satire “derides”; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt existing outside the work itself. That butt may be an individual, or a type of person, a class, a nation, or even the whole race of man. Literary techniques include parody, irony, sarcasm and the use of caricature.

- i. Who is Bruce Norris satirizing in *Clybourne Park*? Who are the butts he is targeting?
- ii. What specific techniques does Norris use in his satiric exploration? (eg. parody, caricature)
- iii. What is the effect of the use of humor to explore serious issues like race, class and gender? Why do you think the playwright chose to write this style of play? How did it make you feel to be in the audience? Did you feel differently watching the first act versus the second act? If so, why?
- iv. With your class, explore other examples of satire through the use of television, film or video clips. Discuss what you watch and conduct a conversation about what the pieces make you think and feel. Is satire an effective tool for engaging in social and political issues? Does it get you thinking? What kinds of questions does it challenge you to ask? Can it inspire action or change?

#### **e) DESIGN**

How did the design of the production affect the presentation of the piece? How effective was the set in defining the space? What mood or ambience was created? How did color, texture and space add to the theatrical experience? How was lighting used to create mood or ambience? How did lighting work to define space and setting? How did the set and the lights work in combination with one another? How was sound and music used to affect the presentation? How were costumes used to define characters? How did the costume designer make use of color, texture and style?

*Clybourne Park* is presented in two acts. The first act takes place in Chicago, in 1959. The second act occurs 50 years later. How were the set, costumes, lighting, sound and props used to evoke the period of the play? Was the design naturalistic (a literal and accurate representation) or abstract (meant to evoke time and place)? Drama students should discuss the difference between the two approaches to design, focusing on the techniques used in this particular production. Why do you think scenery designer, Keith Pitts and costume designer Tracey Lyons chose to represent time, place and characters in these ways?

#### **f) “ART IS THE LIE THAT TELLS THE TRUTH” – Pablo Picasso**

Discuss the meaning of this quotation and how it pertains to a play like *Clybourne Park*, which addresses real issues of race, class, gender, community and property ownership through fictionalized characters and circumstances.

## 2. Racism & Discrimination

### a) UNDERSTANDING PREJUDICE

Many forms of bigotry and prejudice come to light in *Clybourne Park*. The primary form of discrimination examined by the play is based on race. However, characters also make assumptions and judgments based on gender, class and ability; in fact, the many forms of discrimination rarely happen in isolation and an integrated approach to discussing multiple forms of discrimination will be most productive. Before launching into a class discussion specific to the show, it is important for students to have a firm understanding of different forms of discrimination and how they are interconnected. Begin with the following definitions (focusing on the major forms of prejudice highlighted by the play) and be sure to keep in mind the guidelines set out in Section A, Notes for Teachers.

**RACISM:** 1. The prejudice that members of one race are intrinsically superior to members of other races;  
2. Discriminatory or abusive behavior towards members of another race

**CLASSISM:** A biased or discriminatory attitude based on distinctions made between social or economic classes

**SEXISM:** 1. Attitudes or behaviour based on traditional stereotypes of sexual roles;  
2. Discrimination or devaluation based on a person's sex

**ABLEISM:** Discrimination against disabled people

**XENOPHOBIA:** A fear of foreigners or strangers

- i. After attending *Clybourne Park*, discuss the different ways in which various forms of bigotry and discrimination came into play. How were some of these prejudices interconnected? Which characters exhibited bigoted behaviour and in what ways? Who were the victims of prejudice and how were they affected? Who perpetrated prejudice and in what ways? Were there characters that were both victims and perpetrators of prejudice?
- ii. What were the similarities and differences with regard to prejudices, attitudes and discrimination between acts one and two of the play? Were the modern-day characters less bigoted in their views and behaviour? How did characters express themselves differently?

Hint: Examine the contrast between bigotry being overt/explicit and implicit/hidden.

**FURTHER STUDY:** Your discussion need not be limited to the above-mentioned forms of bigotry. And it need not be limited to the subject matter of *Clybourne Park*. We believe that theatre can provide a springboard to class discussion on topics that resonate for students in their daily lives. Your class may be interested in talking about forms of prejudice and discrimination that they witness and experience in their own lives, including racism, religious intolerance, ageism, sexism, homophobia, class discrimination and others.

## b) STEREOTYPES

One of the ways in which prejudices are perpetuated in our society is through the use of stereotypes. When we stereotype someone we apply a generalized assumption we have about a group to an individual. These assumptions may be based on things we've learned from our family or peers or from the various media sources that surround us. They are not based on fact and they do not take into account a person's individuality. When we discount someone's individuality we begin to strip them of their humanity.

Stereotypes are not always based on negative generalizations (e.g., black people are lazy, Aboriginal people are alcoholics, Asian people are poor drivers). Sometimes a generalization about a group of people can, on the surface, appear to be positive (e.g., black people are great athletes, Aboriginal people are spiritual, Asian people are smart). It shouldn't be difficult to determine how ascribing a trait such as "laziness" to an entire group of people is harmful and wrong. But what are the dangers of assuming that every member of a certain group shares a positive attribute such as intelligence, spirituality or athletic prowess?

Begin your discussion by recalling some stereotypes illuminated in the play. Continue the discussion by comparing the ways in which characters stereotype in the different time periods of the play. Is there a change in characters' attitudes and behaviour between the acts? What is different and what remains the same and to what do you attribute these contrasts?

Bring the conversation into your own experience. What stereotypes are prevalent in your community? In the media? At your school? Have you ever felt like you were stereotyped? Can you identify a time when you stereotyped someone else? How does it feel to be stereotyped and what are the individual and societal consequences of stereotyping?

**Note:** Teachers and group facilitators must remember that students should participate voluntarily. Resist the urge to single out students based on their perceived experiences and attributes such as race and gender.

## c) PRIVILEGE & ADVANTAGES

What does it mean to be a member of a privileged group in society? How do we experience the world differently by virtue of being born white or male or heterosexual or into a middle- or upper-class family? Read this excerpt from an interview with Bruce Norris about his intended audience and the significance of acknowledging privilege (See **Section E3** for complete interview):

***Clybourne Park* is a very complex play about race, among other topics. The experience of watching it, and I'll speak here as a white person, is quite complicated.**

**BN:** Well, I think the most interesting question that has been put to me about it was the one you put to me last time we talked, which was "did you write this play for white people?" Remember?

**Yeah, and you said yes.**

**BN:** And I said yes.

**And I was totally shocked. I was sure you were going to say no.**

**BN:** No, I think it is a play for white people. It's a play about white people. It's about the white response to race, about being the power elite, about being the people who have power in the race argument, and what that makes us in the present day – the contortions that makes us go through. Because on the Left we really, really like to deny the power that we have. We don't want to seem like we're powerful and

have the largest army in the world. We want to pretend that we don't. So, while the play is about white people, it's even better if there are black people in the audience because it makes white people even more uncomfortable. ■

- i. How is Bruce Norris's position illuminated by the play? Which are the characters that enjoy privileged status and why? How do they behave and how do you think their privilege contributes to their behavior?
- ii. Discuss examples of how some characters attempt to deny their privilege and power. Why do they do this and what effects do their actions and behaviors have on others?
- iii. *Sections 11* of this Study Guide contains excerpts from Paul Kivel's excellent book *Uprooting Racism* (recommended as a resource in **Section K**), which focuses on identifying and acknowledging white benefits and middle-class privilege. Read these chapters and then discuss how they resonate and how they apply to the characters in *Clybourne Park*. Which characters enjoy benefits and privileges of their race and class? Are they willing to acknowledge these privileges? Does their status make them uncomfortable, and why? Can you personally relate to any of the characters' discomfort?
- iv. Explore notions of privilege more personally by reading Peggy McIntosh's article included in **Section I2** of this Study Guide and then holding a class discussion about the author's assertions. What rings true? What can you recognize from your own life and experiences? What surprises you or encourages you to think about your experiences/actions in a new way?
- v. One day, during one of Studio 180's in-class workshop sessions, a white, middle-class student spoke to us about her own experience with privilege. She identified her status in society by stating: "I won the birth lottery." Ask students to volunteer ways in which they experience privilege. How does this make you feel and how can these feelings result in productive behavior that contributes to fairness and equality in our society?  
  
**Note:** Race is only one way in which some of us experience privilege. Discussion can involve gender, sexual orientation, class, religion, nationality and ability.
- vi. As Paul Kivel writes, the opposite of a benefit is a disadvantage. Read his chapter, "**The Cost of Racism to People of Colour**," from *Uprooting Racism* (**Section I1** of this Study Guide) and then hold a class discussion. Begin with the questions the author poses at the end of the chapter and consider the ways in which some of these disadvantages come to light in *Clybourne Park*. Do characters experience disadvantages differently in act one versus in act two? Why or why not?

#### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES!

Bring the conversation further into the realm of the personal and help tie together several themes with the three activities included in **Section H**, Race & Identity Classroom Activities: Circles of My Self, Common Ground and Don't Label Me.

### 3. Community

#### a) INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

“And fitting into a community is really what it all comes down to.”

– Karl Lindner, Act One, *Clybourne Park*

What makes a community? How do we identify as part of a community? What responsibilities do we have to our community? What responsibilities do we have to other communities? Why is a sense of community important? How can community building create a sense of purpose, belonging and connectedness? In what ways can communities cause division and isolation?

As a group, consider these questions as they pertain to your own experiences and the circumstances and characters in the play.

Hint: Note similarities and differences regarding notions of community between the two acts. How are attitudes different? How are similar attitudes expressed and articulated differently?

To begin, it may be useful for students to recognize the different communities with which they personally identify. Pose the statement: “My community is defined by my ,” and fill in the blank with several options (e.g., religion, school, neighborhood, age, gender). Students can stand in a circle and step inside the circle if they agree with the statement. Encourage students to discuss why they do or do not identify with specific communities.

Use the following script excerpts from the play to bring the conversation into the context of *Clybourne Park*:

#### ACT ONE

KARL:	But, for example, if Mrs. Stoller here were to send you to shop at Gelman’s. Do you find, when you’re standing in the aisles at Gelman’s, does it generally strike you as the kind of market where you could find the particular foods your family enjoys?
FRANCINE:	It’s a very nice store... Mr. Gelman’s a nice man.
KARL:	But, I mean, your preferred food items, would such things even be available at Gelman’s?
ALBERT:	Do they carry collards and pig feet? ‘Cuz I sho couldn’t shop nowhere didn’ sell no pig feet. ■

KARL:	Well, I have a responsibility to the community as a whole. I can’t afford to –
RUSS:	If you honestly think I give a rat’s ass about the god damn – what, ya mean the community where every time I go for a haircut, where they all sit and stare like the goddamn grim reaper walked in the barber shop door? That community? Where, Bev stops at Gelman’s for a quart of milk and they look at her like she’s got the goddamn plague? That the community I’m supposed to be looking out for? Well, you go right ahead and you tell those folks whatever you want, Karl. And while you’re at it why don’t you tell ‘em about everything the community did for my son. I mean Jesus Christ, Murray Gelman even goes and hires a goddamn retarded kid, but my boy? Sorry. No work for you, bub. ■

KARL: I take it, Russ, you're aware that the Community Association meets the first Tuesday of each month? And as I'm sure you know, Don Skinner is part of the steering committee. And somehow it came to Don's attention at this late juncture that Ted Driscoll had found a buyer for this house and I have to say it did come as something of a shock when Don told us what sort of people they were.

RUSS: What sort of people are they?

(Beat. KARL stares at RUSS)

KARL: Well, (chuckles) Uh... Huh. I suppose I'm forced to consider the possibility that you actually don't know.

RUSS: Don't know what?

KARL: Well, I mean. They're colored.

RUSS: Who are?

KARL: The family. It's a colored family. ■

KARL: Well, do the boundaries of the neighborhood extend indefinitely? Who shall we invite next, the Red Chinese? ■

## ACT TWO

LENA: Well... I have no way of knowing what sort of connection you have to the neighborhood where you grew up? And some of our concerns have to do with a particular period in history and the things that people experienced here in this community during that period – both good and bad, and on a personal level? I just have a lot of respect for the people who went through those experiences and still managed to carve out a life for themselves and create a community despite a whole lot of obstacles? Some of which still exist. That's just a part of my history and my parents' history – and honoring the connection to that history – and, no one, myself included, likes having to dictate what you can or can't do with your own home, but there's just a lot of pride, and a lot of memories in these houses, and for some of us, that connection still has value, if that makes any sense? ■

STEVE: Humans are territorial, okay? This is why we have wars. One group, one tribe tries to usurp some territory – and now you guys have this territory, right? And you don't like having it stolen away from you the way white people stole everything else from black America. We get it, okay? And we apologize. But what good does it do, if we perpetually fall into the same, predictable little euphemistic tap dance around the topic? ■



## b) COMMON VALUES

If you have spent time trying to identify what makes a community, you now likely recognize that there is no single answer. Furthermore, not everyone identifies with groups and communities in the same way.

Some communities are defined by geography. Others may exist based on shared characteristics such as race, gender, sexuality or religion. Toronto youth and community leader Lali Mohamed suggests another option – he defines community as a group of individuals with shared or common values.

For example, Lali identifies as a person of color and recognizes that institutionalized and systemic racism impacts his life and the lives of other people of color within society. For Lali, a person whose skin color is identical to his yet whose values do not uphold the need to counter racism and oppression is not someone he considers to be part of his community.

Similarly, Lali identifies as queer and recognizes that homophobia in society contributes to a lack of equality for all. A heterosexual person who shares the belief that homophobia is a negative and destructive force contributing to widespread inequality may be a part of Lali's community even though this individual does not identify as "queer" themselves.

Consider this definition of community and what it means to you. Can people make up a community based simply on a set of traits or characteristics (e.g., race, gender, sexuality)? Or is a shared set of values and/or beliefs crucial to fostering a sense of community identity?

How does this notion of community pertain to the circumstances and characters in *Clybourne Park*? How would each character respond to this definition of community? What would Karl Lindner think? What about Russ or Albert? What about the characters in act two such as Lindsey, Steve, Lena and Kevin?

#### 4. Neighborhood Gentrification

Gentrification is the process by which a working class or low-income neighborhood is transformed into an affluent one. As an area becomes more desirable, property values increase, displacing the existing lower-income residents who can no longer afford to pay rising rent costs and who are unable to purchase expensive dwellings.

This type of community transformation is not all bad and it's not all good. It is a complicated process that for some signals progress, rejuvenation, economic development and a "cleaning up" of the neighborhood. Shiny new storefronts and homes replace dilapidated and crumbling facades. Attractive, affluent residents and visitors populate the streets once filled with prostitutes, junkies and panhandlers. New businesses, restaurants, cafes, bars, galleries and cultural institutions thrive.

What, then, is the trade-off? What happens to the local residents who once called these streets home? When rents start climbing, where do these low-income earners go? What happens to the former businesses and their owners – the old restaurants and stores replaced by Starbucks and American Apparel? What are the implications of eroding diversity, and an increase in socioeconomic, racial and ethnic homogeneity?

The second act of *Clybourne Park* reveals a community undergoing the gentrification process. The middle-class community of act one has experienced a period of economic decline and, due to some desirability factors (such as the area's proximity to downtown), is once again attracting upwardly mobile homebuyers. Lena and Kevin represent ties to the historic neighborhood, while Lindsey and Steve represent the changing face of the community.

At Studio 180, we love exploring issues such as gentrification and community through theatre because of the ways characters express multiple points of view. As a class, discuss the different viewpoints expressed in the play regarding the changing face of the Clybourne Park neighborhood. In what way is change identified as positive or progressive? Which characters are resistant to change in the community and for what reasons? How does the play reveal a connection between class and race or ethnicity?

The following excerpts from the play will help kick off your classroom discussion:

LINDSEY:	Look, I for one – I am really grateful for what you said, but this is why we sometimes feel defensive, you know? Because we <i>love</i> this neighborhood. We completely do, and we would never want to to to carelessly –
STEVE:	Run roughshod.
LINDSEY:	– over anyone's – And I totally admit, I'm the one who was resistant, especially with the schools and everything, but once I stopped seeing the neighborhood the way it used to be, and could see what it is now, and its potential?
LENA:	Used to be what?
LINDSEY:	What do you mean?
LENA:	What it "used to be"?
LINDSEY:	Historically. The changing, you know, demographic – ? ■

LINDSEY: And you know, the thing is? Communities change.

LENA: And some change is inevitable, and we all support that, but it might be worth asking yourself who exactly is responsible for that change?

LINDSEY: I'm not sure what you –

LENA: I'm asking you to think about the motivation behind the long-range political initiative to change the face of this neighborhood.

LINDSEY: What does that mean? Do you know what –

LENA: I mean that this is a highly desirable area. And now the area is changing.

KATHY: And for the better, right?

LENA: And I'm saying that there are certain economic interests that are being served by those changes and others that are not. That's all. ■

For a look at how private property and development interests in Chicago have led to gentrification and the displacement and relocation of low-income public housing residents, watch the documentary *Voices of Cabrini: Remaking Chicago's Public Housing* by Ronit Bezael and Antonio Ferrara. It can be viewed online at [www.ronitfilms.com/films/voicesofcabrini.html](http://www.ronitfilms.com/films/voicesofcabrini.html).

Another great resource is the excerpt from Heather McLean's essay "Go west, young hipster: the gentrification of Queen Street West" included in Section I3 of this Study Guide.

## H. Race & Identity Classroom Activities

The following suggested activities are provided by Rai Reece at the Toronto District School Board Gender-Based Violence Prevention Office.

### 1. Circles of My Self

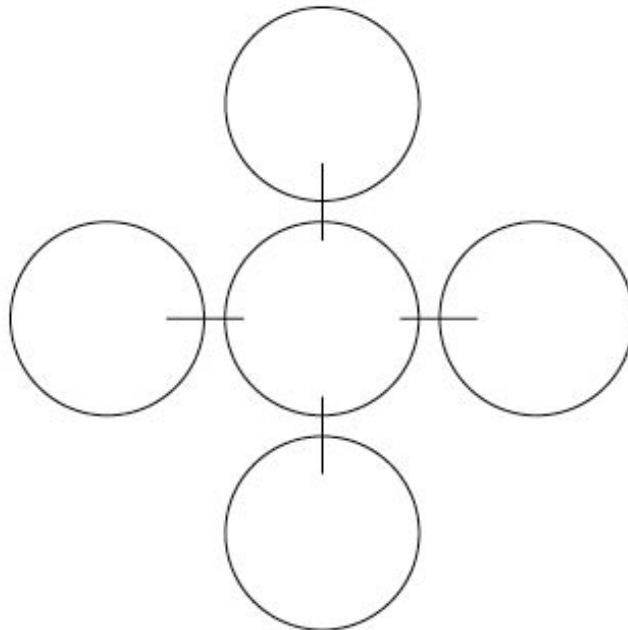
This activity highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities. It addresses the importance of individuals self-defining their identities and challenging stereotypes.

Draw a circle in the center of a page and then draw four satellite circles surrounding it – each connected to the center with a straight line. Place your name in the center circle and write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles – an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian, female, brother, athlete, Taoist, Muslim, or any descriptor with which you identify.

1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify yourself with one of the descriptors you used above.
2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.
3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_, but I am NOT (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_.

(E.g., if one of my identifiers is “Christian,” and I think a stereotype is that all Christians are radical fundamentalists, my sentence would be: “I am a Christian, but I am NOT a radical fundamentalist.”)



## 2. Common Ground

This activity identifies common stereotypes and misconceptions that we face in our daily lives. It highlights the commonalities we share, despite the various identifiers that make us all unique. Have students stand in a circle facing into the circle. As the facilitator, instruct students to step inside the circle if they identify with a statement when you make it. You may begin with a few rounds in silence during which students simply physicalize their responses and observe others. As the activity progresses, students should be encouraged to verbally discuss their responses, entering into the conversation as they feel comfortable.

Following the activity, facilitate a debriefing during which students can share their overall experiences and reflect on how much common ground they were able to identify.

Some examples of statements include: “Step into the circle if...”

1. You have been treated differently based on your religion.
2. You have been treated differently based on the way you dress.
3. You have been stereotyped based on your race.
4. You have been stereotyped based on your gender.
5. You have stereotyped someone else.
6. You have used a homophobic slur.

## 3. Don't Label Me

The purpose of this activity is to identify and acknowledge racial stereotypes and slurs. By exposing stereotypes, slurs and assumptions, we can work to move beyond negative language and misconceptions towards understanding, empathy and true equality.

On large cardstock or pieces of paper, write several racial identifiers and place them on the walls around the room. Examples may include: Black, White, Asian, Aboriginal, South Asian, Middle Eastern, etc.

Provide students with post-it note pads and instruct them to work independently and silently, brainstorming words they associate with each identifier. Have them stick the post-its by the appropriate identifiers. Encourage students to work quickly and on impulse – resisting the urge to self-censor.

After a few minutes ask students to stop writing and circulate throughout the room, reading the various responses.

As a class, discuss some of the words you read and what they made you think or feel.

**Note:** *This activity can also be carried out using identifiers based on characteristics such as gender, sexuality, religion or ability.*

# I. Readings for Pre- and Post-Show Discussion

## 1. Chapter excerpts from *Uprooting Racism* by Paul Kivel

*Uprooting Racism* by Paul Kivel includes tools to help white people understand and stand-up to racism in America. It explores the manifestations of racism in US politics, work, community and family life, addressing the many areas of privilege for white people and suggesting ways for individuals and groups to challenge the structures of racism.

You may like to read these excerpts and then discuss how they resonate for you, and how they apply to the characters in *Clybourne Park*. See the suggested topics for discussion and classroom activities described on pages 20 and 21 of **Section G**.

### a) “I’M NOT RACIST”: excerpt from *Uprooting Racism* by Paul Kivel

Whether it is easy or difficult to say that we’re white, the phrase we often want to say next is “But I’m not racist.” There are lots of ways we have learned to phrase this denial:

I’m not racist.

I do anti-racism work.

I don’t belong to the Klan.

I went to an unlearning racism workshop.

I have friends who are people of color.

I don’t see color, I’m colorblind.

This book is not about whether you are racist or not, or whether all white people are racist or not. We are not conducting a moral inventory of ourselves, nor creating a moral standard to divide other white people from us. When we say things like, “I don’t see color,” we are trying to maintain a self-image of impartiality and innocence (whiteness). Ultimately, this disclaimer prevents us from taking responsibility for challenging racism because we believe that people who see color are the problem.

The only way to treat all people with dignity and justice is to recognize that racism has a profound negative effect upon all our lives. Noticing color helps to counteract that effect. Instead of being color neutral, we need to notice much more acutely and insightfully exactly the difference that color makes in the way people are treated.

Just as it’s not useful to label ourselves racist, it is not useful to label each other. White people have committed some very brutal acts in the name of whiteness. We may want to separate ourselves from them by claiming that they are racist and we are not. But because racism operates institutionally, to the benefit of all white people, we are connected to the acts of other white people.

Of course you’re not a member of the Klan or other extremist groups. Of course you watch what you say and don’t make rude racial comments. But dissociating from white people who do is not the answer. You may want to dissociate yourself from their actions, but you still need to challenge their beliefs. You can’t challenge them or even speak to them if you have separated yourself from them, creating some magical line with the racists on that side and you over here. This division leads to an ineffective strategy of trying to convert as many people as possible to your (non-racist and therefore superior) side. Other white people will listen to you better, and be more influenced by your actions, when you identify with them. Then you can explore how to work from the inside out together.

Perhaps most importantly, people who are more visibly saying or doing things that are racist are usually more scared, more confused and less powerful – or they are trying to increase their own power by

manipulating racial fears. It is amazing how, when we feel scared, confused or powerless, we can do and say the very same things. Since racism leads to scapegoating people of color for social and personal problems, white people are all susceptible to resorting to it in times of trouble. Notice the large number of white people who are blaming immigrants of color for our economic problems. Visible acts of racism are, at least in part, an indication of the lack of power that a white person or group of people have. More powerful and well-off people can simply move to segregated neighborhoods or make corporate decisions that are harder to see and analyze as contributing to racism. Since the racism of the wealthy is less visible to us, those of us who are middle-class can inadvertently scapegoat poor and working-class white people for being overtly racist.

We do need to confront words and actions that are racist when we encounter them because they create an atmosphere of violence in which all of us are unsafe. We also need to understand that most white people are doing the best they can to survive. Overtly racist people are scared and lack the information and skills to be more tolerant. We need to challenge their behavior, not their moral integrity. We also need to be careful that we don't end up carrying out an upperclass agenda by blaming poor and working people for being racist when people with wealth control the media, the textbooks, the housing and job markets and the police. Staying focused on institutions and decision makers challenges societal racism. ■

b) "WHITE BENEFITS, MIDDLE-CLASS PRIVILEGE": excerpt from *Uprooting Racism* by Paul Kivel

It is not necessarily a privilege to be white, but it certainly has its benefits. That's why so many of our families gave up their unique histories, primary languages, accents, distinctive dress, family names and cultural expressions. It seemed like a small price to pay for acceptance in the circle of whiteness. Even with these sacrifices, it wasn't easy to pass as white if we were Italian, Greek, Irish, Jewish, Spanish, Hungarian or Polish. Sometimes it took generations before our families were fully accepted, and then it was usually because white society had an even greater fear of darker-skinned people.

*Privileges* are the economic extras that those of us who are middle-class and wealthy gain at the expense of poor and working-class people of all races. *Benefits*, on the other hand, are the advantages that all white people gain at the expense of people of color regardless of economic position.<sup>1</sup> Talk about racial benefits can ring false to many of us who don't have the economic privileges that we see others in this society enjoying. But though we don't have substantial economic privileges, we do enjoy many of the benefits of being white.

We can generally count on police protection rather than harassment. Depending on our financial situation, we can choose where we want to live and choose safer neighborhoods with better schools. We are given more attention, respect and status in conversations than people of color. Nothing that we do is qualified, limited, discredited or acclaimed simply because of our racial background. We don't have to represent our race, and nothing we do is judged as a credit to our race or as confirmation of its shortcomings or inferiority.

These benefits start early. Others will have higher expectations for us as children, both at home and at school. We will have more money spent on our education, we will be called on more in school and given more opportunity and resources to learn. We will see people like us in textbooks. If we get into trouble, adults will expect us to be able to change and improve and therefore will discipline or penalize us less

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<sup>1</sup> See the important work on privilege done by Peggy McIntosh, *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies*, Wellesley College, Center for Research on Women, 1988; as well as material from Allan Creighton with Paul Kivel, *Helping Teens Stop Violence*, rev. ed. Hunter House, 2011; and George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, Temple University, 1998.

harshly than children of color. These benefits accrue and work to the direct economic advantage of every white person in the United States. First of all, we will earn more in our lifetime than a person of color of similar qualifications. We will be paid \$1.00 for every \$0.60 that a person of color makes.<sup>2</sup> We will advance faster and more reliably and, on average, accumulate eight times as much wealth. A white family will, on average accumulate \$170,000 in assets, a black family \$17,000, and a Latino/a family \$21,000.<sup>3</sup> The gap for single women-headed households is even more stark – in 2007 a white female-headed household had on average \$41,000 in assets, a black female-headed household \$100, and a Latina-headed household \$120.<sup>4</sup>

These are historically derived economic benefits too. All the land in the US was taken from Native Americans. Much of the infrastructure of this country was built by slave labor, incredibly low-paid labor or by prison labor performed by men and women of color. Much of the housecleaning, childcare, cooking and maintenance of our society has been done by low-wage-earning women of color. Today men and women and children of color still do the hardest, lowest-paid, most dangerous work throughout the US. And white people enjoy plentiful and inexpensive food, clothing and consumer goods because of that exploitation.

We have been taught history through a white-tinted lens that has minimized our exploitation of people of color and extolled the hardworking, courageous qualities of white people. For example, many of our foreparents gained a foothold in the US by finding work in such trades as railroads, streetcars, construction, shipbuilding, wagon and coach driving, house painting, tailoring, longshore work, bricklaying, table waiting, working in the mills or dressmaking. These were all occupations that blacks, who had begun entering many such skilled and unskilled jobs, were either excluded from or pushed out of in the 19th century. Exclusion and discrimination, coupled with immigrant mob violence against blacks in many northern cities (such as the anti-black draft riots of 1863), meant that recent immigrants had economic opportunities that blacks did not. These gains were consolidated by explicitly racist trade union practices and policies that kept blacks in the most unskilled labor and lowest-paid work.<sup>5</sup>

It is not that white Americans have not worked hard and built much. We have. But we did not start out from scratch. We went to segregated schools and universities built with public money. We received school loans, Veterans Administration (VA) loans, housing and auto loans unavailable to people of color. We received federal jobs, apprenticeships and training when only whites were allowed.

Much of the rhetoric against more active policies for racial justice stem from the misconception that all people are given equal opportunities and start from a level playing field. We often don't even see the benefits we have received from racism. We claim that they are not there. ■

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<sup>2</sup> In 2007 black families earned \$0.59, Latino families earned \$0.62, and American Indian/Alaska Native families made \$0.59 for every dollar in income earned by a white family. For women-headed households the gaps were even larger. Nationally, Asian American income was \$1.10 but was highly variable based on geography and ethnicity. *Check the Color Line: 2009 Income Report*. Applied Research Center, 2009. [online]. [cited February 8, 2011]. [colorlines.com/pdf/2009\\_Check ColorLineIncome.pdf](http://colorlines.com/pdf/2009_Check%20ColorLineIncome.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Insight Center for Community Economic Development. *Laying the Foundation for National Prosperity: The Imperative of Closing the Racial Wealth Gap*. March, 2009. [online]. [cited February 8, 2011]. [insightcced.org/uploads/CRWG/LayingTheFoundationForNationalProsperity-MeizhuLui0309.pdf](http://insightcced.org/uploads/CRWG/LayingTheFoundationForNationalProsperity-MeizhuLui0309.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Insight Center for Community Economic Development. *Lifting As We Climb: Women of Color, Wealth, and America's Future*. Spring, 2010. [online]. [cited February 8, 2011]. [insighted.org/uploads/CRWG/LiftingAsWeClimb-WomenWealth-Report-InsightCenter-Spring2010.pdf](http://insighted.org/uploads/CRWG/LiftingAsWeClimb-WomenWealth-Report-InsightCenter-Spring2010.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> For an extended history of the relationship between the white working class and workers of color, see David R. Roediger. *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*. Verso, 1991.



**c) “THE COSTS OF RACISM TO PEOPLE OF COLOUR”: excerpt from *Uprooting Racism* by Paul Kivel**

The opposite of a benefit is a disadvantage. People of color face distinct disadvantages. If we were to talk about running a race for achievement and success in the US and white people and people of color lined up side by side as a group, then every white benefit would put white runners steps ahead of the starting line and every disadvantage would put people of color steps backwards from the starting line before the race even began.

The disadvantages of being a person of color in the United States today include personal insults, harassment, discrimination, economic and cultural exploitation, stereotypes and invisibility, as well as threats, intimidation and violence. Not every person of color has experienced all these disadvantages, but they each have experienced some of them, and they each experience the vulnerability to violence that being a person of color here entails.

Institutional racism is discussed in detail in Parts IV, V and VI, but personal acts of harassment and discrimination committed directly by individual white people can also take a devastating toll.<sup>1</sup> People of color never know when they will be called names, be ridiculed or have jokes and comments made to them or about them by white people. They don't know when they might hear that they should leave the country, go home or go back to where they came from. Often these comments are made in situations where it isn't safe to confront the person who made the remark.

People of color also have to be ready to respond to teachers, employers or supervisors who have stereotypes, prejudices or lowered expectations about them. Many have been discouraged or prevented from pursuing academic or work goals or have been placed in lower vocational levels because of their racial identity. They have to be prepared to receive less respect, attention or response from a doctor, police officer, court official, city official or other professional. They are likely to be mistrusted, accused of stealing, cheating or lying or stopped by the police because of their racial identity. They are also likely to have experienced employment or housing discrimination or know someone who has.

There are cultural costs as well. People of color see themselves portrayed in degrading, stereotypical and fear-inducing ways in the media. They may have important religious or cultural holidays that are not recognized where they work or go to school. They have seen their religious practices, music, art, mannerisms, dress and other customs distorted, “borrowed,” ridiculed, exploited, used as mascots or otherwise degraded.

If they protest they may be verbally attacked by whites for being too sensitive, too emotional or too angry. Or they may be told they are different from other people of their racial group. Much of what people of color do or say, or how they act in racially mixed company, is judged as representative of their race.

On top of all this, they have to live with the threat of physical violence. Some are survivors of racial violence or have close friends or family who are. Perhaps even more disheartening, they have to teach their children at a young age how to respond to this as well.

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<sup>1</sup> See Ellis Cose. *The Rage of a Privileged Class*. HarperCollins, 1993; Joe R. Feagin and Vera Hernan. *White Racism: The Basics*. Routledge, 1995; Annie S. Barnes. *Everyday Racism*; Philomena Essed. *Everyday Racism*. Hunter House, 1991, and *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. Sage, 1991.

Although all people of color have experienced some of the disadvantages mentioned above, other factors make a difference in how vulnerable a person of color is to the effects of racism. Economic resources help buffer some more egregious effects. Depending upon where one lives, women and men with different racial identities are treated differently. Discrimination varies in form and ranges from mild to severe depending on one's skin color, ethnicity, level of education, location, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, age and how white people and white-run institutions respond to these factors.

Most of us would like to think that today we have turned the tide and that people of color can run the race equally with white people. We now have an African American president and some people of color who are wealthy or in positions of power. But, if we honestly add up the benefits of whiteness and the disadvantages of being a person of color, we can see that existing affirmative action programs still don't put everyone at the same starting line.

**Is it hard for you to accept that this kind of pervasive discrimination still occurs?**

**Which of the above statements is particularly hard to accept? ■**

## 2. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” by Peggy McIntosh

(excerpted from *White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women’s Studies*

[www.docs.google.com/Doc?id=dd323hvj\\_1204hbf24wcm](http://www.docs.google.com/Doc?id=dd323hvj_1204hbf24wcm))

“I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group.”

Through work to bring materials from women’s studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men’s unwillingness to grant that they are overprivileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say they will work to women’s statues, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can’t or won’t support the idea of lessening men’s. Denials that amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages that men gain from women’s disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened, or ended. Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that, since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege that was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something that puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage. I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize male privilege. So I have begun in an untutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was “meant” to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in women’s studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, “having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?” After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are just seen as oppressive, even when we don’t see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence. My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work that will allow “them” to be more like “us.”

### **Daily effects of white privilege**

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.

3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
22. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.
23. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.
24. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to the "person in charge", I will be facing a person of my race.
25. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.
26. I can easily buy posters, post-cards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys and children's magazines featuring people of my race.
27. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance or feared.
28. I can be pretty sure that an argument with a colleague of another race is more likely to jeopardize her/his chances for advancement than to jeopardize mine.
29. I can be pretty sure that if I argue for the promotion of a person of another race, or a program centering on race, this is not likely to cost me heavily within my present setting, even if my colleagues disagree with me.

30. If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have.
31. I can choose to ignore developments in minority writing and minority activist programs, or disparage them, or learn from them, but in any case, I can find ways to be more or less protected from negative consequences of any of these choices.
32. My culture gives me little fear about ignoring the perspectives and powers of people of other races.
33. I am not made acutely aware that my shape, bearing or body odor will be taken as a reflection on my race.
34. I can worry about racism without being seen as self-interested or self-seeking.
35. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having my co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of my race.
36. If my day, week or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it had racial overtones.
37. I can be pretty sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with me and advise me about my next steps, professionally.
38. I can think over many options, social, political, imaginative or professional, without asking whether a person of my race would be accepted or allowed to do what I want to do.
39. I can be late to a meeting without having the lateness reflect on my race.
40. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.
41. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.
42. I can arrange my activities so that I will never have to experience feelings of rejection owing to my race.
43. If I have low credibility as a leader I can be sure that my race is not the problem.
44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race.
45. I can expect figurative language and imagery in all of the arts to testify to experiences of my race.
46. I can choose blemish coverup or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.
47. I can travel alone or with my spouse without expecting embarrassment or hostility in those who deal with us.
48. I have no difficulty finding neighborhoods where people approve of our household.
49. My children are given texts and classes which implicitly support our kind of family unit and do not turn them against my choice of domestic partnership.
50. I will feel welcomed and "normal" in the usual walks of public life, institutional and social. ■

### 3. “Go west, young hipster: the gentrification of Queen Street West”

by Heather McLean

The following is an excerpt from Heather McLean’s essay published in *uTOpia: Towards a New Toronto*. Jason McBride & Alana Wilcox, eds., 2005, Toronto, Coach House Books. This reading will provide an excellent foundation upon which to base a class discussion about gentrification, focusing on Toronto’s Queen Street West neighborhood.

The transformation of a traditionally working-class neighbourhood into a ‘hip’ entertainment hub is typical of many complexities and contradictions of the gentrification process – a spatial transformation driven by the imperative of economic growth and development. This process has come to mean changing neighbourhoods through an increase in housing prices, an accentuation of socio-economic polarization, the change in local retail structure, land-use speculation and a shift towards accessibility for people with higher incomes.

While urban transformations are not new, various theorists explain how gentrification expresses larger global shifts: national and regional economies have moved their priorities towards recreation and consumption and a global hierarchy of world, national and regional cities has emerged. Encouraging hip, urban livability has become the goal as municipal governments and private-sector initiatives throughout the world try to attract new economy workers and the ‘creative’ classes to purchase condominiums, eat in posh cafes, and shop in boutiques.

Toronto’s latest Official Plan (the guiding policy and planning vision for how the city will grow in the next thirty years) uses the city’s arts, music and cultural communities as a selling feature to attract investment and real-estate development. As urban-planning researcher Susannah Bunce notes, rather than promote a bland King and Bay Street image of the city, local arts communities are highlighted to attract potential investors and residents. While this type of promotion might help sustain an interest by levels of government in supporting arts and culture, it also encourages gentrification and the inevitable displacement of working- and artist-class inhabitants as higher-income earners move to buy their way into what is packaged and promoted as a hip lifestyle. In this process, neighbourhoods like Queen-Beaconsfield and Parkdale become a new frontier for redevelopment.

Geographer Neil Smith’s writing on the gentrification of New York’s Lower East Side in the late 1980s talks about the emergence of the ‘frontier’ myth in the politics of gentrification. Entire neighbourhoods where people lived and worked, Smith notes, when viewed through a colonial lens, were ripe for so-called ‘revitalization.’ New York newspapers, for instance, celebrated the ‘courage’ of urban homesteaders and brave pioneers moving into non-white, lower-income neighbourhoods. Smith’s writing exposes how one couple was quoted in the *New Yorker* as saying, ‘Ludlow Street. No one we know would think of living here. No one we know has ever heard of Ludlow Street. Maybe someday this neighbourhood will be the way the Village was before we knew anything about New York.’

Twelve years after Smith’s writing, Drake Hotel owner Jeff Stober uses the same frontier language to describe his goal of ‘revitalizing’ the corner of Queen and Beaconsfield. ‘Four years ago, if you had said this area would be described as a chic walkway, people would have said you were nuts. It was the wild west,’ Stober stated in the *Toronto Star*. According to Stober, this neighbourhood was a blank slate, a frontier just waiting for investment and redevelopment to bring it to life.

Bars and other establishments love to employ this constructed urban ‘authenticity’ to attract trendy partiers. In this process, long-time homeowners and renters, seniors, new immigrants and people experiencing social exclusion, addiction and mental-health issues, and poverty are rendered ‘edgy’ for people attempting to create a bohemian experience for pubgoers and second-hand-clothes shoppers. This is articulated in a new pub on this strip called the Social, with its intentionally rough décor and the

word 'welfare' painted across one of the walls.

These narratives are further perpetuated by the media. Like a mesh ball cap or seventy-dollar used sweater, some of the neighbourhood's residents serve to accessorize the hip experience of consuming martinis and cultural activities. One pub is described as being 'conveniently located steps from the Queen West Mental Health and Addiction Centre and a hop, skip and a jump from Toronto Western's detox centre.' Another notes 'media types pound single malts while checking out colourful Parkdale street life.' This lack of political self-reflection and the commodification of space contribute to the transformation of working-class and politically active neighbourhoods into what sociologist Christopher Mele calls 'bourgeois bohemia.' A place where, Susannah Bunce notes, a neighbourhood's supposedly authentic and quirky character is used to sell ten-dollar brunches and martinis.

Artists requiring affordable places to live and work are also adversely affected by the process of gentrification. Bunce points out that working artists often seek out neighbourhoods like Parkdale because the rent is cheaper; ironically, these people who contribute to making the neighbourhood culturally appealing in the first place are at risk of being displaced by higher income earners and the services and amenities that aim to serve them. This is evident in the Queen-Beaconsfield neighbourhood; sis Boom Bah, Luft, Burston and Brackett galleries have already had to close due to increased rents. That there are fewer buyers and more art tourists has also been cited as a reason for closing. One gallery owner mentioned that although she has not had to move, the building owner has refused to keep up with anything beyond basic maintenance. While he insists that he cannot afford upkeep because of increases in property tax and insurance, he seems to be waiting for tenants to leave so he can charge double the rent for the space. There is a rumour that another landlord in the area is looking to open a franchise like Starbucks in a former gallery space.

Another regular feature of the colonial process in gentrification, Smith points out, is that developers and gentrifiers often dismiss local residents in the development process. Because the area is defined as a frontier – a place with all this potential where nobody of importance thought of living before – local residents are often rendered invisible and are excluded from planning processes and decisions. QBRA [Queen-Beaconsfield Residents Association] residents are bewildered at how little they have been included in the planning process for the large late-night patio at the corner of their street. 'They had this sense of entitlement,' commented one resident. 'It was like we never existed in the first place.' ■

## J. Follow-Up Articles: Contemporary Local Issues

Look for notes on “Classroom Discussion” after each article for tips on how to springboard from each article into dialogue with your students.

### 1. Africentric high school wins board approval

#### **Education director applauds TDSB for “thinking outside the box” for ways to reach at-risk students**

By KATE HAMMER

*The Globe and Mail*

November 16, 2011

The Toronto District School Board approved the concept of an Africentric high school at a heated board meeting late Wednesday.

The next hurdle, one that proved nearly fatal to the idea last spring, is for the board to identify a site for the school.

Education director Chris Spence said he is hopeful the school will open in the fall of 2012 or 2013.

The board also approved a suite of specialized schools – all-girls, all-boys, choir and sports and fitness-focused – that will open in the fall of 2012.

Parents from the Africentric elementary school, which opened in the fall of 2009 and has widely been considered a success, crowded the boardroom for the vote. It passed 14 votes to 6.

Dr. Spence said he was “pleased” that the TDSB was “thinking outside the box” for ways to reach at-risk students.

There are approximately 30,000 students of African heritage in the board’s schools, and as many as 40 per cent of them drop out.

“To not support an Africentric secondary school would be discrimination against the Africentric community,” said trustee Maria Rodrigues, shortly before the vote.

Trustee Gerri Gershon voted against the high school. “I can’t in good conscience support a school where kids are separated from one another,” she said.

Since the elementary Africentric school opened, it has produced above-average scores on standardized tests, and there are currently about 20 students on a waiting list. The success has led some to question whether the school is in fact serving at-risk students.

Parents from the elementary school were pleased with the vote.

“I’m glad my daughter will have that choice when she gets to high school,” said Michelle Hughes, whose daughter, Samantha, is in Grade 4. “The elementary school has helped her build a strong foundation.”

In March, TDSB staff proposed opening an Africentric high school at Oakwood Collegiate in midtown this



fall. Trustees quickly backed off the idea after students, parents and staff at the school protested that such an idea would “segregate” the multicultural school. They also charged that staff had floated the proposal before consultations with the community. ■

### **CLASSROOM DISCUSSION**

Read this article from *The Globe and Mail* and hold a classroom discussion about the merits and challenges of an Africentric school in Toronto. You can base your discussion on the article alone, or use it as a starting point for students to conduct their own investigation into the issue. Have students search for other articles and resources around this topic or conduct interviews with community leaders, educators and politicians.

It is the classroom leader’s responsibility to ensure that all students feel comfortable contributing to the conversation and that participation is voluntary. Remember that the goal is not to achieve consensus. Different points of view should be welcome and encouraged as long as all voices are respected.

The following questions might be useful in helping guide your discussion:

- What are the benefits of an Africentric public school in Toronto? Which students might benefit from such a school and how? What are some of the positive outcomes to students at risk of dropping out of school?
- Why are some community members opposed to an Africentric school in Toronto? What do they site as potentially harmful outcomes?
- Does an Africentric school create segregation? Why or why not might this be problematic? Is an Africentric school any different than a single-sex school (all girls or all boys), religious-based school (Catholic school) or a school with a focus on athletics or the arts?
- To further explore this topic, have students investigate the issue independently and organize a classroom debate.
- **Drama students** may wish to explore the issues raised in the article by brainstorming characters affected by the story and improvising scenes between those characters.

## 2. Service cuts affect low-income areas most

By ANITA LI, Staff Reporter

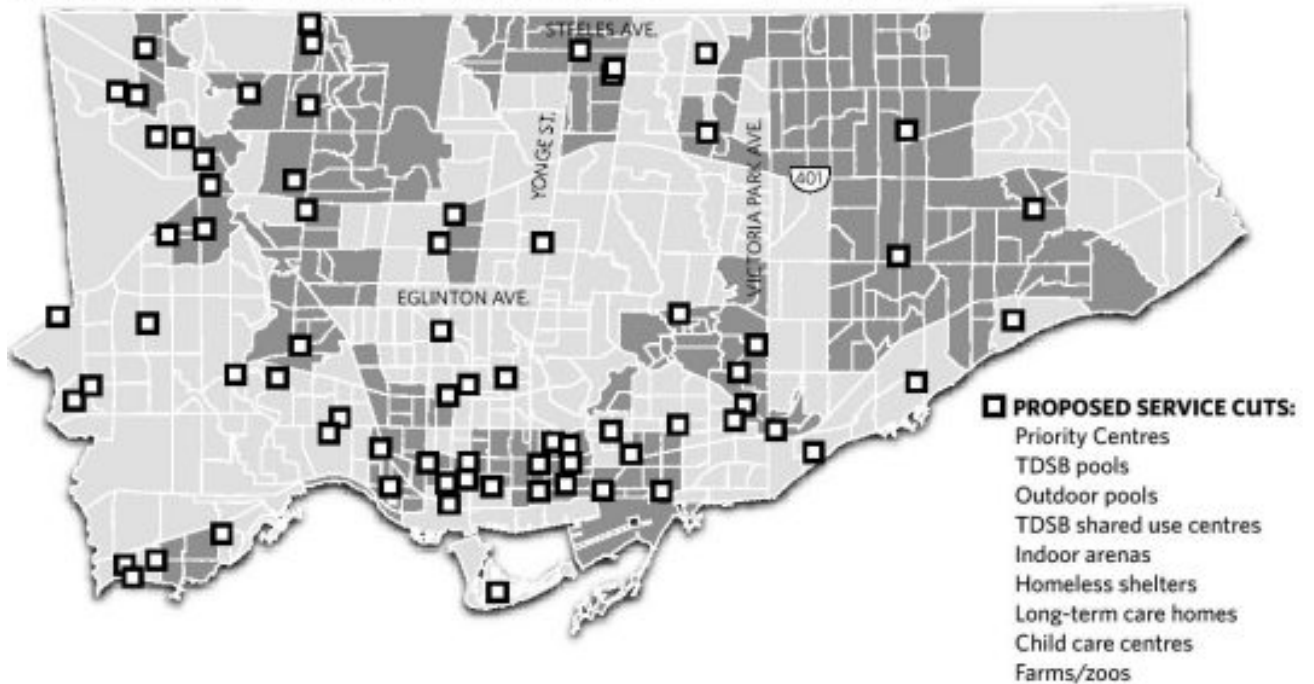
Published On Wed Dec 07 2011

Toronto Star

### Mapping the cuts

Location of proposed service cuts in the City of Toronto's 2012 budget in relation to low-income neighbourhoods.

Percentage of low income persons in Toronto: **24.5%**  
**Percentage of residents who are low-income**  
6.1% - 24.5%  
24.6% - 67.9%



SOURCE: City of Toronto, Neighbourhood Planning Areas Version 2

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

A map created by Social Planning Toronto reveals that the proposed cuts and closures in the city's 2012 budget are "disproportionately" located in low-income neighbourhoods.

Forty-two of the 75 location-specific cuts — or 56 per cent — are in impoverished areas, according to the organization.

"(There's) really great concern about creating a city that is a less equitable city, a less just city, a less compassionate city," said senior researcher Beth Wilson. "I don't think anyone voted for that."

Wilson compiled statistics for the map using information from city budget documents and economic data from its most recent 2006 report on low income. The location-specific cuts do not represent all the proposed service cuts.

For instance, TTC bus routes are not mapped, and are likely to affect people living in the suburbs, as well as lower-income citizens who don't own cars, Wilson said, adding that she plans to update the map as more information about the cuts becomes public.

The organization wants to put a stop to the \$88 million in proposed cuts, and is calling on Mayor

Rob Ford's administration to put the city's unexpected \$139 million budget surplus to use.

"The idea of putting away that money for a rainy day when you're throwing homeless people out of shelters, and you're closing the libraries earlier in the community, closing down rec centres — I think we've got our rainy day now," Wilson said.

The cuts are both damaging and unnecessary, she said.

"We're seeing it as really unnecessarily creating a crisis," she said. "The whole direction that the city is going in is really going to hurt a lot of people." ■

### **CLASSROOM DISCUSSION**

After seeing *Clybourne Park*, use this Toronto Star article to initiate a conversation about neighbourhoods and communities in our own city. How are the issues addressed in the play pertinent to Toronto? Have any of the questions stemming from the play led you to think about your own city in a new light?

Use the following questions to kick-start a dialogue inspired by the article:

- What does the map indicate in terms of Mayor Ford's funding priorities? Who does the article suggest will be most affected by the proposed cuts and in what ways?
- Is it the municipal government's responsibility to allocate resources and provide services based on income and need? Why or why not? What are our responsibilities to one another within a community?
- After months of debate regarding Mayor Ford's budget proposal, what were the eventual outcomes? Which of the Mayor's proposed service and funding cuts were approved and which were denied by city council? Are Torontonians all impacted equally by municipal funding cuts? How might different people be affected differently? How might one's income level, gender, race, ethnicity, language or ability influence how one is impacted by service or funding cuts?

*For an in-depth discussion, read beyond this article and investigate patterns of urban development in Toronto. Check out University of Toronto Professor J. David Hulchanski's work included with this Study Guide (hard copy versions only). Also available online at [www.neighbourhoodchange.ca](http://www.neighbourhoodchange.ca).*

*What do his Three Cities maps have in common with the map used in the Toronto Star article?*

## K. Recommended Resources

### ONLINE LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Organizing for Power, Organizing for Change: Resources and Trainings:**

[www.organizingforpower.wordpress.com/power/anti-oppression-resources-exercises/](http://www.organizingforpower.wordpress.com/power/anti-oppression-resources-exercises/)

**Anti-Racism Education Teaching Resources:**

[www.google.ca/search?q=antiracism+education+teaching+resources+northern+alberta+alliance+on+race+relations&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a](http://www.google.ca/search?q=antiracism+education+teaching+resources+northern+alberta+alliance+on+race+relations&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a)

**University of Toronto Cities Centre:**

[www.citiescentre.utoronto.ca/Page4.aspx](http://www.citiescentre.utoronto.ca/Page4.aspx)

**Neighbourhood Change & Building Inclusive Communities From Within:**

[www.neighbourhoodchange.ca](http://www.neighbourhoodchange.ca)

### BOOKS

*Satire and Dissent.* Amber Day, 2011, Bloomington, Indiana, Indiana University Press.

*Understanding A Raisin in the Sun.* Lynn Domina, 1998, Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press.

*Uprooting Racism: How white people can work for racial justice.* Paul Kivel, 1996, Gabriola Island, B.C., New Society Publishers.

### DOCUMENTARY FILMS

***Voices of Cabrini: Remaking Chicago's Public Housing***

By Ronit Bezalel and Antonio Ferrara, 1999

This 30-minute documentary about the relocating of Chicago's Cabrini Green public housing residents, can be viewed online at [www.ronitfilms.com/films/voicesofcabrini.html](http://www.ronitfilms.com/films/voicesofcabrini.html)

***East Side Showdown***

By Robin Benger, produced by the National Film Board, 1999

This documentary explores neighbourhood & gentrification issues within a local context by examining a downtown, Toronto neighbourhood just minutes from The Berkeley Street Theatre.

***Delivered Vacant***

By Nora Jacobson, 1992

This American documentary about gentrification over a ten-year period focuses on Hoboken, New Jersey.