

ON STAGE AT PARK SQUARE THEATRE

November 17, 18, 19, 24, 2015



# My Children! My Africa!

## Study Guide

Written by ATHOL FUGARD

Directed by JAMES A. WILLIAMS

**3M** STUDENT  
SERIES



**PARK SQUARE**  
THEATRE

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# My Children! My Africa!

## Study Guide

### Contents



#### The Play and the Playwright

Plot Summary. . . . .	4
Meet the Characters. . . . .	6
Who is Athol Fugard?. . . . .	7

#### Historical Context

Glossary of Terms. . . . .	9
History of Apartheid in South Africa. . . . .	12
Bantu Education Under Apartheid. . . . .	15

#### Classroom Activities and Resources

Tossing Lines: A Pre-Play Activity. . . . .	17
Scene to Read Aloud #1: A Pre-Play Activity. . . . .	19
Scene to Read Aloud #2: A Pre-Play Activity. . . . .	22
The Achievement Gap in Minnesota: A Pre-Play or Post-Play Activity. . . . .	25
Making Connections: Test Results in Minnesota: A Pre-Play or Post-Play Activity. . . . .	27
Write to Congress: A Pre-Play or Post-Play Activity. . . . .	28
Violence vs. Nonviolence: A Post-Play Activity. . . . .	30
The Psychology of Radicalism: A Post-Play Activity. . . . .	32
Debate in the Classroom: A Post-Play Activity. . . . .	34
Post-Play Discussion Questions. . . . .	37

# Plot Summary

## Act 1

The play opens in a Bantu classroom in South Africa in 1984. Mr. Anela Myalatya, a teacher at Zolile High School, is moderating a debate between his star student, Thami Mbikwana, and Isabel Dyson, a student from the affluent, white girls' school, Camdeboo High. Despite Thami's passionate closing remarks and his popularity among his classmates, Isabel wins the debate. After the rest of the class leaves, Isabel and Thami talk, and despite their different backgrounds, a friendship is born.

A couple of days later, Mr. Myalatya, also known as Mr. M, searches out Isabel with a proposal: he asks her to join forces with Thami in an interschool English literature competition. Mr. M explains that it is his intention to show that two people of different races can work together. He also admits that he hopes Thami would be able to win a scholarship from the competition. Isabel explains that when she first went to Zolile High for the debate, she was uncertain about how the black students would react to a white student, but that fear soon transformed into friendship. She excitedly accepts the opportunity.

A few days later, Isabel arrives to practice only to find Mr. M alone. Before Thami joins them, the two discuss Thami. Mr. M hints that Thami might be involved in some trouble, so he asks Isabel if Thami has confided in her. Thami rushes in late, and their studying begins. As Thami and Isabel quiz each other, it is obvious from their banter they enjoy each other's company. However, the light-hearted discussion turns dark when it moves into politics. Mr. M chastises Thami for being part of a group that vandalizes in the name of political protest. Mr. M suggests that the group should sit down to discuss the racial injustice instead of using violence. It is evident Thami doesn't agree, but he remains respectful. Isabel guides them back to studying for the competition. She also invites both Mr. M and Thami over to her house for tea the following Sunday. After Mr. M leaves, Thami criticizes Mr. M for his "old-fashioned" ways. He disagrees with Mr. M's analysis of the struggle for freedom. What Mr. M considers "vandalism and lawless behavior" Thami believes is necessary. Isabel urges Thami to talk to Mr. M about it, but he refuses, saying that he can't talk to a teacher that way. The discussion between the two gets heated, and Isabel leaves unhappily.

## Act 2

Isabel and Thami are once again studying when Thami reveals that he is pulling out of the competition. Thami explains that he will be boycotting classes the next day in an effort to protest Bantu educational practices. Isabel hopes the two can still be friends, but Thami does not think it will work. Mr. M joins the discussion hoping to make Thami rethink his decision. Thami disagrees and believes that words are not enough to evoke change. Mr. M reveals that he has been approached by the police to make a list of those involved in the boycott. The three leave in anger.

In the midst of the boycott, Mr. M goes to school the following day but is met with an empty classroom. Thami comes to school despite the boycott to warn Mr. M that because the teacher gave the names of the protest participants to the police, the comrades have denounced him and will kill him. Thami tries to convince his teacher to fight for the comrades' cause. Mr. M speaks passionately of his love for Africa and

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## Plot Summary CONTINUED

laments the needless deaths that are occurring. Thami desperately tries to prevent Mr. M from going outside, but Mr. M walks out of the school to ring the school bell and is killed by the mob.

Thami visits Isabel one last time to tell her he is leaving the country to join the movement. Isabel expresses her inability to grieve for the respected teacher. Before he leaves, Thami tells Isabel of a place where Mr. M felt at peace. Isabel goes to that location, pays her final respects to Mr. M and vows not to waste her life.



Image of South African classroom.

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**By Tanya Sponholz**  
Prescott High School

# Meet the Characters

## Mr. M (Anela Myalatya)

A black, middle-aged teacher at Zolile High School in Camdeboo, South Africa. Mr. M brings together two students from vastly different backgrounds, Thami (Mr. M's favorite student) and Isabel, in an attempt to cross the boundaries of apartheid. As a follower of the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, he has been a long-time teacher of non-violence, believing that change in racially segregated South Africa will only come about through education.

## Thami Mbikwana

A gifted, young black man who is a student of Mr. M's at Zolile High School. He is 18 years old and understands the boundaries put on him by apartheid. Though a longtime student of Mr. M's peaceful beliefs, he is drawn toward the radical student movement.

## Isabel Dyson

A gifted, young white South African (otherwise known as Afrikaner) from Camdeboo High School, a prestigious all-white girls' school. Through Mr. M's invitation to debate at Zolile High School, her friendships with Thami and Mr. M open her world to the complexities of race.



Image of *My Children! My Africa!* by Victory Gardens Theatre. Dir by Cecil O'Neal, 2007.

By **Sulia Altenberg**

Park Square Theatre Intern

# Who is Athol Fugard?

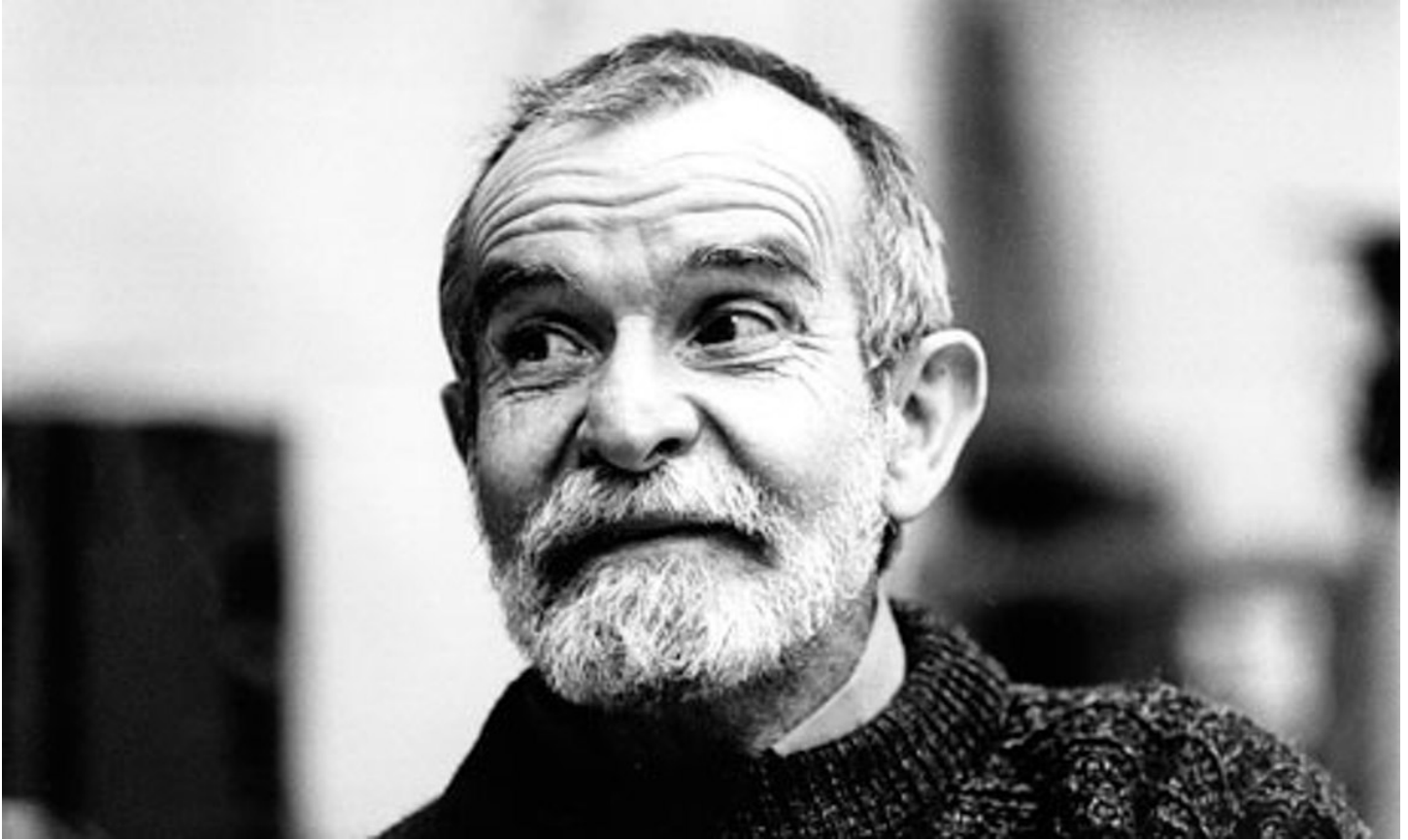


Image of Athol Fugard in 1993. Photo by Sue Adler Sue Adler/PR.

**H**arold Athol Lanigan Fugard is a South African director, actor and writer of more than thirty plays. He is best known for creating works confronting the racial segregation of apartheid in South Africa.

Fugard was born June 11, 1932, in Middelburg, a town in the Great Karoo region of Cape Province, South Africa. He was the son of an Anglo-Irish father and an Afrikaner mother. English was his first language, but because of his mother's dominant personality, Afrikaner culture profoundly affected him. Fugard remembers his father as a man of many contradictions: although gentle by nature, the elder Fugard was "full of pointless, unthought-out prejudices." Mrs. Fugard, on the other hand, was a capable woman who supported her family through her management of the Jubilee Hotel and later of the St. George's Park Tearoom. In contrast to the opinions of her husband, Mrs. Fugard's sense of the injustices perpetrated by her society made a lasting impression on Athol. The two major abstractions of Fugard's work—love and truth—he saw fleshed out as he grew up in Port Elizabeth, a multiracial, industrial, windswept town on the eastern Cape to which his family moved when he was three.

The most influential adult in Fugard's childhood was a black man named Sam who worked with his mother. Although separated by age and skin color, Sam and Athol became fast friends. To the rest of society they were seen as a young white master and black servant, but to each other they were companions. For unknown reasons, one day an angry Fugard spat in Sam's face. Sam forgave him immediately, but feelings of

CONTINUED...

## Who is Athol Fugard? CONTINUED

shame haunted Fugard so strongly into adulthood that the incident became the focal point of one of his later works.

A move to Johannesburg proved crucial to Fugard's development as a distinctly South African playwright. His first job in the Fordsburg Native Commissioner's Court opened his eyes to the oppressive passbook system that limited a black person's opportunities for both employment and decent housing. Fugard's second job, as stage manager for South Africa's National Theatre Organization, introduced him to the practical aspects of theatrical production. The most important event of Fugard's year in Johannesburg was his discovery of Sophiatown, the black ghetto just outside the city, where he began working with amateur black actors. In the late 1960s Fugard founded the Serpent Players, made up of a group of black actors. They moved from place to place performing in black townships. Fugard continued to write plays in South Africa critiquing segregation while his works gathered interest and popularity in America and Europe.

In 1989, *My Children! My Africa!* premiered in Johannesburg. By the time he wrote the play, the end of apartheid was in sight, but the country was engaged in a fierce struggle. His daughter Lisa played Isabel in the New York and London productions of the play. In a review, Fugard was quoted as saying of *My Children! My Africa!*, "I think to a large extent it came from watching Lisa dealing with the problems of growing up in South Africa—the question of white guilt, the accident of a different color and the whole dilemma of the country."

Athol Fugard, often called the "conscience of his country," remains a controversial playwright in South Africa and throughout the world. An Afrikaner who chooses to write in English to reach as broad an audience as possible, Fugard began composing plays as a way of expressing his anger at apartheid. His criticism of the South African government's racial policies has made him many enemies. His plays are often held in small venues for the working classes—people who quite literally become part of the world of the play as they react to situations very similar to those in their own lives. Uncompromising and courageous, Fugard's work continues to be popular today.

Fugard wrote in his journal, "My point is obvious. Anything that will get people to think and feel for themselves, that will stop them delegating these functions to the politicians, is important to our survival. Theatre can help do this" (*Fugard, Notebooks 1960-1977*).

### Sources:

"Athol Fugard Biography." *Critical Edition of Dramatic Literature*. Ed. Carl Rollyson. eNotes.com, Inc., 2003. Web. 12 Aug. 2015.

"Fugard, Athol." *Dictionary of World Biography: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Ed. Frank N. Magill. New York: Routledge, 1999. Print.

"*My Children! My Africa!* Resource Guide for Teachers." *Profile Theatre*. Profile Theatre, 2015. Web. 12 Aug. 2015.



# Glossary of Terms

## **Aikona**

An informal word in South Africa expressing strong negation; no.

*“No. Or as Auntie says in the kitchen when she’s not happy about something: Aikona!”*  
-Isabel, *My Children! My Africa!*

## **Apartheid**

In South Africa, a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race.

## **Afrikaans**

A language of southern Africa, derived from the form of Dutch brought to the Cape provinces by Protestant settlers in the 17th century, and an official language of South Africa.

*“We played a team of friendly Afrikaans-speaking young Amazons from Jansenville and they licked us hollow.”*  
-Isabel, *My Children! My Africa!*

## **Afrikaner**

An Afrikaans-speaking person in South Africa, especially one descended from the Dutch and Huguenot settlers of the 17th century.

## **Amandla**

A political slogan calling for power to the Black population; Xhosa and Zulu word meaning, “power.”

*“Tomorrow we start shouting. AMANDLA!”*  
-Thami, *My Children! My Africa!*

## **Baas**

Boss or master; used especially by nonwhites when speaking to or about Europeans in positions of authority.

*“I have wonderful long conversations with [Samuel] about religion and the meaning of life generally. But it’s always ‘Miss Isabel,’ the baas’s daughter, that he’s talking to.”*  
-Isabel, *My Children! My Africa!*

## **Bantu**

1. A group of Niger-Congo languages spoken in central and southern Africa including Swahili, Xhosa, and Zulu.

2. A member of an indigenous people of central and southern Africa that speaks a Bantu language. The word Bantu became a strongly offensive term under the apartheid regime in South Africa, especially when used to refer to a single individual.

*“Mbikwana is an old Bantu name and my mother and my father are good, reliable, ordinary, hardworking Bantu-speaking black South African natives.”*  
-Thami, *My Children! My Africa!*

## **Bantustan**

(*South African, historical, derogatory*) A partially self-governing area set aside during the period of apartheid for a particular indigenous African people; a so-called homeland.

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# Glossary of Terms CONTINUED

<b>Black</b>	<p>A South African term referring to any human group having dark-colored skin, especially of African or Australian Aboriginal ancestry.</p> <p><i>“Being with black people on equal footing, you know...as equals, that is how I ended up feeling with Thami and his friends.”</i> -Isabel, <i>My Children! My Africa!</i></p>
<b>Coloured</b>	<p>(South African spelling) A person of mixed ethnic origin speaking Afrikaans or English as their mother tongue.</p>
<b>Comrades</b>	<p>A companion who shares one’s activities or is a fellow member of an organization. In South Africa, this word was primarily used in the struggle against apartheid.</p> <p><i>“I’m breaking the boycott by being here. The comrades don’t want any mixing with whites.”</i> -Thami, <i>My Children! My Africa!</i></p>
<b>Confucius</b>	<p>(551-479 BCE) Chinese philosopher, teacher and politician who promoted a system of social and political ethics emphasizing order, moderation, and reciprocity between superiors and subordinates.</p> <p><i>“Those wonderful words came from the finest teacher I have ever had, the most of all the ancient philosophers... Confucius!”</i> -Mr M, <i>My Children! My Africa!</i></p>
<b>Indaba</b>	<p>(Xhosa and Zulu) In discussion or conference.</p> <p><i>“Whenever it’s time for a family indaba...you know, when we sit down in the living room to discuss family business and things.”</i> -Isabel, <i>My Children! My Africa!</i></p>
<b>Inkululeko</b>	<p>(Xhosa and Zulu) The condition of being free to act, believe or express oneself as one chooses; freedom.</p> <p><i>“I don’t need to go to university to learn what my people really need is a strong double-dose of that traditional old Xhosa remedy called ‘Inkululeko.’ Freedom.”</i> -Thami, <i>My Children! My Africa!</i></p>
<b>Karoo</b>	<p>An elevated semi-desert plateau in South Africa.</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>A township or segregated area on the outskirts of a town or city.</p> <p><i>“I heard him say to my dad that it was ‘very much to be regrette’ that the first thing that greeted any visitor to the town was the ‘terrible mess of the location.’”</i> -Isabel, <i>My Children! My Africa!</i></p>
<b>Mealie-pap</b>	<p>a staple food of the Bantu inhabitant that is a porridge-polenta made from ground maize.</p>

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# Glossary of Terms CONTINUED

*"Imagine being able to wake up in the morning in your little room, yawn and stretch, scratch a few fleabites and then jump out of your bed and eat your bowl of mealie-pap."*

-Mr M, *My Children! My Africa!*

## Platteland

Remote, country districts of South Africa.

*"I was sent to school in the peaceful platteland because it is so much safer you see than the big city with its temptations and troubles."*

-Thami, *My Children! My Africa!*

## Pondoks

(South African) A rough shelter made of scraps of wood, cardboard, or corrugated iron.

*"I can remember one visit, just sitting in the car and staring out of the window trying to imagine what it would be like to live my whole life in one of those little pondoks."*

-Isabel, *My Children! My Africa!*

## Qhumisa

(Xhosa and Zulu) To detonate or explode.

## Tshisa

(Xhosa and Zulu) To burn.

*"Everywhere I went... overturned buses, looted bread vans, the government offices... everything burning and the children dancing around rattling boxes of matches and shouting 'Tshisa! Qhumisa!'...and then running for their lives when the police armored cars appeared."*

-Mr M, *My Children! My Africa!*

## Vetkoek

(South African) A small, unsweetened cake of deep-fried dough typically filled with meat or spread with jam.

*"I ended up on the corner where Mrs. Makatini always sits selling vetkoek and prickly pears to people waiting for the bus."*

-Mr M, *My Children! My Africa!*

## White South African

South Africans of European descent.

*"I'm not saying I've had not contact across the color line. Good heavens no! I get as much of that as any average young white South African."*

-Isabel, *My Children! My Africa!*

## Zionist

In southern Africa, a religious movement represented by a group of independent churches which practice a form of Christianity incorporating elements of traditional African beliefs.

*"I have wonderful long conversations with him about religion on the meaning of life generally. He's very much a Zionist. Church every Sunday."*

-Isabel, *My Children! My Africa!*

\*Adapted from study guides by Profile Theatre and Theatrical Outfit.

# History of Apartheid in South Africa

**A**fter the National Party gained power in South Africa in 1948, its all-white government immediately began enforcing existing policies of racial segregation under a system of legislation that it called apartheid. Under apartheid, non-white South Africans (a majority of the population) would be forced to live in separate areas from whites and use separate public facilities, and contact between the two groups would be limited. Despite strong and consistent opposition to apartheid within and outside of South Africa, its laws remained in effect for the better part of 50 years.

## Birth of Apartheid

The Great Depression and World War II brought increasing economic woes to South Africa and convinced the government to strengthen its policies of racial segregation. In 1948, the Afrikaner National Party won the general election under the slogan “apartheid” (literally “separateness”). Their goal was not only to separate South Africa’s white minority from its non-white majority, but also to separate non-whites from each other and to divide black South Africans along tribal lines in order to decrease their political power.

## Apartheid Becomes Law

By 1950, the government had banned marriages between whites and people of other races and prohibited sexual relations between black and white South Africans. The Population Registration Act of 1950 provided the basic framework for apartheid by classifying all South Africans by race, including Bantu (black Africans), colored (mixed race) and white. In some cases, the legislation split families; parents could be classified as white, while their children were classified as colored.

A series of Land Acts set aside more than 80 percent of the country’s land for the white minority, and “pass laws” required non-whites to carry documents authorizing their presence in restricted areas. In order to limit contact between the races, the government established separate public facilities for whites and non-whites, limited the activity of non-white labor unions and denied non-white participation in national government.



Image of the entrance to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg.

Copyright Annette Kurylo

## Apartheid and Separate Development

Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd, who became prime minister in 1958, would refine apartheid policy further into a system he referred to as “separate development.” The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 created

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## History of Apartheid in South Africa CONTINUED

ten Bantu homelands known as Bantustans. Separating black South Africans from each other enabled the government to claim there was no black majority, and reduced the possibility that blacks would unify into one nationalist organization.

### Opposition to Apartheid

Resistance to apartheid within South Africa took many forms over the years, from non-violent demonstrations, protests, and strikes to political action and eventually to armed resistance. In 1960, at the black township of Sharpsville, the police opened fire on a group of unarmed blacks associated with the Pan-African Congress (PAC), an offshoot of the African National Congress (ANC). The group had arrived at the police station without passes, inviting arrest as an act of resistance. At least 67 blacks were killed and more than 180 wounded. Sharpsville convinced many anti-apartheid leaders that they could not achieve their objectives by peaceful means, and both the PAC and ANC established military wings, neither of which ever posed a serious military threat to the state. By 1961, most resistance leaders had been captured and sentenced to long prison terms or executed. Nelson Mandela, a founder of Umkhonto we Sizwe (“Spear of the Nation”), the military wing of the ANC, was incarcerated from 1963 to 1990; his imprisonment would draw international attention and help garner support for the anti-apartheid cause.

### Apartheid Comes to an End

In 1976, when thousands of black children in Soweto, a black township outside Johannesburg, demonstrated against the Afrikaans language requirement for black African students, the police opened fire with tear gas and bullets. The protests and government crackdowns that followed, combined with a national economic recession, drew more international attention to South Africa and shattered all illusions that apartheid had brought peace or prosperity to the nation.

Under pressure from the international community, the National Party government of Pieter Botha sought to institute some reforms. The reforms fell short of any substantive change, however, and by 1989 Botha was pressured to step aside in favor of F.W. de Klerk. De Klerk’s government subsequently repealed the Population Registration Act, as well as most of the other legislation that formed the legal basis for apartheid. A new constitution, which enfranchised blacks and other racial groups, took effect in 1994, and elections that year led to a coalition government with a non-white majority, marking the official end of the apartheid system.



Image of protestors in Soweto, South Africa, 1976.

Copyright 2015 Associated Press

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# History of Apartheid in South Africa CONTINUED

<b>Apartheid and the People of South Africa (ca. 1978)</b>		
	<b>Blacks</b>	<b>Whites</b>
-----		
<b>Population</b>	19 million	4.5 million
<b>Land Allocation</b>	13%	87%
<b>Share of National Income</b>	< 20%	75%
<b>Ratio of Average Earnings</b>	1	14
<b>Doctors/Population</b>	1/44,000	1/400
<b>Infant Mortality Rate</b>	20% (Urban) 40% (Rural)	2.7%
<b>Annual Expenditure on Education Per Pupil</b>	\$45	\$696
<b>Teacher/Pupil Ratio</b>	1/60	1/22

**Source:**

"Apartheid." *History.com*. A+E Networks, 2010. Web. 8 Aug. 2015.

*The History of Apartheid in South Africa*. Stanford University, 1995. Web. 08 Aug. 2015.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Which of the above disparities is most shocking to you? Why? How do you think that particular inequity affected black South Africans?
2. Though the black population of South Africa was over four times greater than the white population, black South Africans were kept at a disadvantage in numerous ways. How do you think this oppressed group felt? Even though their population was greater, why do you think it was so difficult for the black population to gain equality?
3. Refer to the article titled "History of Apartheid in South Africa." What policies did the government make to ensure white privilege?

**By Craig Zimanske**  
Forest Lake Area High School

# Bantu Education Under Apartheid

## A Brief History of Educational Inequality from Apartheid to the Present

By Maria Lizet Ocampo

The apartheid system created educational inequalities through overt racist policies. The Bantu Education Act of 1952 ensured that blacks [would] receive an education that would limit educational potential and remain in the working class. This policy directly affected the content of learning to further racial inequalities by preventing access to further education. In addition to content, apartheid legislation affected the educational potential of students. School was compulsory for whites from age seven to sixteen and for blacks from age seven to thirteen. Clearly, the less education students received, the fewer choices they had in the working world and in accessing more education. Since these policies ensured that the content and amount of education perpetuated social inequalities, changing these policies in a post-apartheid era was the logical step towards social equality.

Educational inequality was also evident in funding. The Bantu Education Act created separate Departments of Education by race, and it gave less money to black schools while giving most to whites. Since funding determines the amount and quality of learning materials, facilities, and teachers, disproportionate funding clearly created disparities in learning environments. For instance, apartheid funding resulted in an average teacher pupil ratio of 1:18 in white schools ... and 1:39 in black schools (*US Library of Congress*). Furthermore, the apartheid system also affected the quality of teachers. White schools had 96% of teachers with teaching certificates, while only 15% of teachers in black schools were certified. In addition to affecting the quality of education, the Bantu Education Act also resulted in the closure of many learning institutions since it withdrew funding from schools affiliated with religion. Since many church schools provided education for a large number of blacks, the black students were the ones most profoundly impacted by the withdrawal of these funds.

The policies and funding disparities in schools ensured contrasting access to higher education. Four Afrikaans speaking universities and one English speaking university admitted only whites, while the other five had restricted admission and segregated classrooms. Additionally, there was no financial aid, and banks did not give out loans to blacks. This means that even if students could break through working class instruction with under-qualified teachers in overcrowded classrooms, they still faced financial barriers to achieving their academic goals.



Image of school children protesting apartheid in 1980.  
Photo by Stan Sierakowski

### Source:

Ocampo, Maria Lizet. "A Brief History of Educational Inequality from Apartheid to the Present." *South Africa Seminar: Info Pages*. Stanford University, 19 Sept. 2004. Web. 08 Aug. 2015.

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# Bantu Education Under Apartheid CONTINUED

## Discussion Questions:

1. You may have heard the phrase “Knowledge is power.” In what ways were black South Africans restricted in their access to knowledge? How did this in turn affect their access to power?
2. After seeing the play, do you believe Isabel or Thami has a brighter future? Support your answer and indicate how much of his or her success can be attributed to their own work ethic and how much can be attributed to the South African education system.
3. In Minnesota, per-pupil funding for education is determined by a number of factors, including voter-approved levies and property taxation. Per-pupil funding varies greatly by district, with the best-funded district receiving \$7,000 more per-pupil than the least-funded district (*Star Tribune, 2014*). Often, the poorly-funded districts are in urban areas with large minority populations. How does the level of funding affect the quality of education received by students in districts on opposite ends of the funding spectrum?



Image of segregated stairwell in Apartheid South Africa.

By **Craig Zimanske**  
Forest Lake Area High School



# Tossing Lines

A PRE-PLAY ACTIVITY

## Objective:

The purpose of this activity is to familiarize students with *My Children! My Africa!* by exposing them to lines spoken in the play. Based on these lines, students are to make predictions about the play's characters and central conflicts and discuss these predictions. This activity helps students form questions, gain insight, and build excitement for seeing and hearing these lines acted out on stage. "Tossing Lines" serves the students best if completed before they attend the play.

**Time Allotted:** 20-30 minutes

## Materials:

Tennis ball or hackey-sack

Slips of paper cut from Tossing Lines on the following page

## Procedure:

Cut out the slips of paper printed on the following page and distribute them to volunteers. Give students a few minutes (or overnight, if appropriate) to practice or memorize their lines. When they're ready, have these students form a circle and give one student the ball. After she speaks her line, the student tosses the ball to another student who speaks his assigned line. Students toss the ball across the circle until all lines have been heard a few times. Encourage students to speak lines with varying emotions, seeking out a variety of ways to perform the lines. If there is time, reassign lines within the group or to other students in the class for another round.

## Optional:

Reassign lines within the group (or to other students in the classroom) and continue for another round.

## Discussion Questions:

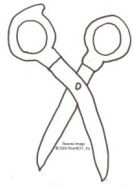
The following questions may be used to guide discussion following the activity.

1. Where and when do you think *My Children! My Africa!* takes place? Which lines support your ideas?
2. Can you predict what themes might be present in *My Children! My Africa!* based on the lines you've heard? What might be the central conflict? Which lines support your ideas?
3. What do these lines tell you about the characters speaking them? Which lines support your ideas?

CONTINUED...

# Tossing Lines Resource

CUT THESE APART AND  
DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR  
STUDENTS.



“Enthusiasm for your cause is most commendable but without personal discipline it is useless.”

“I ended up being damn glad I was born with a white skin.”

“When I see what is happening to my people, it jumps out and savages me like a wild beast.”

“Because you’re *always* the teacher and he’s *always* the pupil.”

“We won’t leave it to Time to bring them down.”

“His ideas about change are the old-fashioned ones.”

“That classroom is a political reality in my life.”

“That little room of wonderful promises has become a place I don’t trust anymore.”

“We have to live every day with the sight of them begging for food in this land of their birth.”

“The time for whispering them is past. Tomorrow we start shouting.”

“What is wrong with this world that it wants to waste you all like that...my children...my Africa!”

“What madness drove those people to kill a man who devoted his whole life to helping them.”

“There is no justice for black people in this country other than what we make for ourselves.”

“It is your laws that have made simple, decent black people so desperate that they turn into ‘mad mobs.’”

By Theodore Fabel  
South High School

# Scene to Read Aloud #1 A PRE-PLAY ACTIVITY

## **A**ct 1, Scene 1 from *My Children! My Africa!*

*Isabel, a visiting student, and Thami have just completed a debate. Isabel is seated at Thami's desk as they talk and get to know one another.*

THAMI: Yes that's the one. For nearly two years I've sat there...being educated!

ISABEL (*Reading names carved into the wood of the desk*): John, Bobby, Zola, Bo...Boni...

THAMI: Bonisile.

ISABEL: Where's your name?

THAMI: You won't find it there. I don't want to leave any part of me in this classroom.

ISABEL: That sounds heavy.

THAMI: It's been heavy. You've got no problems with it, hey.

ISABEL: With school? No not really. Couple of teachers have tried their best to spoil it for me, but they haven't succeeded. I've had a pretty good time in fact. I think I might even end up with the old cliché...you know, school years, best years, happiest years...whatever it is they say.

THAMI: No. I won't be saying that.

ISABEL: That surprises me.

THAMI: Why?

ISABEL: *Ja*, come on, wouldn't you be if I said it? You're obviously clever. I'll bet you sail through your exams.

THAMI: It's not as simple as just passing exams, Isabel. School doesn't mean the same to us that it does to you.

ISABEL: Go on.

THAMI: I used to like it. Junior school? You should have seen me. I wanted to have school on Saturdays and Sundays as well. Yes, I did. Other boys wanted to kill me. I hated the holidays.

CONTINUED...

# Scene to Read Aloud #1 CONTINUED

ISABEL: So what happened?

THAMI: I changed.

ISABEL: *Ja*, I'm listening.

THAMI (*A shrug*): That's all. I changed. Things changed. Everything changed.

ISABEL (*Realizing she is not going get any more out him*): Only five months to go.

THAMI: I'm counting.

ISABEL: What then?

THAMI: After school? (*Another shrug*) I don't know yet. Do you?

ISABEL: *Ja*, Rhodes University. I want to study journalism.

THAMI: Newspaper reporter.

ISABEL: And radio, TV. It's a very wide field now. You can specialize in all sorts of things. (*Perplexed*) Don't you want to study further Thami?

THAMI: I told you, I'm not sure about anything yet.

ISABEL: What does Mr. M say?

THAMI: It's got nothing to do with him.

ISABEL: But you're his favorite, aren't you? (*non-committal shrug from Thami*) I bet you are. And also bet you anything you like that he's got a career planned out for you.

THAMI (*Sharply*): What I do with my life has got nothing to do with him.

ISABEL: Sorry.

THAMI: I don't listen to what he says and I don't do what he says.

ISABEL: I said I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interfere.

THAMI: That's all right. It's just that he makes me so mad sometimes. He always thinks he knows what is best for me. He never asks me how I feel about things. I know he means well, but I'm not a child any more. I've

CONTINUED...

# Scene to Read Aloud #1 CONTINUED

got ideas of my own now.

ISABEL (*Placating*): *Ja*, I know what you mean. I've had them in my life as well. They always know what is best for you, don't they. So anyway, listen...I'm going to write up the debate for our school newspaper. I'll send you a copy if you like.

THAMI: You got a school newspaper! How about that!

ISABEL: It's a bit unethical reporting on a contest in which I took part, and won, but I promise to be objective. I made notes of most of your main points.

THAMI: You can have my speech if you want it.

ISABEL: Hell, thanks. That will make it much easier... and guarantee there won't be any misquotes!

*Thami hands over the speech. It is obvious that they both want to prolong the conversation, but this is prevented by the sound of Mr. M's bell being rung vigorously in the distance. They check wristwatches.*

ISABEL: Oh my God, look at the time!

*They grab their book bags and run.*

## Discussion Questions:

1. What is the relationship between Isabel and Thami?
2. What details about Isabel and Thami's life can we guess from this scene? How are they similar? How are they different?
3. What might be some possible areas of conflict between these two characters?
4. What does Thami mean when he says "School doesn't mean the same to us that it does to you?" Who is he referring to?
5. What details about Thami and Mr. M's relationship can we gather from this scene?
6. Why do you think Isabel is perplexed by Thami's lack of interest in college? What does this reveal about her character?
7. Why do you think Thami is surprised by the fact that Isabel's school has a student newspaper?

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By Elizabeth Seale  
Mounds Park Academy

# Scene to Read Aloud #2 A PRE-PLAY ACTIVITY

## **A**ct 2, Scene 1 from *My Children! My Africa!*

*Thami's beliefs continue to be challenged after Mr. M witnesses a heated discussion between Isabel and Thami about the boycott.*

THAMI: The Comrades are imposing a discipline which our struggle needs at this point. There is no comparison between that and the total denial of our freedom by the white government. They have been forcing on us an inferior education in order to keep us permanently suppressed. When our struggle is successful there will be no more need for the discipline the Comrades are demanding.

MR. M (*Grudging admiration*): Oh Thami, you learn your lessons so well! The "revolution" has only just begun and you are already word perfect. So then tell me, do you think I agree with this inferior "Bantu Education" that is being forced on you?

THAMI: You teach it, so!

MR. M: But unhappily so! Most unhappily, unhappily so! Don't you know that? Did you have your fingers in your ears the thousand times I've said so in the classroom? Where were you when I stood there and said I regarded it as my duty, my deepest obligation to you young men and women to sabotage it, and that my conscience would not let me rest until I had succeeded. And I have! Yes, I have succeeded! I have got irrefutable proof of my success. You! Yes. You can stand here and accuse me, unjustly, because I have also had a struggle and I have won mine. I have liberated your mind in spite of what the Bantu Education was trying to do to it. Your mouthful of big words and long sentences which the not-so-clever Comrades are asking you to speak and write for them, your wonderful eloquence at last night's meeting which got them all so excited—yes, I heard about it! You must thank me for all of that, Thami.

THAMI: No I don't. You never taught me those lessons.

MR. M: Oh I see. You have got other teachers have you?

THAMI: Yes. Yours were lessons in whispering. There are men now who are teaching us to shout. Those little tricks and jokes of yours in the classroom liberated nothing. The struggle doesn't need the big English words you taught me how to spell.

MR. M: Be careful, Thami. Be careful! Be careful! Don't scorn words. They are sacred! Magical! Yes, they are. Do you know that without words a man can't think? Yes, it's true. Take that thought back with you as a present from the despised Mr. M and share it with the Comrades. Tell them the difference between a man and

CONTINUED...

## Scene to Read Aloud #2 CONTINUED

an animal is that Man thinks, and he thinks with words. Consider the mighty ox. Four powerful legs, massive shoulders, and a beautiful thick hide that gave our warriors shields to protect them when they went into battle. Think of his beautiful head, Thami, the long horns, the terrible bellow from his lungs when he charges a rival! But it has got no words and therefore it is stupid! And along comes that funny little hairless animal that has got only two thin legs, no horns and a skin worth nothing and he tells that ox what to do. He is its master and he is that because he can speak! If the struggle needs weapons give it words Thami. Stones and petrol bombs can't get inside those armored cars. Words can. They can do something even more devastating than that... they can get inside the heads of those inside the armored cars. I speak to you like this because if I have faith in anything, it is faith in the power of the word. Like my master, the great Confucius, I believe that, using only words, a man can right a wrong and judge and execute the wrongdoer. You are meant to use words like that. Talk to others. Bring them back into the classroom. They will listen to you. They look up to you as a leader.

THAMI: No I won't. You talk about them as if they were a lot of sheep waiting to be led. They know what they are doing. They'd call me a traitor if I tried to persuade them otherwise.

MR. M: Then listen carefully Thami. I have received instructions from the department to make a list of all those who take part in the boycott. Do you know what they will do with that list when all this is over... because don't fool yourself Thami, it will be. When your boycott comes to an inglorious end like all the others...they will make all of you apply for readmission and if your name is on that list (*He leaves the rest unspoken*).

THAMI: Will you do it? Will you make that list for them?

MR. M: That is none of your business.

THAMI: Then don't ask me questions about mine.

MR. M (*His control finally snaps. He explodes with anger and bitterness*): Yes, I will! I will ask you all the questions I like. And you know why? Because I am a man and you are a boy. And if you are not in that classroom tomorrow you will be a very, very silly boy.

THAMI: Don't call me names, Mr. M.

MR. M: No? Then what must I call you? Comrade Thami? Never! You are a silly boy now, and without an education you will grow up to be a stupid man!

*For a moment it looks as if Thami is going to leave without saying anything more but he changes his mind and confronts Mr. M for the last time.*

THAMI: The others called you names at the meeting last night. Did your spies tell you that? Government

CONTINUED...

## Scene to Read Aloud #2 CONTINUED

stooge, sellout, collaborator. They said you licked the white man's arse and would even eat his shit if it meant keeping your job. Did your spies tell you that? I tried to stop them saying those things. Don't wait until tomorrow to make your list Mr. M. You can start now. Write down the first name: Thami Mbikwana.

*Thami leaves.*

### Discussion Questions:

1. How has Mr. M succeeded in "sabotaging" Bantu Education if Thami is still upset at what he is being taught?
2. What does Mr. M's willingness to submit a list to the police of those involved in the boycott reveal about his character?
3. What is the role of education? Is it the path for escape from oppression? Why or why not?
4. What is more effective: The power of written and spoken word or physical violence? Why or why not?



Image of policeman in Apartheid South Africa.



# The Achievement Gap in Minnesota

A PRE-PLAY OR POST-PLAY ACTIVITY

## Minnesota Report Card

In Minnesota in 2014, 60.6% of white students were at grade level in reading versus only 39.9% of black students. When it comes to math, 63.1% of white students were at grade level versus only 39.4% of black students. The difference between the success rates of white and black students is known as the achievement gap. The achievement gap has real and lasting effects. For example, 70% of white graduates in 2014 went on to enroll in an institution of higher learning within 16 months, whereas only 57% of black graduates enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

**Source:**

"Minnesota Report Card." *Minnesota Department of Education*. Minnesota Department of Education, 2015. Web. 08 Aug. 2015.

## A Troubling Disparity (2004)

By Tim Pugmire

Minnesota students are traditionally among the nation's top performers on key standardized tests. Unfortunately, the statewide averages mask an embarrassing reality. Students of color consistently score far below their white classmates.

This disparity in academic performance between groups of students is known as the achievement gap.

It's a national problem. But Minnesota's gap is particularly wide.

A recent report from the Education Trust, Inc. highlighted the issue. Minnesota eighth graders ranked first in the nation in math on the 2003 National Assessment for Educational Progress. The average score among the state's white students (291) topped the list. The average score for African American students in Minnesota (251) ranked 22nd among the 50 states. Only Wisconsin had a wider gap between white and black scores.

The low test scores are a point of frustration to some; a source of anger for others. The Rev. Randolph Staten of the Minnesota Coalition of Black Churches says state officials have failed to adequately address the educational disparities.

"We wonder why it is with so many of our children being destroyed we have not declared an emergency in the state of Minnesota," Staten said.

Achievement gaps are often attributed to income level and home environment. Low-income families often have few educational resources at home. Recent immigrants don't always have the English language skills needed to keep pace in school. Some experts also point to low classroom expectations, peer pressure and

CONTINUED...

# The Achievement Gap in Minnesota CONTINUED

teacher quality as key factors.

The gap also shows up in graduation rates and college attendance. A recent report from the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership showed a slight increase in higher education enrollment among students of color. But Carlos Mariani-Rosa, MMEP executive director, says the high school dropout rate is tempering the success.

"We are only preparing a fraction of the students that this state needs if it is our choice to be a high skill, high wage, high quality of life state," Mariani said. "And we're only preparing a small fraction of the students of color that are coming through our educational system."

Educators are trying lots of strategies to narrow that gap. Smaller class sizes, expanded early-childhood education programs, higher academic standards and more rigorous courses offer some promise.

The federal government is also pushing schools to narrow the achievement gap. The No Child Left Behind Act established new accountability measures that more clearly identify racial disparities in every school. The federal law also requires those schools to raise the academic performance of all student groups. U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige describes the achievement gap as the civil rights issue of our time.

"Prejudice will not end until we close the achievement gap--not by lowering standards but by raising all children to meet the highest standards of education," Paige said.

**Source:**

Pugmire, Tim. "A Troubling Disparity." *Minnesota Public Radio*. Minnesota Public Radio, Sept. 2004. Web. 08 Aug. 2015.

## Discussion Questions:

1. According to the article, what are some factors that may contribute to Minnesota's wide achievement gap?
2. What could individuals, schools, communities and lawmakers do to address these disparities and narrow the gap?
3. In the article, Pugmire notes that then U.S. Education Secretary Rod Paige believes the achievement gap to be "the civil rights issue of our time." Do you agree with Paige's assessment? Defend your answer.
4. "A Troubling Disparity" was written just over a decade ago. Using the charts on the next page, determine if progress has been made in narrowing the achievement gap in Minnesota. What else remains to be done?

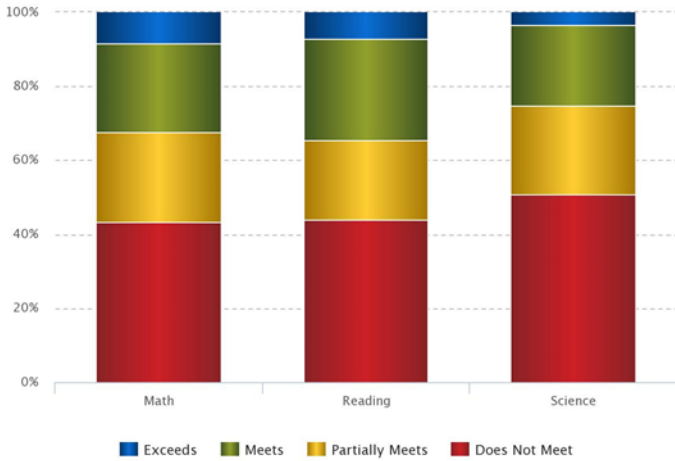
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**By Craig Zimanske**  
Forest Lake Area High School

# Making Connections: Test Results in Minnesota

A PRE-PLAY OR POST-PLAY ACTIVITY

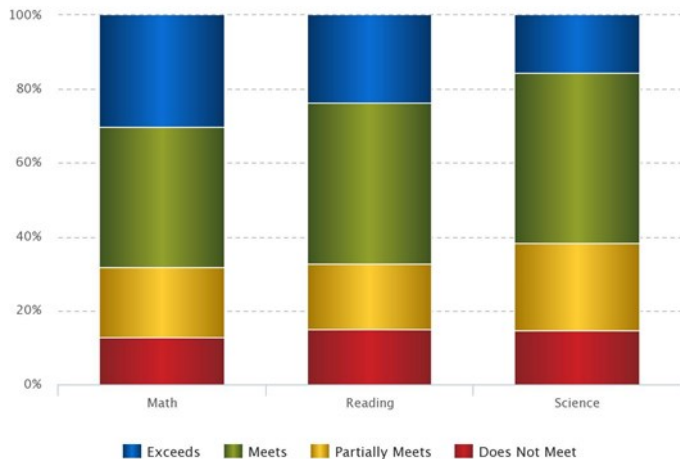
## All MCA Test Scores (2015) – Black Students:



- Approximately what percentage of *black* students meet or exceed standard on the...
  - Math MCAs? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Reading MCAs? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Science MCAs? \_\_\_\_\_

- Approximately what percentage of *white* students meet or exceed standard on the...
  - Math MCAs? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Reading MCAs? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Science MCAs? \_\_\_\_\_

## All MCA Test Scores (2015) – White Students:



- How do the scores of white students compare to those of black students?

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- Why do you think there is such a discrepancy between the test scores of white and black students?

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- What is the 4-year graduation rate for black students? \_\_\_\_\_

- What is the 4-year graduation rate for white students? \_\_\_\_\_

- With this information in mind, what could be done to improve the graduation rate of black students?

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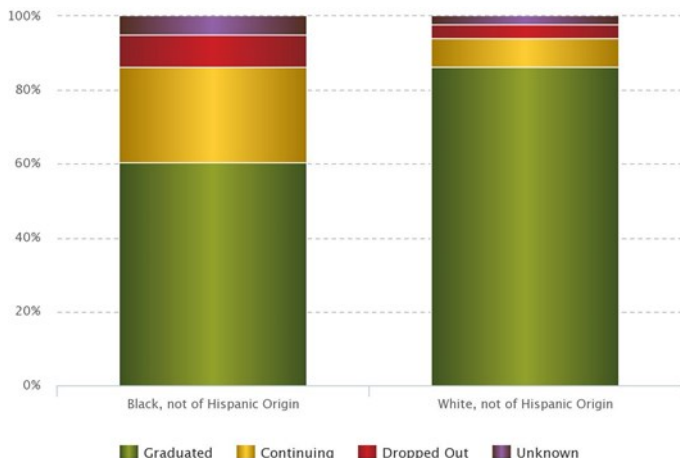


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## Graduation Rates for Black and White Students (2014):



Source: "Minnesota Report Card." Minnesota Department of Education. Minnesota Department of Education, 2015. Web. 08 Aug. 2015.

By Craig Zimanske  
Forest Lake Area High School

# Write to Congress

A PRE-PLAY OR POST-PLAY ACTIVITY

## Task:

After reading the article “A Troubling Disparity” and analyzing the charts from the Minnesota Department of Education, write a professional, persuasive letter to your senator or representative, stating your opinion on racial or educational inequities that should be addressed by policy.

## Procedure:

1. Choose a current topic connected to racial or educational inequities about which to write. Be sure that you can write *persuasively* about this topic.
2. If time permits, research your topic online and gather information about it.
3. Draft a letter that introduces yourself and explains your topic, how you feel about it, and why the congressperson should agree with you. Close by requesting specific action, such as the introduction of legislation or a vote on a particular bill. Be persuasive.
4. Type your letter and sign it when finished.

## Mailing Your Letter:

Always address senators and representatives as “The Honorable (Full Name).”

If you hope for a reply, include both a return address on the envelope and in the upper right corner of the letter itself.

In addressing the envelope, the address should appear as follows:

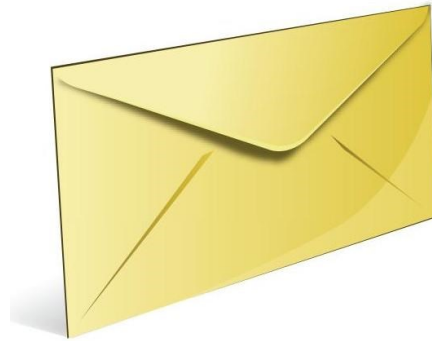
The Honorable  
[Full Name]  
United States [House of Representatives/Senate]  
[Address]



Keep in mind that letters to congresspersons must pass through security scrutiny, which can result in delays, so do not be discouraged if you do not receive a reply right away.

CONTINUED...

# Write to Congress CONTINUED



## **A**ddress Information for Minnesota Members of Congress:

**Senator Al Franken**

309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Senator Amy Klobuchar**

302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Congressman Timothy Walz** (1<sup>st</sup> District)

1034 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congressman Keith Ellison** (5<sup>th</sup> District)

2263 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congressman John Kline** (2<sup>nd</sup> District)

2439 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congressman Tom Emmer** (6<sup>th</sup> District)

503 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congressman Erik Paulsen** (3<sup>rd</sup> District)

127 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congressman Collin Peterson** (7<sup>th</sup> District)

2204 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congresswoman Betty McCollum** (4<sup>th</sup> District)

2256 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Congressman Rick Nolan** (8<sup>th</sup> District)

2366 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Not from Minnesota?** Find your senators and representative and their mailing addresses here:

Senate:

<http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>

House of Representatives:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

# Violence vs. Nonviolence

## A POST-PLAY ACTIVITY

One of the major themes of *My Children! My Africa!* is the discussion about which affects change more: violence or nonviolence. Thami and Mr. M stand on opposite sides of this discussion. In American civil rights history, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X often stood on opposite sides as well.

In this activity, read the following sections of speeches both men gave regarding civil rights, and answer the following questions.

Another thing that we had to get over was the fact that the nonviolent resister does not seek to humiliate or defeat the opponent but to win his friendship and understanding. This was always a cry that we had to set before people that our aim is not to defeat the white community, not to humiliate the white community, but to win the friendship of all of the persons who had perpetrated this system in the past. The end of violence or the aftermath of violence is bitterness. The aftermath of nonviolence is reconciliation and the creation of a beloved community. A boycott is never an end within itself. It is merely a means to awaken a sense of shame within the oppressor but the end is reconciliation, the end is redemption.

--Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., June 4, 1957

Where the government fails to protect the Negro he is entitled to do it himself. He is within his rights. I have found the only white elements who do not want this advice given to undefensive Blacks are the racist liberals. They use the press to project us in the image of violence .... And when you see the Blacks react, since the people who do this aren't there, they react against their property. The property is the only thing that's there. And they destroy it. And you get the impression over here that because they are destroying the property where they live, that they are destroying their own property. No. They can't get to the man, so they get at what he owns. This doesn't say it's intelligent. But whoever heard of a sociological explosion that was done intelligently and politely? And this is what you're trying to make the Black man do. You're trying to drive him into a ghetto and make him the victim of every kind of unjust condition imaginable. Then when he explodes, you want him to explode politely! You want him to explode according to somebody's ground rules. Why, you're dealing with the wrong man, and you're dealing with him at the wrong time in the wrong way.

--Malcolm X, February 11, 1965

CONTINUED...

# Violence vs. Nonviolence CONTINUED

## Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss where Thami and Mr. M fall in terms of these two ideologies. Which character's ideology is similar to Martin Luther King, Jr? Malcolm X? Why?
2. Discuss incidents of racial conflict that have occurred in the US in the past year. How do these reflect each philosophy?
3. Which do you think has a better probability of affecting change: violence or nonviolence? Why?
4. Is the movement "Black Lives Matter" violent or non-violent? Why?

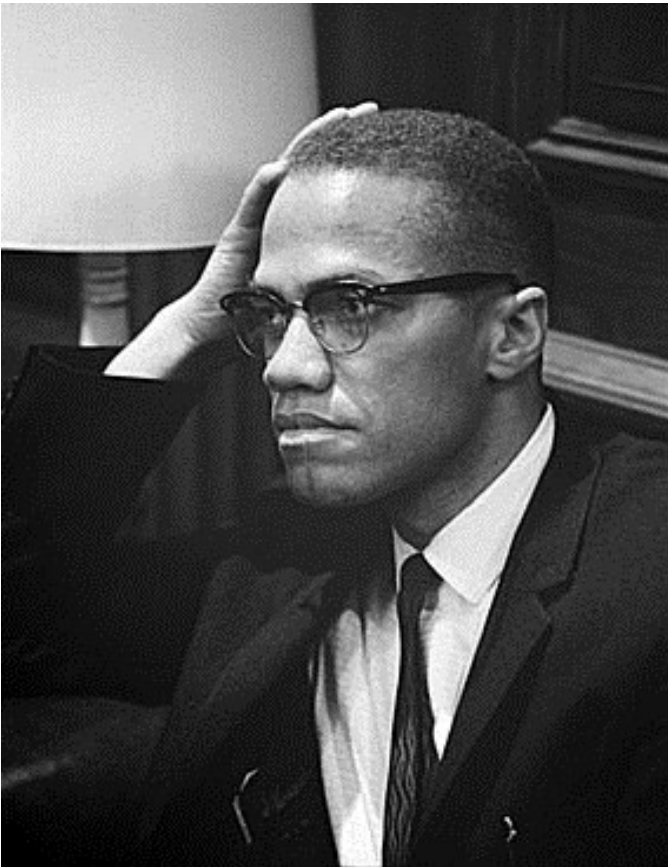


Image of Malcolm X waiting for a press conference to begin on March 26, 1964.

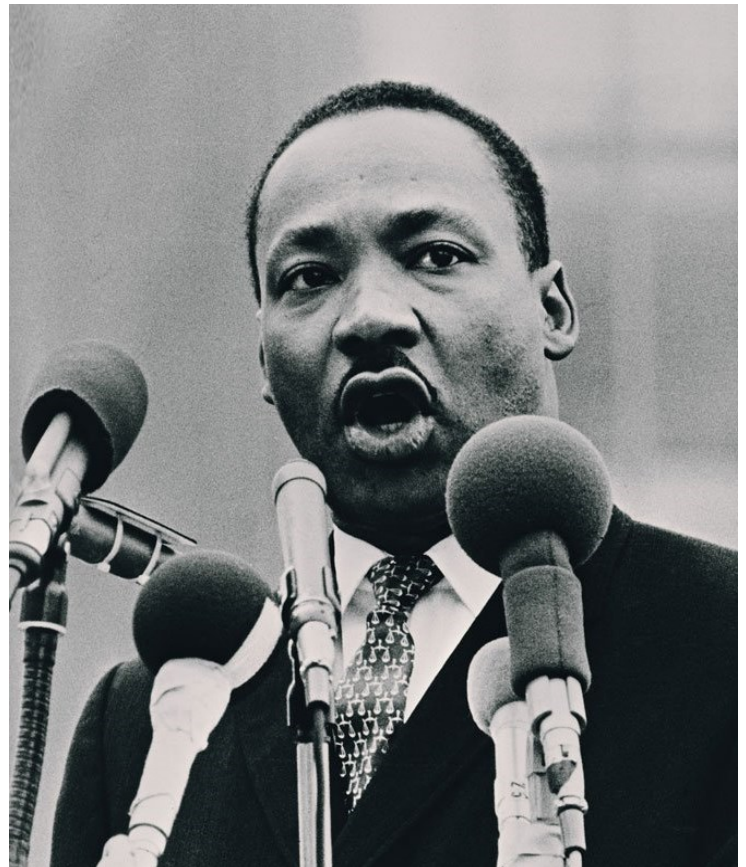


Image of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

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By Tanya Sponholz  
Prescott High School

# The Psychology of Radicalism

## A POST-PLAY ACTIVITY

“We define radicalization as a process whereby one moves to support or adopt radical means to address a specific problem or goal.” (Kruglanski and Webber 379)

**T**he life decisions that Thami Mbikwana makes in *My Children! My Africa!* can raise many questions in the reader/viewer: How did this young man come to join this radical group of students? What were his motivations for joining a group that puts its followers in danger and in the position of potentially committing acts of violence? We can extend these questions to all radical groups both in history and in our present times. What is the psychology behind radicalizing people, particularly youth? What are the common factors, feelings and recruiting tactics between different radical groups? Many scholars have attempted to offer insight into these and other questions regarding radicalization.

The following quotations are taken from two scholarly articles on the psychology of radicalism.

Socially isolated, disenchanted young men turn to extremism in their search for identity, acceptance and purpose which they are unable to find in the community more often concerned with wealth accumulation rather than healthy relationship-building. (Binzina and Gray 72)

Those who feel that society as a whole has the least to offer them are the most likely to join [the terrorist network]. (Sageman [2004] qtd in Binzina and Gray 73)

Individuals drawn to radicalization have a desire to take action and do something significant, .... at the same time, they see the world in black-and-white terms and seek to align themselves with a virtuous cause. (Macleans [2013] qtd in Binzina and Gray 73)

A common denominator seems to be that the involved persons are at a cross road in their life and wanting a cause. (Precht [2007] qtd in Binzina and Gray 74)

CONTINUED...



# The Psychology of Radicalism CONTINUED

## Discussion Questions:

1. What does Thami believe about the positives and negatives of radical action? What does Mr. M believe about the positives and negatives of radical action?
2. How would you describe the emotions that Thami feels towards the youth movement? How would you describe the emotions that he feels towards the South African government? How would you describe the emotions he feels towards Mr. M? Support your opinion with details from the play.
3. Where do you see radicalization taking place in our present times? How are those situations similar to and/or different from Thami's situation?



Image of student protest over apartheid.

### Works Cited:

- Bizina, Margarita and Gray, David H. "Radicalization of Youth as a Growing Concern for Counter-Terrorism Policy." *Global Security Studies* Volume 5. Issue 1 (2014) 72-79. Web. 28 June 2015.
- Kruglanski, Arie W. and Webber, Mr. David. "The Psychology of Radicalization." *Zeitschrift für Internationale Strafrechtsdogmatik* – [www.zis-online.com](http://www.zis-online.com) (2014): 379-388. Web. 28 June 2015.

By Theodore Fabel  
South High School

# Debate in the Classroom

## A POST-PLAY ACTIVITY

**M**y *Children! My Africa!* begins with a debate in the classroom. Mr. M defines debate as “the orderly and regulated discussion of an issue with opposing viewpoints receiving equal time and consideration.” A formal debate is a great way for students to demonstrate their abilities to create an argument using the power of language. For as Mr. M states, “Using only words, a man can right a wrong and judge and execute the wrongdoer.”

Using the Public Forum form of debate found below, have the students research and debate one of the following questions:

- Is violence necessary to reform?
- Is treason really treason if it’s revealing the truth?
- Does educational inequality exist in the United states?

### Public Forum Debate Time Limits:

Opening Statements from the first two speakers:

Speaker 1 (Team A)	4 min.
Speaker 2 (Team B)	4 min.
Crossfire (between speakers 1 & 2)	3 min.

Opening Statements from the second two speakers:

Speaker 3 (Team A)	4 min.
Speaker 4 (Team B)	4 min.
Crossfire (between speakers 3 & 4)	3 min.

Summary Statements from the first two speakers:

Speaker 1 (Team A)	2 min.
Speaker 2 (Team B)	2 min.
Grand Crossfire (all four speakers)	3 min.

Final Focus Statements from the second two speakers:

Speaker 3 (Team A)	2 min.
Speaker 4 (Team B)	2 min.

Total Time: 33 minutes

CONTINUED...

# Debate in the Classroom CONTINUED

## Explanation of Public Forum Debate:

**1. Preparation:** Traditionally, Public Forum debates occur between teams of two. If time permits in your class, divide the class into teams of two and have several debates. If time is limited or your class is large, the teams could contain four students each or multiple students can work together for the opening statements, summaries and final focus.

**2. Research:** Allow the students to use class time to research the topic of the debate. Each team should pick one side of the topic they will research and argue. Part of making a strong argument is to consider what the other side will say in its opening statements.

**3. Opening statements:** Each speaker should outline his/her presentation so it fits in the four minute time limit. Have the students coordinate with their partners to make sure they are not both presenting the same information. When the opposing team speaks, each student will take notes for the crossfires.

**4. Crossfire:** During the crossfire period, both speakers have the floor and may ask and answer questions. If the students are uncertain of how to start, give them some time to develop at least five questions to ask their opponents and to prepare for what the other team might ask them.

There are a couple of rules the students should abide by during the crossfire and the grand crossfire:

- A. The participants are instructed to keep questions and answers succinct.
- B. The students need to be respectful of all speakers.

**5. Summary:** During the debate, summary speakers will take notes of the most compelling arguments their team presented. During the summary, their goal is to refocus the audience's attention on the central issue.

**6. Final Focus:** Final Focus speakers should choose the one issue that matters the most and should use the importance of this issue to frame the parting shot.

**7. Audience:** The students in the class who are watching the debate should help you decide which side had the best arguments and won the debate.

**8. Grading:** If you choose to grade the debate, a rubric is included.



CONTINUED...

# Debate in the Classroom CONTINUED

## DEBATE RUBRIC

	4	3	2	1
<b>PREPARATION</b>	The team coordinated their presentations to minimize redundancy. The team prepared and organized material appropriately and adequately.	The team had some redundancy, but overall they were organized.	Each individual was organized and prepared, but they did not coordinate their presentations.	The team was not prepared for the activity.
<b>EVIDENCE</b>	The team supplied appropriate and sufficient evidence to support its arguments. The team applied that evidence clearly and logically.	The team supplied evidence to support its arguments, but did not apply the evidence clearly.	The team had logic, but it did not have enough evidence.	The team did not supply sufficient evidence to support its arguments.
<b>ARGUMENTATION</b>	The team responded directly to opposing arguments with clear explanations and demonstrated an understanding of the issues involved in the debate.	The team responded to opposing arguments by attempting explanations that weren't as clear as they could have been. Understanding is evident.	The team attempted to respond to opposing arguments and had a limited understanding of the issues involved in the debate.	The team did not respond to opposing arguments and did not seem to fully understand the issues.
<b>CROSSFIRE</b>	The team provided questions, responded effectively to questions, and was polite in the discussion.	The team completed two of the three requirements.	The team completed one of the three requirements.	The team did not provide questions, answer questions, and was rude in the discussion.
<b>PRESENTATION</b>	The team used clear and effective verbal and nonverbal language, and was courteous to opponents.	The team had a few grammatical errors in the presentation, but was courteous to opponents.	The team had a few grammatical errors in the presentation and was not always courteous to opponents.	The team did not communicate in a way that was understandable and respectful.

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

By Tanya Sponholz  
Prescott High School

# Post-Play Discussion Questions

1. What are differences between Thami's and Mr. M's ideologies of change? What are the merits of both methods? What are the downsides to the different ideologies?
2. What is the purpose of calling the area where most black South Africans lived "the location?"
3. What is the significance of Isabel being a female? Why do you think the playwright made this choice? How would the story have been different if Isabel had been male? Or if Thami and Mr. M had been female?
4. This play is being performed 35 years after it was originally written and 20 years after apartheid came to an end. How are the issues in the play relevant today?
5. Where do you see evidence of oppression and disenfranchisement in the play? How is apartheid and the oppression that Thami and Mr. M experience similar to oppressions that have existed and still exist in the city or state where you live? In your school? How about forms of oppression in other places in the world?
6. What expectations did Isabel have going into Zolile High School for the debate? How was her experience different from what she expected? What makes her think that she must behave differently at Zolile than in her school?
7. In the first scene of the play, Thami and Isabel debate about women's rights to jobs. Why do you think that civil rights and equality for people of color and women are often talked about separately? How would it change the debate to talk about them together?
8. Thami joins a political movement that wants to provoke change through violence. When do you think it is okay to use violence for change?
9. What is white privilege and how is it evident in the play's events?
10. Was Isabel an active or passive participant in changing the apartheid system in South Africa? Can people who experience white privilege participate in changing systems of inequality? How?
11. What do you think Mr. M's intentions are in teaching Isabel about wasted lives? How do people waste their lives? Did Mr. M think he had a wasted life? Do you think he had a wasted life?
12. Why does the playwright have Thami leave the place where he was part of such change? Why does the playwright have Isabel alone at the grave?
13. Was the ending of the play hopeful or tragic? How was it hopeful or tragic for each of the characters?

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**By Sulia Altenberg**

Park Square Theatre Intern

# Acknowledgements



## PARK SQUARE THEATRE

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To Our Teachers,

Thank you for giving the gift of theatre to your students, and the gift of your students to our theatre.

Yours sincerely,

The Staff at Park Square Theatre