2012

Thunder Rock: The play, and enriching the high school curriculum

Jason William Bayless

THUNDER ROCK: THE PLAY, AND ENRICHING THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Theatre Arts

---

by

Jason William Bayless

December 2012

THUNDER ROCK: THE PLAY, AND ENRICHING THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

---

by

Jason William Bayless

December 2012

Approved by:

[redacted]

Kathryn Ervin, Chair, Theatre Arts

11/30/12

Date

[redacted]

Terry Donovan Smith

[redacted]

Johanna Smith

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a position paper developing an argument for the advancement of the play *Thunder Rock*, by Robert Ardrey, into consideration for the California Reading List for Public High Schools, in a manner consistent with the policies and procedures established by the California Board of Education, its instructional materials advisory board the Instructional Quality Commission, and the local governing boards and school districts who decide which works of literature public school students are taught. To support the validity of the argument the thesis explores three key elements: the content of the play itself; connections to the California Content Standards for California Public Schools; as well as related instructional methods appropriate to the task of teaching the play. The totality of these elements illuminating the inherent educational value of the play, the importance of considering *Thunder Rock* for inclusion into the broader body of literature acceptable for instruction in California High Schools will be made evident.

The content of the play is explored through extensive dramaturgical analysis in four chapters. In addition to the analysis of the play, each chapter ends with a section explicitly detailing the applicable connections to the Content Standards. Accompanying the body of the text is an appendix addressing issues related to the plays possible instruction, which includes an explanation of drama-based strategies for instruction and sample lesson plans designed with those strategies in mind to foster deeper connections between students and the text.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

I first became aware of the play *Thunder Rock* by Robert Ardrey in the winter of 2010 when searching independently for an American play to analyze for an assignment in my Studies in Dramatic Literature course. There was not a copy of the play in the CSU San Bernardino Pfau library, nor in any anthology, and neither was it in any other library close by for me to check out that I could find. Undeterred, what little discription of the play I had found on the Internet intrigued me enough to decide that it was worthy of study, and so I purchased my own copy from the Dramatists Play Service.

It was a fateful decision. What began as a regular class assignment, a simple exercise in research and dramaturgy, eventually led to this thesis. I was inspired by that initial exploration into what I believe to be a critically important American play, and decided to explore it even more deeply. This process led me to the understanding that, to do justice to this work of literature and piece of drama history, I would have to go beyond an academic exploration, I would have to advocate for the advancement of the play.

As a bit of background, *Thunder Rock* is an American play written by Robert Ardrey in September of 1939. It debuted at the Mansfield theatre in New York city on November 14, 1939, and was produced by the renowned Group Theatre. The play is a timely response to the events that were leading to World

War II. It is also a response to, and philosophical commentary on, the depressed state of the human, and American, spirit as we hurtled through the Great Depression towards another World War. But most importantly, the core of the play is the unveiling of the spirit of hope, and a belief in a future defined by something more than misery and malaise.

This play is a small piece of American history and a singular work of art and literature, conveying a uniquely American sense of being and optimism. More than a half century ago it was one of Ardrey's best known works, but it has largely been forgotten. It has not been given its due as an important work of American dramatic literature, and I believe this needs to change.

My love of this play and desire to see it regain a greater place of importance in American dramatic literature is compounded by the regrettable fact that the California Reading list for Public High Schools no longer contains any American plays written prior to America's entrance into World War II in 1941. Plays like *Our Town*, *Waiting for Lefty*, and *You Can't Take It With You* no longer appear there. The American plays that now hold places on the list include: *The Crucible* (1952), *Fences (*1983), *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *A Streetcar Named Desire (*1947), *Two Trains Running (*1992), and *The American Dream, and the Zoo Story* (1961)(crl.startest.org). Not one of them was written before World War II; drama of the 1930s is completely neglected. It is more than unfortunate that an entire period of American theatre, one of it's most important periods, is left out of the required reading for California students. I do not know why this is the case, but the object of this thesis may provide a possible solution.

It is the case in California that the Reading List is established by the California Board of Education as advised by the Instructional Quality Commission. It is the purpose of this advisory body to make recommendations about curriculum, instructional materials, and content standards; this includes the Reading List (cde.ca.gov). In conjunction with the recommendations of the Instructional Quality Commission, the California Department of Education has also established "Standards for Evaluation Instructional Materials for Social Content." In these standards is a legal requirement that, "instructional materials should reflect a pluralistic, multicultural society composed of unique individuals" (cde.ca.gov). The final decision of what each student reads in High School is actually up to the local governing boards and individual school districts. They select literature for their own schols, though they are encouraged and advised by the "District Selection Policies" to make these literature selections "in conjuction with Recommended Literature: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve," or the California Reading List, as well as giving full consideration to the established procedures and policies set forth by the California Department of Education (cde.ca.gov). There are appropriate policies in place, and ample leeway, for gaps in the type and kinds of literature to which California students are exposed to be remedied, and to ensure the greatest quality and diversity of instructional materials in our schools.

I believe the giant gap in the Reading List, which the absence of this important play represents, deprives all of California's students the opportunity to be exposed to a pivotal era of American thought, experience, expression and

understanding. When I think about what this era represented I am especially concerned, because the United States is currently reliving many of the same trials – economic collapse, record unemployment, political upheaval, wars and threats of wars – much like what was being experienced then. I believe it is of the utmost importance that the youth of our nation and the youth of my native California not be denied the opportunity to be exposed to the lessons of the past. It is often through their exposure to such literature that young adults can develop the appropriate perspective to be able to recognize in their lives more positive ways to move forward, both personally and collectively, in the midst of struggles and uncertainty.

Thunder Rock offers these lessons. This is why I believe it is important enough to make my case in a thesis, and to suggest its inclusion in the California Reading list. A serious review of the play and its content may be able to advance both the importance of the play itself, which has sadly diminished, as well as fill in the egregious gap left in the canon of literature for High School students.

Statement of the Problem

I believe the best way to shine light on the importance of *Thunder Rock* is to begin teaching the play when and where possible. The initial question that such an endeavor poses is whether the play can, and should, be taught. There are many realities that must be face in regards to this question, first and foremost being the reality that few, if any, High School English and Theatre teachers know

the play. Most probably do not even know that it exists, since it has not been held up as an important work by those in academia for decades, nor has it ever to my knowledge been anthologized. It has essentially been forgotten for the past thirty years. How then would one expect a teacher to be able to teach unknown materials?

Also, as California's teachers sometimes feel more and more confined by tightening curriculum restraints, especially involving standards and procedures, to introduce this play into the curriculum would be especially difficult. All teachers have very specific objectives over the course of the school year, and have a limited amount of time to cover all mandatory elements. Even if schools took the modest step of making *Thunder Rock* an optional literature choice, it would do little good because no one would be familiar enough with the material to try it in the classroom. It would require rather adventurous teachers and administrators to take that chance on a non-traditional text, but that is not a safe option in our present educational climate.

Even more difficult would be establishing justifications for a teacher to take that initial chance on an alternative work of literature without being able to explain its value at the onset. That one person likes the piece is not justification enough, there needs to be a detailed explanation of its instructional value and inherent ability to enhance the curriculum. Without preexisting materials that document the educational content of the play, and a means of incorporating the text into the curriculum in a meaningful way, the barriers to inclusion are likely too great to surmount.

Purpose of the Thesis

To advance the play and address the issues surrounding this pursuit, the direction of my thesis then must be threefold. I must present a full dramaturgical analysis of the play to unpack its meaning and uncover its literary merits. I must link the analysis to the California Educational Standards for English and Theatre in Secondary education, and also across other disciplines like US and World History where applicable. And I must present an easy, interesting, and accessible set of lesson plans for the play's instruction in the classroom. The goal, simply put, is to develop in this thesis not only an argument for the inclusion of *Thunder Rock* into the California Reading List, but also create a viable teacher's reference manual for its instruction. The multiple strains of the thesis should support one another: the argument for the plays introduction to the California classroom assumes the need for integrated lesson plans and strategies; and, the creation of a meaningful educational resource validates the importance of the argument, as well as the importance of the play itself as a timeless work of American theatre.

To clarify further, the thesis will need to produce evidence of the inherent quality of the text. It will show a richness in dialogue, theme, characters, subjects and general content that has a broad appeal across the High School curriculum, not just in Theatre or English, but in multiple disciplines essential to quality secondary education that respects a cross-curricular approach. The approach must be explicitely supported with concrete connections to educational content standards. And the standards need to be supported by viable instruction

methods, accessible to the classroom teacher and students alike. I believe that it is only through the coordinated pursuit of each of these elements in tandem that the purpose of the thesis will be made manifest – to facilitate the reemergence of an American play as a classic work of dramatic literature, a valuable resource for education and a source of uplifting enjoyment.

While the connections to educational standards in Enlish and Theatre are obvious with a work of dramatic literature, connections to other subjects may at first appear tenuous. But the enormous amount of historical references in *Thunder Rock* can also make it a viable resource for building connections with the Social Studies curriculum across all four years of High School, further supporting the material the students are already learning. In fact, a play can be a "springboard" for cross-curriculum learning across the school year (Maher 28).

Along with all the other strands of the thesis, I will also present some of the principles of "arts-integrated learning," a theory of using the arts and theatre in a manner wherein "the art form becomes an interdisciplinary partner with another subject or subjects." Theatre, and in this case the play itself, can create the "ways and means" into other topics in the curriculum, and "the results are mutually beneficial" between each discipline (Flynn 13). Edward Berry, the author of "Dramatic Steps into History," explains that using creative dramatics to teach the curriculum in history and social studies can be effecive, "because it helps students focus their attention on an historical event, understand human motivations and feelings and better retain key facts and basic concepts" (Brizendine 120).

Other individuals have seen success with such work, including Rosalind Flynn and Jan Maher. Flynn once worked with a sixth-grade social studies class to create a Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre script to teach about the topic of culture. When she came back months later to work with the same class on another project, the entire class had all been able to commit to memory their new understanding of the definition of culture (Flynn 12). Jan Maher, while working with Nikki Nojima Louis, created a Readers Theatre script called *Most Dangerous Women* as a tool to help teach Women's Peace Activism of the 20th century (Maher 28). The project was intended as an educational resource to be used in conjunction with the US and World History curriculum, connecting with the content standards. They used historical documents and newspapers in a manner reminiscent of "the Living Newspaper tradition of the Depression Era, when Works Project Administration (WPA) theatre artists created theatre from newspaper headlines (59)." They created their play with the understanding that, "the more connections [the teacher] can help the students make between the text of the play and their history texts, the more memorable and meaningful will be their learning" (28).

While my intention is not specifically to attempt to teach history through the play, the dramaturgical analysis of the text requires me to delve into each of these historical topics presented throughout the dialogue. Unpacking the play will actually open up multiple subjects, as well as illuminating possibilities of multiple avenues of learning. The in-depth analysis of these topics will at least create that "springboard" between the subjects of drama, literature, and history;

and, the drama-based educational methods presented in the appendix may also encourage the type of arts-integrated learning described by Flynn.

Content of the Thesis

The thesis is broken down into six chapters, the first being the introduction presented here. The second chapter is designed as an initial introduction into the general aspects of the play. These aspects include: the biographical history of the playwright; background on the Group Theatre who premiered the play; an analysis of the structure of the play; an explanation of the stylistic background of the play and the artistic movement to which it belongs; an introduction to the characters in the play; and, a brief detail about the intersections between the world of the play and the real world.

The third chapter is the first foray into the text itself. This chapter delves into the specific elements of act one, which include: a brief summary of the act; an explanation of the themes of the act; a detailed exploration of topics of historical interest referenced in the act; a short list of questions for further exploration posed in the body of the act; and, finally, an explicit and detailed list of all California Content Standards that connect to the essential points referenced in the text that can enhance the curriculum.

The fourth chapter is formatted exactly like the third, but this act is dedicated to the content and elements of act two of *Thunder Rock*. Likewise, chapter five is about act three. Act summaries, themes, historical details, question, and connections to the Content Standards are the common elements to

all three of these chapters. They are designed in this way in an effort to make the thesis as understandable and accessible as possible, and to fulfill the stated purposes of the thesis.

The sixth chapter is my conclusions regarding the thesis. After the conclusions, I have provided an appendix that is as essential to the purposes of my thesis as the main body of the text. The appendix include: an explanation of why traditional education methods may not be appropriate to the instruction of the play; an explanation of drama-based educational methods; a detailed description of the connections those stated methods have to the California Content Standards; and, an outline of five sample lesson plans based on those methods to assist in guiding more effective instruction of the play.

Expected Significance

I believe that the play, *Thunder Rock*, is a tragically undervalued work of American dramatic literature and history that deserves a chance to be given a more visible place in the canon of American dramatic literature. No other work attempts what I am attempting here in regards to Ardrey's play. The significance of the thesis is not just in its depth of analysis, or in connecting that analysis to meaningful educational standards, but it is the fact that the thesis is designed to be accessible to educators as a guide, a resource, and an example of advocacy for lesser known works of dramatic literature. This resource before now did not exists, the lack thereof making my goal of seeing the advancement of this play in academia difficult. I am not building my thesis upon a foundation of scholarship

by others, but on my own original scholarship. This is a daunting task, but I am confident of its value, as I believe very strongly in the goals of my thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTORY ANALYSIS OF *THUNDER ROCK*

Biographical Information on the Playwright

Robert Ardrey was born on October 16, 1908 in Chicago, Illinois. Though his academic training was in anthropology and the behavioral and social sciences, he had always been interested in writing. He studied with Thornton Wilder, the American playwright and novelist, who greatly encouraged him to write professionally. In the 1930's Ardrey supported himself by playing piano in jazz clubs, working as a staff member of Chicago's personnel bureau doing statistics and analysis, and lecturing in pre-Columbian history and civilizations at the Chicago World's Fair. During that time he wrote a novel and a play, both of which were very poorly received (Fandango.com).

Ardrey's work as a playwright was greatly inspired by the works of Clifford Odets and his mentor, Thornton Wilder (Smith 330). It is through Wilder, and a meeting with Harold Clurman in the mid 30's, that he was able to become connected with the Group Theatre in New York who decided to put on one of his plays (328). In 1938 the Group Theatre produced Ardrey's third play, *Casey Jones*, which ultimately was considered to be a flop. Despite the failure, even reporters and interviewers found Ardrey to be a favorable individual. It seemed that he had:

> a genuine affection for ordinary human beings, whose language he loved and captured beautifully in his dialogue. He wanted to write about them

because they were the essence of America . . . (330)

He was able to maintain good relations with members of the Group, especially Harold Clurman and Elia Kazan, due to their recognition of his inherent talent and their commonality in political and artistic ideals (Smith 330). This continued relationship eventually led to a second opportunity for Ardrey to have the Group Theatre produce one of his plays.

Before *Thunder Rock* Ardrey had written four major plays: *Star Spangled* (1936), *Casey Jones* (1938), *God and Texas* (1938), and *How to Get Tough About It* (1938). Only three of these were produced at the time (Fandango.com). But in 1939, when Ardrey was living on Nantucket and staring out across the Atlantic towards Europe during the Munich crisis, he was wondering about the future of mankind and an impending war. He decided to write a play (Smith 389). The play was originally entitled, *The Tower of Light*, and Elia Kazan was interested in producing it after he had visited Ardrey and had a chance to read it (389).

Thunder Rock would be the last of Ardrey's plays that the Group Theatre produced. After this time Ardrey began to mainly write screenplays, first at RKO and later for MGM. His movies include: *They Knew What They Wanted* (1940), *A Lady Takes a Chance* (1943), *The Green Years* (1946), *The Three Musketeers* (1948), *The Secret Garden* (1949), *Madame Bovary* (1949), *The Power and the Prize* (1956), *The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse* (1962), and *Khartoum* (1966) for which he received his only Oscar nomination (Fandango.com).

In the 1950's he returned to his academic training, part-time, and began writing in the field of Paleoanthropology as well as writing novels and screenplays. Through the decade he "kept his oar in both fields," which afforded him a very unique position in the upper echelons of Hollywood due to his dual career. As a scholarly writer he eventually published for books: African Genesis (1961), Territorial Imperative (1966), The Social Contract (1970), and The Hunting Hypothesis (1977). He received amazing recognition for his work, and all of these works became standard texts for the field of Anthropology. He died in South Africa in 1980, but at that time there were plans to turn *Thunder* Rock into a musical. However, in 1985 the play was presented on network television (Fandango.com).

The Group Theatre and the Production of *Thunder Rock*

Harold Clurman, Lee Strasburg, and Cheryl Crawford started the Group Theatre in 1931 (pbs.org). They began with 27 actors as part of their company, with an intention to work and function as an ensemble and community (Smith 32). They dreamed of transforming the American theatre from "light entertainment" into a more serious and substantial experience (pbs.org). They would especially focus on presenting "contemporary American plays reflecting on the life of their times" (Smith 9). So, they sought out original American plays to put on and develop an authentic American style that would mirror their society, and perhaps even change it (pbs.org).

The greatest part of this process was developing in themselves the ability to present truthful, emotional, and revolutionary American acting (Smith 9). They studied the Russian theatre master Stanislavski's systems of acting, and through the exploration of, and innovation with, these techniques Strasburg developed "the Method," or what is now called "Method Acting" (pbs.org). It was mainly based on a series of physical and psychological exercised that could develop in the actor the ability to "bring honest emotion to the stage" (pbs.org). The Group Theatre existed for just a single decade and successfully put on 20 plays. In that short time they were successful in achieving their central goal – to change American theatre and the art of acting forever (pbs.org).

Near the end of the era of the Group Theater, they embarked upon the project of producing *Thunder Rock* soon after Elia Kazan read the script in the late summer of 1939 (Smith 388). The play was almost finished, but there were some final revisions by Ardrey, after the Soviet Union made their non-aggression pact. Ardrey, like many intellectuals on the left, was very much let down by this action on the part of the Soviet Union. Harold Clurman agreed with Ardrey's ideals, but felt that the play overall lacked a certain "lyrical inspiration" (389). Clurman was originally supposed to direct the play, but soon after pre-production Elia Kazan took over the direction of the project (390). So both of Robert Ardrey's plays, first *Casey Jones*, and later *Thunder Rock*, were to be Elia Kazan's very first opportunities at directing with the Group Theatre (328; 390) It was said by Ardrey that the reason for the change in directors was because Clurman had a nervous breakdown, but this has never been confirmed (390).

Ultimately, the play was doomed to fail. The Group Theatre was going through a rough spell. Stella Adler, the wife of Luther Adler who played the protagonist Charleston, had just returned from some time away from the Group and was not very pleased with them. She was in something of a minor feud with Morris Carnovsky, who played Captain Joshua. Frances Farmer was drinking heavily through all of the rehearsals, because of the breakup of her marriage and her tumultuous affair with Clifford Odets (Smith 391). A number of the cast of *Thunder Rock* were new members to the Group, and they had not received the extensive type and quality of acting classes that the veterans had undergone; they were very green. Clurman was teaching many of those classes and he simply did not have the teaching skills that Strasberg, Adler or Meisner possessed (392).

The play had three performances in Baltimore, Maryland starting on October 31, 1939, but the play officially opened at the Mansfield Theatre in New York, on November 14, 1939. It closed after only 23 shows on December 2, 1939. The Group Theatre had not given the play due diligence and the reviews for the show were not favorable. Surprisingly for the group, there was something of an outcry from the public to keep the show open. Playwrights Philip Barry and Elmer Rice wrote letters to the New York Times in defense of the play (Smith 393).

Some felt that the lighting and sound were done poorly, and that the language was ill-formed. Many reviewers were openly contemptuous about the action, or lack thereof. The one aspect of the play upon which everyone agreed

was Max Gorelik's set; it was said to be rather imaginative. Even though the second performance in New York received seven curtain calls, the Group was still discouraged and didn't quite believe in the play (Smith 393).

Critical Reception

The Baltimore reviewers of the play had this to say about the play, "Perhaps too much good talk and too little sustained action, but it will command the respectful attention and provide a stimulating evening for thoughtful theatergoers" (Smith 393). The New York reviewers were not so kind. Many weren't nearly as taken by the language, and some were harsh in regards to its apparent inactivity. One reviewer noted about the visual and sound effects that were associated with the appearance of the ghosts belonged in "tanktown drama" (393).

Joseph Wood Krutch of *The Nation* called it a "grandiloquent pep-talk," but Richard Watts of the *Herald Tribune* called it a "cry of hope for humanity that cannot be repeated too often." Elia Kazan agreed with Robert Rice of the *Telegraph* that the production was, "a trifle too Russian Arty for a play that requires a straightforward American treatment" (Smith 393).

The play was received much better in London, as can be seen by Vincent Sheean's statement, "*Thunder Rock*, by Robert Ardrey, has come nearer than anything else to a statement of the emotional or philosophical content of many minds in embattled England today" (The New York Times). In 1942, the script was turned into a screenplay and produced in the United Kingdom. The movie

was released in the United States in 1944, but once again received poor reviews. But because of the success that T*hunder Rock* saw in England, it eventually found favor again in the States. It was given new life in America's regional and semi-professional theaters and became his most successful play for a time. There was a later revival of the play in 1973, but the best that could be said of it was that "some elements worked well" (fandango.com).

Expressionism

Thunder Rock would best be described as a work of Expressionism. Expressionism is not very easily defined, especially in context of what existed in American theatre. There were actually very few native Expressionistic plays produced in America. It is thought that the attitudes and expectations of the American audience was never inherently receptive to the "philosophical and thematic excesses" of Expressionism (Valgemae 3). Expressionistic writers were greatly concerned with "subjective states" and often played with the perception of reality, invoking the image of dream states, and treating actions, objects and characters symbolically, often as "abstractions," or types (12).

The development of expressionism was initially a reaction to theatrical realism (John Russell Taylor 105), "a theory predicated upon the concrete, objective representation of ordinary people and events" (Henderson 642), and the expressionistic movement in drama was most thoroughly explored in the theatre of Germany. Its origins are thought to have been based in the later works of Strindberg (John Russell Taylor 105). As the movement developed there was

born a phase of "Subjectivist Expressionism." This approach was:

> dominated by the symbolic embodiment of states of mind and soul on the stage, giv[ing] way to a more formalist, social phase, which applied the same sort of techniques to the study of society at large, with man himself represented as a counter in the larger pattern. (105)

Playwrights who applied this style were often interested in social reform. They were advocates and idealist who wished to expose the more destructive elements of humanity and modern life. This idea is very clearly represented in Ardrey's *Thunder Rock*. More so than in the work of Ardrey, Expressionism in American theatre is most evident in the works of Eugene O'Neill, Elmer Rice, and, to a lesser extent, Thornton Wilder's later works (Henderson 165).

The Structure of the Play

A playwright structures his play in order to guide the audience over the course of the action toward the conclusion in "gradually intensified steps." The most basic way that these steps are broken down for analysis is into five structural pieces, or elements. These elements are generally described as exposition, development, crisis, climax and denouement, or falling action (Grote 153). Different ways of analyzing a play can lead to different interpretations of where various actions in the play may fall within each structural element (154). *Thunder Rock* does not fit so easily into the context of such a rigid and simplistic partitioning, so the analysis presented here will be a more generalized explanation of how these five elements can reflect the basic structure of the play.

The play is divided into three acts with no specifically demarcated scenes within the three acts. The vast majority of the first act is little more than exposition. Exposition describes the period of the play that "provides background information to the audience" (Grote 157). From the entrance of Streeter, Nonny, and Inspector Flanning, through Flanning's discussion with Charleston, and most of Streeter's discussion with Charleston after the Inspector leaves, the dialogue is densely packed with background information on the characters and reminiscences between Charleston and Streeter.

It is not until Charleston begins to describe to Streeter what he has created in his imagination based on the information from the memorial plaque in the lighthouse, and how he has begun to imagine its passengers that the development begins. Development is defined as when the actions begin to be revealed, or where the expectation of the audience is developed for deeper understanding and engagement with the play (Grote 157). The admission of Charleston to Streeter in regards to what he is up to in the lighthouse is surprising, and develops a certain amount of tension that is fully revealed by the entrance of the imaginary, ghostly Captain Joshua at the very end of the first act. The mood and character of the entire play turns at that moment.

There is a second period of exposition that begins at the onset of act two as the individuals Charleston has imagined from the shipwreck in 1849 – Captian Joshua, Dr. Kurtz, Melanie, Anne Marie, Miss Kirby, and Mr. Briggs – are introduced on stage. Their individual personalities and general background initially come off as stereotypes until Captain Joshua informs Charleston that he

has imagined them poorly. This spurs another turn in the action as all the former passengers are reimagined by Charleston in a more accurate manner: more realistic and more tragic.

Then there is a short period of development again, as the action and dialogue between Charleston and the passengers becomes more pointed and intense. This develops the initial conflict of the play. The two worlds collide, and this collision is what creates the moment of crisis in the play. The crisis is the "turning point in the action at which the climax becomes possible" (Grote 156). The crisis is the moment that the pessimism of the ghost passengers causes Charleston to lose his last bit of hope for the future. And this unveils the central conflict of the play, that problem which allows the reader to understand what is at stake in the third act: the false notion of hoplessness, and the inability of the individual to make a difference in a world destined for collapse. Charleston exmplifies this central conflict with the statement, "I'm as helpless in a world of my own choice, as I was in the world I was born into" (Ardrey 49). The weight of that moment is what brings act two to an end.

The beginning of act three shows a little more development, as the ghosts commit themselves to helping Charleston regain his hope, which leads directly to the climax of the play. The climax is when the conflict is most intense, and where "all the major expectations have been aimed and the conflicts must be resolved." It is the "dramatic center of the play (Grote 154)." The climax of the play begins with Charleston being completely unresponsive to the ghosts attempts to buoy his spirits and optimism, through the point at which Charleston gives in to the

words and thoughts of Dr. Kurtz, and finds a sense of peace for the first time in years.

The denouement is the shortest portion of the play. Denouement means "unknotting" in French. It describes the part of the play that unknots any aspects of the plot that are left to be clarified, finished, or resolved (Grote 155). This occurs when the ghosts are able to leave the lighthouse, or rather when Charleston is finally able to let his dependency on their existence in his imagination to go. Charleston is left alone for just a moment, complete within himself, no longer haunted by his own pessimism.

The very end of the play does not clearly fit into any of the five elements of play structure. It is almost like a short epilogue that illuminates the cyclical or continuous nature of this conflict between pessimism and optimism, isolationism and engagement. Charleston is fired from the lighthouse service and meets his replacement, Cassidy, who has fallen victim to the exact same sense of despair, pessimism, and isolationism as Charleston had when he entered the lighthouse service to retreat from the world. Charleston encourages him to ponder the memorial plaque in the lighthouse, and assures Cassidy that he will be seeing him again. Cassidy, seemingly content, is left alone on stage as the curtain falls.

Characters

There are a total of eleven characters in *Thunder Rock.* Five of them living human beings, while the other six are the ghostly imaginings of Charleston who interact with him in the Lighthouse. There is an interesting quote from the

playwright Henrik Ibsen that is relevant to understanding how Ardrey may have created these characters, and is even more prescient in regards to how the reader can understand how the character Charleston himself imagined, and later reimagined, the other characters present in the play. Ibsen said:

> When I am writing I must be alone; if I have eight characters of a drama to do with I have society enough; they keep me busy; I must learn to know them. And this process of making their acquaintance is slow and painful. I make, as a rule, three casts of my dramas, which differ considerably from each other. I mean in characteristics, not in the course of the treatment. When I first settle down to work out my material, I feel as if I have to get to know my characters on a railway journey; the first acquaintance is struck up, and we have chatted about this and that. When I write it down again, I already see everything much more clearly, and I know the people as if I had stayed with them for a month at a watering place. I have grasped the leading points of their characters and their little peculiarities. (Egri 33-34)

Ardrey himself gives a line to his protagonist, as he explains the process of his visualizing his companions, that directly reflects this statement by Ibsen: "like characters in an author's mind, while he's writing a book. . . . I'm trying to see them the way they were. Half a dozen's all I can handle, for a while – " (23).

The protagonist is David Charleston. A former newspaper man turned lighthouse operator who intentionally took himself "out of circulation," as far as engaging with the outside world (Ardrey 20). He is described by Ardrey in the character notes of the play as:

Thirty-five, tall rugged handsome. His instincts are social, talkative, inquiring, constantly interpretive; and through his years a s a newspaper man, these have been his manners. But now, from a decision of mind and through an effort of will, he has sought to smash these instincts as one would break a habit. There's an effect in his personality of an almost detached intellect constantly working, constantly making decisions that would ordinarily be made by reflex. You get this sense of mind in every move he makes. (4)

Charleston's best friend is Streeter. Through the first act he comes off as a solid guy, a man's man, though a little fatalistic. Ardrey's notes describe him as:

Pilot of the supply plane, is about thirty-five, wiry, compact. He's been a knockabout professional flyer for many years. He's reticent, observant, the kind of man who shares his experiences with others, but not his thoughts. (3)

Nonny, a rather comical figure, has the smallest role in the play. He has only a few lines in the first few pages of the first act. He is described briefly in Ardrey's character notes as: "Helper on the supply plane, is just a kid, about seventeen. If Nonny were the only man on earth, he would still be a little bit confused" (3).

Inspector Flanning is also a somewhat comical figure, or at least he provides some small amount of comic relief at the very beginning and very end of the play. He is something of the common man, and he expects others to behave

with that kind of accessible manner as well. Ardrey describes him as: "The superior officer in this division of the Lighthouse Service, is fifty-five, ruddy, healthy, essentially cheerful. He's a man who draws all his pleasure from human contact, but he's stuck in an impersonal job" (3-4).

Captain Joshua is the first of Charleston's imagined individuals. He starts off as a confidant for Charleston, but his role gradually changes over the course of the play. The character is described by Ardrey as:

> First visualized by Charleston, is the strictly romantic concept of a sea captain. He is ageless, bluff, cheery. But as more and more he takes on the role of Charleston's conscience, he becomes resolute, driving, almost menacing. (4)

Briggs is the second of the individuals imagined by Charleston who is seen on stage. He starts out as a rather comic and buffoonish figure, but later becomes something more tragic and serious. Ardrey describes him as: "A Cockney workingman, about forty. At first a comic strutting figure, with a face that might have been drawn in *Punch*. But after his reconception he is pale, drawn, sickly, beaten yet pathetically hopeful" (4).

Dr. Stefan Kurtz is then introduced. He starts out as a quiet, almost distant man. His role, his character, his strength of mind and influence grows throughout the play until he becomes the driving force behind Charleston's return to hope. He is described in Ardrey's character notes as:

> The Viennese doctor, is about sixty. In his first appearance he is gaunt, befuddled, and unimportant. On Charleston's second thought, his true

dignity takes shape. He becomes, like Charleston, a man who has resigned the universe to a fate he cannot influence. He moves in sadness, and in pity. (4)

Melanie is the daughter of Dr. Kurtz. Throughout the play she is pulsing with energy. She comes across as a strong young woman, who is ready to come into her own, but without any idea how. Ardrey describes her as: "Young, lovely, at first merely tempestuous and quarrelsome. But after her reconception, she becomes the more dignified figure of a rebel who cannot rebel" (4).

Anne Marie is Dr. Kurtz's wife and Melanie's mother. She is probably the least involved in the development of the plot compared to the other characters. She is arguably also the least interesting. Ardrey, in his character notes, describes her as:

> Seem[ing] at first merely a superficial fluttery mindless mother. She too quiets with her reconception, and becomes an understanding figure pathetically determined to cling to the grace and beauty of a world she will never see again. (4)

Miss Kirby is a forty-year old, British suffragette. She is the most compelling female character in the play. She has many wonderful lines that are also very thought provoking. She is described by Ardrey as:

> At first the caricature of a suffragette. Later, Charleston sees her as a woman who for all her strong masculine carriage and manner, has knowingly surrendered a life-long battle in total defeat, for the sake of being a woman before it's too late. (4)

The final character introduced in the play is Cassidy. He is a reflection of the completely withdrawn Charleston presented at the beginning of the first act. In Ardrey's character notes he is described as: "The relief man brought to take over Charleston's post, is a tall, spare, sardonic man with something of Charleston's austerity" (4).

Intersections Between Our World and the World of the Play

The World of the Play and the world of the author are contemporary to one another. Ardrey was not writing much that he was not personally aware of at the time of the plays creation. The play is representative of Ardrey's very recent past, a geographical location of which he was intimately aware since he was born on Lake Michigan, and of an economic and political situation that he was currently living through.

Modern day performers and a modern day audience would be able to relate on many levels, since America is once again in a deep recession. Unemployment is not as bad now as it was then, but the difficulties in housing and employment are analogous. Today America is still involved in America's longest war in Afghanistan, while in the world of the play America was fast approaching involvement in the Second World War.

The ideals of democracy, and to some extent socialism, are present in the world of the play, and today in America these ideals are being played out in a very forceful manner over the present day issues of Health care reform, which is said by some to be part of a socialist/communist agenda, and the bailout of the

American banking system, which is called by some a form of economic socialism for corporations. Democracy now, as it was then, is being tested: the questions of what is the will of the American people, what are their needs, and what is the government's role and responsibility to these issues are shifting on almost a daily basis. The question of hope and change, a major theme in the world of the play, is also being played out on the public stage of today.

Connections to the California Content Standards

Discussion of the biographical history of the playwright and the production history of the Group Theatre connects with the Content Standards for California Public Schools for Theatre, grades Nine through Twelve at the proficient level along two standards:

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre

Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

3.2 Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works as *Raisin in the Sun*, *Antigone*, and the *Mahabarata.*

History of Theatre

3.3 Identify key figures, works, and trends in world theatrical history from various cultures and time periods.

Discussion of the theatrical movement Expressionism connects with the Content Standards for Theatre, grades Nine through Twelve at the advanced level along one standard:

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre

History of Theatre

3.4 Compare and contrast styles and forms of world theatre.

And along one Content Standard for English Language Arts, grades Eleven and Twelve for Reading:

3.0 LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science.

Narrative analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.5 Analyze recognized works of American literature representing a variety of genres and traditions.

Discussion of the structure of the play paritally connects with the Content Standards for Theatre, grades Nine through Twelve at the proficient and advanced level along one standard each:

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre

Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure: exposition, complication, conflict, crises, climax, and resolution.

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre

Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Improvise or write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure (exposition, complication crisis, climax, and resolution) and including complex characters with unique dialogue that motivates the action.

Discussion of the characters in the play connects with the Content Standards for English Language Arts, grades Nine and Ten for Reading along two standards:

3.0 LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct indepth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.3 Analyze interactions between main and subordinate characters in a literary text (e.g., internal and external

conflicts, motivations, relationships, influences) and explain the way those ineractions affect the plot.

3.4 Determine characters' traits by what the characters say about themselves in narration, dialogue, dramatic monologue, and soliloquy.

Discussion of the intersection of the world of the play and the real world connects with the Content Standards for English Language Arts, grades Nine and Ten for Reading along one standard:

3.0 LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct indepth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes.

Literary Criticism

3.12 Analyze the way in which a work of literature is related to the themes and issues of its historical period. (cde.ca.gov)

CHAPTER THREE

ACT ONE

Summary of Act One

It is the summer of 1939 on a small, rocky island fifty miles off-shore in northern Lake Michigan. The island is called Thunder Rock, and is inhabited only by a lighthouse and David Charleston, the protagonist. Once a month a supply plane comes to Thunder Rock, and it is that day when the curtain rises. The pilot, Streeter, an old friend of Charleston's, and Charleston's superior, the Inspector Flanning who supervises the lighthouses in this area, have arrived with supplies. Nonny, a seventeen year old helper on the supply plane, is bringing provisions into the lighthouse as Streeter is reading a memorial tablet in the lighthouse at the open of the scene. It is within the interior of the lighthouse where all the action of the play takes place.

Inspector Flanning prefers to be around men who are sociable and with open flaws. Streeter and Charleston are neither of these. Streeter and Flanning engage in conversation with much of the substance being some rather gentle teasing of Flanning. Flanning is complaining about the nature of the men he must work with, most especially Streeter and Charleston. The two friends find some time out alone to open a bottle of whiskey and talk about the past, and their futures. Streeter settles a rather large monetary debt he had with Charleston. He tells Charleston that he is leaving the lighthouse service and going to fly fighter planes for the Chinese against the Japanese. Charleston is not pleased

by this announcement and tries to convince Streeter against it.

Charleston tells Streeter about what he has done to pass the time and reconnect to a hopeful past: he has created a group of companions from his own mind, based on individuals who had died in 1849 on the ship, Land o' Lakes, which had crashed and sunk at Thunder Rock. Charleston has lost his optimism, and has retired from the world for these last few years. Streeter is confused and concerned about announcement. Streeter and Charleston have a small fight, but end it quickly. Inspector Flanning tells Charleston that he will be relieved from duty for a month when the next supply plane comes. Charleston argues, but Flanning insists. Streeter, Flanning, and Nonny fly off the island. At the close of the first act, Captain Joshua, one of Charlestons new ghostly companions walks down the stairs to greet him.

Themes from Act One

One of the central themes explored over the course of the entire play is first expressed by Inspector Flanning near the beginning of the first act. The theme concerns the reality of the state of mankind as they live in an age of overwhelming conflict: an age consumed by anxiety and an awareness of their ignorance of the results and repercusions of aggressive nationalistic, political, and economic pursuits the world over. The seeming inevitability of conflict and the uncomfortable reality of the unknown was clearly evident at the time of the play, and is expressed by Flanning in his comment to Charleston:

How's everything going to come out? Hitler, Mussolini. The dictators vs.

Democracy. Fascism, Communism. Police states and terror and refugees. Look at Europe, look at Asia. What happens next? Is it war? Peace? What is it? Well, whatever's going to happen, it's nineteen thirty-nine and it's drama, my boy, sheer stark drama. How's everything going to come out? (Ardry 13)

Charleston, while conversing with Streeter, presents another theme that is a reaction to this same concept. Really, it is a group of themes that continuously pop up throughout the play: the descent into despair, hopelessness, and isolationism. Charleston has given up, taken himself out of society, and he explains his present state of being to Streeter this way:

When all a man can say is this: We can't find answers for our problems because our problems haven't got any answers – when that's all a man c an honestly say, then he makes a poor crusader. (Ardry 20)

He expounds upon the source of his synicism even further by explaining:

A human being is a problem in search of a solution. . .We expand the world around. Everything there is to exploit – we exploit it. . .What's to be done? It's the only answer we ever knew. Nations hock their resources – they destroy their own civilizations, their hopes and legitimate dreams, all for the sake of that old and worn-out answer – expansion! Because now it means conquest. War! And there at that point, the actual horror begins. Civilization slips out the window. Truth. Freedom of speech. Human dignity. Democracy. Out the window, ignored and forgotten. . .Even America, Street, our own country. . .Society itself is a lost cause, but

there's still a job for a few of its member. . .Keeping lighthouses. (Ardrey 20-21)

This explanation also begins to delve into another theme, which is the nature of the rights of man. Charleston appears to have become convinced that they are not as immutable as he once optimistically believed. Flanning can be interpreted as having a more hopeful belief that these rights may actually progress, but Charleston appears to be struggling with the idea that this progression has begun to fail – stripped away because the notion of progress has devolved into the notion of conquest and war.

Streeter has a different response to similar sentiments that touches on another theme: fatalism. He has decided to go to China and fly planes for the Chinese against the Japanese. He knows the fight is a lost cause, and he is as weary of the world and war as Charleston. But, some piece of him hasn't given up completely on the possibility that he might at least be able to do something. Streeter exclaimes:

> I'm dying for no causes! I'm going to China for one reason. I'm sick of reading the newspapers. I'm sick of problems. . .The time comes round, you've got to do something. That's all there is to it. You can't stand by and watch forever. . .I can't just stand by and watch. (Ardrey 18-19)

There is also a theme of psychological states and escapism introduced in the first act. Charleston represents a man who has retreated into his own mind to find some sense of peace and solace. It is the rejection of the outer world for the interior world – a world he thinks he has more control over. Charleston

describes to Streeter his process of imagining the crew of the shipwrecked Land o'Lakes and why he has chosen to do it. At one point Charleston says, "I've rejected a world that I can't help. I'm building one up that I can. It's perfectly simple. If a man can't actually be useful, he can at least get all the sensations" (Ardrey 22).

A person with a healthy psychology might strive for personal fulfillment that involves both his internal and external worlds, but Charleston has divorced himself from the external, detached himself and retreated into his own mind. Charleston's admission that he has developed this to the point that he can actually see and interact with the characters he has imagined (Ardrey 33) shows the power of the human mind. It also shows the power of psychological defense mechanisms and the extent to which despiration and hopelessness can take a person.

Historical Points of Interest in Act One

The Great Depression

> STREETER: 1930 . . . The only time in my life I ever hocked my plane . . . you were flusher than ever. The man who made money in 1933 . . . (Ardrey 15).

The play takes place against the backdrop of the Great Depression. This is the defining nature of the economic and social reality that Charleston and Streeter, as well as Ardrey's audience, have been living in for a decade. After the stock market crash of 1929, American had a series of low swings with the worst

being right after 1929 and in 1937. This is considered now to be a defining moment in American history. The nation was in a state of upheaval and crisis that lasted for more than a decade It is interesting to note that massive migrations of peoples occurred during this time, and especially to California, a fact that parallels the experience of the character Mr. Briggs in the play (Smiley).

After the crash then President Hoover had announced to the American people that as president he would not advocate the federal government acting as a principle player in addressing the financial crisis. He believed the people would be able to work their way out of the depression on their own and "should not delegate their welfare to distant bureaucracies." This idea was actually a central tenant of Republican economic philosophy at the time, and Hoover had chosen not to deviate from those principles (Rosen 2).

The American people had had enough of American economic stagnation and pain by 1932 and elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a Democrat, to replace Hoover. Roosevelt was a proponent of the "New Deal," which promised the expansion of activities by the government to turn around the depression through a variety of domestic programs. These programs included relief efforts, public works like infrastructure building, industrial and agricultural development, and financial reform (Rosen 2-3). Financial reforms also included the gradual process of taking the nation off the gold and silver standards of currency, which is to say that the American Dollar would no longer backed, or valuated, against the commodities of precious metals (Rosen 25).

At many points in the 1930's, unemployment was well above 25% of all Americans. To have a job was a blessing that few took for granted (Smiley). It was in 1933 that President Roosevelt called upon Congress to address the issue of unemployment, requesting:

> Unemployment relief through three mechanisms: the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps]; grants to the states for relief work; and creation of a broad public works program, which was legislated under Title II of NIRA. (Rosen 81)

From the beginning of 1933 through the end of 1937, the United States Federal Government distributed $17.153 Billion across eleven different public works programs and three Emergency Relief Appropriate Acts, all designed to create jobs, bolster our entire national system, and keep the American people out of abject poverty (92). One of the most effective ways that the elderly were kept out of poverty in this period was through the enactment of Social Security through the Social Security Act of 1935 (167).

Roosevelt was able to begin to turn around the effects of the Great Depression as America moved into the mid-1930's, but the nation experienced another downturn in 1937 and 1938. This drove the nations leaders to rely even further on the economic theories of Keynes to pull the nation back from the brink (Rosen 234). But due to this prolonged economic instability, America was still in the midst of the Depression when she entered in to World War II in 1941. The war, while brutal and on a scope no one had seen before, proved to be an

effective economic catalyst to pull American out of her Great Depression (Smiley). One quote in the play by Inspector Flanning is of some interest in regards to the American government's attitutes toward targeted federal spending to get out of the Great Depression:

CHARLESTON: I'm saving the Government's money.

FLANNING: When did the Government ever want to save money?

(Ardrey 13)

Standard Oil

STREETER: I've made my peace with Standard Oil. We've agreed to let bygones be bygones. (Ardrey 16)

Charleston and Streeter converse for a short time about what was in their pasts, and what is in their futures. Streeter had worked for Standard Oil on a number of occasions, and was planning on working with them again. It is important, then, to understand what Standard Oil was. The story of Standard Oil begins in 1863 when John Davison Rockefeller decided to get in the business of oil refining with partners Maurice Clark and Samuel Andrews. By 1867 Rockefeller had managed to create and own one of the largest oil refineries in Cleveland, Ohio, and in 1870 Rockefeller and his business associates became the Standard Oil Company of Ohio (Manning 2).

"Oil refining was a bitterly competitive industry" (Manning 4). Standard Oil stayed competitive by focusing on a new concept of efficiency. The company sought to maintain all "incidental and related services and activities" that were necessary for the running of the business instead of having to pay other

independent producers of the materials it needed to operate. This meant that Standard Oil secured ownership of all its own storage facilities, tank cars, barrel factories, lumber tracts, iron smelters, plumbing services and so forth (4). The company also put great effort into developing products that utilized the natural byproducts of refining oil, such as the manufacture of profitable lubricants (5). Every effort was taken to develop efficiency and profitability.

"Rockefeller and his associates moved toward combination in the oil-refining industry" (Manning 15), but there were still barriers to reaching their long-term goals. They needed to create an interstate combination, and the way they sought to do that was by arranging a trust agreement. Originally, the legal purpose of such a trust was simply to place holdings, financial and/or property, into a guardianship to then be administered to a trustee. But, Standard Oil redefined how this concept would be used in business. The company eventually created a board of trustees who were able to own all the holdings of the various enterprises related to the business, even those that were outside the state of Ohio where the parent company was legally centered. In this way all the profits of all the endeavors Standard Oil was involved in would be sent to the trustees, and then distributed as they chose each year to certificate holders in whatever amounts they chose (16).

This was a radical redefinition of a trust in relation to businesses, as the obstacle of state boundaries was no longer a burden to individuals and companies in regards to centralized ownership and expansion. Many other companies followed Standard Oil's lead and became trusts, but much of the

public was angered by this type of machination (Manning 17). It was problematic to many that the term "Trust" was so radically expanded, in that it now meant that such a thing had:

> obtained a wider signification, and embrace[d] every act, agreement, or combination of persons or capital *believed to be done, made, or formed with the intent, power, or tendency to monopolize business, to restrain or interfere with competitive trade, or to fix, influence, or increase the prices of commodities.* (17-18)

Those who wished to reform this new system turned to the federal government for a broad-based solution, and so Senator John Sherman of Ohio proposed an act that would eventually become the Sherman Anti-Trust Act in 1890. He believed that the powers inherent in this type of combination were "inconsistent with our form of government, and should be subject to strong resistance" (Manning 45). Unfortunately the Act failed to produce the results the people desired, and it eventually went before the Supreme Court (55). The Court agreed with the assertions of the government and the Act's supporters, and in 1911 was able to, in effect, give the act some teeth (56). Standard Oil, which once had been one of the largest economic forces in the nation eventually became a less monolithic entity, but the company stayed large, and profitable, and a major player in the world economy and the business of oil.

<u>William Randolph Hearst</u>

> STREETER: You were out on the West coast prowling into love nests for Mr. Hearst, I was flying for Standard Oil in Venezuela – (Ardrey 15).

Hearst is referenced a number of times in the first act, and as Charleson was a journalist for many years, it is important to understand this icon of American print news. Hearst was one of the most powerful news publishers in the first half of the 20th century. He was in many ways a larger than life figure, who had an enormous impact on the culture of that period, and that impact was most certainly not without a healthy amount of controversy.

William Hearst was the only son of United States Senator George Hearst, who also owned the *Evening Examiner* newspaper in San Francisco, California. He had been kicked out of Harvard University because of his unusual love for pranks, but in 1887 he induced his father to let him take over the newspaper claiming that he wanted to be a newspaper man, and had some new "ideas how to run a newspaper" (Winkler 3). Hearst was not a trained newsman, no one had taught him journalism. He evolved his own style that was often called "vulgar, demagogic, disgusting." He insisted that his style of journalism was neither "yellow" or "sensational," but his personal policy showed that perhaps his critics were correct (9). His policy was this:

> Get the news. Get it first. Spare no expense. Make a great and continuous noise to attract readers; denounce crooked wealth and promise better conditions for the poor to keep readers. INCREASE CIRCULATION. (8)

Hearst was extremely successful in California, but he wanted to become a national figure in journalism, and he took that chance in 1895 by going to New York and purchasing the New York *Morning Journal* (Winkler 21-22). He was

now in direct competition with the great Joseph Pulitzer. It is these two men who would be considered by many to be the "outstanding geniuses of crusading journalism (23)."

Hearst was a "precedent-maker" in the field of journalism. "He made journalism an irresistible force in the shaping of the American viewpoint." He was said to have accentuated, if not even dictated, whatever was to be "the popular trend of his times" (Winkler 304). He also turned journalism "into big business," while expanding, even originating, the idea of newspaper chains being owned by a single owner and the idea of newspaper syndicates (304).

He most certainly was not without his critics. Oswald Villard once wrote of Hearst:

> He has done more to degrade the entire American press than any one else in its history – more than Pulitzer and both the Bennets combined . . . Indubitably he has fought and is fighting many a good battle . . . but it is all tarnished by self-interest, by self-seeking, and arouses the never- failing and justified suspicion of his sincerity. (Winkler 310)

His impact on the fabric of American life and society is quite great, for good or for ill, but it is understandable that such a figure might have a great impact as he effectively lived out his motto, "Capture the crowd at any cost!" (317)

The Daily News

> CHARLESTON: I quit the Daily News when I got back from Spain. I was washed up. I couldn't be objective, I hadn't any future reporting. (Ardrey 20)

The protagonist of *Thunder Rock*, Charleston, states that he was a journalist for *The Daily News*. Ardrey is likely referencing *The New York Daily News*. There is a slight textual inconsistency that arises from that assumption, which is that Charleston considers himself to have been a serious newsman, but *The New York Daily News* was designed and operated as a pictorial tabloid. This may be an attempt by the playwright to comment on the reality of journalism after Joseph Pulitzer and William Hearst, which is to say that in this period of time the line between serious journalism and tabloid sensationalism had been severely blurred. This interpretation may also tie in to Charleston's statements in the play about having lost his objectivity.

The Daily News was created in 1919 by Robert McCormick and Joseph Patterson, who had become interested in the format of tabloid news while they had been in Europe during the first World War. They were cousins who had come from a newspaper family in Chicago, who owned *The Chicago Tribune*, and they were also heavily involved in the development of the city of Chicago through their work and even through holding elected office (Wallace 11-12). When the cousins came to New York they took the opportunity to "differentiate themselves from older newspaper styles," and to experiment with "content and form" (12). The tabloid format was much shorter than the "broadsheets" like *The New York Times*, which therefore required less paper and was more economical. It also departed from the usual "dense columns of text," favoring many more pictures, large headlines, and pithy text that was much less dense for its readers (12).

As well as regular journalists, the *Daily News* had a "small army of

photographers on staff" (Wallace 14). The activities of these journalists and photographers were heavily directed to chronicaling an era of fame and luxury in the 1920's (15). In this time, though, the emphasis on sensationalism by the tabloids also elevated "the common criminal to the level of celebrity (14)." *The Daily News* owed much of its success in distribution to the activities of criminals and the crime waves of the 1920's and 30's. It was always a good story and there were always riveting pictures for the consumer (15). Though this newspaper is clearly a tabloid, in the grand scheme of such things *The Daily News* was considered to be of a much higher quality than even Hearst's New York tabloid, *The Mirror* (23).

Paris

> STREETER: – Paris, 1928. I'd been flying for Anglo-Persian, you'd gone over for the Daily News. Big stuff, the boy wonder, by-lines and everything, congratulations. . . . I enjoyed Paris. (Ardrey 15)

Streter reminisces with Charleston the time they spent together in the 1920s. In the 1920s many young adult Americans went to France to live in a sort of "self-imposed 'exile'" and apprenticing with artists and writers. The generation of Americans who had grown up and/or lived through World War I seemed to be very curious about old Europe. They had come to imagine for themselves some "great love affair" with the continent. There was something of a "transatlantic migration" of former soldiers, writers, artists, and intellectuals from the United States to France, and Paris in particular (Ford xix).

By 1925 and 26, after *The Sun also Rise* by Ernest Hemingway grew into

a best-selling novel, "the floodgates were opened for tourists to Paris" (Ford xx). Seemingly thousands of Americans came from all over the United States with a desire to become members of "the Lost Generation" that Hemingway's novel romantically, and provocatively, described. The character of Paris changed in those years. Montparnasse, in Paris, was called alternatively the Left Bank, the Latin Quarter and even "the 'American Quarter,'" although that particular title began to dwindle by 1927. But in 1929, when the American Stock Market crashed, the Americans steadily "drifted home." Paris gradually became a less international city and began to reassert more of it's classically "French" character (xxiv).

Edmond L. Taylor, a reporter for *The Chicago Tribune,* published on September 10, 1928 in the paper's sister publication *The Paris Tribune,* a discussion between himself, Gene Tunny, an American boxer, and Thornton Wilder, the American novelist and playwright. The conversation happened in Lipp's cafe on the Boulevard St. Germain. Mr. Taylor says to a scowling Mr. Tunny :

> "Well, Mr. Tunny, if you are anxious to avoid publicity you have come to a bad place. This is a haunt of newspapermen in Paris. You have walked right in to the lion's den."
>
> Mr. Wilder at this point apparently decided to ease the tension a little.
>
> "Why do newspapermen come here?" he asked.
>
> "On account of the beer."
>
> At this magic word the scowl vanished from Mr. Tunny's face . . .

"Are you writing a novel?" Mr. Wilder suddenly asked me.

I blushed and did not answer for a minute. Mr. Tunny saw my embarrassment and came to my rescue.

"I suppose you have some sort of literary aspirations; most newspapermen have. I hope you won't make the mistake of staying too long in journalism. I should think it would be very bad for your style."

"You don't approve of American newspapers, then?"

"Oh, I wouldn't say that. Naturally they are not good from a strictly literary standpoint, but I have the highest respect for sound, accurate, constructive journalism. . ."

"What is your favorite paper?"

"The *New York Times. The Chicago Tribune* is all right, too, but I'm afraid I can't say anything good for the New York *Daily News.* It is probably the least objectionable of the tabloids, but even that is no very high praise."

"You wouldn't enjoy work on a tabloid," Mr. Tunny said to me very earnestly, "a reporter on a tabloid newspaper is obliged to do very many things no gentleman would do. I have known some tabloid reporters that were decent fellows to start off but they ended up blackguards."

(Ford 112)

This is a fascinating article because of the topic and the involvement of Thornton Wilder. Wilder was one of Ardrey's mentors, and certainly spoke to Ardrey about the times he spent in Paris. The content of this conversation and article is so eerily close to the background of the character Charleston that it is

plausible that Wilder could have told Ardrey about this very conversation. There are elements to this conversation depicted in the *Tribune* that could very well be the seed, or genesis, for Ardrey's protagonist, at least as far as the development of Charleston's backstory.

The Spanish Civil War

> CHARLESTON: When I went to Spain to cover the Civil War I nearly enlisted. I told people like you're telling me, Sure they'll lose; might as well fight as watch; what's the use, why not? - I know what I told myself.
>
> STREETER: I'm dying for no causes! . . .
>
> CHARLESTON: Ideals. It's a hell of a pass, isn't it? (Ardrey 18)

The Spanish Civil War also plays a large part in informing the character of Charleston. The Spanish Civil war began in 1936, when the people revolted against their Republican government. The initial coup was unable to take full control of Spain from the government, so the country became split into two warring factions: the Nationalists who were backed by Nazi Germany and Italy, and the Republicans who were backed by the Soviet Union. Many individuals from around the world joined in the fight, including individuals from the United States, as is represented by the characters of Charleston and Cassidy in the play. By March 28th of 1939, the Nationalist forces were able to take full control and won the war. This was the beginning of Franco's fascist dictatorship in Spain (History World International).

As the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, "the conflict seem[ed] to develop . . . into an irreconcilable struggle among the forces of democracy,

fascism, and communism." In many ways it was also much like the dress rehearsal for World War II. It was a first wave of European dictators trying to extend their power on the continent. Even in America, the Spanish Civil War was a source of massive controversy, inflaming all sectors of American society, and causing these opposing activists and opinion makers to champion any one of the disparate players in the conflict in Spain (F. Jay Taylor 7).

The conflict began over opposition towards the Democratic Republic of Spain's recent reforms to finally end what bits of feudalism remained in the state, and to raise the status and dignity of its workers. It had been only five years earlier that the Spanish Republicans had defeated their King, Alfonso XIII on April 12, 1931. They had also triumphed over his General, Primo de Rivera, who had virtually been a dictator over the nation at that time (F. Jay Taylor 21). Spain was slowly making strides toward a strong democracy and equality.

This was not an appealing notion to the dictators of Europe. They began to intervene, and so for Spain this would not be a typical civil war. Hitler and Mussolini actively armed the fascist rebels of the Spanish Republic, and even had German and Italian generals command in the conflict. They also ran a horrendous propaganda campaign to confuse public opinion in Europe and abroad about the realities of the conflict (F. Jay Taylor 17).

The propagandists against Spain painted it relentlessly as a "communist" state, though Spain at the time was most certainly a democratic republic. "It was clear to anyone on the ground that the purpose of the Axis (Germany and Italy) and their rebel allies was the extermination of democracy in Spain as the first

step toward an all-out war for the extermination of democracy in Europe" (Taylor 18). The rebels were armed by the Axis, but the Spanish Loyalists were denied the ability to buy arms under international law, and the "Nonintervention Pact" was used to justify the Western Worlds unwillingness to help the Spanish government (19).

In 1936 the Falange party, a fascist party in Spain, created by General de Rivera's son Jose, became the political power of Spain, led by Francisco Franco. Tension between the relatively small numbers of actual fascists and socialists in Spain became a rather large political issue (Taylor 32). In the spring of 1939 Madrid fell to Franco and his fascist Nationalists. His government was eventually recognized as legitimate by much of the Western World, including America, though many Americans still bitterly fought against it (207).

America as a nation remained neutral in the conflict, but many of the American people did not. Much of the nations hesitancy was their memory of World War I and a desire to not repeat such a war. The issue of unemployment and economic strife in the States also effected its status as a priority (Taylor 40-41). Many Americans joined humanitarian organizations in support of Spain and Spanish loyalists. Other Americans actually served in Spain, fighting the rebels militarily, and still some others tried to care for those who fought in Spain. Ernest Hemingway was one such (130). Some people, and some especially in the press, most notably William Randolph Hearst, who owned the Los Angeles Examiner, was sympathetic towards General Franco. The paper would gin up the idea that the Loyalists were communists and committing atrocities, while

supporting the efforts of fascist rebels (123).

The Sino-Japanese War

> CHARLESTON: So you're flying against the Japanese.
>
> STREETER: (*Harshly.*) Well, why not? . . . I'm an old dog. New tricks come easy. . . . a job's a job. And maybe knocking Japanese bombers out of the Chinese sky happens to pay far better than delivering groceries on the Great Lakes. (Ardrey 17)

Streeter tells Charleston that he has decided to go to Asia and fly planes for the Chinese against the Japanese. This is a dramatic decision by Streeter, and the admission to Charleston is what elicits the first portion of development in the plot. At the time of the play the Sino-Japanese War had already been going on for two years, and was an issue of great concern to many in the western world.

The beginning of the war was actually the climax of decades of territorial disputes and usurpations by Japan in the Korean Peninsula, Manchuria, and mainland China. During World War I the Japanese used the impact of the war in the west to extend their control over European controlled areas of China and greater Asia (Dorn 21). All through the 1920's Japan increased military, economic, and diplomatic pressure on China in an attempt to control the nation and become the great power of Asia (25).

The League of Nations condemned the activities of Japan in the 1930's (Dorn 31), but the ever increasing militarism of Japan eventually led them to aggressively pursue the development of northern China "into a pro-Japanese,

pro-Manchukuo, anti-Soviet autonomous regime" (37). Resistance in China to these efforts led to the fateful moment that a Japanese soldier was killed at the Marco Polo Bridge on July 7, 1937. This would become "the spark that ignited war (37)." In August of 1939, the month when *Thunder Rock* begins, the "largest armored battles in history" up to that period of time were being fought on the Chinese mainland (267).

Questions for Further Exploration

The density and specificity of the dialogue opens up even more lines of inquiry than have so far been discussed in the chapter. Most are of slightly less import, but still have value for expanded discussion. Below are a few questions from the chapter that address the character traits and states of mind the playwright is ascribing to the characters in the act.

What does Inspector Flanning mean exactly when criticizing Charleston and making the comment, "I like men normal" (Ardrey 7).

What is the meaning of the phrase, "A Chinaman's chance," in the discussion between Charleston and Streeter (Ardrey 17)?

When Inspector Flanning comments on the book written by Charleston, he says, "I suppose you'd say his optimism got the better of him" (Ardrey 25). How does that comment reflect on the state of Charleston's being at the beginning of the play? What is the importance of Charleston's book?

Is there any significance that the setting of the play is in the middle of Lake Michigan in a lighthouse? How does that relate to Streeters comments a

bout Charleston building for himself an "Ivory Tower" (Ardrey 27)?

As a bit of background for the later question, there is not an actual lighthouse called "Thunder Rock" on Lake Michigan, but there are 39 lighthouses in or on the lake as of today. From 1910 to 1939 the lighthouses on Lake Michigan were overseen by the Bureau of Lighthouses of the U.S. Lighhouse Service. Over this 29 year period of time, the safety ratings of U.S. Shipping rose to number two in the world. The bureau was directed by civilians, who were intially called inspectors, but they later changed their title to that of superintendents. After 1939, the lighthouses were put under the supervision of the U.S. Coast Guard (US Lighthouse Service).

Connections to the California Content Standards

Discussion of the themes in the first act (as well as the second and third acts) connects to the Content Standards for California Public Schools for English Language Arts, grades Nine and Ten for Reading along one standard, and also for grades Eleven and Twelve for one standard:

3.0 LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct indepth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes.

Structural Features of Literature

3.2 Compare and contrast the presentation of a similar

theme or topic across genres to explain how the selection of genre shapes the theme or topic.

3.0 LITERARY RESPONSE AND ANALYSIS

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct indepth analyses of recurrent patterns and themes.

Structural Features of Literature

3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.

Discussion of the Great Depression connects to the Content Standards for History and Social Sciences, grade Eleven United States History and Geography along one standard:

11.6 Students analyze the different explanations for the Great Depression and how the New Deal fundamentally changed the role of the federal government.

Discussion of Standard Oil connects to the Content Standards for History and Social Sciences, grade Eleven United States History along one standard:

11.2 Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

5. Discuss corporate mergers that produced trusts and

cartels and the economic and political policies of industrial leaders.

Discussion of William Randolph Hearst and *The Daily News* connects to the Content Standards for History and Social Sciences, grade Twelve Principles of American Democracy and Economics along two points of one standard:

12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.

3. Explain how public offials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.

Discussion of Paris connects to the Content Standards for History and Social Sciences, grade Ten World History, Culture, and Geography along two points of one standard:

10.6 Students analyze the effects of the First World War.

2. Describe the effects of the war and resulting peace treaties on population movement, the international economy, and shifts in the geographic and political borders of Europe and the Middle East.

4. Discuss the influence of World War I on literature, art, and intellectual life in the West (e.g., Pablo Picasso, the "lost generation" of Gertrude Stein, Ernest

Hemingway).

Discussion of the Spanish Civil War connects to the Content Standards for History and Social Science, grade Ten World History, Culture, and Geography along two standards:

10.6 Students analyze the effects of the First World War.

3. Understand the widespread disillusionment with prewar institutions, authorities, and values that resulted in a void that ws later filled by totalitarians.

10.7 Students analyze the rise of totalitarian governments after World War I.

3. Analyze the rise, aggression, and human costs of totalitarian regimes (Fascist and Communist) in Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union, noting especially their common and dissimilar traits.

Discussion of the Sino-Japanese War connects to the Content Standards for History and Social Sciences, grade Ten World History, Culture, and Geography along one standard:

10.8 Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II.

1. Compare the German, Italian, and Japanese drives for empire in the 1930's, including the 1937 Rape of Nanking, other atrocities in China, and the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939.

(cde.ca.gov)

CHAPTER FOUR

ACT TWO

Summary of Act Two

At the open of Act II, it is a month later, and just one the night before the supply plane and Charleston's relief man are coming to Thunder Rock. The lighthouse is abuzz with activity. Captain Joshua, the Captain of the lost Land o' Lakes, Charleston and Mr. Briggs, a middle-aged potter from Birmingham, England, also lost with the Land o' Lakes, open the scene. Briggs is looking for Dr. Kurtz because, as Charleson had decided would be an effective way to help bring his companions more fully to life, Briggs's wife is giving birth upstairs. Dr. Kurtz approaches, disheveled, and is taken upstairs by Briggs to attend to his wife. Melanie, Dr. Kurtz daughter, comes on scene and berates Charleston and speaks ill of Mr. Briggs. Anne Marie, Dr. Kurtz's wife, enters and apologizes for her daughter Melanie. Mrs. Kirby, a hardened suffragette, later enters and also speaks ill of the Briggses. Captain Joshua, the only character at this time other than Charleston who knows that they are all just a part of Charleston's mind, reprimands Charleston for the way he is portraying his old shipmates from 1849. He convinces Charleston to replay the scene, but with a more honest representation of the people.

Their characters flesh out even further. The scene replays. Charleston is struck by the humanity of them all, but also by their lack of optimism and the

common theme of escapism that motivated their immigration to America. Charleston tries to convince them of the hopefulness and promise of progress that exists in the world of their future. He gives examples and makes arguments, but they don't understand. Eventually, Charleston becomes even more pessimistic because of their reactions, and loses all hope. In a fit, Charleston tells the old passengers that they are not real, that they are dead. They do not believe at first, but come to believe after they read the memorial plaque. Charleston goes to his rooms defeated, but the passengers have found a new comfort, and the hints of a new purpose.

Themes from Act Two

At the beginning of the second act Captain Joshua introduces a new theme: the ability of man to enact his own thoughts and participate meaningfully in the world around him, and conversely his relative inability to do the same in certain circumstances. The Captain says to Charleston, "I'm an imaginary man that's brimming like a cup with imaginary and economical satisfactions" (Ardrey, Act II, page 30). Their interaction continues as Charleston is unsuccessfully trying to calm the Captain down:

> CAPTAIN: Then we're such flesh and blood of a sudden, that we'll not disappear like a mist in the morning?
>
> CHARLESTON: Well said, Joshua.
>
> CAPTAIN: Well said? (*Snort of disgust, and he rises.*) I dislike your compliments, Mr. Charleston. I speak well? It's your words I'm speaking!

You compliment yourself!. . .I speak no word, I make no move, but it's at your beck. . .I'm a man, Mr. Charleston, with a stormy and responsible past, and a calm and irresponsible future – remind me of these things, I'm discontent. (Ardrey 31)

The Captain makes the obvious point that the dead can not speak for themselves, but this inability is not always limited to the dead. At any time an individual may experience in his life the feeling of being a static, or 'imaginary,' man. Charleston, by attempting to be 'dead' to society, has actually placed himself in a similar situation. The tension between one's ability to act and the forces that would render him unable to act – and how individuals navigate that conflict – is played out over the course of the play. It is not fully resolved, because it is an issue that everyone must always grapple with, but it is very neatly explored.

Mr. Briggs and Melanie Kurtz introduce the theme of education: the hope, and more so the need, for education. Briggs understands that for his children to have an opportunity for education would give them the opportunity to pursue anything they might choose. He also believes that to afford his children that opportunity he must first get rich. Melanie understands that particular reality of their time, but has a more pessimistic view. She despairs over the ignorance that she and her family had to face, which forced them from Vienna. She believes that wealth, or lack thereof, is an insurmountable barrier to access to education. Briggs's offers the more hopeful statement:

BRIGGS: Do you know what I'll do, d'you know? I'll send 'em to school.

To school, d'you hear? I'll be that rich. They'll grow up no ignorant men like me, no, sir. They'll be wise and educated men. Eh. (Ardrey 39)

Melanies interaction with Charleston is more pessimistic:

MELANIE: And if all the ignorant people in all the world might only die tonight – then there'd be an end to all ignorance –

CHARLESTON: They don't need to die! One word: Education.

MELANIE: Education! The rich are few.

CHARLESTON: But a time will come when people won't need to be rich.

MELANIE: They will pay for their schooling with cabbages, perhaps? Cabbages, and bundles of wood? (Ardrey 45)

All this dialogue highlights how the opportunities for education and the advancement of individuals and society have advanced and been successful in creating greater opportunites for equality. Of course, a society that no longer places education as a priority is an obvious and alarming problem that still crops up today.

The pursuit of gender equality is another theme from the play that is brought up by Miss Kirby. She has lost hope for the goal of equality, but she tells the other characters part of the story of her past. She passionately tells them about how she would preach to the men in Hyde Park, saying:

Every child that's born, I'd tell them, I pray its a girl. A female Moses, to deliver her sex from bondage, and lead them into the Promised Land. A Promised Land, where girls will go to school, like boys. Where women may earn their livings, and be more than an object of pity. Where, after

> supper, when the dishes are cleared away, we'll follow the men to the parlor – and we'll all speak together of the world's affairs. Only ten years ago. How I prayed for the birth of a female Moses – (*She falls silent.*). (Ardrey 41)

Miss Kirby has given up on her dream, believing that it is unattainable and relegating herself to the fate she has been fighting against her whole life. The advancement of gender equality and the dignity of women is a reality she can no longer imagine. For all the gains society has made up to today in the regard, there is still a long way to go.

Near the end of the second act Dr. Kurtz echos the theme of despair, hopelessness and escapism introduced by Charleston in the first act. But Dr. Kurtz's words are even more direct; he has no illusions about his reasons for leaving his homeland for America, and his motivivations for giving up on himself. He says:

> He [God] sees us deserting our fatherlands, and all our deepest dreams. The triumph of science, the enlightenment of education, the dignity of labor, the equality of women and men. These are the banners we leave on the field. He sees us now, groping about in an alien land for all the second prizes, wealth, peace of mind – . . . We are fugitives seeking sanctuary, nothing more. (Ardrey 47)

For a short moment Charleston introduces to the passengers of the Land o' Lakes an new idea, a new hope, a new theme. He exhorts: "Stick to your guns, for God's sake, stick to your guns! Men live among you today who will be

he leaders you despair of finding" (Ardrey 48). But the passengers inability to believe the truth of what Charleston says, due to the fact that he is speaking from the perspective of a future they did not live to see, leads them to reject Charlestons call to hope. This lack of vision, resolve, and forward thinking causes Charleston to fall into his deepest level of despair yet. He says, "I'm as helpless in a world of my own choice, as I was in the world I was born into" (Ardrey 49). This exemplifies the central conflict of the play.

Historical Points of Interest in Act Two

The California Gold Rush

> CHARLESTON: Eighteen forty-nine. That was one of our best years. Things weren't so good in Europe, but over here the rush to California was in full swing. (Ardrey 19)
>
> BRIGGS: Eh. I'm a rich man soon. California. (He swaggers about.) No more working for hire, not for me. I'll be spitting out gold like the pits of cherries. Back to Birmingham I'll go, and them's that's sweated me and done me in for but a few shillings come Saturday night, I'll spit in their faces – gold nuggets I'll spit in their face, and I'll say, Ha! Spit back? You'll not. I'm rich. I'm rich. Would you look. My Millie's traveling about in a carriage – (Ardrey 32).

The character Mr. Briggs decided to make the daunting trek from England to California because of the news thaf gold had been found there. It had been in the first few months of 1848 that "stories began to spread through California

about gold discoveries at John Sutter's Coloma mill site and further discoveries at the Mormon diggings lower down the American River. Soon these stories were reaching port cities worldwide, moving along the seaways that carried ships from San Fancicsco Bay (Owens 1). James Marshall was the man who found the first surface deposits of gold on the South Fork of the American River. "More than $345 million in gold, calculated at contemporary value, came from the northern California Mother Lode between 1848 and 1854, the peak years of the gold rush" (16).

The discovery of gold in California was very exciting to many in Europe, especially in the British Isles. The years prior to 1848 when the Irish potato crop began to fail, and the poor grain harvest across all western Europe had created a rising famine. These catastrophes spurred massive migrations, and by 1848 and the discovery of gold in California, for those who could afford the trip, California was the place to go. The largest number of immigrants to California came from the British Isles (Owens 61-62). Although, "those who rushed from other nations to take advantage of this astonishing opportunity . . . included groups of diverse ethnic and cultural origins" (55).

Economic gain and opportunity was not the only motivation for migrations and settlements further to the West on the American Continent. This, of course, was the primary impulse of individuals who made the journey west during the California Gold Rush, whether they be from Europe or Americans from the Atlantic Coast or Midwest; but, there was also an undercurrent of the notion of Manifest Destiny. This was a social and political notion, and an expansionary

impulse, that asserted that the West needed the same "civilizing" that had transformed the American East (Roark 397). The West was a largely undeveloped wilderness repleat with rich resources and vast tracts of land that were necessary for expanding America's national prosperity (397-398). The New York journalist John L. O'Sullivan actually coined the term "Manifest Destiny" in 1845, when he wrote and advocated for:

> The fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying million . . . [and] for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self-government entrusted to us. (Roark 398)

The Women's Movement

> MISS KIRBY: Ah! You contemptible males! That's how you enslave us, with babies and homes and cares in the kitchen . . .
>
> BRIGGS: You're a disgrace to womanhood! America'll have no more of you than London town itself. Spouting forth about Women's Rights and such tomfoolery –
>
> MISS KIRBY: (*She brandishes her umbrella at Briggs, who cringes.*) There's a place where a woman has a higher calling than merely chasing a husband! There's a place where women have better things to do than merely producing babies! Where it is, the Good Lord knows, but wherever it is, I'll find it! (Ardrey 33)

The character Miss Kirby is the image of a British suffragette, though in her reconception she has given up on this dream. It is necessary, then, to

explore some of the major points of the Women's Movement in Great Britain in the mid-1900's, the time of Miss Kirby. But, as *Thunder Rock* is an American play, it is also necessary to expand the discussion further into the Suffrage movement in America. It is also the successes of the women's rights movement in both England and America after the time of Miss Kirby's death that the protagonist, Charleston, uses to convince and inspire her about the importance and meaning of her cause.

In England, there is no single date to mark the true beginning of the Women's Movement, it has many events and cases, but one pivotal date is 1792, when Mary Wollstonecraft wrote and published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women.* In her book she sets out the feminist ideal and the claim for equal human rights in whole. It remains a central text for the women's movement into the 20th century (Strackey 11-12).

> The first stirrings of the feminist movement began through the awakening of individual women to their own uselessness . . . and by the middle of the [19th] century there were quite a noticeable number of people who were familiar with the idea that there was something wrong with the position of women. (Strackey 44)

One of the women would become the most well known in the movement in England at that time was Florence Nightingale, who is specifically referenced in *Thunder Rock.* Florence was born in 1820, and was one of the greatest advocates of the women's movement in Britain from the mid 19th century until her death. She was especially adept at explaining the women's "revolution" by

sharing her experiences and her reactions to them (Strackey 18-19).

Florence, though she eventually came to fight against the conventions of her time that restricted and limited women, would in fact no truly begin to work against those conventions and barriers to independent action by women until she herself was more than 30 years old (Strackey 19). She was certainly not of a weak disposition, though she outwardly appeared to be gentle and perhaps a little aloof, and she felt even from a young age that she needed to be useful and engaged in a work that was of great import to her society. "Above all she chafed and rebelled against the system by which a young lady never had a moment she could call her own" (19).

In America, at the very time that Miss Kirby was leaving England with a sense of defeat, the first major moment of the American suffrage movement was beginning. On July 14, 1848, the "Seneca County Courier," in upstate New York ran a three sentence announcement that "invited women to a discussion of 'the social, civil, and religious rights of women.'" And so, in Seneca Falls in a small church, "the global expansion of human rights for women – the notion that women are full human beings and that women's rights are human rights – began here" (Weatherford 1).

Unfortunately, most women of that time actually opposed the early pioneers of the women's movement. As odd as it seems, most women of the period "had to be talked into their own liberation," to be persuaded to the truth that they deserved and "were worthy of the same rights that their husbands, brothers, and sons took for granted" (Weatherford 1). 1848 was an exciting year

in the women's movement, but 1849 passed by fairly quietly. But in 1850 there was "a second explosion of women's rights," and from that moment "the revolution would be permanent" (37). Ohio, New York, and Massachusetts would all host conventions for the women's movement in that year (37-43).

One reason for the opposition to the feminist movement was because of its opponents portrayal of it as being anti-religious. In truth the early proponents of the women's movement were generally devout of faith, like Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. It is also true, though, that through the last half of the 19th century, as they continued the push for the enfranchisement of women, they did move further from the strict realms of religious orthodoxy (Jacoby 194). Women such as Stanton were adamant about securing the right to vote for women, but they also believed that the injustices against women went far deeper:

> they saw women's inequality in employment, education, and legal rights, especially within marriage, as much deeper issues, rooted in a religiously based tradition that led women to see themselves as inferior. (195)

These women did not live to see American women win the right to vote, let alone the goal of full equality in every aspect of American life. But, in 1920 the first great leap for women's rights in America, and one of its greatest challenges up to that point, had finally been won. It was announced: "Despite the political subversion of the antisuffragists . . . three-quarters of state legislatures ratify the Nineteenth Amendment on [August 26, 1920]. American women win full voting rights" (Weatherford 250).

Industrialism, Child Labor and Abuses

> CAPTAIN: Briggs. You do the man injustice. . . . he'd gone to work at the age of seven, in the potteries at Birmingham. Man, his face, I'll not forget his face. White it was, and a thin glaze, like the china cups themselves. A bit of a cough he had, like so many that came from the potteries. And across his face from cheek to cheek -- a word. You could read it. Doom. (Ardrey 37)

In the early 1800s industrialism had brought about a new factory system, which in turn created abusive "mass-congregated wage slavery." The "profiteering" of capitalists from child labor should not be looked at too simplistically, as children who worked under their parents or were apprentices or bonded out to laborers in place of paying family debts were often the victims of harsher abuse than those children who worked in factories. But the abuses of the factory owner can not be ignored a (Rose 8).

In Britain the Factory Act of 1833, as well as the 1844 Act by Lord Ashley and subsequent Factory Acts up to 1853, finally began to address minimum age requirements, maximum work hours, doctor approved heath certificates, and mandatory provisions for schooling opportunities for children working in the Textile industry. But even with these legal pronouncements, the law was often evaded or cheated to extract as much work from as many children as possible. Families themselves were often responsible for encouraging this illegal activity, often as a response to their extreme poverty, though sometimes not solely for

that reason (Rose 9).

There was a Children's Employment Commission in 1842 and 1843 that also found extreme circumstances for very young children in the mines. Children as young as 5 and 6 years old were sent underground to mine in areas that were awkwardly shaped, craggy and thin. Children would be injured from cave-ins and being run over by the wagons transporting the products of the mines. Many children also experienced lung and skin diseases caused by their work conditions. 1842 and 1860 saw two Mines Acts that began to address the situation of the children and the extreme conditions (Rose 11).

The character, Mr. Briggs, is described as having worked in the Birmingham potteries, and as an adult to be in very poor health. In the potteries:

> Youngsters could work in temperatures of 120-148 [degrees Fahrenheit]. They served as 'mould-runners,' carrying the article fresh out of the mould to the stove room, where the atmosphere was charred with particles of fine clay. This contaminated and overheated atmosphere brought about chest ailments, stunted growth and premature death. (Rose 13)

Polygamy in Early Mormonism

> MISS KIRBY: Why am I here where I don't belong? Because I'm forty years old and I'm ugly. I'm ugly! Look at my face, look at my scars! I've spent my life fighting for the dignity of women and I've made of myself an undignified old battle-ax in the process! Who wants me? Who wants a scarred old warrior? . . . I understand now, when I'm forty years old, and I've wasted my life, and it's almost too late . . . There's a colony in your

western wilderness. . . . Deseret . . . Where else has a woman like me to go? – I'll find a husband, in Deseret – and perhaps – before it's too late – a child – a boy – I hope . . . I like the terms – no better than you, but I'm grateful, I'm grateful – a man of the Mormon religion – who has prettier faces to look upon – will forgive my ugliness . . . (Ardrey 41).

Miss Kirby has given up on her struggle for women's rights and has cynically decided that the only way for her to regain her womanhood is to indeed marry and have children. Even more cynically she has decided that only a Mormon man, who has other, prettier wives, would be able to overlook her ugliness in favor of her usefulness to him.

Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons, or Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, claimed that it had been revealed to him by God that his church was to practice the principle of polygamy. Smith himself had many wives, though this fact was not always admitted publicly (Brodie 388). His first wife, and only legal wife, Emma always denied that her husband had multiple wives, or that there had ever been any revelation from God about polygamy. Though this may have only been a cover for her personal embarrassment at her marital situation, since there is a great deal of documentation and anecdotal evidence to the fact that Joseph indeed had other wives consecrated in official Mormon Temple ceremonies (399).

Brigham Young, who succeeded as the Mormon prophet after Joseph's assassination, took the greater part of the Mormon followers at the time across the great plains to settle in what is now Salt Lake City, Utah in 1848 (Brodie 400).

Brigham Young and his followers took with them the practice of polygamy. But the practice evolved slightly in Utah, where it had once been more of a "clandestine venture limited to the leading elders of the church," in the extreme isolation of the Great Basin of Utah polygamy:

> [It] became an eminently respectable practice, the number of wives even symbolizing the intensity of a man's faith. And there was no more casual marrying of married women, as Joseph had done; every man who took a plural wife assumed full responsibility for her honor, if not always for her support. (Brodie 401)

But by 1890 the practice saw yet another change. The fourth prophet of the church, Wilford Woodruff, who had sincere desires for the Utah territory to win statehood in the Union, "renounced the practice of plural marriage while retaining the principle as an ideal" in a manifesto written by him. That is to say that Mormons would no longer practice polygamy in any way, but hold in their spiritual beliefs the importance and righteousness of the practice as an eternal principle, now meant for use in Heaven alone (Brodie 401). The Mormon church of today has almost completely "turned against the principle as well as the practice," and members often try to think of it as "merely a memory, and an embarrassing one" (Brodie 401).

Medicine and Anesthetics

> CHARLESTON: Why did you leave Vienna?
>
> MELANIE: Because people burn down our house. . . . the people are afraid of Papa. He makes in the basement a little liquid, you smell it – so –

you're asleep. You feel no pain. The people are afraid Papa will put them to sleep, he will cut off their legs, he'll cut off their ears, he'll steal their money and kidnap their children. So the people burn down our house. . . .

CHARLESTON: What'll happen to his work on anesthetics? . . .

MELANIE: He will forget it. . . . People prefer to shriek in pain.

(Ardrey 42-43)

The character Dr. Kurtz in the play is a Viennese doctor who has been run out of his town and his country because of his research into the field of anesthetics. Even in Dr. Kurtz's time this type of scientific research was often misunderstood and mistrusted. At the beginning of the 19th century, many practitioners of medicine had been trained in a "climate of ideas that had not altered much since the time of Hippocrates." some still believed in the effect of internal "humours" on health, and treated such humours with techniques such as blood-letting, the drawing of blood with leeches. As late as 1833, 500,000 leeches were imported into France alone (Williams 1).

Great advances were made in medicine in the 19th century, but many of the discoveries and practices that medical pioneers created in that century were not fully appreciated until the very end of the century or even later (Williams xiii). It wasn't until the 19th century that individuals who underwent surgery would be given any relief from the pain in the form of anaesthesia. The use of alcohol was a common practice to attempt to dull the senses of the patient (39).

Just before this century of innovations, the people had even seen attempts to deal with the pain inherent in surgery with forms of hypnosis. Franz Anton

Mesmer was an advocate of this technique, but a commission of "scientists and physicians appointed by the French Government to investigate his activities" did not particularly like what they found out. Mesmer was driven from his home and practice into "a life of obscurity in Switzerland." Not too obscure, though, because he has been somewhat immortalized by the fact that the word "mesmerize" comes from his name (Williams 39-40).

The use of the gases nitrous oxide and ether became common in the early 19th century, but were often difficult to administer and had side effects (Williams 44-45). In late 1847 Chloroform was finding a place in anesthetics as it could more reliably be administered and had very successful effects. For the last half of the century, chloroform was the anesthetic chosen by most surgeons in much of the western world (52).

Important Historical Figures Mentioned in Act Two

KURTZ: A genius is a mortal man possessed of the divine spark. Shakespeare and Rembrandt, Dante, Harvey, Voltaire, Goethe, Beethoven – all the many leaders down through the ages, they bear the touch of God. (*A slight pause.*) The last genius is dead. Twenty years, and no man rises to take Beethoven's place. – God has given up the struggle.

CHARLESTON: (*In sudden excitement.*) Stefan Kurtz! In your own city, in your own Vienna, a young man plays the organ tonight. His name is Johannes Brahms.

KURTZ: In Vienna?

CHARLESTON: Brahms.

KURTZ: He must be very young.

CHARLESTON: In England, tonight, there's a man not so young, he's working in his study, you should know of him, his name is Darwin. Charles Darwin.

KURTZ: A kinsman of Erasmus Darwin?

CHARLESTON: A grandson. A biologist! (Kurtz *shakes his head.*) In Paris tonight – (*He includes* Anne Marie *as he speaks.*) In your own Paris, Anne Marie – working in your own profession, Kurtz – Louis Pasteur.

KURTZ: (*Shaking his head.*) These are the lesser people – I speak of genius!

CHARLESTON: Miss Kirby! In London, right in London, a young woman, her name is Florence Nightingale – (She shakes her head.) If only you'd stayed there a few more years –

MISS KIRBY: I have never heard the name.

CHARLESTON: Oh, my friends! In my own country, in Illinois, where I was born – tonight in his office, a few hundred miles from here – a young lawyer, his name is Abraham Lincoln. (*A pause. He turns to Kurtz.*) Continue the work you gave up when you left Vienna!

KURTZ: What do you know of this?

CHARLESTON: Continue it! (Ardrey 47-48)

So many historical figures were mentioned in this passage that the descriptions of them must be brief, beginning with Louis Pasteur. Pasteur was born in Dole, France on December 27, 1822. He entered the Ecole Normale at

the age of 19 and was later accepted as a member of the Academie des Sciences, elected to the Academie Fracaise, and made a member of the Academie de Medecine even though he was not actually a doctor. He was responsible for revolutionizing medical and sanitation practices (Cuny 11). He studied fermentation, discovered anaerobiosis, invented pasteurisation, studied antisepsis, which would come to change the practice of surgery, researched rabies and anthrax, which for both he developed vaccinations (Cuny 180-182).

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564, with his birthday celebrated on April 23, though there is no official record of the exact day of his birth (Harbage 10). He attended Stratford grammar school and married Anne Hathaway in 1582 (12). By 1592 Shakespeare was a vital member of the theatre scene of London as both an actor and a playwright (13). He was a "householder," or investor, in the Globe theatre, which was built in 1599 to house the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the theatre company of which Shakespeare was a partner. The Lord Chamberlain's men became the Kings Men when the new King James became their benefactor (15). He wrote 37 plays, and perhaps collaborated on one or two other, which is rather few compared to the productivity of many of his peers, but the impact of his plays on the world of drama over the centuries is equaled by none (14).

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn was a Dutch painter born in 1606. He settled in Amsterdam in 1631 and by 1636 was painting in what was considered to be a very rich and detailed Baroque style. He was a well-known painter of portraits. After his wife died in childbirth and later falling deeply in debt he

retreated from society. He created some of his greatest work at this time, including *The Jewish Bride*. He created about 300 paintings, 300 etchings, and 1000 other drawings (Encyclopedia.com).

Dante Alighieri was an Italian poet born in 1265. For two years he was one of the rulers of Florence, Italy until he was exiled. As a writer his greatest masterpiece was *The Divine Comedy*, which was a three-book work of epic poetry. It is considered one of the greatest all time literary works of the Western World. It solidified Dante's place as one of the world's greatest writers (Encyclopedia.com).

Fancoise Marie Arouet de Voltaire was a French poet, dramatist, philosopher and historian born in 1694 in Paris, France. He was educated by Jesuits who say that he had a great gift for writing. He was a fairly prolific writer across many forms, well praised and well received, and he was an activist for liberty and a major figure in Enlightenment thought. He advanced the notion of public opinion as being central to the better development of public affairs (Encyclopedia.com).

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was a German scientist, novelist, dramatist, and poet born in Frankfurt am Main on August 28, 1749. He is considered the greatest German poet, and wrote the play *Faust*, the first part published in 1808 and the second part published posthumously, which to this day still stands as Germany's national drama. Aside from his artistic pursuits, he had also been at one time a minister of state in Weimar, as well as president of the treasury for a short time. He was one of the true Renaissance men, endeavoring and creating

in every aspect of human expression (Encyclopedia.com).

Ludwig van Beethoven was a pianist and composer born in Bonn, Germany in 1770. He is regarded as a musical genius who straddled the Classical and Romantic eras in music, and was actually instrumental in influencing the development of music into what would become the dominant style of the 1800's. This development of musical trends is most evident in his piano sonatas, symphonies, and string quartets. His 9th symphony is considered by many to be the highest standard by which any later orchestral symphony can be judged. His work was so beyond his time that his last works of composition baffled his audiences, and even some of his contemporary composers and musicians (Encyclopedia.com).

Johannes Brahms was a pianist and composer born in Hamburg, Germany in 1833. He was one of the greatest composers of the 19th century. He personally provided some of the greatest musical works in the repertoire of music from the Romantic era. Brahms was a student of Hayden for a time, and was very familiar with the classical forms of composition. He was able to take those forms and infuse them with romantic melodies and harmonies that were the hallmark of his era. Like Beethoven he continued to create virtuosic work all the way up until his death, his final works representing some of his greatest musical achievements (Encyclopedia.com).

Charles Darwin was born in Shewsbury, England in 1809, and was a naturalist who studied geology, evolution, and natural history. Despite the apparentness of his genius now, he was a poor student as a child and rather

aimless, but he did eventually received a degree from Cambridge. While there, he was encouraged by his friends to pursue studies in the natural sciences, instead of going into the clergy as his father had assumed he would do. He developed the theory of evolution by natural selection, which he empirically deduced through his observation of variations among members of species in a population. He saw that advantageous genetic variations between individuals in a population would allow them to compete more effectively within their environment and over the course of many, many generations the accumulation of these variations could eventually lead to the development of new and distinct species. His theory represents one of the great turning points in science (Encyclopedia.com).

Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin on February 12, 1809 in Hardin County, Kentucky. His first election to public office was in 1834 when he won a seat in the state legislature in Illinois. He began studies as a lawyer, served four successive terms in the state legislature, passed the bar exam, and then was elected to the United States Congress in 1846. He originally had belonged to the Whig party, but in 1856, after deciding that the Whig party was dying politically, he joined the new Republican party of which he quickly became a notable leader (Encyclopedia.com).

In 1860 the Republican party chose Abraham Lincoln as their nominee for President of the United States (Roark 506). On November 6, 1860 Lincoln won the electoral vote, though not the majority popular vote, and became the 16th president of the United States (507). Lincolns election, and more so the

antislavery platform of the Republican party, spurred the southern states to secede from the Union and elect Jefferson Davis as the President of the Confederacy (508). When the South attacked and took Fort Sumter in 1861, the Civil War officially began. Lincoln immediately called for 75,000 militiamen to put down the rebellion (517). After the North's victory at Antietam, Lincoln issued his Emancipation proclamation, which set out the principle of ending slavery, and later clarified the Union's goals in his Gettysburg address "to preserve a nation 'conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal'" (Encyclopedia.com). The war, though long, bloody, and tragic, was eventually won by the Union in 1865, and the South who began the war in order to preserve slavery only succeeded in providing the opportunity for slavery to be abolished (Roark 554). Lincoln would never be able to see the full fruits of abolition and the healing of the American Union, because he was assassinated on April 14, 1865 (Encyclopedia.com).

Questions for Further Exploration

As in the first act, the second act is densely packed with dialogue and references worth unpacking and exploring, though some may not be necessarily central to the development of the plot. Below are just a few of these question:

Why did Charleston choose Captain Joshua to be his confident?

When Charleston's reimagines his companions at the behest of Captain Joshua, who claims that they are not accurate, or 'true,' why do they not just become more 'real,' but also become more reflective of Charleston's

own state of mind? (Ardrey 36)

How do studies in psychology inform the understanding of the interactions between Charleston and the other characters?

The descriptions given by Dr. Kurtz and Melanie as to how the people of Vienna,as well as Dr. Kurtz's own Medical Society, ultimately feared him, treated him, and ostricized him look a great deal like antisemitism. Dr. Kurtz is never directly stated to be Jewish, but might he be? How does what happened to Dr. Kurtz in 1849 reflect what was actually happening in Vienna, and Europe in general, in 1939 at the time of the play? (Ardrey 42-43)

Why does Charleston decide to let the passengers know at the end of the act that they are dead? (Ardrey 49)

How does Mrs. Briggs, Mr. Briggs wife, affect the trajectory of the play, even though she is never seen onstage? Is it somehow important that s he is a character in the play without actually being a character in the play?

As a point of interest, Charleston imagines Mrs. Briggs as being on Thunder Rock with the rest of the characters. She is not seen onstage because Charleston is inspired to imagine her as pregnant and presently giving birth in the upper part of the lighthouse. He does this in an effort to bring more energy and life to the rest of his companions. His plan is successful, though with unintended consequences. As his imaginings take on a life of their own, and the pessimism and harsh realities of their world become fleshed out, Mrs. Briggs dies in childbirth. This is actually a common tragedy of her day. In the 19th century, in

London's greater metropolitan area specifically, about two-thirds of all children born died before they were five years old, many stillborn or dead just after birth (Williams 82). Mrs. Briggs is an invisible woman with a child who never lived, but they function as a catalyst to the plot. Their effect on the other characters through the act is clear.

Connections to the California Content Standards

Discussion of the Women's Rights Movement connects to the California Content Standards for History and Social Studies, grade Eleven United States History and Geography with one standard:

11.5 Students analyze the major political, social, economic, technological, and cultural developments of the 1920s.

4. Analyze the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and the changing role of women in society.

Discussion of industrialism and child labor connects to the Content Standards for History and Social Studies, grade Ten World History with one standard, and grade Eleven United States History with one standard:

10.3 Students analyze the effects of the Industrial Revolution in England, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States.

4. Trace the evolution of work and labor, including the demise of the slave trade and the effects of immigration, mining and manufacturing, division of l abor, and the union movement.

11.2 Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

1. Know the effects of industrialization on living and working conditions, including the portrayal of working conditions and food safety in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*.

Discussion of Mormonism connects with the Content Standards in History and Social Studies, grade Eleven United States History with one standard:

11.3 Students analyze the role religion played in the founding of America, its lasting moral, social, and political impacts, and issues regarding religious liberty.

3. Cite incidences of religious intolerance in the United States (e.g., persecution of Mormons, anti-Catholic sentiment, anti-Semitism).

Discussion of the development of anesthetics connects with the Science Content Standards in Chemistry, grades Nine through Twelve with one standard, and in Biology, grades Nine through Twelve with another standard:

Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry

11. The bonding characteristics of carbon allow the formation fo many different organic molecules of varied sizes, shapes, and chemical properties and provide the biochemical basis of life. As a basis for understanding this concept:

e. Students know how to identify the functional groups that form the basis of alcohols, ketones, ethers, amines, esters, aldehydes, and organic acids.

Physiology

9. As a result of the coordinated structres and functions of organ systems, the internal environment of the human body remains relatively stable (homeostatic) despite changes in the outside environment. As a basis for understanding this concept:

b. Students know how the nervous system mediates communication between different parts of the body and the body's interactions with the environment.

Discussion of the Historical figures connects to a great many Content Standards, which include, but are not limited to: Visual and Performing Arts, Theatre, grades Nine through Twelve proficient standard 3.3; Music, grades Nine through Twelve proficient standard 3.1; History and Social Studies, United States History, grade Eleven standard 11.1; and Science, Biology, grades Nine through Twelve standards 8a, 8b, 8c, and 8d.

(cde.ca.gov)

CHAPTER FIVE

ACT THREE

Summary of Act Three

The third act opens on the morning following act two. The previous night began with Charleston pleased and optimistic about his private little world and the passengers pessimistic and lost, but by the end of the night their positions were reversed. Now, the passengers have decided that they are there to help relieve Charleston's mind of the emotionless, hopeless state he has fallen in. Charleston claims that he no longer cares one bit about anything in the world. He can be objective again and return to his old career as a journalist, which he had left because he had supposedly lost his objectivity during the Spanish Civil War. Dr. Kurtz steps up as the individual to counter Charleston's pessimism and detachment and proceeds to offer him hope for the future again. Through their intense discussion and debate Charleston rediscovers his purpose. As all the emotional wounds are healed and resolved, the passengers are able to leave and fade back into the recesses of Charleston's mind and history.

Flanning returns to Thunder Rock with Charleston's replacement, Cassidy. Flanning announces that Charleston is being fired because he's not "normal" enough and, frankly, just too good for his job. Charleston, while in conversation with Cassidy, realizes that his replacement is similarly afflicted of spirit as Charleston had been; they both had been involved in the Spanish Civil War.

Charleston gives Cassidy some friendly advice, which Cassidy doesn't seem to take seriously. The play ends, the two men saying their goodbyes, as Charleston smiles hopefully.

Themes from Act Three

At the beginning of the third act Charleston shows the most extreme form of hoplessness: the descent into uncaring nihilism and complete emotional detachment from the world. He has resolved to be a ghost himself, a spectre and a spectator with no substance and nothing more to lose. He says to Dr. Kurtz:

> I can't explain why I acted as I did. Perhaps I cared too much. I believe that's been my curse all along -- that I cared more than I knew. Even when I came here to Thunder rock, when I took this job and I thought I cared not at all – I was wrong. I cared a great deal. . . . may I thank you? All of you. Because you've done me a very great favor. You've relieved me of my curse. I no longer care. Not a whit. (Ardrey 55)

After Charleston's revelation to the passengers that they are dead, and in fact nothing more than Charleston's own imaginings, Dr. Kurtz begins to take on the role of Charleston's conscience – his hopeful self. He tries to convince Charleston to leave behind his hoplessness by asking:

> Cannot you see yourself in another man's eyes? A man a century from now, when you are dead, who brings you to his mind as you have brought us? Can't you see yourself as he would see you, a silly, childish,

ridiculous figure, fleeing problems that can never be solved and that for him are solved and forgotten? (Ardrey 57)

The Dr. Kurtz of the third act has seemed to switch positions with the Charleston of the middle of the second act who was trying to convince Dr. Kurtz that the causes they care for so much for will assuredly progress and be fully realized over time.

This conflict between perspectives comes to a head as Charleston laments about the realities of war, and how utterly destructive they have become. His and Dr. Kurtz discussion continues:

CHARLESTON: Your problems were things like pain, and ignorance. What you cannot understand is that our is of a different order. Ours is the end.

KURTZ: The end?

CHARLESTON: The end of all things. Of civilization. Of manking, perhaps, itself.

KURTZ: I do not understand.

CHARLESTON: War, Kurtz. War. A war that may start today, or tomorrow, or the next day –

KURTZ: Such childishness. All this, from merely war?

CHARLESTON: Merely war. . . . to describe modern warfare . . . deliver me! . . . The words are clear. I can read them. (*A silence.*)

KURTZ: David. I weep for you.

CHARLESTON: It's not what I ask.

KURTZ: What do you ask?

CHARLESTON: I suppose – the logical, reasonable basis for belief that a future exists. (He turns from door.) It's a simple thing, isn't it? Who could ask for less? A future that a man can fight for, and a faith in it that my intelligence can't deny. – I tried, Kurtz. I tried all night to see in your lives some answer. But that your problems were solved, proves nothing. (Ardrey 58)

Dr. Kurtz's response to this notion bring the play to its climax and the most important theme in the play. It begins:

KURTZ: David. The work I did in Vienna. What is your word for it?

CHARLESTON: Anesthesia.

KURTZ: Look at me. I gave up. Because I ran away, does the world lack anesthesia?

CHARLESTON: No.

KURTZ: No! And if I had not given up? If I had continued my work in Vienna? What would have been the result?

CHARLESTON: We'd have had anesthetics a few years sooner.

KURTZ: Exactly! (*His excitement is intense.* Charleston *does not understand, but the excitement catches him.*) Whether or not I gave up, the problem would have been solved. What was the power, then, that I surrendered?

CHARLESTON: To solve it sooner.

KURTZ: To solve it sooner. . . . David, David! It is the writing hand! Men

may lose, but mankind never! Sooner or later, tomorrow or in a thousand years, mankind finds an answer. And you, David, or I – we have only one power – to decide just this: will it be sonner? Or will it be later?

(Ardrey 58-59)

The understanding that each individual always has choices, always can have a positive effect in their world, always can have faith that mankind is not destined for destruction so long as men are willing to look for solutions is a powerful lesson that can not be ignored. This entire notion is actually summed up best by Dr. Kurtz in one single sentence: "I cried aloud for leadership, and I failed to look to myself" (Ardrey 60).

Historical Point of Interest in Act Three

German Invasion of Poland

Radio: (*The announcer speaks with measured restraint.*) . . . the latest bulletins on the European crisis. Ladies and gentlemen, it would seem that today may be one long remembered in world history. From Berlin: Adolf Hitler delivered a speech believed to be the keynote to general war in Europe. From Warsaw: Frontier reports say that Polish soil has been invaded by German motorized units. From London – (Charleston *turns off radio. For a moment he stands silent. . . .*) (Ardrey 62)

The beginning of World War II also plays an interesting part in the play. It was written in September of 1939 and takes place in the summer of that year. In that summer the Nazis and the Soviets had signed a pact, Britain and Poland

sign a mutual assistance treaty, and Pope Pious is still trying to negotiate away from war. On August 31st the British fleet mobilizes, and on the following day Germany invades Poland. Many of these historical moments are heard on the radio in the play, which helps to highlight a sense of urgency (The History Place).

To explain the lead up to the war, one must actually begin at the end of World War I. After the First World War was fought and won, the Treaty of Versailles was enacted in 1919. This treaty required a drastically disarmed Germany, a loss of much German territory, both colonies and lands on the European continent, and reparations for the war. Hitler's aims more than a decade later were initially to see those restrictions ended, but once he was able to do that, he could not stop. He wanted to dominate all of Europe (Eubank 2).

In the six years just prior to the German invasion of Poland and the declaration of war on Germany by Britain and France there were a number of steps that marked the progression toward war. Some of these included a ten year nonaggression pact between Germany and Poland on January 26, 1934. It was then on March 7, 1936 that Germany occupied the Rhineland. On May 30, 1938 Germany then invaded Czechoslovakia, and just months later on September 29th Germany annexed the Sudetenland. On April 28, 1939 Hitler then denounced the nonaggression pact with Poland, and 4 months later on August 23rd Germany signed a nonaggression pact with the Soviet Union (Eubank xiii).

It was the Hitler-Stalin pact on August 23, 1939 that caused Warsaw to react "by ordering a general mobilization. But the ambassadors in Warsaw,

Poland from both Britain and France "intervened on August 29 and prevailed upon the Polish government to cancel the order so as 'not to provoke Hitler'" (Dziewanowski 61). But despite these efforts Hitler issued the order to invade Poland on September 1, 1939. This is the act that pushed England and France to declare war on Germany two days later on September 3rd (Eubank 2).

Questions for Further Exploration

Why do the passengers begin to change roles with Charleston intellectually and emotionally?

What does it mean that they begin to take over control of the conversation in the third act?

What is the purpose of revealing the sexual tension between Charleston and Melanie? (Ardrey 61)

Is there any significance to the passengers being able to leave Thunder Rock of their own volition at the same time that Charleston chooses to leave Thunder Rock with a sense of peace?

How important is the radio throughout the play? Is there a connection to FDR's fireside chats? Does the announcement of the beginning of World War II over the radio in the play have any parallels to the Orson Welles radio drama *The War of the Worlds* in 1938 that caused a small panic among listeners who thought it was real?

Connections to the California Content Standards

Discussion of the German invasion of Poland connects with the California Content Standards in History and Social Sciences, grade Ten World History, Culture, and Geography across most every portion of standard 10.8:

10.8 Students analyze the causes and consequences of World War II.

1. Compare the German, Italian, and Japanese drives for empire in the 1930's including the 1937 Rape of Nanking, other atrocities in China, and the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939.
2. Understand the role of appeasement, nonintervention (isolationism), and the domestic distractions in Europe and the United States prior to the outbreak of World War II.
4. Describe the political, diplomatic, and military leaders during the war (e.g., Winston Churchill, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Emperor Hirohito, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Joseph Stalin, Douglas MacArthur, Dwight Eisenhower).
6. Discuss the human costs of the war, with particular attention to the civilian and military losses in Russia, Germany, Britain, the United States, China, and Japan.

(cde.ca.gov)

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to advocate for the reintroduction of an important American play from the pre-World War II era of theatre to the California Reading List for Public High Schools, which is currently neglected in the curriculum. It was my intention to argue my case for the play, *Thunder Rock*, by Robert Ardrey through the use of detailed and thorough analyses of the play, in an effort to unveil the quality and value of its content. This required a complete dramaturgical analysis, including biographical, historical, thematic, and critical inquiries, as well as connecting all relevant information discovered through that process to appropriate educational standards set forth for California public schools. As an additional justification for advancing the play in secondary education, an explanation of contemporary principles of drama in education, and a few explicit examples of those principle in action, has been provided to further the accessiblity of the material. The totality of the project therefore establishes support for the notion of this play being of particular value as a work of dramatic literature, marvelously suited for integration into a more diverse curriculum.

Thunder Rock is a great example of the theatre of the 1930s. It is written by a playwright who was exceptionally talented, and became a very well known and well respected writer of stage and screen. His contributions to the stage were once well known, though they have now become somewhat lost in time. Analysis of this play proves that Ardrey is worth a second look as an important

figure in theatre, and students of theatre and literature would be well-served in having greater exposure to him.

Beyond the work of Ardrey, a very important aspect of this play is that it is directly tied to the Group Theatre. They were one of the most iconic theatre companies in America, and have had a greater effect on American theatre and acting than perhaps any other. To once again have a play on the California Reading List that was debuted by the Group Theatre would be an important step in connecting todays students back to a fundamental aspect of American cultural and artistic history. The play is a part of the lineage of great drama of the 1930's, like the works of Odetts, O'Neill, and Wilder, which once did have a place on the California Reading List, and would be a good catalyst to encourage students to explore further into the important plays of that era.

As has been explored in detail, the contents of the play itself are the greatest proof of the plays educational value. The density of the dialogue and the creativity of the treatment of its subjects creates nearly endless avenues of discovery to pursue in the classroom. Elements of the play directly link to more than thirty different standards across no fewer than seven different subject areas, though primarily Theatre, English and History, and has the potential for even more connections than that as one delves even deeper into the text. The connections to the content areas expand even further when directly applied in the process of classroom instruction and student participation. The opportunities inherent in the study of this play to connect across the curriculum and create a rich educational experience for any High School student are undeniable.

Though the thesis attempts to accomplish many goals similtaneously, and this admittedly creates a slightly muddled presentation of the analysis, it is but an initial exploration of a subject that demands a very high level of dedication. My methods here are at least sufficient to the task of initiating a conversation about the value of this literary work and piece of theatre history. The California Reading List should be more expansive in its inclusion of American plays from important periods, and my method of analysis, I believe, has accomplished at least some small amount of validation for this lesser known American play that deserves a greater consideration in the world of academia due to its value for the advancement and deepening of public High School education.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

To Teach the Play and Drama-Based Education

A play is not just a piece of literature. The play goes far beyond the simplistic notions of plot, character, theme, and prose. Plays invite their readers to enter into an entire world, a universe of experience; but, the play does not expect its reader to engage in this world just through observation. It emphatically requires that it be explored through direct participation. It is interesting to note that in this way a play requires a student to engage with it directly mirrors one of the central themes of *Thunder Rock*.

Unfortunately, it has been the case that teachers often teach dramatic literature as if it were simply some subdivision of teaching novels or any other general piece of literature. Plays have largely been given over to English departments where they tend to concentrate on the play as a written text only (Hobgood 26), where the greatest point of emphasis on the study of plays is put on analysis of story-line. In this way we may be offering students an educational "diet that has been neither aesthetically satisfying nor epistemologically useful" (Bolton 9). Also, the teacher of dramatic literature has often moved directly "from text to meaning," but those who best understand the teaching of scripts "know they have to move not from script to meaning but from script to experience out of which meaning may arise (Hobgood 33).

The typical approach to teaching a play is through a vertical model that has a limited focus in a within a single discipline. This is "discipline-centered

teaching," and it does not take into account any other discipline or path of inquiry outside of the particular course of study. It imposes a more rigid rubric of what is appropriate to be studied, with prescriptive notions of what information is to be assimilated, how and when. Though this model is successful in many circumstances, it does not allow for the most expansive educational experience (Patterson 95).

Many teachers are now exploring a more horizontal model of teaching that incorporates mutiple disciplines and paths of inquiry. These instruction methods are called by many names, among them "integrated curriculum, interdisciplinary learning, inquiry, problem-based learning, and teaching across the curriculum" (Patterson 96). The point of these approaches is to connect multiple disciplines, and even styles of learning, through group activities, projects, and more creative and performative explorations of a subject or problem. Learning can be intiated with a more vertical model, but opportunities to develop more diverse connections to the object of study can often foster a greater mastery of the material (96-97).

Thunder Rock is filled with references to so many experiences, figures and ideas that are readily accessible to the student on multiple levels. More importantly, all of these issues span across far more than any one subject matter or any one aspect of a classroom curriculum and instruction. The play, as with any play, has an immense amount of cross-curricular applications, and is filled with opportunities for learning through participation and action. The play has a clear aesthetic appeal, as well as it has directly applicable uses in stimulating

deeper and more broad-based learning.

It is important, then, that the play be given more appropriate attention in all its uses as an educational medium. In a world where the classroom can become dry and boring, any opportunity to invite a student to delve into the object of their study as a fully engaged participant is important. It is also possible that through the exploration of the world of a play, a learner may find a greater desire to connect more deeply, and with greater curiosity, with the various subjects and ideas of the text.

The play, as with life, is drama. Gavin Bolton says that drama is in a "unique relationship with the rest of the curriculum, for there is a sense in which the rest of the curriculum is drama's subject-matter, particularly at a level of values, issues and implications." A particular usefulness of drama is that it is "a medium for education at all levels and in all directions" (161). David Hornbrook states:

> Dramatic art does not neglect the wider curriculum. It offers the drama room as a kind of laboratory in which the content of our lives in the dramatized society can be explored and interpreted. The form in which this process of critical interpretation and adequate comprehension takes place is that of the dramatic narrative. (137-138)

Further, what drama is able to do is create for the student an opportunity to come to know a subject "from the inside." This is a more subjective-objective approach, an "approach to the material to be understood that is akin to what Kierkegaard meant by knowledge . . . that is both appropriate to the knower and

to the thing known" (Bolton 154). One of the basic purposes of education is to develop and change the students understanding of the world and of himself (148).

To use the play in the educational curriculum, as well as to teach with an approach that is based in the principles of drama education, can specifically address this fundamental aspect of education more comprehensively than any other. The play as a foundational work in the classroom allows students to learn to do drama, learn about drama, learn social skills, learn language skills and learn about themselves. It is "the dynamic nature of the medium," the play itself, which guarantees "that all these dimension for change are encompassed withing the same work" (Bolton 148).

Therefore, drama education requires a fundamentally different pedagogy. The students frame of mind when approaching participation in drama is not always an "intention to learn," but is rather a focus on creating, interacting with peers, and solving a problem. "This has two important implications. The first is concerned with the 'personalizing' of knowledge and the second with the notion of focus of attention (Bolton 153). In his book, *Master Teachers of Theatre*, Burnet Hobgood offers an important quote on this matter:

> In order to deal with the difficult question as to what it is that the script represents, the teacher has to cultivate a sense of discovery in himself or herself as well as in the students. A script after all has a complex nature. To the degree that it is the work of a theatrically astute craftsman, it has its own distinct form. Yet, it promotes differing versions of itself. Discovering

> its limits as well as its possibilities constitutes the peculiar thrill of playreading. Such an approach is dangerous, of course. It has to steer between the rock of tell-me-what-I-should-know and the whirlpool of my-interpretation-is-as-good-as-yours. Yet, our task as teachers is to take our students on that hazardous journey and whet their appetites for other trips like it. (32-33)

To teach and to learn a play is always a matter of exploration in real time. The journey begins with the words on the page, but never ends there.

Part of the value of teaching a play is that in order for a teacher to do so, he must first convince his students that a superior play text will encourage "freedom of interpretation," while also imposing "tests on the quality of interpretation." Which is to say that the play will offer "such rich possibilities" in the activity of probing the script, that they, both teacher and student, will be "stimulated to discover stands of experience within experience" (Hobgood 34). Likewise, the process of dramatic art places a students performance in context of the "distinctions of worth which give our actions meaning in the social world" (Hornbrook 138). Students will best make sense of the drama they watch and participate in as it is grounded in the context of their common history and culture. Hornbrook continues to state that, "to render this act of interpretation conscious, and dramatic art makes claims to be able to do this, is to make both understanding and judgment possible (138).

The development of experience, then, is the key. Though all good teachers, of whom there are a great many across all subjects and in every

school, care deeply about what they teach, Dorothy Heathcote states that:

> unless they have 'stumbled upon authenticity' sufficient for their needs, they are unable to take their pupils into their subjects through the doorways of attraction – attention, interest, involvement, concern – to the investment and, hopefully, productive obsession which thoroughly engages them for a period of time, sometimes for life. (Johnson 178)

The play, and the use of more creative, experiential dramatic techniques in the classroom, allows for an "actual interface" between the students and their subject of learning (Hobgood 190).

This is what makes the play and playreading something fundamental, a "universally potent art." As the play reflects real life, appropriate methods of delving into the play in the classroom effectively responds to the needs of adolescent pupils as they work and struggle internally and with all the rest of us to find "meaning and effectiveness in their lives." The core of study in dramatic literature and theatre art is derived from "the vast living experience of humans," and is therefore one of the most accessible means to individual learning for young students, and even more mature students of life, to develop greater comprehension of value and meaning in the real world (Hobgood 190?).

Principles of Drama-Based Education

Before discussing the principles that will be applied to the following lesson plans for *Thunder Rock*, there must be some discussion of why they matter. The way most public High School classrooms are run shows that many of the

methods used to teach any subject are devised around an assumption that the adolescent students are ready to, or equipped to, deal with what Dorothy Heathcote calls "object-interest," which one could call the recognition of the value or interest in what is being presented to them externally or abstractly. The reality is that the behavior of students in the classroom often show that their "need-interests," what is going on inside them, are not or have not already been met to any great extent. Only when "need-interests" are subdued or met can "object-interest" be engaged. Furthermore, "the great range of interactive tasks which a drama approach . . . can provoke, can make a match between the need-interests and the way object-interests can be developed" (Johnson 180).

Another effect of some of the more traditional methods that are often used in the High School classroom is that it can sometimes keep students from having the opportunity to ask hard questions: questions about society and values, or even about something as fundamental as the purpose of being. It can often just be about memorizing facts, which serves to create a situation that ensures that whatever tasks are accomplished in the classroom have no effect on what happens outside the classroom when the students are on their own, interacting in the real world (Johnson 178).

> So long as the study is undertaken as 'exercise for' and not 'practice of,' with the debilitating emphasis upon the assumption that 'one day you'll be good enough to really do it,' there's not really much danger of the young's interference. (178)

Interference in this case can be understood to mean, simply, participation.

It then becomes problematic if a student's education lacks a participatory or experiential element. What has been learned from cognitive scientists is that, "meaning does not come without the involvement and engagement of the reader" (McEwan 67). A drama-based method of instruction is most likely to engage a student in the most direct and multifaceted way. It is also the most adept at addressing the many needs of students, the many types of ways that each individual is best able to learn, as has been illustrated by the study of Howard Gardner and his theory of multiple intelligences. As we know, "teachers should plan instruction that respects more than one intelligence," if they are to attempt to facilitate the greatest depth of learning for their students (Coreil 95). If a student is never allowed to participate in the creation of meaning through practice, it hinders his ability to learn how to participate in the creation of meaning in society. It should then be understood that the play, and drama-based methods themselves, are the bridge between basic academic learning and actual understanding of real life issues and situations, even those that at first glance seem to be controversial or foreign to the student (Coreil 111).

Experimentation, participation, activity, practice, performance, and experience: these are the central principles of drama-based instructional strategies. They principly inform the many methods with which a teacher can draw his students into the practice of deep and collaborative engagement with the subject. One such method is called Creative Drama. It is an improvisational technique of instruction that uses activity to help students connect to educational matterial and concepts, as well as helping them develop connections with

relevant ideas and feelings through "dramatic enactment" (McCaslin 7). The intent of this improvisation is not just for the sake of play or having fun, but by being somewhat more formalized and structured: the activity must have a purpose that is based directly in the subject that is being explored. It is always "participant centered," and even those students in the group who are not particpating in the action at any particular moment are never just 'an audience member;' they are always engaged observers invited to join in the action when appropriate (8).

Another approach is Readers Theatre. This is "a flexible, creative medium for presenting all kinds of literary texts" (Yordon 11). Movement, or any great deal of spectacle is not necessary for a successful Readers theatre presentation; it can be relatively static, and the students can hold their scripts as they read 'on stage.' It is mostly concerned with actors or participants working to feature ideas, images, and experience (6). Reader's theatre is best with texts that use a great deal of imagery and is best staged using nothing more than "synecdochical spectacle:" the use of a single prop or stage element to suggest a whole being, setting, or idea (11-12). This 'stripped-down' type of presentation creates interesting challenges for students to create solutions to in their performance. It allows every participant to be active, imaginative, and creative in presenting characters and ideas (12). Readers theatre is best approached through an understanding of participation in a performance as a path to "knowing" (xi).

An important technique within Readers theatre is "Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre." Specifically, this is a strategy for classroom instruction "that

combines traditional Readers theatre with creative writing to increase student's fluency, comprehension, and retention of information in any content area" (Flynn 2). One of the main goals of Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre is to afford the students themselves the opportunity "to address difficult, sensitive, or even controversial issues at a comfort level that may not be possible with traditional instruction" (13). To write and perform a personal narrative is one of the many possibilites within this strategy. A personal narrative is "an intimate portait or study of you," which "indicate[s] a willingness to share parts of yourself with others" (Yordon 221). Sharing yourself through performance is a central aspect of drama and the theatre. And when the activity of writing a personal narrative is directly tied to a theme or subject that exists within the context of the object of academic study int the classroom, this will allow students to develop personal and concrete connections to the curriculum. It should be noted that this principle also holds true for collaborative writing and performance with small groups, as they explore and write about a common theme, topic, or experience together.

Another creative way to explore a play in the classroom, and more specifically to explore the characters about which the students are reading, is to have them create sketches or some kind of graphic collage of the characters. This requires study of the period of the piece, which may include an exploration of class dynamics, fashions, and habits or life-experiences of the people of that time. The student must also develop a basic grasp and understanding of the theme (Bicat 108-110). Designers in the theatre – whether they design sets, costumes, or props – often before the actors even begin to have a chance to

develop their characters, design sketches of these important elements that can have an enormous effect in helping the actor connect to and understand his role (55). It may then be quite helpful to give students the opportunity to sketch and create graphic representations of characters as they are delving into the text to aid in the analysis and understanding of the characters they encounter.

As an aid to the instruction of *Thunder Rock*, five sample lesson plans have been provided here. Teaching a play requires a more specialized treatment in order to present the text to its fullest extent, each of the five lesson plans represent what I believe to be an appropriate use of drama-based approaches to teaching and learning. Creative drama, Readers theatre, creative writing, design, and most importantly, performance and experience are all represented in the structure and method of each lesson plan. Each lesson does not utilize every element, but uses at least one of the concepts above to draw students deeper into the text.

Connections to the California Content Standards

The application of Drama-Based educational methods connect to multiple Content Standards in both English and Theatre. For Theatre – Proficient they include:

2.0 Creative Expression

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre

Development of Theatrical Skills

2.1 Make acting choices, using script analysis, character

research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.

Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure: exposition, complication, conflict, crises, climax, and resolution

2.3 Design, produce, or perform scenes or plays from a variety of theatrical periods and styles, including Shakespearean and contemporary realism.

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subect Areas and to Careers

Careers and Career-Related Skills

5.2 Manage time, prioritize responsibilities, and meet completion deadlines for a production as specified by group leaders, team members, or directors.

And for Theatre – Advanced:

2.0 Creative Expression

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre

Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Improvise or write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure (exposition, complication,

crises, climax, and resolution) and including complex characters with unique dialogue that motivates the action.

2.3 Work collaboratively as designer, producer, or actor to meet directorial goals in scenes and plays from a variety of contemporary and classical playwrights.

For English Language Arts, grades Nine and Ten – Writing, the standards include:

2.0 Writing Applications

Students combine the rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description to produce texts of at least 1,500 words.

2.1 Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories:

a. Relate a sequence of events and communicate the significance of the events to the audience.

e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

And the same standards for English Language Arts, grades Eleven and Twelve – Writing ("Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools" and "English Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools." *California Department of Education*. 2009. Web. 25 February 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents>).

LESSON PLANS

Lesson One

Objectives:

1. Students will engage in a simple creative drama game to prepare them to participate in the process of studying drama.

2. Students will make personal connections to one of the central themes of *Thunder Rock*: we have the power to be the solution to the problems we see around us.

3. Students will become more prepared for further opportunities for performance and person expression over the course of learning the play.

Materials:

No materials are needed for this activity – just the students imaginations.

Involving Students' Background, Interests, and Prior Knowledge:

The activity should be set up with a simple question: have you ever come home to find that somebody has left behind a huge mess, and wondered how you were going to clean it up? Students do not need to respond, just ponder, but some discussion of person experiences may spur greater creativity during the activity.

Tasks:

1. Explain to the students that they will be getting out of their seats in front of the class and using pantomime. Everyone will get a chance to participate, and must participate. Language and gestures must be

appropriate for the classroom, but this is intended to be creative and fun.

2. Explain the premise of the activity, and the catalyst for the action: Imagine . . . everyone shows up to school one Monday morning to find that the rival high school did a very cruel prank on everyone by trashing the campus in the night. They dumped trash, confetti, food, broken toys, and posters; they toilet papered the halls and made almost every other manner of mess. Nothing on campus is damaged, but the sheer volume of dirty junk is overwhelming. Everyone needs to pitch in to fix the campus, but nobody seems to know where to start . . .

3. Explain that the exercise is for the students to come up on "stage" and volunteer to begin cleaning or fixing something wrong with the campus, whatever they can imagine might have been trashed. They should announce what they are doing to the class, invite others to join, and begin to pantomime the action they are taking (ex. "Guys! We need to get this toilet paper off from around the flagpole! Come help," and then pantomime the action)

4. Another student should come on stage and volunteer a new action to be done, announce it, invite others to join and pantomime the task. All people on stage should then pantomime the new activity.

5. More students should continue to join, adding new activities, and pantomiming new roles. Whenever a new one joins, the others on stage imitating the new pantomime.

6. When the groups on stage get beyond six or seven, the performers

should be applauded for their work, leave the stage, and allow a new group to form and repreat the process with new activities.

Assess and Review:

The Teacher can ask what the students noticed about the activity. Was there any shortage of things to do? This activity could also be repeated after the students have finished reading the play to review how important it is that individuals step up and be the solution to the problems they find. Perhaps they will find that they are more excited to do the work.

Lesson Two

Objectives:

1. Students will have an opportunity to create a video-journalism piece about a major topic having to do with an issue occuring on campus at that time.

2. Though everyone must be involved in the writing of the piece, they must also divide the process of production into distinct jobs and responsibilities – *actor/presentor, director, cameraman, and producer/editor* – so they can learn more about and experience these different practical tasks.

4. The activity will help the students connect to and better understand the protagonist of *Thunder Rock*, Charleston, who was a journalist.

Materials:

Students will need to have access to a video camera of relative quality, and any related devices and software that can save, edit, and create a hard copy of the final product.

Involving Students' Background, Interests, and Prior Knowledge:

The topic that the student groups choose must be something they have a personal connection to. It should be a topic of importance on campus or in the broader community that effects their lives in a significant way about which other people may have strong disagreements, or even be unaware of in regards to its effects. Groups should not have the same topic as one another, therefore all topics and issues must be approved by the teacher prior to beginning the work. It may be more functional for the teacher to lead a brief discussion of issues on

campus with the class as a whole, allowing the class to develop a list of possible topics and assess their relative importance. From the compiled list the assembled group members can pick, or perhaps draw from a hat, the topic/issue that they will take on for the assignment.

Tasks:

This is a long-term assignment that can be introduced near the beginning of the class reading of the play, but does not need to be turned in and presented until the end of the instructional unit. The students will be working as a group, with no more than four students to a group. The assignment should be broken down into sessions.

1. The groups will do research on the assigned topic with each other tin order to prepare for the first steps of creating their piece.
2. The research should be turned in for review by the teacher before they procede.
3. When the research has been approved the groups can begin to write their script. They should come to a consensus on the particular view point of their piece, what they find most important, and what they hope to achieve from the presentation.
4. When a rough draft of the script is completed, it should be reviewed and approved by the teacher.
5. The groups should perform and produce their piece.
6. When all groups have finished their pieces, they should each be presented in their final form for the entire class.

Assess and Review:

After all the students have presented and observed the work of the other groups, the teacher should lead a classroom discussion about what was learned from the the video-journalism presentations. The teacher should also connect their experiences with the assignment to the experiences of Charleston in the play. They should have a deeper understanding of the character. The teacher can also lead a discussion of whether or not the students, after having completed the assignment, believe that they can help create solutions to the issues addressed in their work.

Lesson Three

Objectives:

1. Students will create a collage of one of the characters from the play.
2. They will be able to develop a deeper understanding of the characters in the play, as well as understand the different possible interpretations of the characteristics and qualities of a character that an actor, costumer, or director would have to navigate to bring these characters to life on stage.

Materials:

Each student will need to be given a poster size piece of paper, whether it be butcher paper, stock, or otherwise. Posterboard would be fine as well, though this assignment should be done as inexpensively as possible. Students will also need access to pens, pencils, crayons, markers, paints and brushes, glue, magazines, newspaper, advertisements, and the internet (as well as a color printer).

Involving Students' Background, Interests, and Prior Knowledge:

This assignment should occur after the class has progressed in their reading of the play at least half way through Act Two. Students will have been exposed to (most) all of the characters by that point and many aspects of their development; and, if they choose to represent one of the passengers, they will have had an opportuninty to be exposed to how the passengers change as Charleston reimagines them, which will help lead them to more possible visual representations. It may be helpful for students to access this activity if it is suggested that they pick the character they feel a certain affinity to, or the

character they have the most questions about.

Tasks:

1. Students will put together sketches or collages on their paper by creating, constructing, or compiling images that adequately represent their interpreations of the characters, informed by their understanding of the reading.

2. The paper should include images of the character him or herself, as well as elements of their costume, or the fashions of the time. Images of certain props or items related to the character should be encorporated in the collage. Color should also be used to depict their emotional states.

3. Every student should find more than one image to represent their character, to offer different views of him or her.

4. The students should try to structure the collage in a way that is "readable," and is organized in a way that suggests the development of the character (i.e. The character that has a very linear development could be represented in a collage that is structured in straight lines, or the character with a more circular development could be represented in a circle, or the character who exists on the edges, or periphery, of the story could be represented only at the edges of the paper – nothing at the center).

4. If a student chooses one of the passengers, they will need to offer an interpretation of the character as he or she was in Charleston's first conceptions, and then an interpretation of the character after Charleston's

second conception.

Assess and Review:

After the students finish reading the play, the teacher should lead a discussion as to whether or not the students still see the their characters in the same way as when they began the collage assignment. As their understanding of the play developed, is it the case that their understanding of the characters developed as well?

Lesson Four

Objectives:

1. Students will read the play in class in the style of Readers theatre.
2. Each student will get a chance to portray a character "on stage" in front of the class.
3. They will be able to get out of their seats and participate in a "staged" reading in a new kind of way.

Materials:

Any materials other than a copy of the play for each student are not necessary, but it may be helpful to have a single property or costume element that can be used by the students as "synechdochical spectacle" to represent the character they are playing (i.e. An umbrella for Miss Kirby, a stethoscope for Dr. Kurtz, a vest or hat for Mr. Briggs, etc.).

Tasks:

This is not a regular classroom reading. The teacher should chose a section of the play that has a lot of characters on stage at once; this would work best in Act Two, but it could be done at any point in the play.

1. A group of students can volunteer or be assigned to the characters in the chosen scene to start it off.
2. So the students don't have to concern themselves so much with movement or blocking, some music stands, or anything of the like, can be set up in a horizontal row for the students to speak from as their characters. This is consistant with traditional Readers theatre.

3. Each student comes up "on stage" in the front of the class and begins to perform the scene. They should feel free to interpret the character – in voice, manerisms, and emotions – as they see fit (within reason, and as might be consistant with the character) while they are portraying their character.

4. At any point any other student can come up and replace any actor for any character and begin to read the lines of that character. They should feel free to reinterpret the character how they see fit, as they take up the dialogue from where it was left off.

5. This process should be as seamless as possible. Students should not have to wait for the next person to get ready, but also students should not try to take over characters abruptly or rudely.

6. If there are students who are not participating, or if the class is a little embarassed to get into the spirit of the activity, the teacher can devise a system of drawing names of students at regular intervals to replace the characters on stage.

Assess and Review:

The teacher should lead a discussion about how the students liked performing the text. All the different ways that a character was presented should be discussed as well. Were some interpretations more successful than others? The class can do this activity as often as they wish.

Lesson Five

Objectives:

1. Students will write and perform a monologue.
2. They will write an inspirational account of themselves from the perspective of someone 100 years in the future, perhaps a great, great grandchild or just a historian or geneologist.
3. They will be able to connect more deeply to the play by having a chance to answer Dr. Kurtz's question, "Can you not see yourself in the eyes of another 100 years from now," and ponder it in an optomistic and positive way.

Materials:

Examples of monologues should be provided for the students to expose them to their specific form and style. Two good resources for this are the monologues script archive at TheatreHistory.com and the monologue database at notmyshoes.net.

Involving Students' Background, Interest, and Prior Knowledge:

This monologue should not specifically take the form of a eulogy, it is not meant to have any element of mourning, but should be a celebration of the achievements of the student. This will require them to tap into their dreams for their lives after high school. It requires them to look forward to what they will be able to accomplish in their educations, careers, families, and communities. They should be encouraged to dream big, and not be embarassed to set lofty goals for themselves. The monologue should assume that they do indeed achieve those

goals. As Dr. Kurtz says in the play, "To be alive. To have in one's hands again that almighty power to decide" (Ardrey 60).

Tasks:

After the students have read Dr. Kurtz's line in Act Three, or perhaps after they have finished the entire play, they will be required to embark on a writing assignment that assumes that, over the course of their lives, they were able to accomplish all their dreams.

1. The monologue must be from the perspective of someone 100 years in the future, and in third person. The speaker can identify themselves at the very beginning of the monologue, or it can just be an unspecified individual relating the story of you to an audience.
2. It must be at least a minute long when read aloud, but no longer than three minutes.
3. When the written assignment is done, the students will need to memorize their monologues and perform them in front of the class. Class Readings should take at least a day to get through, but it may be best to split it up into two class periods.

Assess and Review:

The monologue can be performed at the end of the instructional unit or at the end of the school year as a final class presentation. It may inspire them to start off their new school year with optimism. A small variation of the performance portion of the assignment can be done if there are issues with classroom dynamics, or cohesion, or unfriendly behaviors, for the purpose of

conflict resolution. The students can be assigned other students monologues to then be memorized and performed in front of each other in class. This would give the class an opportunity to speak about each other in possitive terms, with praise and optimism – perhaps bringing the class much closer together as a unit.

WORKS CITED

"Abraham Lincoln." *Encyclopedia of World Biography.* Encyclopedia.com. 2004. Web. 5 July 2011. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

Ardrey, Robert. *Thunder Rock: Play in Three Acts.* New York: Dramatists Play Service, 1950. Print.

Bicat, Tina and Chris Baldwin, eds. *Devised and Collaborative Theatre: A Practical Guide.* Marlborough: Crowood Press, 2008. Print.

Bolton, Gavin. *Drama as Education.* Essex: Longman, 1984. Print.

Brizendine, Nancy Hanks and James L. Thomas, eds. *Learning Through Dramatics: Ideas for Teachers and Librarians.* Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1982.

Brodie, Fawn M. *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith.* New York: Vintage Books, 1995. Print.

"California Reading List." *California Department of Education.* 2012. Web. 5 May 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/readinglist.asp>.

Coreil, Clyde, ed. *Multiple Intelligences, Howard Gardner and New Methods in College Teaching.* Jersey City, NJ: New Jersey City University, 2003. Print.

Cuny, Hilaire. *Louis Pasteur: The Man and His Theories.* Trans. Patrick Evans. London: Souvenir Press, Ltd., 1965. Print.

"Dante Alighieri." *World Encyclopedia.* Encyclopedia.com. 2005. Web. 5 July 2011.

<http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

"Darwin, Charles." *Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography.* Encyclopedia.com. 2008. Web. 5 July 2011. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

"District Selection Policies." *California Department of Education.* 2012. Web. 26 October 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/ll/litrlppolicies.asp>.

Dorn, Frank. *The Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1941.* New York: Macmillan, 1974. Print.

Dziewanowski, M.K. *War at Any Price.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991. Print.

Egri, Lajos. *The Art of Dramatic Writing.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004. Print.

"English Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools." *California Department of Education.* 2009. Web. 25 February 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/elacontentstnds.pdf>.

Eubank, Keith. *World War II: Roots and Causes.* Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1992. Print.

Flynn, Rosalind M. *Dramatizing the Content with Curriculum-Based Readers Theatre, Grades 6-12.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2007. Print.

Ford, Hugh, ed. *The Left Bank Revisited: Selections from the Paris Tribune 1917- 1934.* University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1972. Print.

Grote, David. *Script Analysis: Reading and Understanding the Playscript for Production*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub., 1985. Print.

"Group Theatre." *pbs.org*. 2012. Web. 14 August 2012. <http://www.pbs.org>.

Harbage, Alfred. ed. *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. New York: Penguin, 1969. Print.

Henderson, Helene and Jay P. Pederson, eds. *Twentieth-Century Literary Movements Dictionary*. Detroit: Omnigraphics, 2000. Print.

"History and Social Sciences Content Standards for California Public Schools." *California Department of Education*. 2009. Web. 25 February 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/histsocscistud.pdf>.

Hobgood, Barnet M., ed. *Master Teachers of Theatre*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1988.

Hornbrook, David. *Education and Dramatic Art*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1998. Print.

"Instructional Quality Commission." *California Department of Education*. 2012. Web. 26 October 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/cc/cd/index.asp>.

Jacoby, Susan. *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004. Print.

"Johann Wolfgan von Goethe." *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. Encyclopedia.com. 2004. Web. 5 July 2011. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

"Johannes Brahms." *Encyclopedia of World Biogrpahy.* Encyclopedia.com. 2004. Web. 5 July 2011. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

Johnson, Liz and Cecily O'Neill, eds. *Dorothy Heathcote: Collected Writings on Education and Drama.* London: Hutchinson, 1988. Print.

"Lighthouses: A Brief Administrative History." *The United States Lighthouse Service.* Michigan Lighthouse Conservancy. 2008. Web. 7 March 2010. <http://www.michiganlights.com/lighthouseservice.htm>.

"Ludwig van Beethoven." *Encyclopedia of World Biography.* Encyclopedia.com. 2004. Web. 5 July 2011. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

Maher, Jan. *Most Dangerous Women: Bringing History to Life through Readers' Theatre.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006.

Manning, Thomas G. *The Standard Oil Company: The Rise of a National Monopoly.* New York: Hold, Rinehart and Winston, 1964. Print.

McCaslin, Nelli. *Creative Drama in the Classroom and Beyond.* 8th ed. Boston and New York: Pearson Education, 2006. Print.

McEwan, Elain K. *Raising Reading Achievement in Middle and High Schools.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Crowin Press, 2007. Print.

Owens, Kenneth N. *Riches for All: The California Gold Rush and the World.* Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2002. Print.

Patterson, Jim, Donna McKenna-Crook, and Melissa Swick. *Theatre in the Secondary School Classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006. Print.

"Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn." *World Encyclopedia*. Encyclopedia.com. 2005. Web. 5 July 2011. <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

Roark, James L., et al. *The American Promise: A History of the United States.* 3rd ed. Vol 1. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005. 2 vols. Print.

"Robert Ardrey." *Fandango.com*. Biography. Web. 10 March 2010. <http://www.fandango.com/search>.

Rose, Lionel. *The Erosion of Childhood: Child Oppression in Britain 1860-1918.* London and New York: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Rosen, Elliot A. *Roosevelt, the Great Depression, and the Economics of Recovery*. Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 2005. Print.

"Science Content Standards for California Public Schools." *California Department of Education*. 2009. Web. 25 February 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/sciencestnd.pdf>.

Smiley, Gene. "Great Depression." *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. Library of Economics and Liberty. 2008. Web. 8 March 2010. <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/GreatDepression.html>.

Sheean, Vincent. "American Drama Stirs Londoners." *The New York Times*. North American Newspaper Alliance. 29 July 1940. Web. 10 March 2010. <http://select.nytimes.com>.

Smith, Wendy. *Real Life Drama*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1990. Print.

"Standards for Evaluating Instructional Materials for Social Content." *California Department of Education*. 2012. Web. 26 October 2012.

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/socialcontent.pdf>.

Strackey, Ray. *"The Cause:" A Short History of the Women's Movement in Great Britain.* Port Washington, NY: Kennikut Press, 1969. Print.

Taylor, F. Jay. *The United States and the Spanish Civil War: 1936-1939.* New York: Bookman Associates, 1956. Print.

Taylor, John Russell. *Dictionary of the Theatre.* London: Penguin Books, 1993.

"The Spanish Civil War." *History World International.* 2007. Web. 7 March 2010. <http://history-world.org/spanish_civil_war.htm>.

Valgemae, Mandi. *Acelerated Grimace: Expressionism in the American Drama of the 1920's.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1972. Print.

"Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools." *California Department of Education.* 2009. Web. 25 February 2012. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/vpastandards.pdf>.

"Voltaire." *Encyclopedia of World Biography.* Encyclopedia.com. 2004. Web. 5 July 2011. <http://www.encylopedia.com>.

Wallace, Aurora. *Newspapers and the Making of Modern America: A History.* Westport, Connecticut: Greenwod Press, 2005.

Weatherford, Doris. *A History of the American Suffragist Movement.* Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998. Print.

Williams, Guy. *The Age of Miracles.* London: Constable, 1981. Print.

Winkler, John K. *W.R. Hearst: An American Phenomenon.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928. Print.

"World War Two in Europe Timeline." *The History Place*. 1996. Web. 7 March 2010. <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/ww2time.htm>.

Yordon, Judy E. *Experimental Theatre: Creating and Staging Texts*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1997. Print.