

The Milwaukee Repertory Theater Presents

TROUBLE IN MIND

January 23 - February 15, 2009

By: Alice Childress

A study guide for students and educators

Inside this guide

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Synopsis/About the Author | 2 |
| The 1950s: Separate but Equal? | 4 |
| A History of Black Theater | 6 |
| An Interview with Timothy Douglas | 8 |
| Self-Identity | 10 |
| The Play Within the Play | 11 |
| Visiting The Rep | 12 |



This study guide is researched and designed by the Education Department at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater and is intended to prepare you for your visit. It contains information that will deepen your understanding of, and appreciation for, the production. We've also included questions and activities for you to explore before and after our performance of

TROUBLE IN MIND

Study Guide Created By

Rebecca Witt,
Education Coordinator

With Contributions From

Janine Bannier,
Education Intern

Laura Lynn MacDonald,
Literary Office Support

Editing By

Jenny Kostreva,
Education Director

Kristin Crouch,
Literary Director

If you would like to schedule a classroom workshop, or if we can help in any other way, please contact

Jenny Kostreva at (414) 290-5370
jkostreva@milwaukeeep.com

Rebecca Witt at (414)- 290-5393
rwitt@milwaukeeep.com



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SYNOPSIS

***“This ain’t sayin’
nothing’, don’t
make sense. Talkin’
‘bout the truth is
anything I can
believe... well, I
don’t believe this.”
- Wiletta***

TROUBLE IN MIND takes place in 1957 and Wiletta Mayer, a talented, yet struggling actress, has just been cast in the show *Chaos in Belleville*, an anti-lynching play that will open on Broadway. Wiletta has had her fair share of shows with demeaning scripts and stereotypical roles and she hopes that this play will be different. She must work with her white director in order to get the show up and running and successful. But, when things go awry and the play turns out to be not so different from others in the past, will Wiletta be able to swallow her pride and continue with the show or will she be unable to keep her thoughts to herself?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alice Childress was born on October 12, 1916 in Charleston, South Carolina. At the age of nine her parents separated and she moved to Harlem with her mother and they lived with Childress’ grandmother. In Harlem, her grandmother taught her to approach life as an education and encouraged her to pursue her talents in reading and writing. Childress was known to frequent the museums and libraries of New York and her mother encouraged her to study the behavior and culture of New York City. Childress' formal education halted after two years of high school, when her mother and grandmother died. In 1935, Childress gave birth to a daughter. She was alone and was forced to support herself and her child.



After seeing a Shakespeare play, Childress decided to become an actor. In 1939, Childress joined the American Negro Theatre (ANT) in Harlem. After acting in the show ANNA LUCASTA, Childress decided to become a playwright. By 1949, she completed her first play, FLORENCE, and it was this one-act play that launched her writing career. She wrote twelve plays, one anthologized vignette, three children's books and one novel. Childress was the first black woman to get her plays professionally produced on stage in New York. For all of her accomplishments as a black woman, her efforts went largely unnoticed.

Alice Childress was not a well-known playwright in her time. Even today, her writing continues to be overlooked by critics, theater historians and scholars. When TROUBLE IN MIND was scheduled to open on Broadway, the producers felt that the show needed more of an uplifting ending as well as a new title. Childress refused to make the ending more happy and more palatable to white audiences so the show never made it to Broadway. The same year this show was scheduled to open, Lorraine Hansberry’s A RAISIN IN THE SUN

opened and became the popular choice for critics. Her writing did not follow in the shadow of the typical dramatist, but she had her own agenda with her writing. The men and women playwrights from this era would put race before gender. They fostered the belief that truly stirring and captivating drama was sensationalized and white male-focused. While Childress' plays would allude to some of these same themes, her main focus was to combine her gender with her art. She shocked her audiences and critics with her skilled characterization of African Americans and females, and also dramatized issues she saw in society, including segregation. She lived in a society where blacks were not allowed to share white space. They were not allowed to enter through the same door as white people, drink from the same fountains, or even ride on the same bus. This type of inhumane treatment fueled her writings. Her plays include FLORENCE, GOLD THROUGH TREES, TROUBLE IN MIND, WEDDING BAND: A LOVE/HATE STORY IN BLACK AND WHITE and LETS HEAR IT FOR THE QUEEN.



Childress signing a copy of her first novel, *Like One of the Family* (1956); a book about the domestic worker's opinion on life.

For a brief period Childress expanded her writing from plays to novels. She wrote three children's novels, *A Hero Ain't Nothing but a Sandwich*, *Rainbow Jordan* and *Those other People*. These novels contain depictions of alienated and lonely teenagers faced with finding security, acceptance and selfhood in social environments hostile to their development. She wrote these books to try to help isolated children feel that they have reason to feel optimistic. In 1978, *A Hero Ain't Nothing but a Sandwich* was made into a film. She also wrote an adult novel, *Those Other People*, which looks at a young man dealing with his homosexuality and all the implications that are associated with it.

In 1994 Childress died of cancer. Childress has been described as a distinguished woman of her time, a literary genius, a great collaborator and an inspiration for African American women in drama. While her work has been overlooked, it is time to give Childress the proper spotlight she deserves.

ACTIVITY: Alice Childress wrote about what she saw in society and what she experienced in life. Brainstorm a short list of things that you see in society that has impacted you as a person. Have these things impacted you negatively or positively? Write a short monologue describing this experience and what it means to you. Rehearse briefly in small groups and then perform the monologue for your class. After everyone has gone, discuss these experiences and how they have impacted you and society as a whole.

THE 1950s: SEPARATE BUT EQUAL?

America was coming out of a bleak era: the Depression in the 1920s and 1930s and World War II during the 1940s. As servicemen started coming back from overseas, the economy started to boom. Americans started buying goods that were depleted during the previous decades which created corporate expansion and more jobs. America was starting to rebuild quickly and efficiently.

The 1950s was the perfect picture of American society. Imagine a man, working every day to provide for his family. Imagine a woman, cooking and cleaning all day and enjoying it. Imagine the children, frolicking gaily during recess and enjoying school. Imagine the house, a small two story with lace curtains, a white picket fence and a dog in the front yard wagging its tail. Can you picture it: the epitome of the perfect American lifestyle? However, the 1950s wasn't this picture-perfect story. The 1950s was a time of resistance and struggle for many American citizens.



While some may claim that there is only one America, the 1950's had two. There was “white America” and “black America.” The phrase “separate but equal” rang throughout the nation. This doctrine created in the late 19th century during the Supreme Court case Plessey vs. Ferguson, was the catch phrase of the time. This ruling originated with Homer Plessey, who was jailed for sitting in a “white car” even though he was only one-eighths black. Judge Ferguson ruled that separate cars does not conflict with the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery. Thus the phrase “separate but equal” was born. During the 1950s this applied to everything from drinking fountains to schools to buses to hospitals and separate was not truly equal.



This segregated nation became the “norm.” People accepted it because this was how it had been for so long. However, there were many who felt this to be immoral and needed to change. The 1950s was the starting point of the Civil Rights Movement: an initiation of abolishing “separate but equal.” The first groundbreaking event was the Brown v. Board of Education case in Topeka, Kansas. This case focused on the idea of school segregation. It sought to challenge a law passed in 1879 that said racially-segregated schools were acceptable. However, most “black schools” were much worse than “white schools.” They were smaller, falling apart, had a deficient curriculum, poor teacher training and often times students had to take a school bus for over an hour just to get to school. When 13 parents attempted to enroll their children in a “white school,” they were denied. In February 1951, the Topeka National Association for

FACTS ABOUT 1957

- **POPULATION: 151,684,000**
- **AVERAGE SALARY: \$2,992**
- **COST FOR A LOAF OF BREAD: \$0.14**
- **WHAT WAS READ: YOU CAN SURVIVE, A PAMPHLET ABOUT BOMB SHELTER PLANS**

FACTS ABOUT 2007

- **POPULATION: 301,621,157**
- **AVERAGE SALARY: \$40,000**
- **COST FOR A LOAF OF BREAD: \$1.35**
- **WHAT WAS READ: HARRY POTTER SERIES, NOVELS ABOUT WIZARDRY AND WITCHCRAFT**

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) filed a case on the parents' behalf. It took three years for the ruling of "separate and unequal" in schools and various other public facilities. This ruling paved the road for much other educational and social reform throughout America.

Another event that opened the eyes of Americans took place in 1955. December 1, 1955 marks the date that Rosa Parks refused to move from her seat on a bus. While the buses were considered desegregated (blacks and whites could ride together), blacks had to sit in the back of the bus and couldn't sit with the whites. Rosa Parks boarded the bus and sat in the fifth row, the first row the blacks could occupy. A few stops later, the first four rows were filled with whites and one white man was left standing. According to the bus system, blacks and whites couldn't occupy the same row so the bus driver asked Parks to move. She refused and was arrested. This event started the Montgomery Bus Boycott, another initiative to desegregate more public facilities. During this year long ordeal, blacks refused to use public transportation and worked with each other to create a more fair system. Whites tried to end the boycott by using threats, stories to try to divide the black community, and, eventually, violence. However, blacks continued to stay off the buses until November 13, 1956 when the US Supreme Court ruled that segregation on buses was unconstitutional.



The 1950s paved the way for blacks and gave hope to a majority of Americans. The two Americas were becoming one through the works of Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr, Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall and many more. The Civil Rights Movement continued into the 1960s and finally ended in 1964 with the Civil Rights Act outlawing racial segregation in schools, public places and employment.

DISCUSSION: The 1950s gave way to desegregating many public institutions. To this day, we are considered wholly equal. Do you see any times when this is not true? Look at various cultures and races and discuss whether or not we are truly equal. Do you believe we are? If you believe we are not equal, what can you do to help this? Discuss these questions with your classmates.

A HISTORY OF BLACK THEATER

This article was researched and written by Laura Lynn MacDonald, Literary Office Support.

Black Theater rose out of a rich history in Africa where stories were often dramatized using music and masks. As migration and slave trading moved Africans to other continents, vestiges of their storytelling traditions eventually made it onto the stage. Susan Croft, in *Migrating Histories* notes that in Britain, “black performers can be traced back to the time of Henry VIII, who employed a ‘black trumpet.’” The first black actor to achieve major recognition was Ira Aldridge (1804-1867), who was heralded for his portrayal of great Shakespearean roles, most notably, Othello.

In the United States, around the time of the American Civil War, Minstrel Shows (disparaging comedies featuring white actors wearing greasepaint to look black) were all the rage. After The Civil War, blacks were finally allowed to participate in the Minstrels Shows themselves. They embraced the opportunity to perform and expanded the shows to include dancing, singing and skits.

By the turn of the twentieth century, black musicals were being produced. The first known play by a black playwright was James Brown’s KING SHOTAWAY (1823). William Wells Brown’s THE ESCAPE, also known as A LEAP FOR FREEDOM (1858), was the first black play published, but the first real success of a black dramatist was Angelina W. Grimke with her show, RACHEL (1916).

Black theater flourished during the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 30s. Experimental groups and black theater companies emerged in Chicago, New York City and Washington, D.C. The Ethiopian Art Theatre, which started in Chicago, launched the career of one of the most influential and charismatic actors of his day - Paul Robeson. Mr. Robeson is known for his incredible low voice, singing “Ol’ Man River” in the musical SHOWBOAT.



When Lorraine Hansberry’s *A RAISIN IN THE SUN* appeared on Broadway in 1959, the artist became, at 29, the youngest American playwright, the fifth woman and the only African American to date to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play of the Year.

In 1925, Garland Anderson’s play, *APPEARANCES*, was the first play authored by a black playwright to make it to Broadway. But, it wasn’t until Langston Hughes’ *MULATTO* opened in 1935 that black theater could celebrate a true hit on Broadway. In that same year, the Federal Theatre Project was founded, providing a training ground for black actors. In the late 1930s, black community theaters began to appear. Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee began their careers in community theater. By 1940, two major black theater companies had formed: The American Negro Theater and the Negro Playwrights’ Company.

After World War II, black theater in the United States became more established. Black playwrights wrote plays that realistically told the stories of their lives. These stories asked hard questions about race, identity and stereotypes. Out of that time came the groundbreaking plays of two remarkable women - Alice Childress (*TROUBLE IN MIND*, 1955) and Lorraine Hansberry (*A RAISIN IN THE SUN*, 1959). Ms. Childress was the first black female playwright to win an Obie Award



Suzan-Lori Parks has the distinction of being the first black woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for her play, *TOP DOG/UNDERDOG* (2001).

for best original play. Hansberry's play that followed a few years later inspired a generation of black writers and actors and "changed American Theatre forever" (*The New York Times*).

A *RAISIN IN THE SUN* was the first play written by an African-American woman to be produced on Broadway. It premiered in 1959, with Lloyd Richards directing a cast that included Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee. The show ran for 530 performances and won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for Best Play. In 2004, it received a Broadway revival featuring Phylicia Rashad (*The Cosby Show*) and Grammy winning Sean (Puffy) Combs. Ms. Rashad won a Tony Award for her performance.

From the original cast of *RAISIN*, three revolutionary minds came together to create a new company devoted to black theater. Douglas Turner Ward, Robert Hooks and Gerald Krone opened the doors of The Negro Ensemble Company in New York City in 1965. Its mission was to provide a home for black actors, writers and directors to freely explore their talents beyond the confines of racial barriers. The Negro Ensemble Company has produced more than 200 plays both on and off Broadway, winning numerous Tonys, Obies and Pulitzers. It has been the starting ground for many of our most famous black performers. Actors such as Denzel Washington, Samuel L. Jackson, Phylicia Rashad, Laurence Fishburne and Angela Bassett all began their acting careers on the NEC stage.

Samuel L. Jackson during an interview.



The 1960s and 70s were a volatile period when creative expressions were directly influenced by the hope and energy of the Civil Rights Movement. The plays written by black playwrights at that time often focused on the social turmoil of the day. As racial barriers were being challenged, more black plays and black theater companies, like The New Federal Theatre, emerged.

In 1989, Larry Leon Hamlin founded the National Black Theatre Festival with the support of Dr. Maya Angelou. In its first year over 10,000 people attended to see thirty performances by seventeen of America's best professional black theater companies. According to *The New York Times*, "the 1989 National Black Theatre Festival was one of the most historic and culturally significant events of black theatre and American Theatre in general."

In recent history, many black playwrights' works have been produced to great acclaim. August Wilson has won a Pulitzer Prize and a Tony Award for his play *FENCES* (1987). He won another Pulitzer in 1990 for his play *THE PIANO LESSON*.

This year, the Signature Theater Company in New York City is celebrating the vibrant history of the Negro Ensemble Company by re-staging three of their classic productions. Many cities now have theater companies that dedicate their seasons to producing plays of color. Milwaukee alone has three black theater companies: Hansberry-Sands, Andre' Lee Ellis and Co. and the African American Children's Theatre. The Milwaukee Rep has proudly produced numerous black playwrights, including August Wilson, Lynn Nottage, Lorraine Hansberry and Pearl Cleage.



Phylicia Rashad and Sean Combs in the Broadway revival of *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*.

AN INTERVIEW WITH TIMOTHY DOUGLAS, DIRECTOR

How did you get into theater? Did you always want to direct?

No, I was an actor and it's all I ever wanted to do and I did for a while. I actually did a short season at the Milwaukee Rep in 1989 and 1990. Then I moved to Los Angeles to do film and TV. That didn't work out at all. When I was there I found teaching and started teaching at the University of Southern California. Part of my tenure track responsibilities was to direct a play. After much resistance I just had to do it. An L.A. Producer saw it and decided I was a director. I started getting offered work. It just happened. Within a year I had to decide whether I was going to leave teaching and do directing full time. It was ridiculous how fast it happened. I never wanted to do it [direct]; it was never a goal in mind.

What was the first play you directed?

A RAISIN IN THE SUN.

How was that experience for you?

It was remarkable. It's an amazing play. I went into it thinking that I knew the play since I had been in a production of it. I thought that it was a good play, but it was an old play and out of all the great living black playwrights, why did we have to do this play? But when I was directing, I thought, oh my God, this piece holds up to Shakespeare, Chekov, and the Greeks and this is really an amazing play. It was a very symbiotic experience. We worked hard, but I didn't find it difficult since I had been in theater so long. I understood everything that was supposed to happen even though I'd never been at the forefront, but I'd been around so many great theatre people that I just had it in me and I took it from there. I've directed it two more times and I'm probably doing it again next year. I never get tired of it. It's an amazing play.

You mentioned that you were an actor with The Rep and you have also directed with us before. How has the rehearsal process differed from show to show? Are there any similarities?

I approach everything exactly the same way; it's the play itself and what the play requires that determines what happens. I just want it to be honest and truthful. We honor the story the playwright is trying to tell. It's like a math equation—a combination of what the play needs, what the actors need to achieve those goals, and depending on how challenging the physical production is (if the set is complicated), we work it out. All those things tell us what it needs from me and I just rise to it. I'm not a pre-planner; I don't know how to do that. I've never taken a directing class in my life. I continue to go with instinct on everything and so far, so good.





Each show has its own appeal. What attracted you to TROUBLE IN MIND?

It spoke to me very personally, initially, in terms of the potential clash of ideology when dealing with race issues in America that continue even post-Obama election. If anything, more things have been brought into the light that will have to be dealt with. Also, specifically, this play is about the theater, which really spoke to me because I've been through a lot of the things the play brings out. Once I started working on the play, I started to see how it expands for any individual who feels disenfranchised or doesn't feel that their voice is being acknowledged, and how one approaches the goal of achieving a place at the table, literally and figuratively. It's not limited to the issues of race. When I saw that other layer and when I talked to Joe [Hanreddy, Artistic Director for The Rep], that's what he saw first, and it made perfect sense to me. It's amazing how it hit him on that level right away. We both realize how important a play it is. We both agree on the other's take on it as well. His excitement was the second thing that really made me want to do the play.

Going along with this, the play was first produced in 1955 and takes place in 1957. Do you see any connections to today? What themes and overall ideas are still relevant?

Two things. From my part and my initial perspective, Alice [Childress] is pretty much predicting the Civil Rights Movement. It hadn't happened yet. There were grassroots operations starting to bubble up in the south and the people in the north were starting to talk about it in earnest. So, she's not working with that benefit. She really is predicting the Movement in the same way Beaumarchais and Marivaux predicted the French Revolution, not knowing that they were. The issue of race and emergence of black culture into American mainstream, this is what she's beginning to address. We are definitely in a parallel place with the election of Obama. As I said, a lot of issues that have been lying dormant since Alice wrote this play are being forced into the forefront in a way that is not organized yet. It's precisely because a black man is in the white house that all of America is thinking in a different way and there's going to be a very distinct response soon. We've already seen some beneficial ones, which is just so exciting. I mean on election night there was a rainbow celebration across the world; that's a beautiful thing. But the opposite is also being stirred up and I've already seen reports both in print and on TV of America's Neo-Nazi movement really starting to kick in again. On a race level it's an absolute parallel. In terms of what Joe's saying, look at the economy, look at what's happening with people losing jobs, the corporations going down, as well as individuals. Even wealthy people are starting to understand what many Americans know about economy and struggling. So there is this sense of, "Where was my voice? Where am I as an individual in this big mish-mosh? And who's going to listen to me and am I going to make a difference in the world?" It is exceedingly relevant right now. There's a kind of safety in American minds and American audiences that I've encountered. If a play is considered a period piece, if it's set in the past, people are more willing to listen than if they think they're seeing something ultra-contemporary; the relevance will sneak in. They'll actually receive it on a more personal level instead having mind-chatter going on during the play. It's a great, great play to do right now.

What is the most important idea you want the audience to take away after seeing the play?

I don't normally engage in that kind of thinking. I feel like I want them to know themselves better when they're leaving. If I've done my job, then the audience at some point, hopefully during a point in the play, will see themselves in it and think about and talk about how the play impacted them personally. Where were the parallels in their lives and what it brought up for them in terms of who they are in the world? If that sparks discussion, then that's the goal. But one specific thing, that's as individual as each person who comes to see it? ... I don't have one thing I want people to get. Who am I? I don't know. I have no way of determining that.

SELF-IDENTITY

TROUBLE IN MIND focuses on several characters. These characters are completely different types of people. They have their own way of doing things, believe in different things, and think that certain things are right. This is who they are—their self-identity. Each character has come from a different place and has had different experiences that make them who they are. Here are a couple of characters' identity.

Wiletta Mayer – Wiletta is a middle-aged actress who has grown up during the heart of segregation. She has seen many confrontations between blacks and whites. Her experience in theater is quite extensive and she holds it more as a business rather than an art. Wiletta believes that you must behave nicely and properly in order to get along with the whites: she laughs when necessary and usually holds back her true feelings because she doesn't want to cause any problems. Because she feels this way, Wiletta is cast in many "character" roles and is manipulated by her directors.

Millie Davis – Millie is a thirty-five year old actress. She is married and says she does not need to work and displays more wealth than the other characters. Like Wiletta, she is conscious of how she acts and what she says around whites. Millie does not like the kind of roles she must play because of her race, but wants to act. At one point she says that she did not tell her relatives about the last production she was in because of stereotypical line she repeated over and over again. Though Millie expresses her objections about a couple of things, she is not willing to put her job on the line.

While these are brief, it helps give the audience more of an insight into who the characters are, what makes them who they are and how they interact with each other. Millie is quite wealthy, wearing fur and lavish jewelry. The other characters in the show do not come from wealth and they view her in a different light because of it. Wiletta has had much experience in theater, so several of the characters look up to her and follow her actions. The ones who don't follow her are questioned and given a hard time because of their choices. These conflicts happen because each character has their own history; their own self-identity.

ACTIVITY: Using the above character identities as examples, create a short identity for the rest of the characters in TROUBLE IN MIND. Use the script as well as your imagination in order to give the character an identity. How does their history affect who they are in their present life? How do you think these things affect their interactions with other people?

ACTIVITY: Think about who you are as a person. What is your own self-identity? Jot down some ideas, experiences and beliefs that make you who you are. Create a short monologue discussing one or multiple aspects about you. Share these monologues with your classmates.

RESOURCES AND FURTHER READING

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THE PLAY WITHIN THE PLAY

This article was researched and written by Janine Bannier, Education Intern.

In *TROUBLE IN MIND*, the playwright Alice Childress uses the theatrical device known as a “play within a play.” As you will see, the characters in *TROUBLE IN MIND* are actors who are rehearsing a play about race relations in America. Though the outer play is a comedy, the inner play is a drama which focuses on the African-American right to vote. The characters in the outer play live in the year 1957, and are forced through-out rehearsals to deal with a parallel in their lives to the lives of the characters of the inner play. In this way, Childress uses a “play within a play” to show the parallel of race relations throughout generations of Americans.

The history of the theatrical device “play within a play” can be seen as far back as ancient India, where layered stories known as a “frame story” were popular. In these stories passed down through generations of storytellers as an oral tradition, the outer story served only as a vehicle to the inner story. For instance, the popular tale of *Scheherazade* is still told to this day. The outer story of *Scheherazade* is that of a king and a storyteller who saves her own life by telling a new tale to the king each night. The inner stories contained lessons, morals and what can be considered the “guts” of the tale. The inner stories were known to change often throughout the generations but were able to provide similar morals. One of the most infamous Indian tales that uses a story within a story is *The Mahabharata*, which was written in the ancient language of Sanskrit. This tale is that of two rival tribes, who fight a war through their family stories. Famous stories in this series include *Arabian Nights*, *Ramayana*, and the *Seven Wise Masters*.

“A story within a story” can be seen across cultural history. In France, the device is known as *Mise en abyme* which translates into “placing into infinity.”

The first play to use this device was *THE SPANISH TRAGEDY* written in 1587 by Thomas Kyd. In this production, a play is presented in front of two “audience members” who commentate on the action. In this show, a play within a play was used to clearly convey the author’s inner monologue about a social issue.

“Play within a play” became very popular in western playwriting with William Shakespeare, who used the device in several of his works. The device was used in both comedies, such as *TAMING OF THE SHREW*, *LOVE’S LABOURS LOST* and *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM*, as well as tragedies, most notably *HAMLET*.

A play within a play has continued to be used in western playwriting throughout modern history. From realistic works such as Anton Chekhov’s *THE SEAGULL* to the revolt of realism as seen in Bertolt Brecht’s *THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE* and into today’s popular Broadway hits such as *KISS ME KATE* and Mel Brook’s *THE PRODUCERS*, a play within a play can be used in so many ways. In some cases, the inner play exists for no other reason than to entertain. However, it can also be used to convey morals, lessons, social commentary, or to show a parallel between two worlds as seen in Alice Childress’ *TROUBLE IN MIND*.

ACTIVITY: In small groups, do some research about the above plays. Pick a play that you especially like and look at the play within the play. What is the purpose of the inner play? What is the purpose of the outer play? Do you think this theatrical device works for this particular play? For added affect, perform a part of the play within the play for your classmates.

VISITING THE REP

The Milwaukee Repertory Theater is housed in the Milwaukee Center at the corner of Wells and Water Streets, downtown. Our building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company. This name is still carved on the wall outside.

You'll enter on the Wells Street side into a large, open space. Our box office will be visible on your left as you come through the front doors. The large space is the main hub for the businesses that share this building: a bank, an office tower, the Pabst Theater, and the Intercontinental Hotel. If you walk into the center of this area, you'll see a staircase on your left. You will take this staircase to the Powerhouse Theater lobby.

Inside the lobby are restrooms, water fountains, and a coat check. If you decide to bring a snack, please know that food and drink are NOT permitted in the theater. However, you can leave things (at your own risk) in the coat check room, and enjoy them outside the theater during intermission. Most plays have one intermission that is about 20 minutes long. You might also want to look for signs in the lobby which give the full "running time" of the play.

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The Milwaukee Repertory Theater Education Department

**Jenny Kostreva, Education Director
kostreva@milwaukeeerp.com
414-290-5370**

**Rebecca Witt, Education Coordinator
rwitt@milwaukeeerp.com
414-290-5393**

*"The theatre is so endlessly
fascinating because it's so
accidental. It's so much like life."*

Arthur Miller

The Rep Milwaukee
THEATER ♦ TRAINING AT ITS BEST

Our lives are greatly enhanced with theater. Studying and viewing it teaches us about other cultures and times, collaboration, work ethic, and imagination. We become more aware of the world around us with these concepts, and in addition to this, more alert to and responsive of human nature. With this improved understanding of what theater can provide for us we are able to gain a better appreciation not only for theater, but for life as well.